SEEING THE OTHER IN THE SELF: THE IMPACT OF BARACK OBAMA AND CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION ON PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-OTHER OVERLAP AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

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Past research has suggested that the cognitive broadening produced by positive emotions may extend to social contexts. Building on this evidence, two experiments conducted one year post-election examined the extent to which increased social perspective taking occurs after exposure to Obama. Experiment 1 demonstrated that African Americans exposed to Obama showed more inclusive social perceptions of self and others, even beyond that associated with another highly successful African-American exemplar (Oprah Winfrey). Mediation analyses provided support for the causal role of positive emotions in social perspective taking. Experiment 2 replicated the findings of Experiment 1 and demonstrated that exposure to Obama led to reports of greater self-other overlap with people of other races, but only among African Americans high in cultural socialization. Implications of these findings for the role of positive emotions and cultural socialization in broadening perceptions of intergroup closeness are considered.

Alongside our famous individualism, there's another ingredient in the American saga—a belief that we are connected as one people. If there's a child on the South Side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me, even if it's not my child. If

there's a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for her prescription and has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it's not my grandmother. If there's an Arab-American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties. It's that fundamental belief—I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper—that makes this country work. It's what allows us to pursue our individual dreams, yet still come together as a single American family. *E pluribus unum*. Out of many one. (Obama, 2008, pp. 102–103)

On November 4th, 2008—45 years after Dr. Martin Luther King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech—Barack Obama was elected as the 44th president of the United States. His historic presidential victory has been heralded as a moment of national pride for African Americans and a powerful symbol of racial progress in the United States. Early national polling in the days after the election found that 69% of Americans reported feeling hopeful, and 65% said the president makes them feel proud (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2008). When asked about what the election meant for Blacks[1] in the United States, over two-thirds of Americans indicated that Barack Obama's ascendency to the White House is either the most important advance for Blacks in the past 100 years, or among the two or three most important of such advances (Gallup News Service, 2008).

The election of the first African-American U.S. president has provided scholars with a unique opportunity to study the effects that a single, positive Black exemplar can have on countering negative racial stereotypes. Indeed, a number of studies published in the immediate aftermath of Obama's 2008 victory suggested the possibility of an "Obama effect" on African Americans' academic achievement and perceptions of social belonging (Purdie-Vaughns, Sumner, & Cohen, 2011), standardized test performance (Marx, Ko, & Friedman, 2009; but see Aronson, Jannone, McGlone, & Johnson-Campbell, 2009), and racial identity (Fuller-Rowell, Burrow, & Ong, 2011). Additionally, findings from various studies indicated that exposure to Obama resulted in a decrease in explicit (Goldman, 2012; Welch & Sigelman, 2011) as well as implicit prejudice of Whites toward Blacks (Bernstein, Young, & Claypool, 2010; Columb & Plant, 2011; Plant, Devine, Cox, et al., 2009; see also, Columb & Plant, this issue). At the same time, however, other studies revealed that despite Obama's election, racial biases showed little evidence of change (Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009; Lybarger & Monteith, 2011; Schmidt & Nosek, 2010; see also Schmidt & Axt, this issue).

Although increasing evidence points to both positive and negative changes in intergroup attitudes that follow from making Obama salient to White Americans (Lybarger & Monteith, 2011; Pyszczynski, Henthorn, Motyl, & Gerow, 2011), very limited work has considered whether exposure to Obama could result in changes in social perception among African Americans (but see Rivera & Benitez, this issue). Obama's remarkable success in politics and ascendancy to the presidency

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1. We use the terms Black and African American to refer to people of African descent who reside in the United States.

make him an especially effective counter-stereotypic role model, particularly for African-American youth (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2011). Prior research has demonstrated that having a role model from one's in-group can counter the effects of stereotype threat (Marx, 2009), especially when the role model is perceived as competent in the stereotyped domain (Marx & Roman, 2002), and when the role model's achievements are perceived as personally relevant and attainable (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). The aftermath of Obama's election, therefore, offers an opportune moment to explore his influence as a particularly effective counter-stereotypic role model for African Americans, in whom shared group membership may serve to enhance positive emotions (e.g., pride and inspiration) and potentially alter mental representations of the self and others (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2013; see also Rivera & Benitez, this issue).

POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING

In addition to research on role models, studies showing that positive emotions influence perspective taking suggest that exposure to Obama could cue positive feelings, which in turn may lead to social broadening,[2] or an expansion of peoples' sense of self to include others. In particular, it has been suggested that positive emotions increase the accessibility of positive associations in memory (Isen, Shalker, Clark, & Karp, 1978), making such associations more likely to come to mind, and thus more likely to influence the evaluation of neutral social stimuli (for reviews, see Isen, 1987, 2004). For example, persons in whom positive emotions have been induced are more likely to form inclusive social categories (Isen & Daubman, 1984; Isen, Niedenthal, & Cantor, 1992) and view themselves as members of a larger group (Dovidio, Gaertner, Isen, & Lowrance, 1995). Additional empirical evidence suggests that induced positive emotions promote a common in-group identity (Dovidio, Isen, Guerra, Gaertner, & Rust, 1998; Urada & Miller, 2000) and reduce the salience of intergroup boundaries (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005; Stroessner, Mackie, & Michaelsen, 2005). Finally, and more specific to the impact of Obama on perspective taking, are results from a study that experimentally manipulated the psychological salience of Obama by having African-American students reflect on the 2008 presidential election. Specifically, Ong, Burrow, and Fuller-Rowell (2012) reported results from an expressive-writing study demonstrating that African-American college students prompted to write about Obama immediately prior to and after the 2008 presidential election used more plural self-references, fewer other-references, and more social references. Further, mediation analyses revealed that writing about Obama increased positive emotions, which in turn increased the likelihood that people thought in terms of more inclusive super-

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2. Although our use of the term *broadening* is compatible with the interpretation that positive emotions lead to more flexible, broad-minded thinking (e.g., Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), we note that such flexibility is not limited to a broadened perspective, but may involve the ability to generate narrow categorizations of material where appropriate (for a discussion, see Isen, 2008).

ordinate categories (*we* and *us* rather *they* and *them*). In sum, there is evidence from laboratory studies that positive emotions can have a proximal effect on people's sense of self, making them more likely to see connections and similarities between themselves and others. Moreover, given Obama's ability to evoke positive emotions such as hope and pride, as well as his highly publicized message of inclusion and social unity, one could reasonably predict that African Americans exposed to Obama might respond with increased positive emotions and perspective taking in social situations.

THE OBAMA EFFECT AND CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION

To date, research on limiting conditions or moderators of the "Obama effect" have received little empirical attention. Notably, whether increased social perspective taking occurs as a function of making Obama salient may depend on a number of external contingencies, including media coverage, the rise and fall in his approval ratings, and overall changes in the political landscape. Alternatively, students' own culturally dominant frames about race relations may influence their perceptions of the personal relevance of Obama's symbolic achievements. Research on cultural socialization (i.e., practices that promote knowledge about and pride in one's ethnic-racial heritage) suggests that African Americans who have been socialized with messages that emphasize racial pride (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Lesane-Brown, 2006) report more positive academic outcomes (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006), higher self-esteem (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, et al., 2006), and greater use of approach-coping strategies in response to discrimination (Neblett, White, Ford, et al., 2008; Scott, 2003). This may occur because strong identification with one's group can provide a sense of social belonging and collective self-esteem that could broaden the perceived sources of racial affirmation and solidarity (Cohen & Garcia, 2005; Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994) and help to counter negative racial stereotypes (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). More directly relevant to the present research, Rivera and Benitez (this issue) found that exposure to Obama led to less self-stereotyping, but only among strongly identified African Americans. Among weakly identified African Americans, exposure to Obama did not affect level of self-stereotyping. To the extent that the availability of positive cognitions of one's race facilitates more perceived social closeness, African Americans who report receiving socialization messages that emphasize racial pride should see more overlap and interconnections between themselves and others when exposed to Obama.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

The goal of the current research was to provide an empirical examination of the social broadening hypothesis. Given the link between positive emotion and in-

creased self-other overlap (e.g., Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006), it is conceivable that positive emotions generated from exposure to Obama as a positive and powerful Black exemplar may influence how African Americans view themselves in relation to others. That is, to the extent that Obama increases the overlap between mental representations of the self and others, African Americans should be more likely to see themselves and others as part of a larger whole. Experiment 1 builds on initial evidence of the social broadening effects of Barack Obama (Ong et al., 2012). Although findings from Ong et al. (2012) provide support for the causal role of Obama, clarification of the unique influence of Obama, as opposed to that of another successful African-American exemplar, to engender social broadening needs to be demonstrated. Accordingly, in Experiment 1, we included an additional control group involving a target other than Barack Obama to further distinguish Obama's influence from that of an alternative, highly successful Black exemplar (i.e., Oprah Winfrey). Additionally, given that the Ong et al. (2012) study was conducted in the days immediately surrounding the presidential election, it is possible that the effects observed were driven not by an Obama effect per se, but rather by a presidential "honeymoon" effect. Experiment 1 thus also examined whether the causal effect of Obama could be documented one year post-election. Experiment 2 examined a potential moderator of the Obama effect: cultural socialization. Finally, because both male and female exemplars (Obama vs. Oprah) were examined in this study, we tested for sex differences throughout.

EXPERIMENT 1

METHOD

Participants and Design. Eighty-nine African-American undergraduate students (52% female) participated in exchange for course credit. Ages ranged from 17 to 25 years ($M = 19.90$, $SD = 1.58$), with a median age of 20. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions that involved manipulations of emotion by film clips. "Shapes" shows a dynamic display of colored abstract shapes and was used to induce a neutral state (adapted from Gross & Levenson, 1995). Two videos were used to induce positive emotions. "Obama" shows still photographs of Barack Obama. "Oprah" shows still photographs of Oprah Winfrey. All three clips were each 100-s long and without sound.

First-Associates Task. As an implicit test of emotion, all participants were asked to provide their first associate to each of five neutral words (i.e., table, street, hand, cabin, and stem). This task has been used in previous work (e.g., Isen, Johnson, Mertz, & Robinson, 1985; Isen, Labroo, & Durlach, 2004) to show that positive emotions lead to more pleasant first associates to neutral words. For example, Isen et al. (1985) reported that participants induced to feel positive emotions responded to "carpet" with a greater number of pleasant associates such as "plush," "fresh," and "green." Two independent coders, unaware of the conditions and study hypotheses, coded participants' associates to the five neutral words for "pleasantness." The coding for each word was binary; it was either considered pleasant and

received a score of 1, or it was not considered pleasant and received a score of 0. Inter-rater agreement was 91%. The scores for total number of pleasant associates were summed and divided by five to create a mean pleasantness score for each participant.

Self-Other Overlap. After completing the first-associates task, participants completed a measure of *self-other overlap*, which was adapted from a previously validated scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). This measure consists of seven Venn-like diagrams, with pairs of circles varying in their degree of overlap. Instructions, modeled on those of Aron et al. (1992), explained to participants that the seven circles depicted possible ways of viewing the relationship between the self and people of other races. "Considering yourself as *Self* and people of other races as *Other*, please circle one of the seven pictures that best describes, at this moment, the way you see the relationship between yourself and people of other races."

Procedure. Participants were tested individually. On arrival, they were seated in a chair in front of a computer monitor, which displayed written instructions for completing a survey of demographic information (e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity). Upon completion of the demographic survey, participants were randomly assigned to view one of the three film clips.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To confirm that the film clips influenced implicit experiences as predicted, we examined pleasantness ratings by film or exemplar condition. An omnibus ANOVA revealed that participants in the Oprah ($M = .53$, $SD = .23$) and Obama ($M = .63$, $SD = .21$) conditions reported higher levels of pleasantness of associates to neutral words than did control participants ($M = .25$, $SD = .24$), $F(2, 86) = 22.12$, $p < .001$, $d = .34$. Our main hypothesis was that participants in the Obama condition would report greater self-other overlap compared with participants in either the control or Oprah condition. We tested for group differences in ratings of self-other overlap using a 3 × 2 ANOVA (Film × Sex). The main effect for film or exemplar condition was the sole reliable effect, $F(2, 83) = 9.78$, $p < .001$, $d = .19$. Participants in the Oprah ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.76$) and Obama ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 2.24$) conditions were more likely than those in the control condition ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.53$) to express greater self-other overlap with people of other races. Confirming predictions, a planned contrast revealed Obama participants reported levels of self-other overlap that were significantly higher than that reported by Oprah participants, $F(1, 57) = 5.13$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$.

To determine whether positive emotions played a causal role in perspective taking, we conducted a mediation analysis. More specifically, when self-other overlap scores were regressed on pleasantness ratings and exemplar condition (i.e., Obama vs. Oprah/control) simultaneously, only positive emotions remained a reliable predictor. The reduction in the direct effect of the Obama manipulation on self-other overlap was significant, thereby confirming the causal efficacy of positive emotions as a mediator of self-other overlap, Freedman-Schatzkin $t(87) = 2.38$,

$p < .05$ (cf. Freedman & Schatzkin, 1992; MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002).

Taken together, findings from Experiment 1 suggest that participants exposed to Obama showed more inclusive social perceptions of self and others, even beyond that associated with another successful, high-profile African-American exemplar (Oprah Winfrey). Additionally, mediational analyses provided support for the causal role of positive emotions in social perspective taking. That this effect was found one year following the presidential election provides further support for the claim that exposure to Obama, a positive Black exemplar, broadens social perception by reducing the salience of racial group boundaries.

EXPERIMENT 2

The results of Experiment 1 provide evidence of Obama's influence on social broadening. Experiment 2 was designed to replicate and extend findings from Experiment 1 by examining a potential moderator (i.e., cultural socialization) of the Obama effect.

METHOD

Participants. Participants were 108 African-American undergraduate students (60% female), who received course credit in exchange for their participation. Ages ranged from 17 to 23 years ($M = 19.78$, $SD = 1.37$), with a median age of 20.

Cultural Socialization. Defined as parenting messages and practices that instill pride in and knowledge about the meaning of being a racial minority (Hughes et al., 2006), cultural socialization was measured using the Cultural Socialization subscale of the Racial Socialization Scale (Hughes & Chen, 1997). The subscale consists of five items (e.g., "Growing up, how often did your parents encourage you to read books concerning the history or traditions of your race?" "How often have your parents said that learning about your race is an important part of who you are?"). Participants rated the frequency of each item on a 1 (*never*) through 5 (*very often*) Likert scale ($\alpha = .85$).

Emotion Report. Subjective experiences during the experimental session were assessed using an explicit measure of emotions (adapted from Ekman, Freisen, & Ancoli, 1980). Participants rated the amount felt of the following seven positive emotions: amused, content, eager, excited, happy, interested, and proud. Ratings were made on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely*; $\alpha = .76$).

Procedure. The laboratory environment and procedure for Experiment 2 were identical to those of Experiment 1 with two exceptions. First, prior to viewing the film clip, participants completed a measure of cultural socialization. Second, immediately after viewing the film clip, participants completed an explicit measure of emotion to describe how they felt while viewing the film.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Confirming predictions, participants in the Oprah ($M = 2.48$, $SD = .25$) and Obama ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.14$) conditions reported similar levels of positive emotion that were higher than that reported by control participants ($M = 1.58$, $SD = .41$), $F(2, 105) = 30.65$, $p < .001$, $d = .37$. To test for differences in self-other overlap elicited by the three films and to explore possible differences by sex, a 3 × 2 ANOVA (Film × Sex) was performed. Replicating Experiment 1, the main effect for film or exemplar condition was the only significant effect, $F(2, 102) = 15.57$, $p < .001$, $d = .23$. Participants in the Oprah ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.52$) and Obama ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 2.01$) conditions were more likely than those in the control condition ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.87$) to express greater self-other overlap. As predicted, a planned contrast confirmed that Obama participants reported levels of self-other overlap that were significantly higher than that reported by Oprah participants, $F(1, 66) = 4.23$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.

Tests of mediation replicated the findings of Experiment 1. The effect of the Obama (vs. Oprah/control) manipulation on self-other overlap was significantly reduced when controlling for positive emotions, Freedman-Schatzkin $t(106) = 2.84$, $p < .01$, suggesting that positive emotions were responsible for the increase in self-overlap observed among Obama compared with Oprah/control participants. Thus, the ability of the Obama manipulation to engender social perspective taking occurred as a result of positive emotions; the more positive emotions participants felt as a result of exposure to Obama, the more they saw overlap and interconnections between themselves and people of other races.

Having replicated findings from Experiment 1, we next tested our main prediction that the Obama effect would be stronger among participants higher in cultural socialization. To examine the potential moderating effect of cultural socialization, we formed two groups (high and low cultural socialization) by performing a median split on the participants' responses to the cultural socialization scale.[3] To test for differences in self-other overlap elicited by the Obama and control conditions, and to explore potential differences by cultural socialization, we conducted a 2 × 2 ANOVA (Film: Obama vs. Control × Cultural Socialization). The ANOVA indicated that there was a significant interaction between film or exemplar condition and cultural socialization as predictors of self-other overlap, $F(1, 66) = 5.27$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Figure 1 presents mean self-other overlap scores for each film condition as a function of low and high cultural socialization. Tests for simple main effects revealed that for participants high in cultural socialization, the effect of Obama ($M = 5.37$) compared with the control condition ($M = 3.45$) led to greater reports of self-other overlap with people of other races, $F(1, 29) = 21.28$, $p < .001$, $d = .30$. By contrast, for those low in cultural socialization, no significant differences in self-other overlap was found between the Obama ($M = 3.67$) and control ($M = 2.88$) conditions, $F(1, 37) = .03$, ns.

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3. We also analyzed the data with regression using continuous cultural socialization scores and obtained an identical pattern of results as that reported here. We chose to report the data based on the median split for ease of presentation.
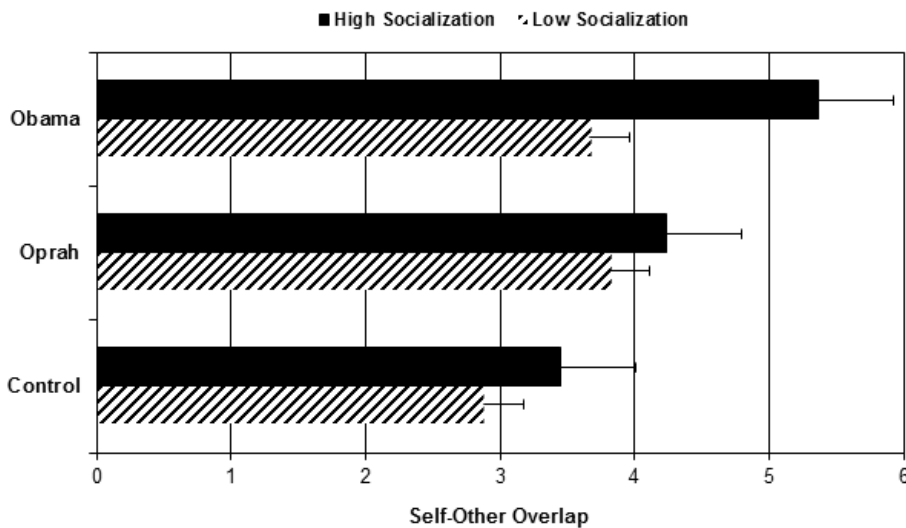
FIGURE 1. Mean values of self-other overlap as a function of cultural socialization and condition. High and low cultural socialization were defined by median split.

Finally, we examined whether exposure to Obama, as compared with Oprah, would lead to greater reports of self-other overlap among those high in cultural socialization. The ANOVA indicated that there was a significant interaction between film/exemplar condition and cultural socialization as predictors of self-other overlap, $F(1, 64) = 6.67$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Replicating our main findings, tests for simple main effects revealed that for participants high in cultural socialization, the effect of Obama ($M = 5.37$) compared with Oprah ($M = 4.24$) led to greater reports of self-other overlap, $F(1, 29) = 24.78$, $p < .001$, $d = .46$. By contrast, for those low in cultural socialization, no significant differences in self-other overlap was found between the Obama ($M = 3.67$) and Oprah ($M = 3.82$) conditions, $F(1, 35) = .58$, ns.

The results of Experiment 2 lend further support for Obama's effectiveness in fostering social broadening by increasing the likelihood that participants will see more shared overlap between themselves and people of other races. With regard to the mechanism underlying the observed Obama effect, we found that the increase in self-other overlap was mediated by the amount of positive emotions participants in the Obama condition experienced, as opposed to those in the Oprah/control conditions. Finally, data from Experiment 2 shed light on a possible boundary condition (i.e., cultural socialization) by which Obama may broaden and expand individuals' sense of self to include others.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present studies established support for the social broadening effects of Barack Obama. Across two experiments, we found consistent evidence that Obama influences perspective taking in social situations. Experiment 1 confirmed the influence of Obama, as opposed to that of another successful African-American exemplar

(Oprah Winfrey) and a control condition, to engender social broadening. Experiment 2 confirmed that, among participants high in cultural socialization, Obama (as compared with Oprah/control) led to more inclusive mental representations of self and others. To our knowledge, these findings stand as the first experimental evidence of Obama's causal role in broadening social perception among African Americans.

Findings from the current work have several implications for our understanding of perspective taking and intergroup processes. First, our findings suggest that exposure to Obama may lead to an increase in perceived intergroup closeness, resulting in people seeing more of a connection between themselves and people of different races. These findings are consistent with previous work demonstrating reductions in stereotyping and racial bias following exposure to multiple positive Black exemplars (Dasgupa & Greenwald, 2001), and Obama specifically (Columb & Plant, 2011; see also Rivera & Benitez, this issue). Previous work suggests that role models can have a positive impact on student aspirations when their success is perceived as being applicable and within reach (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Although we have no direct data bearing on Obama's status as a real world role model, it is possible that his success, relative to Oprah's, was perceived as being more relevant to African-American college students, thereby contributing to differences in social perception. Specifically, Obama's widely publicized achievements and historic presidential victory make him a unique role model for African-American youth. Indeed, some have speculated that as the first Black American president, Obama represents a "symbolic first" that may potentially alter perceived contingencies and opportunities for student academic achievement, particularly among racial minority students (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2013).

Further and consistent with the broadening hypothesis (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), findings from the current research suggest that Obama influences social perspective taking via positive emotions. These results raise additional questions concerning the types of positive emotions that are elicited by Obama that in turn influence social perspective taking. Although empirical support for the effects of discrete positive emotional states on self-other overlap has been limited (Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006), foundational research by Aron and Aron suggests that self-expansion is most directly tied to interpersonal positive emotions, such as love and gratitude (e.g., Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995). Thus, illumination of the role of discrete positive emotions in perspective taking requires future investigation. Similarly, just as individual-level positive emotions can implicate the self, so too can group-level positive emotions shape social behavior (Smith & Mackie, 2008). Indeed, empirical evidence that group-level positive emotions (e.g., happy, grateful) can be differentiated from individual-level positive emotions (Eliot, Seger, & Mackie, 2007) points to the possibility that Obama may influence social processes in still other ways, as yet largely unexplored.

Alternatively, Obama may exert effects on social perspective taking through changes in racial identity. Some evidence suggests that changes in racial public regard—the extent to which individuals feel that others view their racial group in a positive manner—may perhaps be more likely among African Americans fol-

lowing Obama's presidency. For example, Fuller-Rowell et al. (2011) demonstrated that relative to other aspects of racial identity (i.e., racial centrality, private regard), African Americans' perceptions of pubic regard showed increases immediately following Obama's election and remained high at 5 months follow-up. In general, all three of these processes (individual-level and group-level discrete positive emotions, racial identity) may be important mechanisms by which Obama influences perspective taking in social situations. Thus, future research might profitably ask questions designed to distinguish among these potential theoretical mediators.

Finally, findings from Experiment 2 indicate that differences in social broadening following exposure to Obama may be moderated by the tendency to have positive messages come to mind when thinking about one's race. Here, it is noteworthy that exposure to Obama led to greater self-other overlap, only among participants high in cultural socialization, an effect that dovetails with recent work demonstrating that exposure to Obama reduces self-stereotyping, but only among African Americans who strongly identified with their racial group (see Rivera & Benitez, this issue). Overall, findings from the current research suggest that socialization messages that emphasize racial pride and teachings about Black culture (Hughes et al., 2006) may constitute an important factor in understanding the differential impact of positive, counter-stereotypic exemplars on perspective taking and intergroup relations.

Given Obama's effectiveness in facilitating social broadening, several related questions arise. First, research suggests that positive emotions facilitate *flexibility* in categorization (Isen & Daubman, 1984; Isen et al., 1985; Murray, Sujan, Hirt, & Sujan, 1990), allowing people to perceive not only similarities among concepts but also important distinctions between them. Therefore, examining how Obama affects flexibility in social responding may offer additional insights into the social effects that result from cueing thoughts of Obama. Furthermore, a focus on additional limiting conditions by which Obama may give rise to social broadening is merited. For example, findings from a study by Effron, Cameron, and Monin (2009) suggested that endorsing Obama just before the 2008 election licensed individuals to make ambiguously racist statements; however, this effect held only for participants with higher scores on the Modern Racism Scale (MRS; McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981), a measure of prejudice. At the same time, evidence suggests that implicit Black group identification among White respondents is associated with lower anti-Black bias, as well as pride of and support for Barack Obama (Craemer, 2014; Craemer, Shaw, Edwards, & Jefferson, 2013). Thus, additional research examining the specific conditions under which the current findings hold for other in-groups and historically disadvantaged out-groups is warranted.

THE LEGACY OF BARACK OBAMA

In a presidential election marked by discord and division, Barack Obama campaigned on hope, social inclusiveness, and the promise of change. Obama's success has been heralded as having a host of implications for African Americans. Im-

portantly, the scale of his political achievement—nearly 70 million voters cast ballots for Obama—serves as a powerful, societal-level repudiation of the belief that being elected president is contingent on race. Throughout his 2008 presidential campaign and post-election, media coverage of Obama stimulated much discussion about intergroup attitudes and racial progress in the United States. As exposure to Obama as a counter-stereotypic Black exemplar increased, studies reported a gradual reduction in White racial prejudice in the general population (Columb & Plant, 2011; Goldman, 2012; Plant et al., 2009). Nonetheless, a number of social cognition researchers (e.g., Aronson, Jannone, McGlone, & Johnson-Campbell, 2009; Lybarger & Monteith, 2011; Schmidt & Nosek, 2010; Schmidt & Axt, this issue) have questioned whether a single, positive Black exemplar could decrease or override generations of implicit bias based on race. Questions, therefore, remain concerning the boundary conditions of the so-called "Obama effect." Similarly, it is too early to reach firm conclusions about the significance of the Obama presidency for African Americas. Indeed, an assessment of his racial legacy will have to await the effectiveness of his public policy agenda in mitigating racial disparities in sundry areas, including education, income, and housing. Irrespective of his political platform, Obama's election as the first African-American president of the United States was a historic event and a salient example of how far the country has come in its pursuit for racial equality.

In sum, the present research suggests that the experience of positive emotions accounts for the social broadening effects of Barack Obama. Furthermore, cultural socialization is a critical variable that influences the degree to which exposure to Obama increases perceptions of intergroup closeness. Overall, it remains to be seen whether messages that promote racial pride in concert with ongoing exposure to Obama as a positive Black exemplar will continue to spark positive emotion and lead people to expand their sense of self to include others.

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