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Critical consciousness, racial Identity, and appropriated racial oppression in Black emerging adults

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, RACIAL IDENTITY, AND APPROPRIATED RACIAL OPPRESSION IN BLACK EMERGING ADULTS

By Keyona Allen, M.Ed.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2018

Major Director: Shawn O. Utsey, Ph.D.,
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The present study explored private regard and public regard, two subcomponents of racial identity, as mediators of the association between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. In a sample of 75 Black emerging adults, ages 18-25, the current study examined (1) the relationships between critical consciousness, racial identity, and appropriated racial oppression and (2) whether racial identity mediates the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. Relationships in the expected direction were evident between private regard and both critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. Relationships in the expected direction were evident between public regard and critical consciousness. Further, mediation analyses indicated that the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression was mediated by private regard. These findings indicate how critical consciousness and private regard may play a significant role in influencing appropriated racial oppression in Black emerging adults.

Introduction

Educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (Freire, 1993) theorized that socially marginalized people can realize liberation by identifying and critically reflecting upon their oppressive socioeconomic circumstances and engaging in sociopolitical action to counter their own oppression. Freire's idea, achieving "radical self-awareness," evolved into the concept, critical consciousness (Freire, 1993). Critical consciousness has been adopted by an array of scholars who posit that this construct can serve as a protective factor for oppressed groups against socioeconomic and sociopolitical oppression (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014; O'Conner, 1997; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). Watts et al. (1999, p. 255) described critical consciousness as an "antidote to oppression" due to its ability to provide marginalized people with the awareness, motivation, and agency to recognize and address societal inequities.

Historically, Black Americans have endured continuous systemic oppression that has threatened their psychological well-being (Browman, 1997; Smith, 1985; Utsey, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000) and self-concept (Jackson et al., 1995; Simpson & Yinger, 1985). Despite this, many Black Americans have also achieved positive self-perceptions and remained socially and psychologically resilient while enduring marginalization (Utsey, Bolden, Lanier, & Williams, 2007). Via cultural and sociopolitical movements created by Black Americans, like the Black Power movement (Ongiri, 2010) and Black Lives Matter movement prevalent in contemporary Black culture (Rickford, 2015), Black Americans openly expressed and reclaimed positive views of themselves (Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, & Moats, 2016; Van DeBurg, 1992; hooks, 1989). These movements, through which Black Americans have experienced empowerment and resilience, have involved critical reflection upon and sociopolitical activism that challenged harmful stereotypes and systemic oppression (Brush, 2001).

These shifts towards awareness and sociopolitical activism are analogous to the processes of critical reflection and critical action that define critical consciousness. Given the impact of these critical consciousness-aligned movements, it can be argued that when Black individuals adopt critical consciousness as a way of existing, critical consciousness strengthens their racial identities and serves as a protective barrier against appropriated racial oppression. Furthermore, this might suggest that if one strongly identifies with their racial/ethnic community and views their racial group positively, they may be less susceptible to appropriating negative messages regarding their Blackness from a White supremacist mainstream society. An individual's internal perception of their racial group's value is understood as private regard (Sellers, Rowly, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Appropriated racial oppression is a construct that refers to the ways in which those of marginalized racial identities internalize negative, oppressive stereotypes and beliefs about their racial group (Campón & Carter, 2015). One might argue that critical consciousness can positively impact Black individuals' appraisal of their racial group, thus protecting them from appropriated racial oppression.

Theorists have suggested that critical consciousness can result in improved racial identity and decreased appropriated racial oppression (Freire, 1973, 1994; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015; Pascoe & Richmond, 2009). However, to author's knowledge, there is no present literature that has empirically examined the relationship between critical consciousness, racial identity, and appropriated racial oppression. Only recently have measures of critical consciousness been developed to assess the phenomenon (Diemer et al., 2016). In order to validate the impact and utility of critical consciousness, we must first assess the conceptual framework that suggests that critical consciousness improves racial identity and makes racially marginalized people less susceptible to internalizing negative beliefs and stereotypes regarding

their racial group. This necessitates exploration of how and why these phenomena relate. This study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between critical consciousness, racial identity, and appropriated racial oppression.

Literature Review

Freirean Pedagogy

Paulo Freire (1994) posited that *conscientizacao*, “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality”, was the ultimate path to authentic liberation for victims of injustice (p. 17). He developed an educational methodology centered upon facilitating the development of *conscientizacao*, which he used to empower Brazilian peasants who had been historically deprived of equitable economic and educational opportunities. This laid the foundation for a cultural revolution in which peasants across Northeastern Brazil achieved literacy, which they had long been denied, and empowered themselves to transform the social order of Brazil, destroying the cycles of oppression that had characterized Brazil’s economic caste system for ages (Freire, 1994).

Freire described critical consciousness as a “humanist and libertarian pedagogy” in which the oppressed discover the ills of systemic oppression and commit to the process of intellectual transformation and activism (Freire, 1994). He emphasized that ongoing critical reflection is essential in the development of each individual’s critical consciousness. His methodology of liberation was comprised of two essential, distinct stages. The first stage involved a process in which the oppressed discover for themselves the realities of systemic oppression and express active commitment to engaging in the struggle towards liberation. In the second stage, the oppressed initiate a “revolutionary transformation,” confronting and ultimately reforming the oppressive systems that once restricted them (Freire, 1994). Freire stressed that the process of

critical consciousness is one that is developed within the psyches of the oppressed, not imposed upon them. Through their own processes, those who experience marginalization establish their own liberation and rid their worlds of injustice. He also expressed the importance of critical dialogue and collective identity and action to shape and move this process. To aid Brazilian peasants in fostering critical consciousness, Freire implemented an approach he termed culture circles (Freire, 1973). Within these culture circles, participants would engage in dialogue to collaboratively deconstruct situations and develop awareness of the foundations and nature of oppression within their society. The goal of the culture circles was twofold—participants developed both academic and sociopolitical literacy as they learned to read and “read their worlds (Freire, 1973).”

Contemporary Conceptualizations of Critical Consciousness

As Freire’s work expanded and critical consciousness surfaced as an effective intervention to empower oppressed people across Latin America, theorists and practitioners sought to build upon his theory and approach. Many have developed models to describe the development process and interventions to foster critical consciousness among other groups who face marginalization and systemic injustice (Diemer et al., 2016; Freire, 1973; Freire, 1993; Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). Though critical consciousness-related literature continues to grow as scholars seek to conceptualize and develop methods to foster critical consciousness primarily in populations of marginalized youth, there does not yet exist a definitive and cohesive single definition or model of this phenomenon (Diemer et al., 2016). However, scholars have sought to identify shared concepts and general approaches consistent across critical consciousness-oriented literature (Diemer et al., 2016; Watts & Hiralito-Delgado, 2015). Diemer and colleagues (2016) described the common underlying objective or characteristic of all critical

consciousness literature as the idea of “movement from a critical acceptance of the status quo to critical and liberating action to redress societal inequities (p.219).”

Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) conducted a literature review of articles within peer-reviewed academic journals to identify trends in theory and practice of critical consciousness. The themes that they identified pertaining to scholars’ theory and suggestions for practice for promoting critical consciousness included: shared values, fostering collective identity, encouraging critical questioning, critical social analysis, and taking sociopolitical action.

They found that authors of both theory-focused and practice-focused articles expressed the necessity of shared philosophical values among members of critical consciousness-seeking groups. Further, they suggested that the most prevalent shared value that theorists and practitioners identified across critical consciousness-seeking groups was praxis—the use of theory to inform practice and practice to improve theory (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). A second theme is critical social analysis. This entails increasing individuals’ awareness of sociopolitical conditions, developing awareness of oppression, experiencing identity and membership within an oppressed group, engaging in critical discussion of specific relevant incidents to better understand social injustice, and exploration of the mutualistic relationship between marginalization and current sociopolitical conditions. Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) identified critical social analysis as the critical consciousness theme that leads the oppressed to develop a language to describe the oppression they experience and the liberation they seek. A third theme across critical consciousness theory and practice is encouraging critical questioning that prompts participants to critically re-examine and challenge dominant social narratives that perpetuate oppression. The processes related to critical social analysis and critical questioning beget a fourth theme, moving towards individual and collective sociopolitical action

to spur social change. Lastly, Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) identified fostering collective identity as a component of contemporary critical consciousness theory and practice. Fostering collective identity entails inspiring a sense of pride and connectedness among those with shared identities and shared experiences of marginalization. Theorists suggest that fostering collective identity is a piece of critical consciousness that can reinforce critical social analysis and promote critical questioning (Freire, 1993; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). This can, in turn, lead oppressed persons to challenge negative stereotypes of their identity group and eliminate self-blame for circumstances born in systemic oppression, warding off the effects of appropriated racial oppression (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

While critical consciousness is multifaceted and conceived in several different perspectives, Diemer et al. (2014) offer a succinct explanation of three defining and measurable subcomponents. It is devised into two factors, critical reflection and critical action. Critical reflection is further decomposed into two subcomponents, both an analysis of perceived inequality and the endorsement of social equality. This means that when individuals engage in critical reflection, they become aware of the presence and impact of oppression (perceived inequality), and they reject social injustices in favor of an equitable society (egalitarianism). Critical action involves partaking in sociopolitical action, at the individual or collective level to facilitate change (Diemer et al., 2014). The present study focuses on the perceived inequality dimension of critical consciousness. This dimension is most amenable to the foundational theoretical framework of Freire's critical consciousness, primarily entailing critical social analysis that facilitates the dismantling of systemic oppression. It is also most amenable to conceptualizing how critical consciousness can be utilized within a therapeutic context for Black individuals. The process of recognizing, understanding, and cognitively deconstructing

systematic institutions of oppression is reflected in the perceived inequality domain of critical consciousness. Thus, this study focuses on the perceived inequality dimension of critical consciousness.

Critical Consciousness within Black Individuals

Applying Freire's theory and practical approaches, researchers and practitioners within the United States have sought to explore the implications of adopting critical consciousness among historically marginalized Black Americans, specifically Black youth (for example, Diemer & Rapa, 2016). In addition, some have sought to construct interventions that promote critical consciousness in this population (for example, Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). Literature focused on exploring the role and impact of critical consciousness for Black individuals revealed various promising outcomes, such as improved academic achievement and motivation to engage in academics (O'Connor, 1997), increased civic engagement (Diemer & Li, 2011), and more desirable career outcomes (Diemer, 2009). There has also been some focus on interventions designed to increase critical consciousness among Black individuals.

Watts, Abdul-Adil, and Pratt (2002) developed and implemented the Young Warriors program, a critical consciousness intervention for African American adolescent males, ages 11-21. This school-based intervention sought to raise social, political, and cultural consciousness in low SES, African American boys and young men. The intervention was comprised of eight sessions during which the participants discussed and analyzed hip-hop music videos, film, and other culturally-relevant forms of media to facilitate the development of critical consciousness. Through involvement in the Young Warriors program, participants used culturally relevant mediums to critically analyze their worlds and develop critical consciousness pertaining to gender, cultural, social class, and racial oppression. Participants demonstrated increased critical

thinking responses during critical dialogue, however, critical consciousness was not directly assessed.

In another example of a critical consciousness intervention for African American youth, Lynn, Johnson, and Hassan (1999) applied portraiture as a means to qualitatively assess and analyze an African American school teacher's critical consciousness intervention for his affluent African American sixth and eighth grade students. In this intervention, the school teacher aided in the facilitation of critical consciousness for said students via a course curriculum that integrated critical dialogue, use of various forms of media to demonstrate both current and historical sociopolitical oppression and its impact on African American people, and written reflection to encourage critical reflection upon systemic injustice. Upon analyzing themes gathered from classroom observations and individual and group interviews with students, parents, and administrators, the authors found that students experienced greater academic achievement, greater expressed values of humanitarianism, and an increased commitment to social change (Lynn, Johnson, & Hassan, 1999).

While both of these interventions demonstrated successful efforts to foster critical consciousness among Black adolescents, they each possess some limitations. In both examples, variables related to critical consciousness were assessed (e.g. commitment to social change and critical thinking skills); however, critical consciousness, itself, was not measured. Also, while each implied intention to garner a sense of collective identity among the group members and deconstruct negative dominant social narratives to counteract appropriated oppression, the impact of the critical consciousness development on these two domains was not clearly identified nor discussed. To better understand the impact of critical consciousness development in Black Americans on their appropriated racial oppression and to understand the role of collective

identity in facilitating this process, it is essential that measurements of appropriated racial oppression and collective identity be integrated concurrently when exploring critical consciousness in Black individuals.

Appropriated Racial Oppression

Freire theorized that a primary function of critical consciousness is to serve to protect against appropriated racial oppression, a phenomenon that he suggested serves to maintain systemic oppression (Freire, 1973). Appropriated racial oppression is a contemporary term coined in lieu of the traditional term, internalized racism. This terminology is adopted to provide a language that does not impose victim-blaming upon those who are subjected to the unconscious integration of negative beliefs about their own ethnic/racial groups into their psyches as a consequence of racism (Campón & Carter, 2015). Appropriated racial oppression is the process by which people of marginalized ethnic groups adopt the dominant White culture's oppressive actions and beliefs toward their people, while rejecting their cultural worldviews (Bailey, Chung, Williams, Singh, & Terrell, 2011). This involves internalization of negative stereotypes, discrimination, hatred, falsification of historical facts, racist doctrines, and White supremacist ideology. Campón and Carter (2015) posit that when people experience appropriated racial oppression, their racial self-image is formed based on direct and indirect negative stereotypical messages, thus, influencing their self-image and worth, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. They found a four-factor structure to conceptualize this construct which includes patterns of thinking that maintain the status quo, adaptation of White American beauty standards, devaluation of one's own racial or ethnic group, and emotional reactions. Research has demonstrated that experiencing appropriated racial oppression is related to deleterious impacts such as skin color dissatisfaction, depressive symptomatology, anxiety, and lower levels of self-esteem in African

Americans (Bailey et al., 2011; Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams, & Belgrave, 2014; Taylor, Wilson, & Dobbins, 1972).

Other researchers have found that among African Americans, denial of racial inequality, which is presumably indicative of low critical consciousness, relates to appropriated racial oppression, self-blaming attributions for racial inequality, justification of social roles, and a preference for a hierarchical, rather than egalitarian, social structure (Neville, Coleman, Falconer, & Holmes, 2005). Conversely, higher levels of African American ethnic consciousness and the recognition of structural inequalities, has been found to be related to greater system-blame as opposed to self-blame that characterizes appropriated racial oppression (Broman, 1999). These theoretical and empirical indications suggest that critical consciousness might decrease appropriated racial oppression. Thus, it is imperative to explore how critical consciousness relates to appropriated racial oppression to understand its capacity to protect against the deleterious impacts of appropriated racial oppression on Black individuals.

Racial Identity

Cross (1991) proposed the first model of Black racial identity as he sought to capture the transformative process that unfolded as Black people partook in the Black Power phase of the Black Social Movement. This multidimensional model depicted nigrescence, which denotes evolution towards a Black identity. The current model of nigrescence involves six attitudes. The six attitudes that are assessed by the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) include: (a) Pre-Encounter Assimilation, (b) Pre-Encounter Miseducation, (c) Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred, (d) Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, (e) Internalization Afrocentricity, and (f) Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). These attitudinal clusters, pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization, were formerly designations of stages

(Cross, 1971, 1991). The pre-encounter dimension reflects acceptance of negative beliefs about Blackness. The encounter dimension reflects the result of events in which one's Blackness and societal position are challenged. Immersion-Emersion reflects movement towards a Black identity, and Internalization reflects development of acceptance of self and others. Cross's nigrescence model provided the predominant theoretical framework for understanding Black racial identity and has served as a foundation for racial and ethnic identity development models and scales (Worwell et al, 2011).

As with critical consciousness (Carr, 2003; Gutierrez, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995), racial identity (Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Molix & Bettencourt, 2010; Tamanas, 2010) has been widely implicated as a source of psychological resilience. Research has indicated that racial identity increases as critical consciousness increases (Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015). Racial identity has been implicated as a protective factor against the deleterious effects of racism in marginalized racial groups. Within the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), racial identity is understood as the component of a person's self-concept that is related to membership within a race (Sellers, Chavous & Cooke, 1998). The MMRI demarcates four distinct, yet interrelated dimensions of Black racial identity. These include centrality of the identity, identity salience, the ideology one attributes to the identity, and the regard in which one holds those associated with the identity. The present research focuses on the regard dimension. Regard is a person's affective and evaluative judgement of their own race (Sellers et al., 1998). More specifically, it pertains to the extent of a Black individual's positive or negative appraisal of African Americans and their membership in the Black racial group. The regard dimension is parsed into private and public components. Private regard, often associated with racial pride and psychological proximity, reflects how positively or negatively Black people affectively appraise

African Americans and their membership in this group. Public regard refers to the extent to which a Black person feels others view Black people positively or negatively. Research has indicated that low levels of public regard, which reflect an awareness of societal prejudices and oppressive views towards Black people, act to protect against the harmful impact of racial discrimination on psychological well-being (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & L'Heureux Lewis, 2006). In addition, those with high levels of private regard experience greater levels of overall psychological well-being and less perceived stress and depressive symptoms than those who report low levels of private regard. Sellers and colleagues (2006) suggested that racial identity, specifically high private regard and low public regard, may result in less appropriation of inferiority beliefs about Black people that are conveyed through racial discrimination experiences. Consequentially, racial identity, thought to be increased through critical consciousness, may serve to decrease appropriated racial oppression.

Summary and Purpose of the Current Study

Theorists posit that appropriated racial oppression, a psychological consequence of racial discrimination, functions to compel marginalized racial groups to self-blame for systemic oppression, thus, propelling the reinforcement and sustainment of enduring systems of racial oppression (Freire, 1993). Furthermore, some suggest that critical consciousness, achieved through processes that involve unveiling and dismantling systems of oppression through critical questioning and critical social analysis, can facilitate empowerment and protect marginalized racial groups from the psychological harm of racial oppression (Freire, 1993; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Throughout history, sociopolitical movements that centered around the critical reflection characteristics of Freire's concept of critical consciousness have pervaded and defined Black American culture (Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, & Moats, 2016; Van DeBurg, 1992;

hooks, 1989). Such critical consciousness-aligned movements served to promote positive racial identity, deconstruction of oppressive systems, and countering the negative stereotypes and falsehoods appropriated from the dominant, White culture (Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, & Moats, 2016; Rickford, 2015; Van DeBurg, 1992; hooks, 1989). Theorists have conceptualized that the development of critical consciousness can improve one's racial identity, and in turn, decrease appropriation of negative, harmful stereotypes regarding one's racial group (Freire, 1994, Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). However, this conceptualization has yet to be examined empirically. The purpose of this study is to assess the relationship between critical consciousness, appropriated racial oppression, and racial identity. I postulate that critical consciousness decreases appropriated racial oppression. Additionally, I propose that racial identity will partially explain the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression.

Study Aims

The aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between critical consciousness, racial identity, and appropriated racial oppression. Mediation analyses will be used to examine whether racial identity, particularly private regard and public regard mediate the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. Initially, the association between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression will be determined. Then, whether both private regard and public regard relate to both critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression will be determined. If there exists a relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, mediation analyses will be used to determine if racial identity serves to create this relationship by acting as a mediator.

Hypothesis I. The first goal of the study is to examine if critical consciousness, measured by the Perceived Inequality Subscale of the Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS; Diemer et. al., 2014) is associated with appropriated racial oppression, as measured by the Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale (AROS; Campón and Carter, 2015). I hypothesize that critical consciousness will be negatively associated with appropriated racial oppression.

Hypothesis II. The second aim of the study is to examine if critical consciousness is associated with private regard, measured by the Private Regard subscale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). I hypothesize that critical consciousness will be positively associated with private regard.

Hypothesis III. A third aim of the study is to examine if critical consciousness is associated with public regard, measured by the Public Regard subscale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997). I hypothesize that critical consciousness will be negatively associated with public regard.

Hypothesis IV. This study will also examine if private regard is associated with appropriated racial oppression. I hypothesize that private regard will be negatively associated with appropriated racial oppression.

Hypothesis V. Additionally, the association between public regard and appropriated racial oppression will be examined. I hypothesize that public regard will be positively associated with appropriated racial oppression.

Hypothesis VI. If there is an association between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, and private regard is correlated with both critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, then private regard may mediate the former relationship. Mediation analyses will be used to determine whether private regard explains the relationship

between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. I hypothesize that private regard will mediate the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression.

Hypothesis VI. Lastly, if there is an association between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, and public regard is correlated with both critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, then public regard may mediate the former relationship. Mediation analyses will be used to determine whether public regard explains the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. I hypothesize that public regard will mediate the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. The hypothesized conceptual model is represented by figure 1.

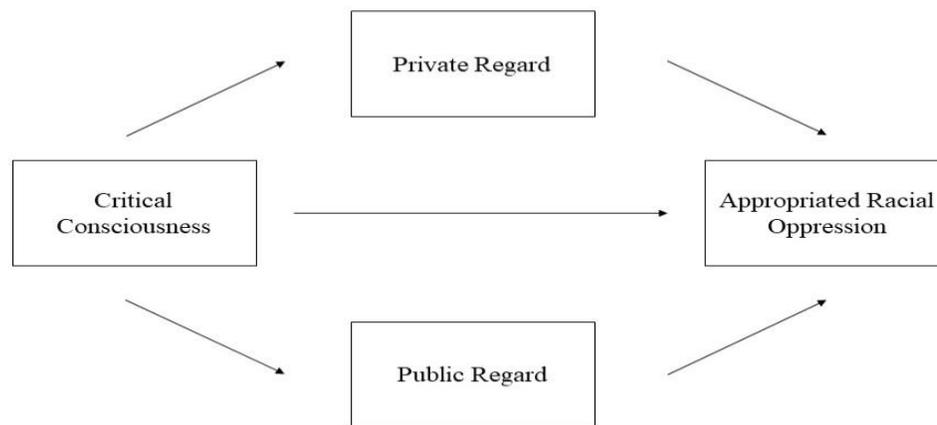


Figure 1: Conceptual model for hypotheses.

Method

Participants

The present study recruited a total of 80 Black students between the ages of 18 and 25 who were enrolled at a predominately White institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the United

States. Students were recruited through the online SONA-Systems© in which students receive extra credit for participation in university-wide research. The sample was used to make inferences to the population of Black emerging adults.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. The participants completed a demographic questionnaire that includes age, gender identity, racial/ethnic identity, grade point average, parental education level, college classification, identification number, and college major(s).

Critical Consciousness Scale. The Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS; Diemer et al., 2014) is a 22-item scale that assesses participants' critical analysis of socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and gendered constraints on educational and occupational opportunity, endorsement of societal equality, and participation in social and political activities to change perceived inequalities. Each item is rated on a six-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree," 6 = "Strongly Agree"). Responses result in separate and distinct scores on three different subscales, Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality, Critical Reflection: Egalitarianism, and Critical Action: Sociopolitical Participation. The three CCS subscales have demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha estimates of .90 for Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality, .88 for Critical Reflection: Egalitarianism, and .85 for Critical Action: Sociopolitical Participation. Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality has a significant positive correlation with Critical Action: Sociopolitical Participation. Critical Action: Sociopolitical Participation has a significant negative correlation with Critical Reflection. Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality does not correlate with Critical Reflection: Egalitarianism (Diemer et al., 2014). Higher scores indicate higher amounts of critical consciousness. In this sample, the Cronbach's alpha for the Perceived Inequality subscale was .93.

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997) is a scale that measures three stable dimensions of racial identity proposed in the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI; Sellers et al., 1998). These dimensions consist of racial centrality, racial regard and racial ideology. The present study focuses specifically on the Regard scale. The Regard scale features two subscales, Private Regard and Public Regard. The Private Regard scale is a seven-item subscale that assesses the extent to which a Black person feels negatively or positively about Black people and their membership within the Black racial group. The Public Regard subscale comprises four items and assesses the extent to which a Black person feels others negatively or positively appraise Black people. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale (1= “Strongly Disagree”, 5= “Strongly Agree”). Higher scores on each subscale indicate higher regard. The subscales have demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .78 for Private Regard and .78 for Public Regard (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). In this sample, Cronbach’s alphas were .86 for Private Regard and .58 for Public Regard.

Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale. The Appropriate Racial Oppression Scale (AROS) (Campón and Carter, 2015) is a 24-item scale that assesses internalized racism in people of color. Each item is rated on a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). The AROS has four subscales: Emotional Responses (Cronbach’s alpha of .83), American Standard of Beauty (Cronbach’s alpha of .85), Devaluation of Own Group (Cronbach’s alpha of .86), and Patterns of Thinking (Cronbach’s alpha of .70). Higher scores indicated higher levels of appropriated racial oppression. In this sample, the Cronbach’s Alpha for the total scale was .90.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through an online research posting via SONA-Systems©. For data collection, students completed a set of surveys (i.e. Demographic Questionnaire, Critical Consciousness Scale, Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity, Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale) through the confidential SONA-Systems©. Students received extra credit for their participation in the study.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Data Preparation. To determine the necessary sample size for the study, an a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Land, 2009). There has been no previous literature examining the effect of critical consciousness and racial identity on appropriated racial oppression, so effect sizes (Cohen, 1995) were anticipated to be medium ($f^2 = .15$). Using this assumption for all hypotheses, 68 participants were determined to be sufficient to detect an effect (power ≥ 0.80 , alpha ≤ 0.05). Notably, the present study was comprised of an analytic sample of 75 participants. Prior to running statistical analyses, the data were cleaned and examined for errors, missing values, and outliers. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated to verify that the data met the assumptions of the analyses. Histograms were generated to assess normality observed in the data. Skewness and kurtosis were assessed as acceptable if the test statistic contained values of ± 1 . When examining the distribution of data, private regard was substantially kurtotic and negatively skewed. To adjust for the skewed and kurtotic distribution, an exponential transformation was performed using Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) guidelines for

data transformation. Data transformation remedied issues with skewness and kurtosis. Scatterplots of residuals were generated to assess for homoscedasticity. Correlations between independent variables were examined to assess multicollinearity. Data sufficiently met these assumptions (i.e., residuals were homoscedastic, no presence of multicollinearity among predictors). Significance for all tests was established at an alpha level of .05, two-tailed.

Missing Values Analysis. Analysis of missing data indicated that five cases were missing 100% of values. These cases were removed from the data set. For remaining data, analysis identified the absence of 4% of responses for critical consciousness and 5.3% of responses for both private and public regard. Little's MCAR test demonstrated that data were missing completely at random (MCAR), $\chi^2(80) = .027, p = .869$, indicating that the likelihood of missingness depended neither on the observed data nor the missing data (Little, 1988). Statistical analyses are unlikely to be biased when less than 10% of data are missing. Further, ignoring data missing under MCAR should not introduce bias (Dong & Peng, 2013). Thus, missing data were handled using pairwise deletion.

Primary Analysis

Correlation analyses were used to determine the association between variables of interest. Additionally, mediation analyses using the bootstrapping approach (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) were conducted to examine the pathway(s) by which critical consciousness affects appropriated racial oppression. PROCESS version 3 for IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 (Hayes, 2017) was used to test a mediation model, whereby critical consciousness was modeled to affect appropriated racial oppression through private regard. A second mediation model, whereby critical consciousness was modeled to affect appropriated racial oppression through public

regard was tested, as well. Each model was tested in Model 4 in PROCESS with 5,000 bootstraps at a 95% confidence interval.

Preliminary Results

Sample Characteristics. Means and standard deviations were calculated for continuous demographic variables and percentages were used to describe categorical demographic variables. Table 1 shows participant demographic information. Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine differences between women and men on critical consciousness, private regard, appropriated racial oppression, and public regard. Table 2 shows means and standard deviations of study variables, as well as significant differences between cisgender women and cisgender men. Only one participant identified as GNC. This participant was not included in this analysis. Independent samples t tests demonstrated that cisgender women reported significantly lower appropriated racial oppression, $t(74) = -2.04, p = .045$, in comparison to cisgender men. There were no statistically significant differences between cisgender women's and cisgender men's critical consciousness, private regard, and public regard scores.

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

Variable	N (%)	<i>M (SD)</i>
Age		19.76 (1.78)
Gender		
Cisgender Woman	52 (65.00)	
Cisgender Man	23 (28.70)	
Gender Non-conforming/NB	1 (1.30)	
Missing	4 (5.00)	
Sexual Orientation		
Gay/Lesbian	1 (1.30)	
Bisexual	4 (5.00)	
Heterosexual	67 (83.80)	
Questioning	2 (2.50)	
Pansexual	1 (1.30)	

Missing	5 (6.30)
Parental Education	
None	1 (1.30)
Some High School	5 (6.30)
High School Degree or Equivalent (G.E.D.)	10(12.50)
Some College	26(32.50)
Associate's Degree	3 (3.80)
Bachelor's Degree	12(15.00)
Graduate or Professional	17(21.30)
Not Applicable/Don't Know	2 (2.50)
Missing	4 (5.00)
U.S. Born	
Yes	60(75.00)
No	16(20.00)
Missing	4 (5.00)

Table 2.

Sample Characteristics

	Cisgender Women (n= 51)	Cisgender Men (n= 23)	Significant Differences
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	
Appropriated Racial Oppression	53.80(18.06)	63.79(22.44)	$t(72) = -2.04^*$
Critical Consciousness	39.27(7.50)	39.09(7.93)	
Private Regard	818.98(318.79)	675.02(387.02)	
Public Regard	3.49(.82)	3.69(.99)	

* $p < .05$ **Primary Results**

Correlation analyses. Bivariate correlation analyses between all variables of interest were conducted (see Table 3). Analyses indicated a significant negative association between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression $r(70) = -.26, p = .03$. There was a

significant positive association between critical consciousness and private regard $r(69) = .28$, $p = .02$. Additionally, there was a significant negative association between critical consciousness and public regard $r(69) = -.30$, $p = .01$. Analyses also revealed a significant negative correlation between private regard and appropriated racial oppression $r(69) = -.72$, $p < .001$. Lastly, there was no sufficient evidence to indicate that public regard was positively associated with appropriated racial oppression $r(69) = -.01$, $p = .94$.

Table 3.

Summary of Intercorrelations for Scores on Appropriated Racial Oppression, Critical Consciousness, and Racial Identity Scales

	1	2	3	4
Appropriated Racial Oppression	-			
Critical Consciousness	.26*	-		
Private Regard	-.72***	.28*	-	
Public Regard	-.01	-.30*	-.11	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Mediation analyses. Hypotheses 6 and 7 were explored via tests of indirect effects, using PROCESS (Hayes, 2017), with 5,000 bootstraps at a 95% confidence interval.

Relation between critical consciousness, appropriated racial oppression, and private regard. The first model tested the indirect effect of critical consciousness on appropriated racial oppression through private regard (see Figure 2). Results indicated that there was a significant indirect effect of critical consciousness on appropriated racial oppression through private regard ($ab = -.52$, CI $[-.99, -.06]$). Further, the relationship between critical consciousness and

appropriated racial oppression was reduced to non-significance when controlling for private regard ($B = -.27, p = .24$).

Relationship between critical consciousness, appropriated racial oppression, and public regard. In the second mediation model, the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression through public regard was explored (see Figure 3). Results indicated that there was no evidence to suggest that critical consciousness indirectly affects appropriated racial oppression through public regard ($ab = -.08, CI [-.10, .43]$).

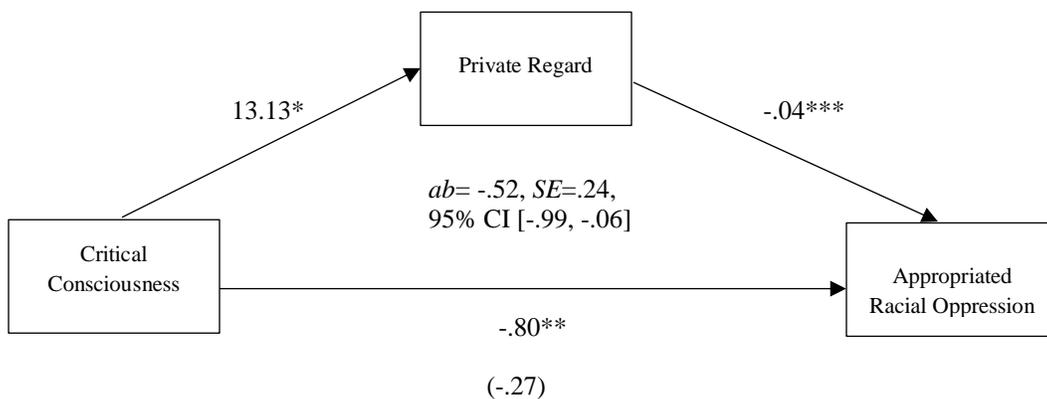


Figure 2. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression as mediated by private regard. The standardized regression coefficient between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, controlling for private regard, is in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

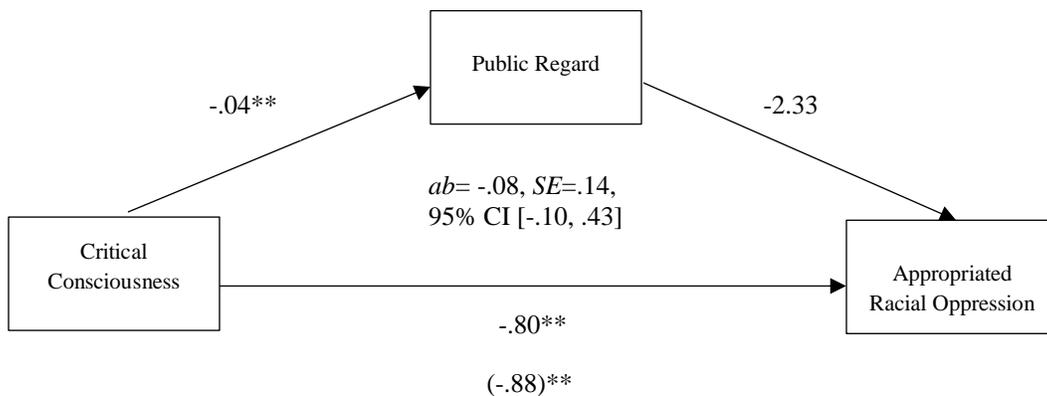


Figure 3. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression as mediated by public regard. The standardized regression coefficient between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression, controlling for public regard, is in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between critical consciousness, racial identity, and appropriated racial oppression in a sample of Black emerging adults.

Critical Consciousness and Appropriated Racial Oppression

The first hypothesis was that critical consciousness would be negatively associated with appropriated racial oppression. Results of bivariate correlation analyses indicated that critical consciousness, specifically perceived inequality was negatively correlated with appropriated racial oppression. Participants who endorsed higher critical consciousness reported lower appropriated racial oppression. Paulo Freire (1973) theorized that as oppressed individuals develop the capacity to “read their worlds,” identifying systemic injustices within their sociopolitical environments, their internalization of negative stereotypic beliefs about themselves adopted from the oppressive group worldview would diminish. This finding provides empirical support for this notion. This finding is also consistent with previous findings that suggest that there is an inverse relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression (Neville, Coleman, Falconer, & Holmes, 2005; Broman, 1999).

Critical Consciousness and Racial Identity

Additionally, this study explored the relationship between critical consciousness and racial identity. The second hypothesis was that critical consciousness would be positively associated with private regard. We also hypothesized that critical consciousness would be negatively associated with public regard. Findings indicated that critical consciousness was positively associated with private regard. That is, participants who endorsed higher critical consciousness endorsed higher private regard. This finding converges with previous findings that

private regard is associated with higher perceived racial discrimination (Lee & Ahn, 2013). Presumably, those who possess higher critical consciousness, endorsing greater awareness of systemic inequalities, are more likely to recognize or perceive discrimination than those who possess less critical consciousness. Also, critical consciousness was negatively associated with public regard, meaning that participants who endorsed higher critical consciousness endorsed lower public regard. Public regard reflects the extent to which a Black person feels non-Black people view Black people positively or negatively (Sellers et al., 1997). Lee and Ahn (2013) found that public regard is negatively related to perceived racial discrimination. Since the perceived inequality dimension of critical consciousness captures one's awareness of systemic oppression, it is possible that this heightened awareness relates to lower perceptions of how non-Black people appraise Black people. Our findings, which indicate that those who demonstrate greater ability to identify systemic oppression believe non-Black people appraise Black people more negatively, support this rationale. However, given the unacceptable Cronbach's alpha of the public regard scale within this study, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Racial Identity and Appropriated Racial Oppression

This study also explored the relationship between racial identity and appropriated racial oppression. It was hypothesized that private regard would be negatively associated with appropriated racial oppression, while we expected that public regard would be positively associated with appropriated racial oppression. Findings indicated that private regard was negatively associated with appropriated racial oppression. This finding is consistent with prior studies which have demonstrated that high private regard protects against the negative psychological consequences of discrimination (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & L'Heureux Lewis, 2006). Further, this finding supports Seller's and colleagues' (2006) postulation that high

private regard protects against the appropriation of inferiority beliefs about Black people that are conveyed through racial discrimination experiences. However, public regard was not associated with appropriated racial oppression. This conflicts with the notion that low public regard buffers against the appropriation of inferiority beliefs conveyed through discrimination (Sellers et al., 2006). Some have found that low public regard functions as a self-protective factor against stigma (Crocker & Major, 1989; Lee & Ahn, 2006). On the contrary, Perkins, Wiley, & Deaux (2014) found that in a sample of immigrants of color, public regard of White individuals had no impact on participants' evaluation of their own ethnic group and minimal influence on their self-esteem. However, given the unacceptable Cronbach's alpha for the public regard subscale, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Critical Conscious, Racial Identity, and Appropriated Racial Oppression

Lastly, this study examined the pathway through which critical consciousness impacts appropriated racial oppression. We hypothesized that private regard would mediate the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. Additionally, we hypothesized that public regard would mediate the relationship between critical consciousness and appropriated racial oppression. Results of mediation analyses indicated that critical consciousness predicted appropriated racial oppression through private regard. Conceptual literature suggests that stronger racial identity protects individuals from the deleterious impacts of racial discrimination because it helps provide said individuals with the knowledge that discrimination is due to systemic injustice rather than personal deficiencies, thus preventing their self-concepts from being infiltrated with negative stereotypes (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). These findings support this conceptualization but indicate that knowledge that discrimination is due to systemic injustice contributes to higher private regard which, in turn, contributes to lower

appropriated racial oppression. There was no evidence to suggest that critical consciousness influenced appropriated through public regard. As mentioned above, this may be due to the poor internal consistency for the public regard subscale within this sample.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study examined the pathways through which critical consciousness influences appropriated racial oppression for Black emerging young adults, a topic which has been addressed conceptually, but had yet to be examined empirically. While our findings demonstrate the important role that critical consciousness and racial identity may fulfill in influencing appropriated racial oppression, there are several limitations that should be considered concurrently with our findings. First, the convenience sample of Black college students located at one university limits the external validity of our findings. Results from this study may not generalize to populations within different socioenvironmental contexts. Given that context can differentially influence racial identity and adjustment to discrimination, future research should comprise a sample of participants with greater variability in geographic location and nonstudents. Second, the data yielded a low Cronbach's alpha for the public regard subscale of the MIBI. Perhaps, the analyses may have depicted different relations between public regard and the other variables of interest had we used a more reliable scale to capture public regard. In addition, this study's design is cross-sectional, thus causal conclusions cannot be drawn from the findings. Future studies should employ longitudinal design to discern the directions of the associations depicted within these findings. Also, the present study did not attend to the source of evaluation (i.e. White, in-group, non-White outgroup) in the assessment of participants' public regard. Since findings have indicated that the source of evaluation influences the relationship between Black peoples' public regard and self-esteem and evaluation of their own racial group, it

is necessary to discern the source to more clearly depict the relationships between the variables of interest (Perkins, Wiley, & Deaux, 2014).

In addition, this study focused only on the regard dimension of racial identity. Examination of additional dimensions of racial identity may have provided a different or more thorough depiction of how racial identity relates to critical consciousnesses and appropriated racial oppression. For instance, the centrality of race to one's overall self-concept might influence how critical consciousness impacts their private regard and how their private regard impacts appropriated racial oppression. Future studies should incorporate other dimensions of racial identity when examining the relationship between critical consciousness, racial identity, and appropriated racial oppression. Also, this study focused solely on the perceived inequality component of critical consciousness. Future research should seek to more fully capture the wholeness of this construct, incorporating egalitarianism and sociopolitical participation.

Implications

This study provides insight regarding how critical consciousness influences race-related psychological outcomes. Our findings expand upon the theory which implicates the instrumental role of critical consciousness in influencing appropriated racial oppression. Specifically, this study indicates that higher critical consciousness is related to more positive perceptions of one's racial self which, in turn, could beget lower levels of appropriated racial oppression. This has implications for the therapeutic utility of critical consciousness in mitigating the impact of racial discrimination and racism-related stress. Clinicians and interventions might engage critical consciousness as a therapeutic intervention to improve race-related psychosocial functioning.

These findings also support the importance of encouraging engagement in sociopolitical movements that facilitate the development of critical consciousness and positive private regard.

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APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age?

2. Ethnicity:

3. Are you Latino/a or Hispanic? Yes No

4. Please select your gender:

Cisgender Woman

Cisgender Man

Transgender Woman

Transgender Man

Gender Non-Conforming/Non-Binary

Other: _____

5. Sexual Orientation:

Gay/Lesbian

Bisexual

Heterosexual

Queer

Questioning

Other: _____

6. Where you born in the United States of America? Yes No

a. If not, at what age did you move to the U.S. permanently? _____

7. Highest level of education achieved by parent/guardian:

None

Some High School

High School degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)

Some college

Associate's degree

Bachelor's degree

Graduate or Professional degree

Not applicable/Don't know

APPENDIX B: CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS SCALE

Instructions: Please respond to the following statements by circling how much you agree or disagree with each statement. For each statement, choose “Strongly Disagree,” “Mostly Disagree,” “Slightly Disagree,” “Slightly Agree,” “Mostly Agree,” or “Strongly Agree.”

Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education					
1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Poor children have fewer chances to get a good high school education					
1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs					
1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Women have fewer chances to get good jobs					
1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Poor people have fewer chances to get good jobs					
1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get ahead					
1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Women have fewer chances to get ahead					
1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead					
1	2	3	4	5	6
9. It is a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom					
1	2	3	4	5	6

Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
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1	2	3	4	5	6
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10. It would be good if groups could be equal

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

11. Group equality should be our ideal

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

12. All groups should be given an equal chance in life

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

13. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Instructions: Please respond to the following statements by circling how often you were involved in each activity in the last year. For each statement, choose “Never did this,” “Once or twice last year,” “Once every few months,” “At least once a month,” or “At least once a week.”

Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
1	2	3	4	5

14. Participated in a civil rights group or organization

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

15. Participated in a political party, club, or organization

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

16. Wrote a letter to a school or community newspaper or publication about a social or political issue

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

17. Contacted a public official by phone, mail, or email to tell him/her how you felt about a particular social or political issue

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
1	2	3	4	5
18. Joined in a protest march, political demonstration, or political meeting				
1	2	3	4	5
19. Worked on a political campaign				
1	2	3	4	5
20. Participated in a discussion about a social or political issue				
1	2	3	4	5
21. Signed an email or written petition about a social or political issue				
1	2	3	4	5
22. Participated in a human rights, gay rights, or women's rights organization or group				
1	2	3	4	5

20. The same forces which have led to the oppression of Blacks have also led to the oppression of other groups.
21. A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today.
22. Blacks and Whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences.
23. Black values should not be inconsistent with human values.
24. I often regret that I am Black.
25. White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned.
26. Blacks should have the choice to marry interracially.
27. Blacks and Whites have more commonalties than differences.
28. Black people should not consider race when buying art or selecting a book to read.
29. Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues.
30. Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black.
31. We are all children of a higher being, therefore, we should love people of all races.
32. Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race.
33. I have a strong attachment to other Black people.
34. The struggle for Black liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups.
35. People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations.
36. Blacks should learn about the oppression of other groups.
37. Because America is predominantly white, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.
38. Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies.

39. Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system.
40. Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals.
41. Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated.
42. The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups.
43. Blacks should feel free to interact socially with White people.
44. Blacks should view themselves as being Americans first and foremost.
45. There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans.
46. The plight of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions within the system.
47. Blacks will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other oppressed groups.
48. Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.
49. Blacks should try to become friends with people from other oppressed groups.
50. The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented.
51. Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.
52. Blacks are not respected by the broader society.
53. In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.
54. I am proud to be Black.
55. I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society.
56. Society views Black people as an asset.

APPENDIX D: APPROPRIATED RACIAL OPPRESSION SCALE

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to measure people's social attitudes, beliefs, feelings and behaviors concerning race. There are no right or wrong answers--- everyone's experience is different. We are interested in YOUR experiences with race. Be as honest as you can in your responses.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. There have been times where I have been embarrassed to be a member of my race.
2. I wish I could have more respect for my racial group.
3. I feel critical about my racial group.
4. Sometimes I have a negative feeling about being a member of my race.
5. In general, I am ashamed of members of my racial group because of the way they act.
6. When interacting with other members of my race, I often feel like I don't fit in.
7. I don't really identify with my racial group's values and beliefs.
8. I find persons with lighter skin-tones to be more attractive.
9. I would like for my children to have light skin.
10. I find people who have straight and narrow noses to be more attractive.
11. I prefer my children not to have broad noses.
12. I wish my nose were narrower.
13. Good hair (i.e. straight) is better.
14. Because of my race, I feel useless at times.
15. I wish I were not a member of my race.
16. Whenever I think a lot about being a member of my racial group, I feel depressed.
17. Whites are better at a lot of things than people of my race.

18. People of my race don't have much to be proud of.
19. It is a compliment to be told, "You don't act like a member of your race."
20. When I look in the mirror, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see because of my race.
21. I feel that being a member of my racial group is a shortcoming.
22. People of my race shouldn't be so sensitive about race/racial matters.
23. People take racial jokes too seriously.
24. Although discrimination in America is real, it is definitely overplayed by some members of my race.

Vita

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