

VICARIOUS RACISM AND RACE-

Black social media users are often second-handedly and repeatedly exposed to graphic recordings of racism through social media platforms, which can negatively impact the mental health of Black viewers. Thus, the aims of the current research was threefold: firstly, to assess how videos of racialized police violence, as indicators of indirectly experienced racism, psychologically affect Black viewers; secondly, to examine how Black racial identification may be a moderator in this observed relationship; and thirdly, to evaluate social media as a conduit for trauma inducing content. By fulfilling these aims, via correlational and experimental approaches, the current research will contribute to the scant literature connecting vicarious racism and race-based traumatic stress. Additionally, these studies will be utilized to understand the psychological impacts of racism that can lead to significant trauma in targets of interpersonal and structural racism. Furthermore, the studies will examine social media as, yet another avenue racism can exert its effects on Black people's health. This work will be the first to our knowledge to experimentally investigate the intersection of social media, vicarious racism, and race-based traumatic stress on Black Americans, important given the rising attention to racialized police violence and the historical complications with identifying and diagnosing race-based trauma.

In comparison to White Americans, Black Americans are 3 times more likely to be killed by the police, 1.3 times more likely to be unarmed, and constitute 28% of police-related deaths despite representing only 13% of the U.S. population (Sinyangwe & McKesson, 2020). In fact trauma-

police in their lifetime with the greatest likeliness around their early-20s to mid-30s (Edwards et al., 2019). Police violence is, evidentially, a racialized public health issue that disproportionately affects Black Americans (Cooper & Fullilove, 2016). As a result, fatal police encounters have an ascribed formidable significance for Black Americans, signaling not only to biased killings of unarmed Black men and emotional suffering for their loved ones, but also collateral injury to the mental health of the Black community.

Across two current studies we examined the relationship between exposure to vicarious racism, via social media, and race-based traumatic stress responses in Black Americans.

In Study 1, the relationship between vicarious racism and RBTS was examined, as well as the role of racial centrality in this relationship. Study 1's hypotheses were as followed:

Participants with more daily social media use, and thus more exposure to videos of racialized police violence, will exhibit more race-based traumatic stress symptoms.

Racial centrality will moderate the relationship between vicarious racism and RBTS. However, given the mixed literature on **racial centrality and its role as a buffer or exacerbator of negative mental health outcomes, there is not a directional hypothesis.**

In the study 1, we found that the more social media Black people used daily, thus allowing for more encounters with racialized police violence, the more race-based

traumatic stress (RBTS)

Conclusion

Black Americans are not only susceptible to the harm caused by experiencing racism firsthand, but also by the harm of racism experienced by others that look like them. Watching videos of racist acts on social media is just one of the many ways Black individuals can experience racism directly and indirectly. Although the findings of the current studies failed to support the hypothesis that Black participants who watched a video of a racialized police killing would have more race-based traumatic stress than participants who watched a video of police killing a White individual or a video of a non-fatal incident, the findings point to an institutional-level issue that goes beyond the interpersonal implications of racism of police-civilian interactions and future research will be necessary to examine the specificity of racialized police violence as source of vicarious racial trauma. Additionally, the current findings highlight racial identity factors that can influence who is more likely to be susceptible to the adverse mental health outcomes of racism. The current studies have contributed meaningfully to the larger body of literature on vicarious racism by furthering our understanding of it and being the first to date to experimentally investigate the psychological impact of vicarious racism for Black individuals.