

BIAS FILTERED:
INTERNALIZED RACIAL OPPRESSION, EXPERIENCES OF RACISM, AND WELL-
BEING AND AUTHENTICITY AMONG BLACK AMERICANS

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INTERNALIZED RACIAL OPPRESSION, EXPERIENCES OF RACISM, AND WELL-
BEING AND AUTHENTICITY AMONG BLACK AMERICANS

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Abstract

Internalized racial oppression and experiences with prejudice correlate negatively with psychological well-being. Authenticity is a well-established contributor to well-being, yet research has not addressed how racial identity and its potential consequences relate to authenticity and therefore well-being. African American adults ($N = 451$) completed measures of internalized racial oppression, experiences of racism, authenticity, and well-being. Authenticity was positively related to well-being and negatively related to both internalized racial oppression and experienced racism. Both internalized racial oppression and experienced racism independently and negatively predicted authenticity and well-being. Mediation analyses showed that authenticity fully accounted for the link between internalized racial oppression and well-being but only partially explained the influence of experiences with racism on well-being. This research contributes a richer understanding of how internalized racial oppression and experiences with racism impact racialized populations, as well as how authenticity may mediate these negative effects. Implications and future research directions are discussed.

Bias Filtered:

**Internalized Racial Oppression, Experiences of Racism, and Well-being and Authenticity
Among Black Americans**

“Just be yourself” is practically a truism in the psychology of well-being. Authenticity, being aware of one’s own characteristics and genuinely expressing them in behavior, is a central theme in humanistic approaches to optimal functioning (e.g., Rogers, 1961; Ryan & Ryan, 2019). Certainly, authenticity is a strong and consistent predictor of psychological well-being (e.g., Baker et al., 2017; Hewlin, et al., 2020; Reinecke & Trepte, 2014; Robinson, et al., 2012; Rivera et al., 2019; Sutton, 2020; Weddel & others, 2020). The abundance of this literature might seem to support the conclusion that this link speaks to a general aspect of *human* functioning: That, optimally, any person should know and be true to themselves. Yet, the experience of authenticity and its link to well-being have not been examined specifically in groups who live in inherently unfair systems such as African Americans in the United States.

The United States is among the most multiracial societies in the Western world. It also has a violent and complicated history of racial prejudice and discrimination. The Atlantic Slave Trade began operating as a global production and economic system in the 15th century and has yet to fully divest itself from the institutional fabric of the United States. Violently negative racist messages, events, and experiences permeate not only the systems within U.S. society but also the minds of those who live within it. Black people have fought to reclaim and maintain a sense of humanity within a structure that was built on the exploitation of their labor only to be historically and cyclically met with violence by hegemonic white supremacy (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; French et. al., 2020).

Considered in such a context, the level of white privilege embedded in the platitude to “just be oneself” is astounding. Among Black people, navigating life within the constraints of racialization, behavior must be monitored, regardless of whether it is an expression of one’s genuine characteristics, not only to achieve personally valued goals but for the sake of personal safety (McCluney et al., 2021). Clearly, authenticity and its relationship to well-being may be complicated by racism. The present study examined the experience of authenticity in a sample of African American adults, investigating the relationships of internalized racial oppression and experiences with racism with authenticity and well-being and testing the potential role of authenticity in explaining the links between internalized racial oppression and experiences with racism and well-being.

Specifically, this study addressed three research questions:

1. Does authenticity predict well-being in this sample?
2. How do internalized racial oppression and experiences with racism relate to not only to well-being but also to authenticity?
3. Does authenticity explain the links between internalized racial oppression and experiences with racism and well-being?

The answers to some of these questions may seem obvious based on the extant literature on authenticity and well-being. However, given the racist context in which African American adults exist, there are good reasons to address these questions in this particular sample. Moreover, addressing these questions potentially enables a clearer answer to the possibility of the generality of the link between authenticity and *human* functioning.

Because racism can be understood as affecting processes that are both internal (the internalization of racial oppression), and external (interpersonal experiences of racism) to the

person, the present study included measures of both experiences. Internalized racial oppression refers to the extent to which people endorse harmful, negative beliefs about their own marginalized group due to influence by the dominant group (Bailey et al., 2021). Not surprisingly, internalized racial oppression is negatively related to well-being (e.g., Pierre & Mahalik, 2005), and we expected to find the same negative relationship in this study. We propose that the influence of internalized racial oppression on well-being is primarily about its tendency to obfuscate a person's genuine impulses and invalidate the self and the genuine behavioral expression of that self. We predicted that internalized racial oppression would relate negatively to authenticity. Moreover, we predicted that authenticity would fully mediate the association between internalized racial oppression and well-being among African American adults.

A large and ever-growing literature attests to the fact that encounters with prejudicial treatment and discrimination or living in a context in which prejudicial attitudes are common is associated with poor outcomes among African American people (Britt-Spells et al., 2018; Chae et al., 2015; Pascoe & Smith Richman, 2009; Stevens & Thijs, 2018). Thus, we predicted that experiences of racism would relate negatively to well-being in the present study. Such encounters are interpersonal, social experiences and their relevance to authenticity has not been examined. It is not difficult to imagine that such experiences would be experienced as demeaning the self and rendering genuine self-expression a fraught and potentially dangerous proposition. As such, we predicted that experiences with racism would be negatively related to both well-being and authenticity. However, we expected this link to be weaker than that for internalized racial oppression which is more proximal to the self and shares a stronger conceptual link to authenticity as we consider below.

Approaches to Authenticity

Authenticity is inherently tied to the self, its contents, and its expressions. Socialization is a natural part of the developmental process for a psychologically healthy sense of self, and thus the term racial socialization refers to how one is taught directly and indirectly to identify with one's group (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). African American or Black adults are thought to have experienced this process at some point in their lives, and thus have likely incorporated their racial identity into their sense of selves (Cross et al., 2003). This could mean that the average Black American considers their African ancestry to be important, if not central, to who they are.

The existence of racism renders the self, itself, a potentially problematic and difficult experience. W. E. B. DuBois (1903) characterized “double-consciousness” as the experience of an unrelenting awareness of one's racial identity. DuBois explained this feeling as a “two-ness” of thoughts, behaviors, emotions - a feeling of strife between being American and identifying with African roots – that can create a fragmented sense of self within the individual. This dynamic is complex because of the psychological harm that racism and its consequences have on a person's capacity to look at themselves through only one lens –their own—to determine who they truly are. Thus, for someone who holds an African American identity, the experience of authenticity, of being aware of one's true characteristics and values, and being able to act in accord with these in everyday life, is a complicated, problematic issue.

The complicated relationship between authenticity and racial identity is at least partially due to negative messages that stigmatized groups receive about their place within the society (Jerald et al., 2017). The awareness of negative stereotypes about one's group may inhibit authentic functioning because it acts as a filter through which the racialized individual views themselves and their group. For example, Adams-Bass and colleagues (2014) found that media

images that depicted Black people as criminals negatively affected the self-esteem of Black adolescents. Endorsing negative messages about one's group was associated with lower levels of well-being, whereas associating ethnic identity with pride relates to higher self-esteem and well-being in racialized groups (Adams-Bass 2014; Anderson & Stevenson 2019; Branscombe 1999; 2016).

Does the existence of a racist systems require an explicit Afrocentric conception of authenticity? Within humanistic psychology, Carl Rogers (1961) offered a generic "content free" approach to personality that focused on the key role of authentic self-awareness and expression in optimal functioning. Rogers' perspective is termed "content free," here, because the contents of the self were irrelevant to Rogers' advocacy for authenticity (Womick et al., 2019). Whatever one truly is, according to Rogers, should be expressed. From this perspective, for example, if an African American adult's self is invested in preoccupation with whiteness or values that are at odds with African culture and identity, expressing that preoccupation and those values could be an authentic expression of the self.

Approaches to optimal Black functioning from Black Psychology also include an emphasis on genuine expressions of the self, however a key difference between these perspectives and Rogers' is that Black psychologists acknowledge that the content of the true self for African Americans includes (or should include) knowledge of and appreciation for African history and heritage. In particular, Kobi Kambon's (e.g., Kambon & Bowen-Reid, 2010) approach to Black Personality presented the Black self as developing, optimally, only in the presence of such knowledge and appreciation. Kambon argued that a key obstacle to African American psychological health was a cultural misorientation toward Eurocentrism and whiteness. Kambon's perspective offers an important insight for the present study. In contrast to

Rogers' content free perspective, Kambon's suggests that internalized racial oppression should be negatively related not only to well-being among African Americans but also to authenticity itself: The African American experience of authenticity should include a deep commitment to African survival, African heritage, and African principles (Johnson 2003; Kambon & Hopkins, 1993). Such a perspective informed our prediction that internalized racial oppression would be negatively related to both well-being *and* authenticity.

Authenticity and Well-Being in African Americans

It might seem obvious that authenticity should relate to well-being among African Americans however, there are good reasons to interrogate this link in the context of marginalized identity and racist social contexts. The measure of authenticity used in the present study includes four facets of the experience of being true to oneself (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Examining each facet, individually, highlights importance of race in the relationship between the person, their authenticity, and ultimately their psychological well-being. This examination reveals, as well, the ways that unfair contexts can obfuscate the very meaning of authenticity for people with marginalized identities. Below we describe how holding an oppressed identity such as African American identity can complicate and interfere with each facet of authenticity, thereby inhibiting authentic functioning. Throughout we note the ways that racist contexts require the subjugation of individual authenticity in the service of functioning within those contexts.

Authentic Awareness

Authentic awareness refers to a person's knowledge of their values, motives, beliefs, and self-relevant cognitions and their experience of these as genuinely their own (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Events that cause racial trauma such as police brutality, mass incarceration, gentrification, and oppressive laws are related to depression and anxiety, symptoms of which prevent one from

being able to process complex emotions such as authenticity (Banerjee et al., 2015). Past experiences with racism can confound whether a current experience is in fact a valid instance of injustice or if the circumstance is benign, leading to an increase in hypervigilance (Abdullah, et al., 2021). The psychological experience of hypervigilance is a survival response and takes the individual out of planning processes and into biological processes. The capacity to stay, psychologically, in the authentic space is a privilege of unconditional safety. Understanding one's motives, values, and beliefs as a stable, unchanging fact of self can be complicated if settings require the enactment of different selves (McCluney, et al., 2021).

Another example of how racism can impact authentic awareness is “racelighting,” a term adapted from “gaslighting,” which refers to “the process whereby people of color question their own thoughts and actions due to systematically delivered racialized messages that make them second-guess their own lived experiences and realities with racism” (Wood & Harris, 2021, p.10; see also Johnson et al., 2021). The controversy over microaggressions in academic psychology offers an apt case in point. White scholars have questioned the very existence of microaggressions, focused on their likely unintentional nature, and called for an end to trainings to reduce their occurrence (Haidt, 2017; Lilienfeld, 2017). Such perspectives ignore the lived experience of people subjected to microaggressions (Sue, 2017) and underestimate the real harm such treatment does (Freeman & Stewart, 2021; Williams, 2020).

Internalized stigma may prevent the development of a cohesive self-concept due to the fragmentation and juxtaposition of identities within the self, especially when external sources display contempt for an identity (Ryan & Ryan, 2019). This process may be crucial to authenticity as racial stereotypes, for example, inform racialized individuals about the negative perceptions of their group. People may internalize negative group perceptions as a reflection of

themselves, developing their self-concept to include detrimental components such as “Black people are lazy, I am Black, I am lazy,” (Jerad et al., 2017; Matthews et al., 2012). Incorporating messages such as these into one’s self-concept then has deleterious effects on the person’s sense of self (Koontz & Nguyen, 2020).

Unbiased processing

Unbiased processing is the ability to assess one’s faults and strengths objectively and without bias. Again, negative messages and images perpetuated by the media impact this processing by influencing one to believe that these negative things are true about one’s group, and oneself. In addition, the very definitions of behaviors as faults or strengths are rendered ambiguous in the context of bias and oppression. For example, enacting strengths that are stereotype consistent may render those strengths as faults. Stereotype threat research (e.g., Steele & Aronson, 1995) demonstrates that performance concerns for stereotype-relevant tasks can create self-fulfilling prophecies (e.g., Taylor & Walton, 2011). “Faults” are not only momentary failures but proof of the negative stereotypes about a person and their group identity.

Another barrier to achieving unbiased processing is the experience of the imposter phenomenon. Bernard and colleagues (2017) found that higher frequencies of racial discrimination were associated with not only lower levels of well-being but higher frequencies of feelings of intellectual incompetence in a sample of African American adults. Experiences with racism incur a toll not only on good feelings but on the experience of one’s own capacities and strengths. Individuals may internalize experiences of racism as evidence of their self-perceived incompetence which in turn inhibit their ability to accurately assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Authentic Behavior

Authentic behavior is the extent to which participants view their own behavior as representing their authentic self, perhaps best represented by the item: “I find that my behavior typically expresses my values.” Another item in this subscale gets at an important aspect of how behavior can be inauthentic: “I find it easy to pretend to be something other than my true self.” This pretending aspect captures well the ways that tailoring one’s behaviors in racist contexts can lead to behavior that is ostensibly *inauthentic*. The authenticity of a behavior—whether it “expresses” one’s values—cannot be prioritized in contexts some values (e.g., doing well in a work setting) conflict with others (e.g., not enacting stereotype consistent behavior or not putting oneself in harm’s way). Racism requires racialized people to change their behavior, tailoring in the service of the demands of the racial implications of social contexts. Indeed, people who hold marginalized identities change their behavior if they think the other party has negative feelings towards their group (Sawyer et al., 2012). Similarly, Franklin and Boyd (2000) found that Black men who experienced racism were more likely to devote mental energy to ameliorate these negative effects, particularly the ones most salient to their outward appearance, i.e., understanding that something as insignificant as their gait can cause alarm in racist white people. Thus, the effect of racism on behavior taints even behaviors that are likely to be spontaneous and even trivial. If a man cannot simply walk the way he walks, how can he be expected to enact behaviors that express his personal values?

Research shows that racialized people experience a dissonance between themselves and their white counterparts (Seawell et al., 2014). The potential consequences of filtering one’s behavior through a lens of difference have been examined by asking participants to reflect on behavioral stereotypes, especially ones perpetuated by the media. That research shows that people did change their behavior in response to thinking about these stereotypes so as to not

reinforce negative stereotypes (Lavner et al., 2018a). Additionally, stereotypes function as psychological stressors for African American men, fostering internalized negativity towards the group and thereby himself (Rauscher & Wilson, 2017; Scheim & Bauer, 2019). The effect of jumping through psychological hoops to avoid negative characterization has been shown to lead to an increase in depression and anxiety symptoms in racialized adults (Majors et al., 2003). This may be due to the “double-consciousness” or the “veil,” both representations of the palpable tension of holding a racialized identity in a deeply racist society.

Can this barrier be overcome? Few studies have bridged the gap between the lived experiences of racialized Black people and the academic pursuits that they describe within their scholarship (Whitten 2020). Research testing the potential protective effects of system blame (relegating responsibility for major barriers as a product of the larger systemic structure of racism) has shown slight buffering effects but not lasting change in well-being (Rauscher & Wilson, 2017; Sellers et al., 2011).

In addition, studies have tested the influence of parents on Black and Brown youth socialization, and whether a positive racial influence can override the negative systemic influences (Lanier 2017, Matthews et al., 2017; McNeil Smith, 2020; Mushonga, 2017). In short, results show, again, a minor buffering effect of parent involvement, but it was ultimately ineffective in mitigating the negative effects of messages about their group. The context of historical and contemporary violence is a reality with which all minoritized groups must reckon. Often these compromises on the part of the racialized individual have negative consequences for their psychological well-being, as they go through the processes of psychological development (Oliver et al., 2017; Perry et al., 2013; Seaton, 2009; Seaton et al., 2010; Seawell et al., 2014). Older African American adults also report difficulties maintaining a sense of authenticity over a

lifetime of dealing with institutionalized racism (Adams-Bass, 2014; Yoon, Coburn, & Spence, 2019).

All of these factors influence the way a person enacts or performs an expression of their “authentic self.” The context, the stereotypes, the internalized biases and more all conglomerate into a *performance* of self, but not necessarily authentic behavior. The consequences for disregarding this context are dire: performing in congruence with one’s values as a racialized person, such as one’s right to life, we see that in real time authentic behavior results in dehumanization, degradation, and even death. Thus, the behavioral aspect of authenticity is thwarted for African American adults. They must accept the potential consequences of expressing their values, feelings, and genuine intentions in this context and navigate a potential minefield of risk.

Authentic Relational Orientation

Authentic relational orientation refers to the experience of feeling emotionally close to others because of a sense of safety, acceptance, belongingness, and support. Racism can affect every close relationship—ranging from friendships to romantic partners, to parents and children. To establish close relationships implies a degree of knowing oneself, yet as we have presented, racial identity may complicate the process of reconciling intertwined and conflicting messages about the self. Internalizing negative messages about the self and the group may result in maladaptive coping strategies.

Romantic relationships between racialized individuals suffer because of these added psychological burdens with which both parties must contend to find emotional closeness with another person. Couples that deal with racial discrimination individually and together experience more symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD that hinder their ability to feel emotionally

safe with their partner (Barton et al., 2018; Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008; Chadwick & DeBlaere, 2019; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). In one study, self-identifying Black adults were asked about the impact of childhood experiences with racism on their adult relationships (Lavner et al., 2018a). Results showed that adults who reported more childhood experiences with racism were more likely to adopt hostile behaviors towards their partner during disagreements. Such results support the argument that instances of racial discrimination dampen the benefits of close relationships on well-being because they complicate the authenticity of these relationships, adding pressure to the individuals and to the relationship to flourish under the constraints of a racist system.

Parent-child/adolescent relationships are also impacted. Racialized parents and children experience incidents of discrimination both separately and together. Yet, the parent is tasked with the objective of preparing their children for, and mitigating the potential negative consequences of, discrimination as part of the developmental, socialization, and acculturation processes (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Dotterer & James, 2018; Dyar et al., 2019; Greene et al., 2006; Kaiser et al., 2006; Lu & Wan, 2018; Varner et al., 2018). Additionally, parents who reported higher levels of racial discrimination were more likely to rely on maladaptive coping strategies, in turn increasing the likelihood that their children would use those same strategies as adults (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Clearly, the psychological effects of racism do not only affect the individual at the singular moment in time that an event occurs, rather, there are a slew of factors that may obfuscate successful emotional closeness.

In sum, conceptually and empirically, racism has far-reaching implications for the experience of authenticity among racialized people. Racism can be seen to affect every aspect of authenticity. The present study sought to address the ways that internalized oppression and

experiences of racism relate to authenticity, an experience that has been portrayed as a well-spring of well-being.

Overview and Predictions

A sample of African American adults completed measures of well-being, authenticity, internalized oppression and encounters with racism. We tested whether authenticity would predict well-being in this sample. In addition, we predicted that internalized racial oppression and encounters with racism would correlate negatively with well-being and authenticity. Further, we predicted that authenticity would mediate the relationship between internalized racial oppression and well-being. We also tested whether authenticity might explain the association between encountering racism and well-being. Because the data are correlational, it is important to note that mediational analyses cannot purport to demonstrate causality. However, to probe the viability of our hypothesis that the negative effects of internalized racial oppression on authenticity explain its effects on well-being, we computed a model testing the opposite pattern—with internalized racial oppression serving as the mediator of the link between authenticity and well-being in African Americans.

Methods

Participants

Participants ($N = 500$) were recruited through Prolific Academic and were paid a small fee for completing a brief questionnaire. Due to a programming error, gender was not recorded for 66 participants. Among those for whom gender was recorded, 182 identified as cisgender men, 178 as cisgender women, 3 as transgender men, 2 as transgender women, 2 as nonbinary, and 18 specifying another gender identity. Ages ranged from 18 to 76 years, M age = 33 years, $SD = 10.62$. Years of education ranged from some high school (1%) to doctorate/professional

degree (2.4%) with the modal education being a Bachelor's degree (39%). Median income was \$35,000-\$50,000.

Materials and Procedures

Participants completed measures in the order presented here using *Qualtrics* software. All measures were rated on 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*) scale. Scale scores were computed by averaging over all items. The assessment included two attention check items. Participants who failed both attention checks were excluded from analyses ($n = 49$, leaving a final sample of 451 for analyses).

Authenticity. The 45-item Authenticity Inventory 3 (Goldman & Kernis, 2002) assesses authenticity, $M (SD) = 4.54 (.94)$, $\alpha = .80$, as both objective self-awareness and authentic expression. This scale contains 4 subcomponents. Authentic Awareness, $M (SD) = 4.84 (1.34)$, $\alpha = .51$, measures self-awareness of motivations, desires, strengths, and weaknesses (e.g., "For better or for worse I am aware of who I truly am"). Unbiased Processing, $M (SD) = 3.77 (0.27)$, $\alpha = .77$, measures the tendency to engage in objective internal evaluations of self-relevant information (e.g., "I am very uncomfortable objectively considering my limitations and shortcomings," reverse scored). Authentic Behavior, $M (SD) = 4.46 (0.78)$, $\alpha = .49$, measures the extent to which an individual engages in behavior based on their internal values and preferences (e.g., "I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things"). Finally, Authentic Relational Orientation, $M (SD) = 4.85 (0.83)$, $\alpha = .64$, measures the tendency to engage in genuine openness and truthfulness in close relationships (e.g., "I want people with whom I am close to understand my weaknesses").

Well-being. In all, participants completed 8 measures of psychological well-being. Global meaning in life and its 3 facets were measured using the 16-item Tripartite Meaning

Scale (Costin, & Vignoles, 2020). Four 4-item subscales measure global meaning in life, $M (SD) = 3.93 (4.37)$, $\alpha = .91$, (e.g., “My entire existence is full of meaning,”), coherence, $M (SD) = 3.94 (2.37)$, (e.g., “My life makes sense”), existential mattering or significance, $M (SD) = 3.94 (2.72)$, (e.g., “I am certain that my life is of importance”), and purpose $M (SD) = 4.20 (2.80)$, (e.g., “I have certain life goals that compel me to keep going”). The 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale, $M (SD) = 4.38 (0.14)$, $\alpha = .91$, (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985; e.g., “I am satisfied with my life”) is a widely used measure of life satisfaction. Self-esteem was measured with a single item, “I have high self-esteem” (Robins et al., 2001). To measure positive and negative affect (PA and NA), participants rated mood descriptors. For PA, $M (SD) = 4.93 (0.09)$, $\alpha = .93$, these included, joyful, enthusiastic, happy, satisfied, calm, relaxed, and hopeful. For NA, $M (SD) = 2.24 (0.11)$, $\alpha = .89$, they were, nervous, afraid, angry, sluggish, depressed/blue, and sad.

Experiences with Racism. Participants completed 26 items measuring encounters with prejudicial treatment. Items were drawn from two established measures, the Perceived Prejudice Scale (McNeilly et al., 1996; e.g., “You have been called insulting names related to your race or skin color.”) and the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS; Torres-Harding et al., 2012; e.g., “Others assume that I will behave aggressively because of my race;” “Sometimes, I am the only person of my racial background in my class or workplace.”), $M (SD) = 3.59 (0.37)$, $\alpha = .96$. All items can be found in the Appendix.

Internalized Racial Oppression. Participants completed the Internalized Racial Oppression Scale (IROS, Bailey et al., 2011), $M (SD) = 2.94 (1.75)$, $\alpha = .84$. The measure includes 5 subscales: Belief in Biased Representation of History, $M (SD) = 3.64 (1.46)$, $\alpha = .22$ (e.g., “There were no institutions of higher learning in Africa”), Devaluation of African Worldview and Motifs, $M (SD) = 3.57 (3.20)$, $\alpha = .19$ (e.g., “I do not tend to associate myself

with an African heritage”), Alteration of Physical Appearance, $M (SD) = 2.11(1.96)$, $\alpha = .85$ (e.g., “I wish my nose were narrower”), Internalization of Negative Stereotypes, $M (SD) = 2.26 (0.22)$, $\alpha = .86$ (e.g., “Black people are lazy”), and Hair Change, $M (SD) = 4.33 (2.06)$, $\alpha = .31$ (e.g., “Straight hair is better than my natural hair texture”). Given the low reliabilities of some of the subscales, we caution against drawing conclusions about these in analyses. In addition, in multivariate analyses we relied only on the full IROS.

Results

Analyses first addressed the experience of authenticity in this sample. Generally, participants reported relatively high levels of authenticity. Single sample t -tests showed that for overall authenticity and all subscales, the sample scored significantly above the midpoint (4) on the 7-point rating scale (all p 's < .001). For overall authenticity, $t(450) = 26.37$, $d = 1.24$, 95% $CI = [1.18, 1.36]$. For the subscales, t 's ranged from 5.63, $d = 0.27$, 95% $CI = [0.17, 0.36]$ for unbiased processing to 29.12, $d = 1.37$, 95% $CI = [1.24, 1.50]$ for authentic self-awareness. Among the subscales, participants endorsed significantly higher authentic self-awareness than all other subscales (all p 's < .001); higher authentic relational orientation than authentic behavior or unbiased processing (both p 's < .001); and higher authentic behavior than unbiased processing ($p < .001$). Although the purpose of this study was not to compare these adults to others, it is worth noting that generally, the means are in line with those from a majority white sample of adults recruited online in a previously published study (Womick, et al., 2019), who also endorsed relatively low levels of unbiased processing compared to the other subscales of authenticity.

Gender

Before addressing the main predictions of the study, gender differences were evaluated for all variables of interest. These analyses include only participants who identified as cisgender

men or women ($n = 365$). With regard to overall authenticity, there was no significant difference between those identifying as cisgender women, $M(SD) = 4.89(0.74)$, and cisgender men, $M(SD) = 4.92(0.66)$, $t(362) = 0.395$, $p = .69$. No authenticity subscales differed by gender, all p 's $> .21$. There was also no gender difference on experiences of racism, $t(362) = 0.56$, $p = .58$, $d = -.06$, 95% $CI = [-0.26, 0.14]$. With regard to internalized racial oppression, Table 1 shows that, on every subscale except Hair Change, cisgender men scored higher than cisgender women.

For well-being, three differences emerged. First, cisgender men reported higher life satisfaction, $M(SD) = 4.61(1.53)$ compared to cisgender women, $M(SD) = 4.07(1.48)$, $t(363) = 3.42$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.36$, 95% $CI = [0.15, 0.57]$. Second, cisgender men also reported higher self-esteem, $M(SD) = 5.26(1.64)$ compared to cisgender women, $M(SD) = 4.44(1.83)$, $t(355) = 3.31$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.47$, 95% $CI = [0.27, 0.68]$. Finally, cisgender men reported higher positive affect, $M(SD) = 5.18(1.64)$, compared to cisgender women, $M(SD) = 4.69(1.54)$, $t(349) = 3.31$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.35$, 95% $CI = [0.14, 0.55]$. (Note df reflect significantly different variances across groups for self-esteem and positive affect).

In sum, although cisgender men reported higher internalized racial oppression, when gender differences in well-being were observed, they reported higher well-being than cisgender women. In addition to testing for mean level gender differences, we also tested whether gender moderated the associations among authenticity, well-being, internalized racial oppression, and experienced racism. In no case did the 2- or 3- way interaction terms involving gender contribute significantly to the prediction of well-being (all p 's $> .68$). As such, gender was not included in multivariate analyses. This step also allowed us to include all participants in those analyses.

Authenticity and Well-being

Analyses next examined the relationship of authenticity to well-being. Table 2 shows that, as in past research, authenticity and its subscales were positively related to all aspects of well-being and negatively related to negative affect.

The various well-being measures were all strongly related to each other and related to the other variables of interest in a parallel fashion. Thus, to simplify analyses, well-being measures were standardized and aggregated to create an overall well-being composite (after recoding the standard score for NA), $\alpha = .91$. Overall authenticity was strongly related to overall well-being, $r = .62, p < .001$, as were all authenticity subscales, with r 's ranging from .37 for unbiased processing to .64 for authentic self-awareness, all p 's $< .001$. Authenticity does predict higher well-being among African Americans.

Internalized Oppression, Experienced Racism, and Well-being

Table 3 shows the correlations between internalized racial oppression and its facets and experienced racism with well-being. As can be seen, as in past research, both internalized oppression and experienced racism were negatively related to positive functioning. Notably, internalized racial oppression was weakly negatively related to experienced racism, $r = -.17, p < .001$. When well-being was regressed on internalized racial oppression and experienced racism, simultaneously, both independently predicted lower well-being; for internalized racial oppression, $\beta = -.26, p < .001$, for experienced racism, $\beta = -.20, p < .001$. For the equation, $R^2 = .09, p < .001$. Finally, analyses examined whether internalized racial oppression and experienced racism interacted to predict well-being. Predictors were mean-centered, and their product was used as the interaction term. When well-being was regressed hierarchically on the main effects of internalized racial oppression and experienced racism (Step 1) and their interaction (Step 2), the interaction step did not contribute significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .88$.

Internalized Racial Oppression, Experienced Racism, and Authenticity

Table 4 shows the correlations between the overall authenticity measure and its subscales with internalized racial oppression and experienced racism. As can be seen, as predicted, overall internalized racial oppression was negatively related to overall authenticity and all its facets. Although the subscale correlations were not always significant, they were all in the same (negative) direction. Interestingly, experienced racism was not as consistently linked to authenticity. It was weakly negatively related to overall authenticity and authentic behavior and moderately negatively related to unbiased processing.

When authenticity was regressed on internalized racial oppression and experienced racism simultaneously, both variables contributed significantly and independently; for internalized racial oppression, $\beta = -.40, p < .001$, for experienced racism, $\beta = -.17, p < .001$. For the equation, $R^2 = .16, p < .001$. As predicted, the contribution of internalized racial oppression to authenticity was significantly stronger than the contribution of experienced racism, $z = 6.25, p < .001$. As with well-being, when authenticity was regressed hierarchically on the main effects of internalized racial oppression and experienced racism (Step 1) and their interaction (Step 2), the interaction step did not contribute significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .004, p = .13$. Thus, for both well-being and authenticity, internalized racial oppression and experiences of racism independently predict lower levels of these variables and do not interact.

Finally, two hierarchical regression equations were computed to explore whether authenticity might serve a buffering function, potentially protecting people from the well-being effects of internalized racial oppression or experiences with racism. First, well-being was regressed on (mean centered) authenticity and internalized racial oppression and their interaction. Only the main effect of authenticity contributed significantly, $\beta = .63, p < .001$. For the

interaction, $\beta = .05, p = .17$. Second, well-being was regressed on authenticity and experienced racism and their interaction. In this case both main effects were significant, for authenticity, $\beta = .60, p < .001$, for experienced racism, $\beta = -.10, p = .007$. The interaction was not significant, $\beta = .02, p = .59$.

Mediational Models

Three mediational models were computed. The first tested whether authenticity explained the association between internalized racial oppression and well-being. The second examined the role of authenticity in the link between experienced racism and well-being. We repeated both models, entering each predictor as a covariate in the model for the other. Results were essentially identical. Finally, we tested internalized racial oppression and experienced racism as simultaneous mediators of the link between authenticity and well-being to test the reverse direction of influence. All models were computed using PROCESS Macro for SPSS (Model 4, Hayes, 2016), bootstrapped with 1000 re-samplings.

Results of the model testing whether authenticity mediates the link between internalized racial oppression and well-being are shown in Figure 1. As predicted, authenticity fully mediated the relationship between internalized racial oppression and well-being. The indirect effect of internalized racial oppression through authenticity was significant, $B(SE) = -0.25 (0.03)$, 95% $CI = [-0.32, -0.19]$.

Results for an analogous model using experienced racism as the predictor variable are shown in Figure 2. As can be seen, in this case only partial mediation is supported. The direct effect of experiences with racism remained significant. For the indirect effect of experienced racism on well-being through authenticity, $B(SE) = -0.04 (0.02)$, 95% $CI = [-0.07, -0.002]$.

The third mediational model tested whether accounting for experienced racism and internalized racial oppression (entered as simultaneous mediators) would explain the link between authenticity and well-being. Note this model tests for the alternative direction of influence—the idea that the link between authenticity and well-being is accounted for by the variables used as predictors in the previous models. As can be seen in Figure 3, authenticity negatively predicted experiences of racism and internalized oppression but accounting for these relationships did not explain the association between authenticity and well-being, which remained largely unchanged and significant. Moreover, the total indirect effect of experienced racism and internalized racial oppression was not significant, $B(SE) = 0.02 (0.02)$, 95% $CI = [-0.02, 0.05]$. The indirect effect of authenticity through internalized racial oppression was nonsignificant $B(SE) = 0.007 (0.02)$, 95% $CI = [-0.02, 0.04]$. Thus, although cross-sectional data cannot indicate causal directions, this result suggests that authenticity explains the link between internalized oppression and well-being (fully), rather than the alternative.

General Discussion

Authenticity shares a robust relationship with positive psychological functioning. This project examined authenticity and well-being in a sample of African American adults, including the relationships of these experiences to internalized racial oppression and experienced racism. Results showed, first, that participants reported relatively high levels of authenticity, an experience that shared a strong relationship to psychological well-being. Second, internalized racial oppression and experiences with racism were negatively related to well-being, as has been shown in past research (Adams-Bass, 2014; Barton et al., 2018; Bey, 2020; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). Third, internalized racial oppression and experienced racism were negatively related to authenticity, with the link for internalized racial oppression being stronger than that for

experienced racism. Fourth, mediational analyses suggest that internalized racial oppression affects well-being primarily via its detrimental influence on experienced authenticity. Finally, mediational results for experienced racism showed that such experiences continue to take a toll on well-being, even after accounting for their small influence on authenticity. Overall, these results highlight two different pathways by which unfair contexts can influence the well-being of marginalized people, an internal path that is more strongly linked to the person's experience of the self as authentic and an external path that continues to affect well-being, regardless of a person's authenticity.

Future research might examine the ways these two paths interact and mutually reinforce each other. Internalized racial oppression—buying into the negative messages that are conveyed in society—presumably arises from social/external sources. Although we did not find evidence for internalized racial oppression and encounters with racism interacting to predict either well-being or authenticity, it might be that tracking these variables over time among people experiencing important developmental milestones (youth, adolescents) would illuminate the ways external messages become internalized and ultimately take toll on the sense of the authentic self.

The present results offer support both to the more generic notion that authenticity has salubrious effects on well-being (such as that offered by Rogers, 1961) as well as the more explicitly Afrocentric views offered by Black Psychology (e.g., Kambon & Bowen-Reid, 2010). Certainly, authenticity was strongly associated with all indicators of well-being measured in this study. The fact that this well-established link emerged in a sample living in an unfair context, replete with negative messages about them, is compelling evidence that authenticity matters to human functioning. However, the relevance of internalized racial oppression to authenticity

supports the notion that part of being an authentic African American person is rejecting denigrating views of African heritage, history, and African American people, as Black psychologists have proposed. That people who hold negative views of their own racial group suffer in the realm of well-being is not surprising. However, finding that such individuals experienced lower *authenticity* speaks to the role of internalized negative views of that group in damaging a foundational pathway for well-being—being oneself.

Results for the internal pathway by which internalized racism influences the well-being of African Americans suggest the importance of intrapersonal experiences in well-being. These results support the value of interventions that promote positive racial identification, especially during those times when people are developing sense of self. More positive identifications can be expected to enhance authenticity and, in turn, well-being. However, and importantly, these results ought not distract from the other finding of this study, namely, how lived experiences of racism detract from well-being, regardless of intrapersonal experience. Experiences of racism continued to take a toll on well-being even accounting for their influence on authenticity. Even the most authentic person may find encounters with racism to be stressful and harmful to well-being. This result emphasizes the importance of change in the lived experiences of individuals to reduce these distressing and demeaning experiences. The effects of racism on well-being cannot be erased with a focus solely inside the heads of marginalized people. Research and interventions for diversity must acknowledge both the internal and external aspects of oppression. Simply put, targeting one at the expense of the other is inadequate to improve the system or the life of the person.

Many organizations invest in diversity trainings to improve the inclusivity of the workplace, however the effectiveness of these on actual behavior is difficult to gauge (Hayes, et

al., 2020; Hernandez, et al., 2020). Recently, Onyeador and colleagues (2021) suggested that in addition to offering trainings for majority group members, organizations should build supportive networks for workers from diverse backgrounds. Such steps fit well with targeting both external and internal processes that affect the well-being of workers. Additionally, reducing the experience of prejudice in daily life may involve more than simply relying on training. Incorporating screening of potential hires for racist views would help to produce not only a more diverse workplace but one that is fully inclusive (Hernandez, et al., 2020).

Gender

Results regarding gender present a bit of a puzzle. Although cisgender men reported higher levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and positive affect compared to cisgender women, they also reported greater internalized racial oppression. In addition, there were no gender differences on authenticity or reported experiences with racism.

Well-being results support the idea that African American women may experience lower levels of well-being due to their intersectional status. Further research is needed to support this claim, particularly because we did not have a large enough population of transgender or non-binary participants to provide adequate comparison to the cisgender sample. Results for internalized racial oppression may suggest that men and women have different ways of coping with racial stress or differ in their likelihood of internalizing those messages, but of course more research is needed to address this possibility.

Differences in internalized racial oppression suggest the differential influence of stereotypes for men and women. Black masculinity studies have addressed this indirectly: in terms of hegemonic masculinity, whiteness is centralized and thus perpetuated as the standard toward which all men should strive (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). The ideal image is to be

strong, emotionally distant, protective, and to provide for the family. Historically speaking, Black male identity has been subjugated to the positionality of being the antithesis to this: Black men were (purportedly) violent, out of control, unable to provide due to criminality and selfishness (Adams-Bass et al., 2014). Black men must reckon with this reality, reject it, and then assimilate their own thoughts and behaviors into their sense of self, despite the context that deprives them of the freedom to exist without these added psychological pressures (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). Further, to understand their own definitions and standards of masculinity Black men must acknowledge the slanderous history and actively refute it within their own minds as a representation of themselves, adding a layer to the process of identity development that racialized white men do not have to deal with (Benner & Graham, 2013; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019). The binds of this situation for Black men may help to explain their greater tendency to endorse negative views of African heritage, history, and people.

In this sample, African American women reported both lower levels of internalized racial oppression and well-being. Black women express dealing with racial discrimination with the support of other Black women as most beneficial to their ability to function at an optimal level (Adams-Bass et al., 2014; Dale & Safren, 2019; Hope et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2019). The identification with Black womanhood as a unifying factor led many of these women to describe a “sisterhood” of their peers, language that reveals the emotional closeness one can achieve when identities are shared, particularly ones that are so complex. Further, Black womanhood has long been subjugated to the bottom tier of society, as eloquently expressed by Malcom X in 1964: “The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman.” This succinctly emphasizes the unrelenting intersectionality of these identities as not only Black, not only a woman, but also

American. These contexts individually carry centuries of burdens and struggles: combined, the pressure is enormous. Scholars such as Sojourner Truth have asked why this combination has been so readily and ruthlessly marginalized. In her “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech, Truth grapples with the dehumanization faced by Black women in America – for a recent example, see how Breonna Taylor became a meme not even a few weeks after her death – and the psychological barriers one encounters after centuries of repeatedly not seeing oneself represented with the fullness of one’s humanity. Messages that degrade Black women are reinforced continuously in movies, TV, music, and popular culture. From the commodification of Black girlhood to Jezebel-Mammy dualism, Black womanhood is policed, monitored, corrected, and imposed upon every single moment of the person’s life.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has a number of limitations that warrant note. First, we relied exclusively on self-report measures collected from an online platform. While this approach is not unusual for psychological research, conclusions are limited by the medium. The self-report measures of authenticity and well-being were not tailored to particular concerns of African Americans and probing these variables with measures informed by Black experience would likely enrich the conclusions that could be drawn. Specifically, measures that were more directly relevant to the experiences of African American women might help to illuminate the gender differences uncovered here. In addition, future research should use alternative methodologies to investigate each research question more deeply. For example, qualitative narratives about the experience of authenticity could provide important nuance to the present conclusion.

A second limitation is the cross-sectional correlational nature of the data. Clearly, one-shot cross-sectional designs are limited in terms of the kinds of conclusions that can be drawn.

Tracking experiences measured over time would provide an opportunity to examine the temporal ordering of the experiences measured. Such longitudinal data would allow for a sense of whether, for instance, authenticity is changed by experiences with racism and how internalized racial oppression emerges in a person's inner life. In addition, experimental research with African American samples would allow for causal conclusions. Experimental studies could examine the various processes suggested previously as taking a toll on authenticity to see if, in fact, they do. For example, such work might manipulate stereotype threat to measure its downstream consequences for experienced and expressed authenticity. Often outcomes of stereotype threat have focused on performance and task-related attitudes (Fordham et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2021). There is no question that understanding how stereotype threat (and other aspects of marginalization) help to explain differences in performance and eventual career goals for Black people, the self-related processes implicated in stereotype threat may have real consequences for well-being via authenticity. The implications of stereotype threat for authenticity would be a fruitful direction for future research.

A third potential limitation to this study was the time in which the data were collected: not only in the midst of a prolonged global pandemic but in a time when racial differences have become vividly apparent in U.S. society. Though many people are "used to it" by now, we may not know the longitudinal effects of this time until many years hence.

Future research might treat this work as a model for understanding the influence of internalized oppression for other minoritized groups. Certainly, people with a wide range of minoritized identities have been shown to possess varying degrees of negative attitudes about their own groups. Does, for instance, internalized homophobia relate to the well-being of people with diverse sexual orientations via its association with authenticity? Does internalized misogyny

affect the well-being of women through authenticity? These types of questions, emerging out of the present work, suggest the fertile ground that the present study has opened for inquiry.

Conclusion

The United States presents a unique context in which to study the relationship between internalized oppression, authenticity, and well-being because of the hierarchical nature of racial divisions in the country. African Americans represent a group that has been historically oppressed socially, politically, and economically in the United States. As such, this group is at risk of internalizing that oppression to reflect negatively upon the group and the individuals within. The present study addressed one important mechanism by which internalized oppression affects well-being, by depriving the person of a sense of authenticity. Given the abundant literature demonstrating the harms racism, the level of authenticity espoused by participants speaks to their resilience. That authenticity, in turn, was a robust predictor of well-being, suggests the generality of the link between authenticity and well-being. The negative relationship between internalized racial oppression and authenticity fully explained the link between internalized racial oppression. Internalizing negative messages about one's own group interferes with the awareness and enactment of one's genuine impulses, which in turn decreases well-being. At the same time, experiences with racist treatment affect the psychological functioning of African Americans over and above the influence of authenticity.

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Table 1. Gender and Internalized Racial Oppression

| | Gender | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | <i>t</i> | <i>d</i> | 95% CI for <i>d</i> |
|--------|--------|----------|------------------------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| IROS | Men | 185 | 2.5(.72) | 4.12** | 0.43 | [0.43, .022] |
| | Women | 180 | 2.2(.63) | | | |
| BHIST | Men | 185 | 3.0(1.02) | 3.35* | 0.35 | [0.14, 0.56] |
| | Women | 180 | 2.6(1.05) | | | |
| DVW | Men | 185 | 2.4(1.09) | 2.08* | 0.22 | [0.01, 0.42] |
| | Women | 180 | 2.1(.96) | | | |
| APP | Men | 185 | 2.1(1.00) | 2.54** | 0.27 | [0.06, 0.47] |
| | Women | 180 | 1.9(.84) | | | |
| ISTYPE | Men | 184 | 2.3(1.07) | 4.90** | 0.51 | [0.30, 0.72] |
| | Women | 180 | 1.8(.99) | | | |
| HAIR | Men | 185 | 3.1(.99) | 0.46 | 0.05 | [-0.16, 0.25] |
| | Women | 180 | 3.1(1.13) | | | |

Notes. IROS = Internalized Racial Oppression composite, BHIST = Belief in Biased

Representation of History, DVW = Devaluation of African worldview, APP = Appearance,

ISTYPE = Internalized negative stereotypes, HAIR = hair change;

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$

Table 2. Correlations between Authenticity and Well-being

| | OWB | SWLS | MIL | SE | PA | NA |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| AUT | .62** | .34** | .51** | .47** | .42** | -.45** |
| AAW | .64** | .34** | .53** | .47** | .46** | -.45** |
| ABH | .50** | .32** | .39** | .43** | .34** | -.37** |
| ARO | .43** | .22** | .41** | .30** | .30** | -.24* |
| AUP | .37** | .16* | .27** | .27** | .20** | -.38** |

Notes. AUT = Authenticity composite, AAW = Authentic awareness, ABH = Authentic behavior, ARO = Authentic relational orientation, AUP = Authentic unbiased processing; OWB= Overall well-being, SWLS = Satisfaction with life, MIL = Meaning in life, SE = self-esteem item, PA = positive affect, NA= negative affect.

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Internalized Racial Oppression and experienced racism and well-being

| | Overall Well-Being |
|--|--------------------|
| Internalized Racial Oppression | -.22* |
| Belief in Biased Representation of History | .09 |
| Devaluation of African Worldview | -.40* |
| Appearance | -.24* |
| Internalized negative stereotypes | -.09 |
| Hair Change | -.03 |
| Experienced Racism | -.16* |

Note. $N= 452$, * $p < .001$.

Table 4. Correlations between Authenticity and Internalized Racial Oppression

| | AUT | AAW | ABH | ARO | AUP |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| IROS | -.37** | -.33** | -.24** | -.41** | -.25** |
| BHIST | -.14* | -.09 | -.07 | -.17** | -.17** |
| DWV | -.36** | -.36** | -.22** | -.41** | -.16* |
| APP | -.33** | -.30** | -.26** | -.32** | -.21** |
| ISTYPE | -.20** | -.17** | -.10* | -.24** | -.14* |
| HAIR | -.19** | -.14* | -.15* | -.20** | -.17** |

Notes. $N = 452$. IROS = Internalized Racial Oppression composite, BHIST = Belief in Biased Representation of History, DWV = Devaluation of African worldview, APP = Appearance, ISTYPE = Internalized negative stereotypes, HAIR = hair change; AUT = Authenticity composite, AAW = Authentic awareness, ABH = Authentic behavior, ARO = Authentic relational orientation, AUP = Authentic unbiased processing. Due to low reliabilities, subscale results should be viewed with caution.

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

Figure 1. Authenticity Fully Mediates the Link Between Internalized Racial Oppression and Well-being

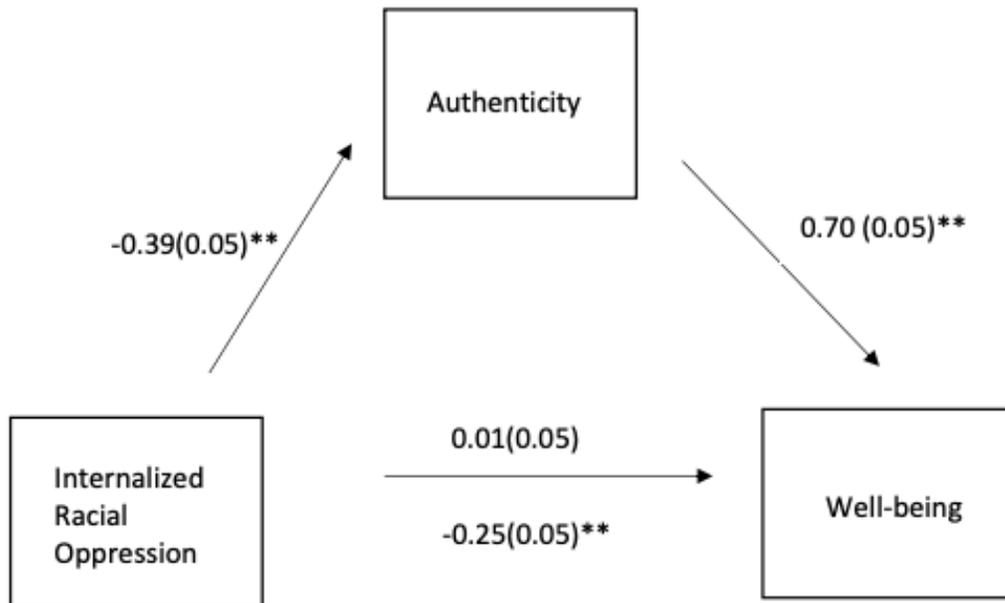


Figure 2. Authenticity Partially Mediates the Link Between Experienced Racism and Well-being.

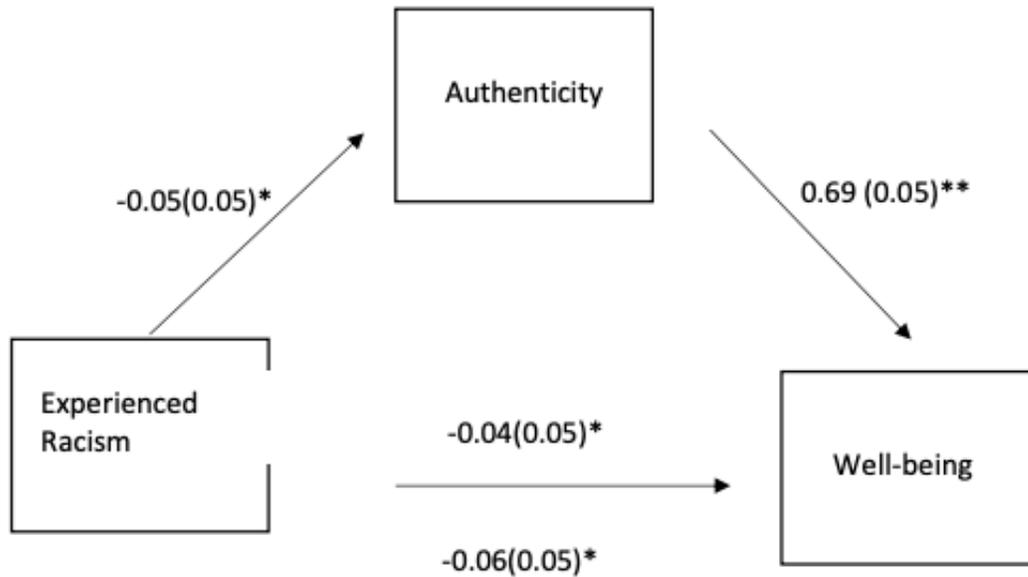
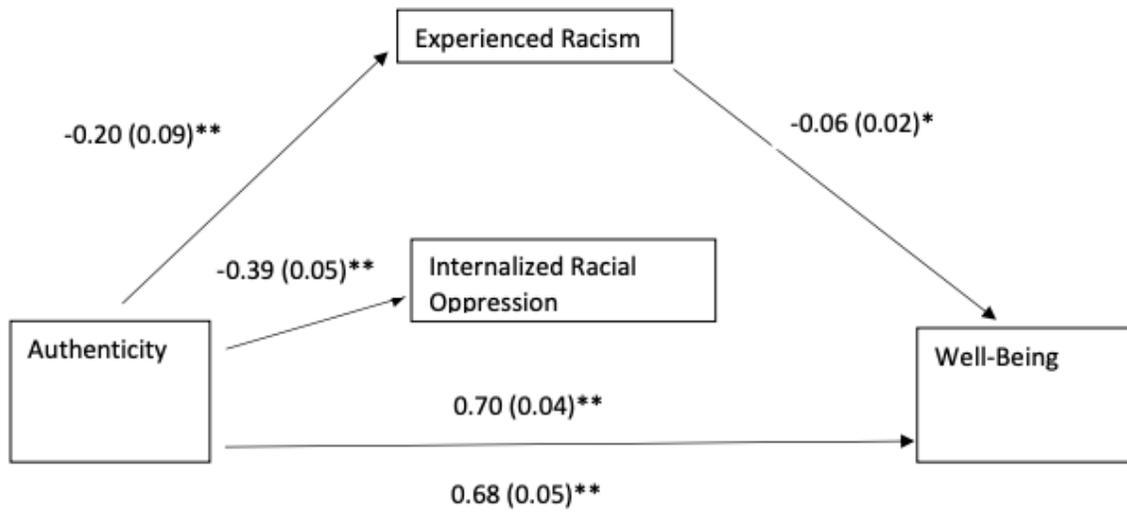


Figure 3. Experienced Racism and Internalized Racial Oppression Do Not Mediate the Link between Authenticity and Well-being



* $p = .0067$; ** $p < .001$

APPENDIX

Prejudice Items

- 1- You have been called insulting names related to your race or skin color.
- 2- When you go shopping, you are followed by White security guards or watched by White clerks.
- 3- People “talk down” to you because you are Black.
- 4- Waiters and waitresses ignore you and serve Whites first.
- 5- I am mistaken for being a service worker or lower-status worker simply because of my race.
- 6- My contributions are dismissed or devalued because of my racial background.
- 7 - People act like they are scared of me because of my race.
- 8- I am singled out by police or security people because of my race.
- 9- Other people act as if all of the people of my race are alike.
- 10- Other people deny that people of my race face extra obstacles when compared to Whites.
- 11- Others only focus on the negative aspects of my racial background.
- 12 - Other people view me in an overly sexual way because of my race.
- 13- Other people hold sexual stereotypes about me because of my racial background.
- 14 - Because of my race, people suggest I am not a “true” American.
- 15 - When I interact with authority figures, they are usually of a different racial background.
- 16- I notice there are few role models in my racial background in my chosen career.
- 17 - Sometimes I am the only person of my racial background in my class or workplace.
- 18- Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.
- 19- Someone told me that I was “articulate” after he/she assumed I wouldn’t be.
- 20- Someone clenched her/his purse/wallet upon seeing me because of my race.
- 21- Someone told me that they “don’t see color.”
- 22- I was told that I complain about race too much.
- 23- Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.
- 24 - Someone told me that all the people in my racial group look alike.
- 25- Someone only wanted to date me because of my race.
- 26- Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race