

Cultural Misorientation in the Digital Age: Understanding the Link Between Media Exposure, Desensitization, and the Psychological Well-Being of Black Adults

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Introduction and Background

Problem Statement

- In the United States, one of the most prevalent and devastating issues affecting the Black community is acute violence (Currie, 2020).
- This subsection is not just a byproduct of the times or modern technology but is deeply rooted in a historical legacy of systemic violence (Briseno, 2024).
- Research suggests that constant exposure to racial trauma in online spaces may contribute to desensitization (Maxie-Moreman & Tynes, 2022).
- The dehumanization of Black bodies in digital spaces is not just incidental but intentionally embedded within the broader structure of online platforms (Noble, 2018).

Aims of the Research

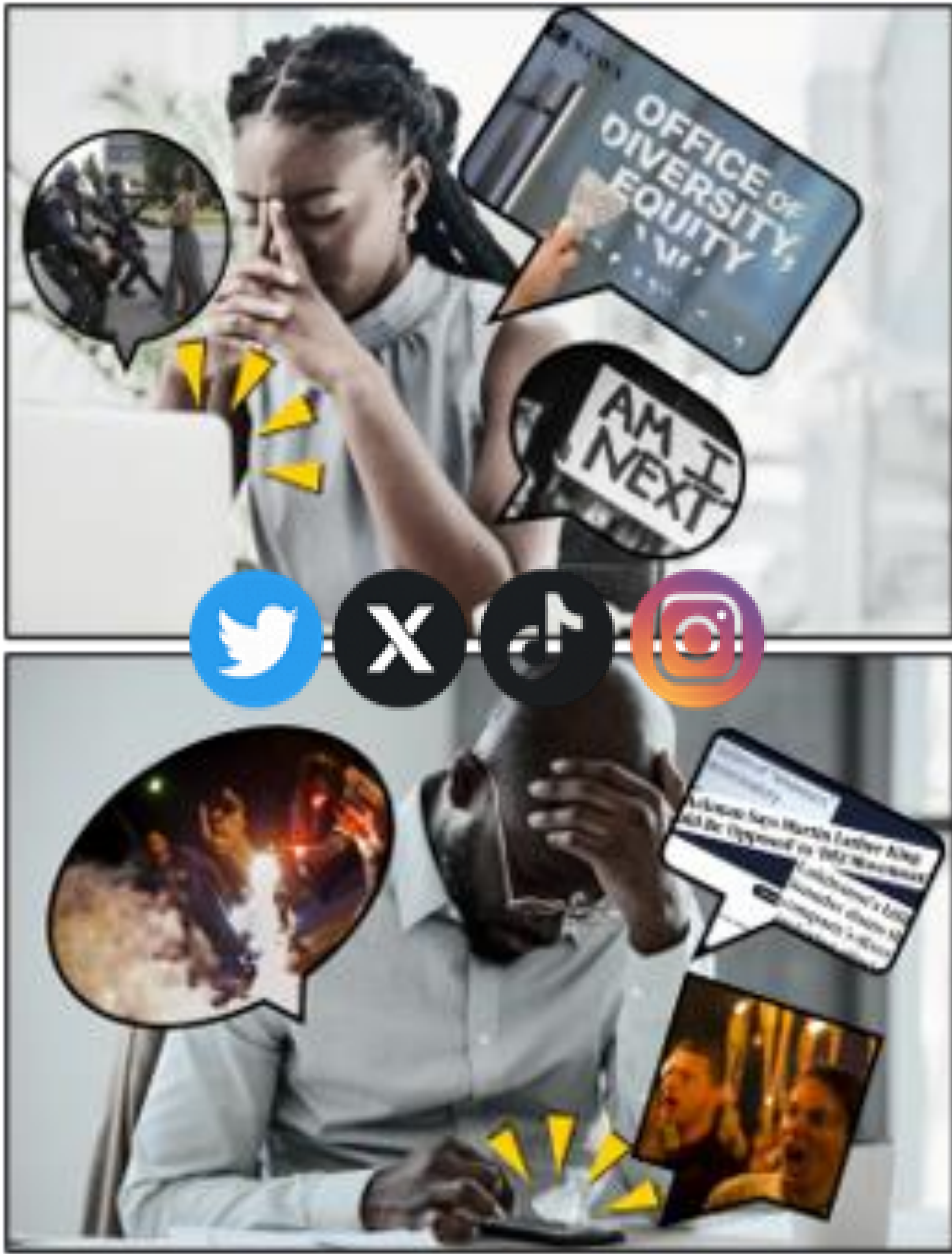
While prior studies explore the psychological impact of racial trauma and media violence, few studies examine how repeated exposure to racial violence in digital spaces influences Black individuals' emotional responses and their detachment from an Afrikan worldview (Kambon, 1998). This study seeks to address this gap in the literature.

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between exposure to racial violence in media and emotional desensitization among Black individuals?
- How does desensitization to racial violence in media relate to Black individuals' cultural misorientation?

Hypotheses

- There will be a statistically significant negative relationship between Content-Based Media Exposure (C-ME) and Cultural Misorientation (CMS).
- There will be a statistically significant positive relationship between Content-Based Media Exposure (C-ME) and Desensitization to Violence (DVS).



Proposed Method

Measures

- **Cultural Misorientation Scale (CMS;** Kambon & Rackley 2017): 45 items on a 1-5 Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree*). Higher scores indicate greater disconnection from Afrikan-centered values.
- **Content-Based Media Exposure Scale (C-ME):** 12 items on a 1–5 Likert scale (*1 = Never, 5 = Very Often*) assessing frequency of exposure to racial violence in media.
- **Desensitization to Violence Scale (DVS):** 10 items on a 1-5 Likert scale (*1 = Never, 5 = Almost Always*); higher scores reflect reduced emotional responsiveness to violence.
- **Reliability:** All measures demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .82-.91$).

Participants and Procedures

- Approximately 150 self-identified Black individuals aged 18+
- At least moderate engagement with digital content (e.g., 7+ nonconsecutive hours per week on social media)
- 15 – 30 minutes to complete survey
- Convenience sampling recruited via email, social media, word-of-mouth, university networks, and the Association of Black Psychologists' 56th Annual Conference.
- Opportunity to earn extra credit and/or gift card (four, \$25 gift cards)

Method and Data Collection

- **Correlational design** examining relationships among media exposure, desensitization, cultural misorientation, and well-being.
- **Online Qualtrics survey** administered to approx. **150–300 Black adults** recruited through university networks and social media.
- **Demographic items** collected age, gender, race, education, income, religion, sexual orientation, and social media use.

Key References

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