

2017

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Recommended Citation

Blume, Maile, "Effect of Framings of Racism on White Students' Resistance to Confronting Whiteness" (2017). *Scripps Senior Theses*. 932.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/932

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**EFFECT OF FRAMINGS OF RACISM ON WHITE STUDENTS' RESISTANCE
TO CONFRONTING WHITENESS**

By

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY**

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DECEMBER 9, 2016

Abstract

The proposed experimental study seeks to explore under what conditions white participants might demonstrate less behavioral resistance to engaging in conversations about racism. In this study, approximately 128 white-identifying students at Scripps College will be randomly assigned to one of two conditions: a non-racist framing condition (in which racism is primarily conceptualized on an individual level) or an anti-racist framing condition (in which racism is primarily conceptualized on an institutional level). After completing the framing task, participants will be asked to imagine that they are going to meet with a group of Students of Color to discuss the issue of the lack of diversity on campus. Participants' interview behaviors will be videotaped, and later coded for behavioral resistance. Lastly, participants will complete affect and self-esteem self-report measures. Participants in the non-racist framing group are expected to score lower on self-esteem, and higher on negative affect and resistant behavior than participants in the anti-racist framing group. Furthermore, the effect of framing on participants' behavior is expected to be mediated by participants' affect. Lastly, it is predicted that the effect of framing on participants' affect will be mediated by participants' self-esteem.

Keywords: whiteness, behavioral resistance, anti-racism, self-esteem, affect

Acknowledgements

Maile would like to thank Professor Sheila Walker and Professor Jennifer Ma for their ongoing support this semester. Maile would also like to thank Professor Judith LeMaster for her assistance with the development of the Behavioral Resistance Scale (BRS).

Effect of Framings of Racism on White Students' Resistance to Confronting Whiteness

Marybeth Gasman (2016), a white¹ professor of higher education and director of the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions at the University of Pennsylvania, recalls her experience speaking at a higher education forum. Upon being asked why there weren't more faculty of Color in institutions that serve a predominantly white population, Gasman asserted, ““The reason we don't have more faculty of Color among college faculty is that we don't want them. We simply don't want them”” (Gasman, 2016 p. 2).

Gasman, who has spent years facilitating workshops aimed at diversifying the faculty at higher learning institutions, argues that the reason that majority institutions (institutions that serve a predominantly white population) do not have more faculty of Color is not that strategies for improving diversity have not been developed, but that majority institutions are not dedicated to the mission of diversifying their faculty. Gasman argues that majority institutions often hold conversations about improving diversity, but fail to take concrete action.

Gasman (2016) challenges white faculty members at majority institutions,

How often do you point to the lack of people of color in the faculty pipeline

¹ For the purposes of this thesis, and informed by anti-racist scholarship, the terms “white” and “whiteness” will not be capitalized. However, “of Color” will be capitalized. This differential treatment of these terms is to honor the differential positions that white people and People of Color occupy in US society. People of Color share an identity based on the discrimination that they receive from a society that privileges being white. Capitalizing “People of Color” highlights the need for racial inequity to be counteracted by privileging those who face systematic discrimination. This literary choice is intentionally being used for the reasons outlined above.

while doing nothing about the problem?...Rather than getting angry at me for pointing out a problem that most of us are aware of, why don't you change your ways and do something to diversify your department or institution's faculty? I bet you don't, but I sure hope you do (Gasman, 2016, p. 6).

Gasman's dark admission, "I bet you don't, but I sure hope you do," suggests that white faculty members in majority institutions may be psychologically resistant to improving diversity in their departments. In other words, white faculty members may be invested in the maintenance of "whiteness": a construct of power that allows white people to assert white superiority over those who are not white (Gusa, 2010). This investment in the maintenance of whiteness may be unconscious. As Gasman suggests, white individuals may believe themselves to be in opposition to the maintenance of white supremacy, yet resist participating in conversations and actions that actively address racism.

While research has identified some of the factors that may contribute to white resistance to discussions of racism, there is little research on the conditions under which these resistances may be lowered. The present study seeks to answer the following questions: under what conditions might white individuals demonstrate less resistance to addressing the role of whiteness in maintaining racial inequity? What frameworks might support white participants' efforts to engage in discussions of racism?

An investigation of these questions requires delving into a larger question: what happens when white individuals who are complicit in the maintenance of whiteness are confronted with their participation in promoting white supremacy? Research in Whiteness Studies suggests that when white individuals are confronted

with the knowledge of their white complicity, they may experience white fragility: a sensitivity to racial stress in which even a minimal amount of racial stress leads to a host of defensive responses (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 1). White fragility may result from the assertion by Memmi (1991) that oppressors, in dehumanizing others, dehumanize themselves. Memmi's theory suggests that white individuals may be resistant to conceptualizing themselves as immoral. As a result, they may demonstrate a variety of emotional and cognitive disturbances (Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009).

This may contribute to the reality that many white Americans display discomfort when confronted with discussions of race (Cargile, 2015; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). This discomfort may cause white individuals to actively resist engaging in conversations about racism. According to DiAngelo (2011), white individuals may be particularly uncomfortable with conversations about racism because the majority of white Americans grow up in predominantly white environments. These segregated environments do not socialize white Americans to think critically or with complexity about race (DiAngelo, 2011). Instead, they teach white Americans that their interpretations of the world are not racialized, and representative of all human experiences. In these segregated environments, white individuals are also taught to value individualism, a worldview that emphasizes the role of the individual in shaping reality (DiAngelo, 2011). Their internalization of individualism may cause white individuals to conceptualize

whiteness as a construct of power produced only by individual “bad” white people rather than by systems of oppression.

Therefore, while white individuals may acknowledge the existence of whiteness, they may fail to implicate themselves as its purveyors. Rather, they may distance themselves from discussions of race, and develop an expectation that they will constantly remain racially comfortable, or unsusceptible to racial stress when confronted with race-related issues. Instead of engaging with these issues, white individuals may demonstrate behavioral resistance to discussions about race. This behavioral resistance may include expressions of anger, guilt, emotional incapacitation, or cognitive dissonance, as well as becoming argumentative or withdrawing from the conversation at hand.

Research by Shnick (2002, as cited by Gusa, 2016) as well as research by Srivastava (2005) suggests that emotionality and hostility often characterize white responses to conversations about racism in which the role of whiteness is highlighted. White individuals' emotional and hostile responses may be rooted in white entitlement to a space, or the belief that a space should promote white ideologies and support white superiority (Gusa, 2016, p. 472). White entitlement may lead participants to display emotional and hostile responses to having their white privilege challenged. A study by Schnick (2002) illustrates the emotionality and hostility with which white students may respond to discussions of whiteness. Schnick observed that during an undergraduate college course on multiculturalism, white students responded to unflattering facts about white individuals by challenging the unflattering facts,

dismissing them merely as the opinion of the professor of Color, or ensuring that they were reframed to reflect white preconceptions (Schnick, 2002; as cited in Gusa, 2016, p. 473).

This resistant behavior may be triggered when white Americans perceive a threat to their image of themselves as moral beings (Applebaum, 2010; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). This is evidenced by the finding that after white participants were asked to do a self-affirmation task, they demonstrated an increased willingness to conceptualize racism in institutional terms (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). Applebaum (2010) proposes that an unwillingness to accept institutional racism may come from a desire to avoid moral responsibility and the feelings of guilt it may trigger (Applebaum, 2010). Furthermore, the need for white individuals to maintain their self-image may be correlated with their susceptibility to stereotyping and experiencing prejudice towards people of Color (Fein, 1997).

There is also evidence that decreased levels of executive functioning may influence white responses to perceived threats to their self-image. A study by Apfelbaum and Sommers (2009) suggests that when white individuals' executive capacity is lowered, they may exhibit less inhibition to discussing approaches to improving campus diversity with Black discussion partners. Indeed, after completing an executive functioning depletion task, white participants were more likely to talk openly with Black discussion partners about strategies for improving campus diversity (Apfelbaum & Sommers, 2009). This suggests that executive functioning

may support certain neurological defensive mechanisms that promote white resistance to conversations about racism.

The research described above suggests that white behavioral resistance to conversations about racism may have many components, but that these components may be lowered under certain conditions. The present study seeks to investigate what might constitute white individuals' behavioral resistance, as well as under what conditions it might be lowered.

System Justification Theory

There are several theories in Psychology that might explain white individuals' behavioral resistance. For example, System Justification Theory proposes that individuals are motivated to conceptualize society as good and fair (Jost & Andrews, 2011). For example, white individuals may justify systems that promote white supremacy in order to avoid the feelings of distress that may come with recognizing the role of their own whiteness in maintaining racial inequity (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Napier, Mandisodza, Anderson, & Jost, 2006; Smith, Jost, & Vijay, 2008). Moreover, because some system justifying behaviors may not be considered socially acceptable, system justification processes may occur on an unconscious level. Therefore, white behavioral resistance to conversations about racism may be initiated outside of participants' conscious awareness. As a result, white individuals may have the means to avoid acknowledging their role in promoting racial inequity, and maintain their feelings of racial comfort.

Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory may also explain why white people may demonstrate behavioral resistance to conversations about racism. Social Dominance Theory proposes that individuals support institutions that help maintain their privileged positions in society. Furthermore, Social Dominance Theory suggests that this support allows institutions to continue to promote ideologies that benefit those in power (Ho et al., 2015; Sidanius, Pratto, Laar, & Levin, 2004). In this case, the unspoken (and perhaps largely unconscious) desire to uphold white supremacy may connect white individuals in a coordinated effort to maintain white-dominant institutions. As a result of receiving this support, these institutions may promote the social ideologies (i.e., whiteness) that maintain white individuals' position of social power.

Social Dominance Theory builds on Systems Justification Theory by addressing how institutions and individuals may work together to maintain systems of oppression (Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 846). While System Justification Theory explains why individuals might be motivated to justify systems of power, Social Dominance Theory addresses the coordinated effort between individuals and institutions in maintaining group-based social hierarchies.

Furthermore, Social Dominance Theory research recognizes that the American racial hierarchy may be maintained by institutions' differential treatment of members of different racial groups (Pratto, Stallworth, & Conway-Lanz, 1998). For example, research suggests that many American institutions encourage white

individuals to take up hierarchy-enhancing roles in society, while they encourage People of Color to take up hierarchy-attenuating roles (Pratto & Espinoza, 2001, as cited in Sidanius et al., 2004). According to Pratto and Espinoza, by encouraging white people to acquire positions of power that reinforce racial hierarchy while simultaneously discouraging People of Color from entering into these positions, US society maintains white occupancy of positions of power.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980) suggests that there are many components that may lead white individuals to support racial inequity. According to The Theory of Reasoned Action, an individual's behavioral intention is determined by their attitude towards a behavior, as well their perceptions of what other individuals and groups think about this behavior. Individuals may integrate these considerations into their behavioral intention, which in turn might lead to observable behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). Furthermore, individuals' attitudes towards behaviors may be shaped by their worldviews (which are often produced by institutions) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). Therefore, many components may be working together to influence individuals' behavioral intentions and resulting behaviors.

The Role of Anti-Racist Education

These behaviors are likely influenced by the systems of power that produce white individuals' worldviews. Consequently, altering individuals' behaviors (e.g.,

encouraging white individuals to engage in conversations about the role of whiteness in maintaining racial inequity) may entail that individuals challenge the worldviews that they have internalized. A non-racist framework of racism, or one that conceptualizes racism primarily as an individual problem, is the hegemonic framework for thinking about racism in American society (Srivastava, 2005). This widely-accepted view of racism rationalizes individuals' disengagement with conversations about racism. In the non-racist framework of racism, individuals can assert that they not the ones enacting racial violence, and can relinquish any feelings of moral responsibility to participate in conversations of racism. (Applebaum, 2010). Conversely, an anti-racist framework may encourage white individuals to consider how they may be complicit in systemic violence. It may encourage white individuals to conceptualize racism as a systemic issue rather than just an issue of "bad" individuals. By doing so, it may encourage white individuals to address their complicity in institutional racism (Applebaum, 2010).

Furthermore, an anti-racist framework may give white individuals an important language with which to talk about racism and whiteness (Blumer & Tatum, 1999). According to Blumer and Tatum, those given an anti-racist framing of racism may be more likely to promote anti-racism within educational institutions. Blumer and Tatum researched an anti-racist intervention in the school district of Newton, Massachusetts. During the anti-racist intervention, educators were encouraged to take an anti-racist training course. The goal of the course was to prepare teachers to facilitate discussions with their students about systems of oppression. In this course,

educators were provided with an anti-racist framework for talking about racism in their classrooms. Blumer and Tatum express the role this anti-racist framework played in increasing teachers' ability to engage with discussions of race in the classroom. According to Blumer and Tatum, after being given an anti-racist framework of racism, teachers were able to move past their initial discomfiture and participate constructively in conversations about racism in educational settings (Blumer & Tatum, 1999). This research suggests that anti-racist education may allow individuals to move past their initial resistance and address how whiteness may be operating within institutions to which they belong.

Unlike a non-racist framework, an anti-racist framework does not locate the solution to racism within individuals, but rather within racially socialized groups and institutions (Srivastava, 2005). Therefore, an anti-racist framework may be able to support white students in moving past their resistance to conversations about racism and make way for them to address the issue of whiteness at an institutional level.

White Institutional Presence at Scripps College

Scripps College, the institutional stage for this research, has a predominantly white student population, and is staffed by mostly white faculty. As a result, Scripps College is at risk for having what Gusa (2010) calls a high "White Institutional Presence", or "the institutionalized fusion of white worldview, white supremacy, and white privilege" (Gusa, 2010, p. 472). Consequently, Scripps College may promote a white worldview that normalizes whiteness and does not address systems of

oppression. In this way, Scripps College may act as an extension of other segregated environments that students are exposed to. At Scripps College, as well as other undergraduate institutions, white students may not be forced to address the role of whiteness in maintaining white supremacy. Instead, they may adapt a non-racist framework for thinking about racism, in which racism is constructed primarily as an individual problem rather than as an institutional issue.

Furthermore, in these white-dominated institutions, white students may be encouraged to take up roles as hierarchy-enhancers of the institution. Simply by being complicit in the proliferation of a predominantly white student population, white students are benefiting from and supporting the white-dominated institution. Therefore, by remaining complicit in the maintenance of Scripps College as a predominantly white institution, white students may be fulfilling a role as hierarchy-enhancers.

Furthermore, because white students at Scripps College may benefit from maintaining a white-dominated institution, they may experience difficulty switching out of their potential roles as hierarchy-enhancers. It is possible that white students may unconsciously resist becoming hierarchy-attenuators because doing so may cut them off from the institutional support they may receive as hierarchy-enhancers. Therefore, while white students' resistance to addressing whiteness may seem to occur on an individual level, this behavioral resistance may be informed by an institutional pressure for white students to act as hierarchy-enhancers within their institutions.

Because Scripps College may resemble other predominantly white institutions that promote a white worldview, it is a valuable setting for research on white behavioral resistance to discussions of racism. Furthermore, the likely similarities between Scripps College and other predominantly white undergraduate institutions may allow the findings from this study to be generalized to other institutions. For this reason, the current study hones in on an investigation of white students' behavioral resistance to conversations of racism at Scripps College.

Defining Behavioral Resistance

One of the challenges of the present study is attempting to operationalize white individuals' behavioral resistance. As proposed by the current literature, this resistance may include expressions of anger, guilt, emotional incapacitation, and cognitive dissonance, as well as becoming argumentative and withdrawing from the conversation (DiAngelo, 2011; Schnick, 2002, as cited in Gusa, 2016; Srivastava, 2005; Sue et al., 2009). Although the researchers mentioned above vaguely describe what these behaviors may look like, there isn't an established comprehensive and simple measure for coding for behavioral resistance. For the purpose of this study, a new measure, The Behavioral Resistance Scale (BRS) will be used to measure participants' behavioral resistance during the interview portion of the present study (see Appendix A).

Present Study

Just as an anti-racist framework may provide educators with the tools to engage comfortably with issues of racism in their classrooms (Blumer & Tatum, 1999), an anti-racist framework may allow white students at Scripps College to address the role of whiteness in maintaining racial inequity on campus. It may also allow students to move past the initial feelings of discomfiture and other negative emotions that they may experience upon implicating themselves in institutional racism (Schnick, 2002, as cited in Gusa, 2016; Srivastava, 2005; Sue et al., 2009). The goal of the present experimental study is to investigate whether the type of framing (non-racist or anti-racist) affects white students' behavioral resistance, self-esteem, and affect during a conversation about racism.

Hypotheses

This study hypothesizes that white-identifying, American students at Scripps College will demonstrate less behavioral resistance during an interview about an imagined discussion of on-campus diversity in the anti-racist framing condition than in a non-racist framing condition. Furthermore, the study hypothesizes that participants in the anti-racist framing condition will demonstrate lower levels of negative affect and higher levels of self-esteem than participants in the non-racist framing condition. This study also hypothesizes that the effect of framing on behavioral resistance will be mediated by affect, while the effect of framing on affect will be mediated by self-esteem.

Proposed Method

Participants

As determined by a power analysis (desired power: .80, desired α : .05, estimated effect size: .09, design: 2 cells), this experimental study will require 128 white-identifying participants (64 participants per condition). The estimated effect size for this study was determined using research by Apfelbaum and Sommers (2009). All participants will likely be within the age range of 18-23, since all participants will be undergraduate students. Furthermore, all participants will be recruited through Psychology courses Scripps College, as well as over the Scripps College Current Students Facebook page. Because the Scripps College Fall 2015 Census reported that in 2015, the student body was predominantly white (only 40% of the student body was Students of Color) white-identifying students at Scripps College constitute an accessible population for recruitment. All participants of the study will be compensated with a small pencil or notebook of their choosing, as well as by an opportunity to enter a raffle for a \$10 campus coffee shop gift card.

Materials

Affect. Affect will be measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS, Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The PANAS is comprised of 20 items (10 items measuring positive affect, PA, and 10 items measuring negative affect, NA). Each item lists an emotion word, and asks participants to indicate the extent to which they are experiencing that emotion on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Very*

Slightly or Not at all, 5 = Extremely). The emotion words on the NA portion of the PANAS include “distressed”, “upset”, “guilty”, and “ashamed”, while the emotion words on the PA portion of the PANAS include “excited”, “interested”, “strong”, and “proud”. The PANAS will be used in this study because it has been shown to have high α reliabilities (PA, $\alpha = .86$; for NA, $\alpha = .87$), and because it is established as a valid measure of positive and negative affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Participants' scores on individual items (e.g., “distressed”) within each subscale will be averaged. These averages will be used for data analysis.

Self-esteem. Self-esteem will be measured using the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES, Rosenberg, 1965). This measure includes 10 items related to participants' self-confidence and self-worth, and is considered to be a reliable and valid measure of self-esteem (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1993). All items on the RSES are scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly agree*, 4 = *Strongly disagree*), and five items are reverse scored. The RSES asks participants to state their level of agreement with a series of statements, including “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself” and “I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others”. In the present study, participants' average scores on the RSES will be used for analysis.

Interview. During a short interview, participants will be asked to close their eyes and imagine that they are going to meet with a group of Students of Color at Scripps College to discuss how diversity on campus could be improved. Participants will then be asked to respond verbally to five questions that allow them to actively

imagine this scenario (see Appendix B). All interviews with participants will be videotaped so that participants' behaviors can be coded for behavioral resistance.

Behavioral resistance. In this study, behavioral resistance will be measured using a self-developed measure, the Behavioral Resistance Scale, or BRS (see Appendix A). The BRS operationalizes behavioral resistance as expressions of anger, guilt, emotional incapacitation, or cognitive dissonance, as well as demonstrations of argumentation or withdrawing from the conversation. This measure was developed in collaboration with Clinical Psychologist, and Professor at Scripps College, Judith LeMaster. During the interview, participants' behaviors will be videotaped, and will be scored using the BRS. Two researchers will independently code the participant behaviors presented in each interview after establishing good inter-rater reliability. The composite scores of behavioral resistance from each interview will be used in analysis.

Manipulation

There will be one manipulation in this study: the type of framing given to participants ("non-racist" or "anti-racist"). In the "non-racist" framing condition, participants will be asked to spend 10 minutes responding to a writing prompt in which racism is conceptualized as occurring primarily on an individual level. They will be asked to read the following statement: "Please write about how individuals within the Scripps College community might contribute to the lack of diversity among students and faculty". Conversely, In the "anti-racist" framing condition,

participants will be asked to respond in writing to a framing in which the issue of underrepresentation of Students and Faculty of Color is framed as an institutional problem: "Please write about how the Scripps College Institution might contribute to the lack of diversity among students and faculty". Participants' responses to the writing prompt will be reviewed to confirm if the issue of campus-wide diversity has been adequately framed (i.e., if participants discussed the issue primarily on the individual level or on the institutional level, respectively).

Procedure

After being recruited and providing informed consent, participants will be randomly assigned to one of the framing conditions. They then will complete the framing task, the interview task, the PANAS, and the RSES. Finally, participants will be asked to fill out a demographics questionnaire, and undergo de-briefing. Before participants leave the laboratory, they will be thanked for their participation and compensated.

Ethics

This study includes some risk to participants, as well as many potential benefits that outweigh these risks. The study's risks include participant exposure to mild discomfort, embarrassment, anger, anxiety, fear, and sadness, as well as participant experiences of slightly lowered self-image. These emotions may come up during the interview section, as they may be triggered by conversations about racism

(Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009). Self-image may also be slightly affected (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). However, the study's investigation of participants' resistance to conversations about racism necessitates that participants be asked these interview questions. Furthermore, these interview questions are questions that participants are likely to consider in every day life. Therefore, the likelihood that they would cause participants to experience significant and long lasting levels of emotional stress is low.

While the perceived level of risk involved in the study is minimal, the benefits of the study may be far-reaching. Participants may experience an increased awareness of their own resistance to discussing racism. Furthermore, the study may serve as an opportunity for them to develop new strategies for conceptualizing racism (via the anti-racist framework provided to them in one condition and in the de-briefing statement) as well as new strategies for engaging in conversations about racism. Furthermore, the study may provide important insight for the field of psychology and society at large. This study may generate important information regarding how anti-racist education may influence white individuals' engagement with conversations about racism. This information may lead to future research on white resistance to conversations about racism, and result in the development of a model for facilitating discussions of racism that may be used at Scripps College and other predominantly white institutions. Furthermore, this research may bridges important scholarship in Africana Studies, Feminist Studies, and Psychology in the shared endeavor of determining what constitutes white resistance to conversation about race, as well as

how this resistance might be attenuated. By bringing together texts from these three disciplines, the present study participates in the important project of developing a shared language for talking about white behavioral resistance.

Furthermore, this project will not involve deception or a protected population. All participants will be adult, white-identifying students at Scripps College. All participation in the study will be voluntary, and participants will only be included in the study after providing informed consent. The informed consent form distributed to participants will inform them that the study seeks to investigate students' experiences entering into discussions about race. This description of the study will be kept purposefully vague so as not to give away the variable being manipulated and studied (framing) or the variables being measured (affect, self-esteem, and behavioral resistance). In addition, the informed consent form will also give a brief overview of the risks and benefits that participants may experience (although the benefits will be stated generally so as not to give away that participants' resistance to discussions about racism will be studied). In the informed consent form, participants will also be reminded that they may withdraw their participation at any time without penalty.

After completing the study, participants will be asked to read a de-briefing document that frames racism as a systemic issue that implicates all white individuals. This de-briefing document will encourage participants to conceptualize their white identity as a position of power within a greater system of injustice rather than simply as an attribute that gives them certain negative moral qualities (i.e., makes them "bad" people).

Throughout the study, participants' responses will be kept confidential. Participants will be given numbers that will replace their names during data collection and in the final report. The data collected by the researchers (including participant responses on written measures and interview videos) will only be accessible to the researchers. All research-related, physical files will be kept in a locked room, and all digital data will be kept on a private flashdrive. Through these measures, the confidentiality of participants will be respected and ensured.

The researchers of the present study are committed to respecting participants' desired level of participation. By providing participants with an explicit overview of the study, an informed consent form, and a comprehensive de-briefing document, the researchers will again emphasize that all participation is voluntary. Furthermore, by taking measures to ensure that all data collected remains confidential, the researchers will encourage participants to respond to the tasks openly and honestly.

Predicted Results

Data Preparation

Participants' scores on the PANAS will be averaged into two composite scores: one for Positive Affect and one for Negative Affect. Similarly, participants' scores on the RESSS will be averaged into composite scores. Lastly, participants' scores on the BRS will be summed into composite scores.

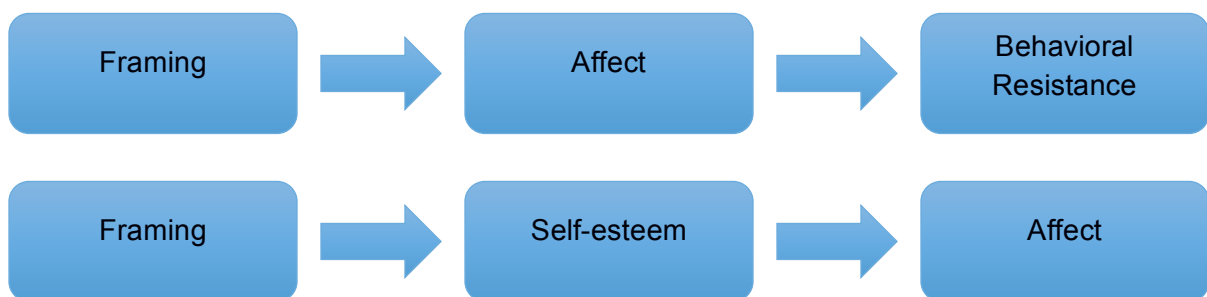
The Effect of Framing

A series of 2 (independent) samples t-tests will be used to compare the means of the two framing groups on the following dependent variables: participants' scores on affect (positive and negative), self-esteem, and behavioral resistance. In accordance with the hypotheses, it is predicted that participants in the anti-racist framing group will score significantly higher than participants in the non-racist framing group on positive affect and self-esteem. It is also predicted that participants in the anti-racist framing group will score lower than participants in the non-racist framing group on negative affect and behavioral resistance.

Affect as a Mediator of Behavior

The Sobel Test will be used to test the hypothesis that participants' framing affects their scores on affect, which in turn affects their scores on behavioral resistance. Specifically, it is predicted that in the "anti-racist" framing group, lower scores on negative affect will lead to lower scores on behavioral resistance, while in the "non-racist" framing group, higher scores on negative affect will lead to higher scores on behavioral resistance.

Figure 1. Mediation hypotheses



These hypotheses are informed by research that suggests that white-identifying participants who enter into discussions about racism often experience decreased self-esteem and a range of negative emotions, including discomfort, embarrassment, anger, anxiety, fear, and sadness (Cargile, 2015; Diangelo, 2011; Diangelo & Sensoy, 2014; Gusa, 2016; Richeson & Trawalter, 2008; Srivastava, 2005). Conversely, those who are exposed to an anti-racist framework may experience lower levels of negative affect, which may manifest itself in less demonstrations of behavioral resistance (Blumer & Tatum, 1999).

While it is predicted that those exposed to an anti-racist framework will demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem (Blumer & Tatum, 1999), it is also predicted that higher scores on self-esteem will lead to lower scores on negative affect. In short, it is predicted that participants' scores on self-esteem will mediate the effect of framing on participants' scores on affect, where higher levels of self-esteem will lead to lower levels of negative affect.

The Sobel test will be used to analyze the mediation hypotheses. This is because the sample for the present study is relatively large (128 participants), which allows the results of the Sobel test to be compared with a normal distribution of the data. Because there are independent subscales for the positive and negative components of the affect measure, two Sobel tests will be used to analyze affect as a potential mediator of the effect of framing on behavioral resistance.

Discussion

These results suggest that the two framings of racism will lead to significant differences between groups' levels of self-esteem, affect, and behavioral resistance. Participants in the non-racist framing, who are encouraged to think about racism primarily as an individual problem, may feel personally implicated in the lack of diversity at Scripps College. As a result, they may experience decreased self-esteem and increased negative affect. Their negative affect may include feelings of shame and guilt for participating in the maintenance of a predominantly white student and faculty population (Applebaum, 2010). This heightened level of negative affect may lead participants in the non-racist framing condition to score higher on behavioral resistance than participants in the anti-racist condition. Accordingly, those in the anti-racist framing condition, who are encouraged to consider racism on an institutional level, may be less likely to consider their participation in maintaining a predominantly white institution to be a reflection of their personal morality (Applebaum, 2010). Therefore, they may experience less negative affect and behavioral resistance than those in the non-racist condition.

Understanding the relationship between the variables examined in this study may be crucial for the development of strategies to lower white individuals' behavioral resistance. Furthermore, lowering white individuals' behavioral resistance to conversations about racism is especially important because white individuals are often those with the most power to either promote or challenge systems of oppression.

It is important that these privileged actors understand how they are benefiting from and participating in the maintenance of racial inequity.

The proposed results suggest that increases in negative affect and decreases in self-esteem may contribute to white individuals' behavioral resistance to conversations about race. Therefore, anti-racist education may play an important role in attenuating these potential contributors to white behavioral resistance.

Limitations and Future Directions

More information is needed to determine if a decrease in behavioral resistance is actually correlated with an increase in *participation* in conversations about racism. While this study may show that participants in the anti-racist framing condition demonstrate less behavioral resistance than participants in the non-racist framing condition, it cannot confirm that this decrease in behavioral resistance will translate into actual participation in conversations about racism. Similarly, it cannot determine to what extent participants' experience of *imagining* this conversation is representative of their experience of actually having this conversation in a real life setting.

More information is also needed to determine if participants' levels of behavioral resistance differ depending on the size of the discussion groups they are in. Perhaps participants respond differently in a one-on-one conversation than they do in large group discussions. More information on how group size may affect participants' levels of behavioral resistance may be useful for the development of constructive

conversations about racism. More information is also needed to determine if the BRS is a valid and reliable measure of behavioral resistance. The development of the BRS may serve as an important step towards a more comprehensive and detailed measure of behavioral resistance.

Future research should continue to develop the BRS, and investigate whether white individuals' participation in conversations about racism actually translates to their involvement with concrete actions on campus. As Gasman warns, there can be no movement built solely on a series of dialogues. Psychological research can step into the gap between talking and acting, and generate important insight regarding how communities might best organize and mobilize against institutional racism.

Conclusion

The present study examines behavioral resistance as a starting point for doing further investigation into white resistance to conversations about racism. The construct of behavioral resistance has been identified many times by scholars in Whiteness Studies, Africana Studies, Feminist Studies, and Psychology as a useful construct for studying white reluctance to participating in conversations about racism. Many theories may account for this reluctance. For example, white individuals may be invested in both, white privilege and an image of themselves as moral beings. As a result, they may fail to implicate themselves in the proliferation of racial inequity. Furthermore, participants may experience white fragility, a state in which they

respond to discussions of racism with a host of behavioral responses that are counterproductive to the conversation.

Although this study is only one effort in the larger project of critically examining white individuals' reluctance to discussing whiteness and racial inequity, it is doing important work by bringing Psychology into this project. Furthermore, The present study seeks to open up and participate in a larger conversation about what psychological constructs are needed for a comprehensive study of white behavioral resistance. The present study calls for a collaboration of future researchers to do the important work of studying and developing strategies for addressing white complicity in racial inequity. The present study is grounded in the understanding that complicity is a form of participation, and that white endorsement of racial inequity, however unintentional, is an act of violence. Furthermore, it is grounded in the belief that who belong to US society are responsible for addressing the violence that US-based systems of oppression continue to enact. As scholars who have the privilege to study the mechanisms and implications of systems of oppression, we have a responsibility to examine the violence that is being carried out by these systems. We must use our privilege of being able to access higher education to call for a disruption of systematic oppression. It is only by disrupting white privilege on an institutional level that members of the Scripps College community can participate in the construction of inclusive and equitable spaces, in higher education and beyond.

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Appendix A

Behavioral Resistance Scale (BRS)

For every time one of the following behaviors is demonstrated during the 10 minute interview, participants will receive 1-point. Participants' scores will be summed to create a composite score of behavioral resistance. Resistant behaviors include:

- Expressing:
 - Anger
 - Guilt
 - Emotional Incapacitation
 - Cognitive Dissonance
- Arguing
- Withdrawing from the conversation

Appendix B

Interview Script

“Close your eyes and imagine that you are going to meet with a group of Students of Color at Scripps College to discuss how diversity on campus could be improved.

1. How do you think the room might be set up at this event?
2. Who do you think would attend?
3. What topics do you think would be covered?
4. How might you feel going into this discussion?
5. What concerns might you have going into this conversation?”