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Fernando Estrada
Loyola Marymount University, fernando.estrada@lmu.edu

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Perceived Culpability in Critical Multicultural Education: Understanding and Responding to Race Informed Guilt and Shame to Further Learning Outcomes Among White American College Students

Fernando Estrada and Geneva Matthews
Loyola Marymount University

In this investigation we explored among a U.S. sample of White college students the effect of perceived race-informed culpability—conceptualized as the self-conscious emotions known as White guilt and shame—on two critical multicultural education outcomes: modern prejudicial attitudes and demonstrated anti-racist knowledge. Interaction effects by participants' racial identity were also examined. Moderated hierarchical linear regression showed that the tendency to experience White guilt as well as White shame explained a significant portion of the variability in racist attitudes. For knowledge, only guilt had an effect. No interaction effects were observed. Limitations are discussed followed by implications for teaching and learning with an emphasis on affect-sensitive pedagogy.

Multicultural education is one of the most challenging topics to teach for postsecondary teachers because of the strong emotional reactions by students of racially privileged backgrounds (i.e., White/Caucasian; Kernahan & Davis, 2007; Sue et al., 2011). Of particular interest is the pervasive feeling of perceived culpability or blameworthiness that White racial students can experience and its ties to outcomes in multicultural education. Within the United States this inquiry is important because, on average, college courses there are comprised of predominantly White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), and also because perceived culpability induces an anxiety that can either enhance learning or distract from it (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Scholarship in this area can help deepen the understanding among educators related to student emotions, its effects on course outcomes, and the development and testing of empirically derived, affect-sensitive teaching practices.

In the current study, we adopted a social-emotional theoretical framework (Tangney & Dearing, 2002) that helped to conceptualize a complex phenomenon like race-informed culpability as comprised of White guilt and White shame[1], which facilitated an empirical test of direct and indirect effects on (a) modern racial prejudice and (b) demonstrated knowledge. First, a conceptual framework is articulated that helps to locate White guilt and shame more precisely within a postsecondary course setting framed by critical multicultural education principles. Then, three hypotheses are tested using moderated hierarchical linear regression and the results discussed in relation to teaching and learning. Limitations of the study as well as future scholarship are discussed.

Student Emotions and Critical Multicultural Education

A course curriculum focused on race, racism, and other multicultural topics can often trigger among White college students an emotional reaction undergirded with anxiety aimed at themselves. Helping to explain are factors such as the aim, design, and overall implementation—or pedagogy. Critical multicultural education pedagogy draws on paradigms like feminism and critical race theory, essentially elevating within the process of teaching and learning the importance of demographic variables like gender, race, and sexuality as well as more distal forces like institutional or systematic oppression that help maintain wide disparities in areas like education and healthcare (May & Sleeter, 2010). Accordingly, the classroom is seen as a space where the teacher, by engaging students with participatory forms of instruction like community service and group discussions, stimulates intellectual as well as emotional processes in order to help them acquire accurate cultural knowledge, confront prejudicial attitudes, and achieve a more resolute commitment to social justice (Kivel, 2011).

Anti-Racist Multicultural Pedagogy and Race-Informed Culpability

Anti-racist multicultural pedagogy, a strand of critical multicultural education, is an instructional paradigm that specifically targets the development of vocabulary and behavior for addressing *White* racism (May & Sleeter, 2010). Curricular emphasis is placed on examining the role that Whiteness and White identity politics play in maintaining social stratification (Cross & Naidoo, 2012). Consequently, the student is required to unpack provocative concepts like cultural dominance, imperialism, and White racial privilege. In

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[1]To minimize redundancy, guilt and shame refer to the White racialized version unless otherwise noted.

brief, the White person is asked to centrally consider the notion that inequality is not so much a problem facing minorities, but rather a problem stemming from Whiteness (Kivel, 2011).

Anti-racist multicultural pedagogy sheds light on the normalcy of emotional reactions among White students in a multicultural education setting. Moreover, it illuminates the likely possibility that an instructor will have to address student feelings rooted in a pervasive sense of personal responsibility for existing racism and oppression. A deeper understanding of this perceived and racially charged blameworthiness and its effects on key outcomes can promote affect-sensitive multicultural teaching strategies (Zembylas, 2012).

White Guilt and Shame

Perceived race-informed culpability has been largely understood as White guilt (Spanierman, Poteat, Wang, & Oh, 2008; Tatum, 1994), or a blend of confusion, disbelief, and remorse stemming from a perception that one has personally engaged in an act of racism. It can also involve the perception of an ideological transgression of a race-based moral such as meritocracy or color-blindness (Spanierman et al., 2008)—ideals that are improbable within a racially stratified society like the U.S. (Bonilla-Silva, 2013).

Guilt, generally speaking, has a negative valence and is considered unpleasant. But in an academic setting, studies with samples of U.S. students have found largely positive links to educational outcomes. White guilt has been correlated with a greater belief in oppression against minorities, fewer prejudices against Blacks, and overall lower levels of racism (Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005; Swim & Miller, 1999). Iyer, Leach, and Crosby (2003) found that higher levels of self-reported guilt was associated with greater support for affirmative action and other attitudes focused on ending racial inequality. Among graduate students, guilt has demonstrated a positive association with an enhanced ability to conceptualize client problems (Spanierman et al., 2008).

The extant literature suggests that the tendency to feel White guilt heightens the sense of personal responsibility for racism in a way that leads to multicultural gains. While prior research has looked at the effects of guilt on overt forms of prejudice (e.g., Swim & Miller, 1999), newer measures that reflect its subtle nature remain underutilized. In a time of rapid shifts in U.S. demography (Krogstad, 2014) and increasing racial tensions nation-wide (Drake, 2014), examining the association between White guilt and modern racist attitudes is important and timely.

The More Unpleasant Side of Culpability

The experience of generalized shame, which is similar to guilt but more unpleasant (Tracy, Robins, & Tangney, 2007), remains highly understudied in education. But an anti-racist paradigm urges postsecondary instructors to ask: is it possible for racially dominant students to experience a more acute reaction stemming from perceived culpability? If so, what impact might it have on multicultural outcomes? Answers to questions that explore the complexity and nuance of the affective experience of a student can shape intelligent teaching practices (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007).

Similar to general forms of guilt, general shame also stems from a perceived transgression, but judgment is cast throughout the *entire* self rather than on a single behavior or act. Stated differently, guilt involves a person feeling as though he or she did something wrong, whereas shame feels as though there is something wrong with him or her. Shame is associated with the urge to hide and withdraw from others and, left unattended, can manifest in irritability and expressions of anger and resentment (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Such emotions have been identified as having the potential to adversely impact multicultural learning (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; Garcia & Van Soest, 2000).

Theoretically, White shame might work similarly to White guilt in a critical multicultural education context and positively impact outcomes. However, because shame in general is believed to be more unpleasant, the anxiety associated with it might work against the beneficial properties of self-conscious emotions. Because the loosening of a modern racist ideology is a delicate undertaking even for the most seasoned instructor (Sue et al., 2011), college educators stand to benefit from examining the effects on racist attitudes from both White guilt and shame. In addition, examining the impact of both race-informed emotions on demonstrated forms of knowledge, as opposed to self-reported knowledge, can shed light on the relation between perceived race-informed culpability and more objective measures of academic performance, which currently lack. Spanierman and colleagues (2008) found a positive correlation between White guilt and self-reported multicultural knowledge among a sample of graduate students. Seeing if an association exists between performance on a test and feeling racially culpable, understood as both White guilt and shame, can promote affect-sensitive strategies to optimize multicultural learning (Boatright-Horowitz, Marraccini, & Harps-Logan, 2012).

The Current Study

The aim of this study was to empirically test the notion that perceived race-informed culpability

operationalized as both White guilt and shame are uniquely associated with critical multicultural outcomes like reduced racial prejudice and acquisition of anti-racist knowledge. A social theory of self-conscious emotions (Tracy et al., 2007) helped us generate the hypotheses. The theory maintains that general forms of guilt and shame involve a perceived moral transgression, with guilt implicating a behavior and shame the entire self. Yet, as a self-reported experience, generalized guilt and shame are often seen as more similar than different. For example, studies using a range of quantitative measures have shown guilt and shame to frequently co-vary (Tracy et al., 2007). In addition, the link between affect and outcome is not always straightforward. Self-conscious emotions involve intrapersonal processes (i.e., identity centrality), and social identity theory (Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011) would contend that the extent to which a person identifies with their White identity could bolster or mitigate the effects of race-informed guilt and shame on the outcomes of interest. To summarize, the hypotheses tested in the current study are:

> (1) White guilt and shame will be negatively and significantly associated with modern racist attitudes above and beyond other explanatory variables. In other words, as guilt and shame increase, racial prejudice will decrease.
> (2) White guilt and shame will be positively and significantly associated with demonstrated knowledge. Specifically, as levels of guilt and shame increase the scores on a recall test focused on anti-racist content will also increase above and beyond any control variables.
> (3) White racial centrality will moderate the relation between White guilt and shame and the dependent measures such that stronger levels of White centrality will bolster the effects of guilt and shame on the dependent variables.

Persons interested in topics related to multiculturalism and anti-racism will seek out information on their own, whether through personal reading or college coursework. Such behavior can influence race-based attitudes but also existing levels of multicultural knowledge (Banks & Banks, 2012). To minimize the number of variables in this exploratory study, we elected to use a degree of self-exposure to multiculturalism content as the only covariate.

The tests of the three aforementioned hypotheses will advance the literature in a few ways. First, perceived race-informed culpability is defined as consisting independently of both White guilt and shame, which offers a more complete understanding of emotions in the classroom. Second, the test of moderation increases the precision for intervention design by highlighting groups for whom the effects are largest.

Third, the dependent variables in this study respond to trends in the literature. Last, the inclusion of the control variable increases the statistical rigor of the study, thereby increasing confidence in the obtained results.

Method

Participants

Table 1 shows a demographic profile of the 153 participants in the study. All participants self-identified as being racially White and ages ranged from 18 to 29 ($M = 21.3$, $SD = 2.3$). In terms of gender, 63% ($n = 97$) were women while the remaining 37% ($n = 56$) were men. Regionally, 61% ($n = 93$) of participants were students at a large university on the West coast, 31% ($n = 48$) attended a university in the Midwest, and the remaining 8% ($n = 12$) were students from the Southwest. The majority of participants (65%) were juniors or seniors. A single item measure of a person's self-perceived social rank (1 = *lower class* to 10 = *upper class*) was used, with the average participant identifying as middle class ($M = 6.7$, $SD = 1.44$). On average, the political orientation of participants (1 = *extremely liberal* to 7 = *extremely* conservative) was moderately liberal ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 1.37$).

Measures

Demographic. Participants were asked several demographic-related questions concerning their age, race, current education level, socioeconomic status, and political orientation.

White guilt and shame. The Test of White Guilt and Shame (Grzanka, 2010) is comprised of seven scenarios designed to elicit a range of White racial anxiety, with each scenario accompanied by several response options that correspond to either White guilt or White shame. A third factor has been observed that taps into a cognitive process of denial and not an emotional experience, so this factor is less relevant than the guilt and shame subscores. Participants are instructed to rate each response item from 1 (*not likely*) to 5 (*very likely*) with the average of all response items for each factor indicating participants' level of proneness to that particular affect. As an example, one scenario states: "*you read a Civil War novel about American slavery that describes violent abuse of Black slaves by White slave-owners.*" Participants then rate response items like: (a) *you would feel depressed and sad about the history of racism in the United States*; and (b) *you would think: "I wish there was something I could do to make up for all the harm slavery caused Black people.*"

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis with a sample of White college students helped establish the psychometric properties (Grzanka, 2010). Convergent

Table 1
Sample Demographics (N=153)

	M	SD	n	%
Socioeconomic Status	5.7[†]	1.44		
Political Orientation	3.3[††]	1.37		
Exposure to Diversity	3.4[x]	.69		
Age				
18 to 99			28	18
20 to 22			93	61
Older than 22			32	21
Gender				
Men			56	37
Women			97	63
School Region				
West Coast			93	61
Southwest			12	8
Midwest			48	31
Education				
Freshman			15	10
Sophomore			30	20
Junior			39	25
Senior			60	39
Graduate			9	6

Note. [†] indicates a scale of 10, [††] indicates a scale of 7; [x] indicates a scale out of 5

validity was established with measures for general guilt and shame, as well as with existing measures for White guilt (Grzanka, 2010). Discriminant validity has yet to be reported. Temporal stability (two weeks) has been calculated from .87 to .90 (Grzanka & Estrada, 2011). Alpha coefficients for the scales have ranged from .80 to .86 (Grzanka, 2010). For the current sample, alpha coefficients for the guilt and shame scales were calculated at .81 and .84 respectively.

Racist attitudes. The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002) was designed to assess contemporary racist attitudes across four themes: work ethic, excessive demands, denial of continuing discrimination, and undeserved advantage. In essence, the instrument is described as measuring a blend of racial antipathy and conservative values (Henry & Sears, 2002). One item asks*: Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same.* Item responses vary from 1 to 4 with options varying in description to prevent agreement bias. Responses are summed and averaged to obtain a single value, with higher values indicating a higher level of modern racist beliefs.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have shown a unitary construct (Henry & Sears, 2002). The instrument predicts conservative racial policy preference and tests of discriminant validity have established negative correlations with measures for traditional racism

(Henry & Sears, 2002). A two-week, test-retest reliability coefficient has been calculated at .68, and alpha coefficients with White college students has ranged from .77 to .79 (Henry & Sears, 2002). The alpha coefficient for the current sample was calculated at .78.

Demonstrated knowledge. Multiple-choice questions that test recall information on a specific area of content are frequently used to show the degree of knowledge retention among students. Given the exploratory nature of this study, eight multiple-choice items were created that assessed recall of content related to a lecture on structural racism (see next section). For example, participants were asked, *In a racialized environment, what determines the distribution of social privilege?* Each item was followed by five answer choices with only one correct response. In the aforementioned case the answer was: *racial group membership.* Correct answers for all eight items were summed, which provided a single value used to determine the degree of demonstrated multicultural knowledge (i.e., information recall). Reliability coefficient for the eight-item measure was calculated at .70.

Racial identity centrality. The four-item, identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Measure (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) was used as the moderator variable. The scale was designed to assess the importance of one's social group membership to one's

self-concept with higher averages indicating higher collective self-esteem. All subscales for the collective self-esteem measure, including the identity subscale, underwent principal component factor analysis and have demonstrated sound convergent and discriminant validity. The identity subscale has been found to positively correlate with other measures for collective esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Two-week test-retest reliability coefficient for the identity subscale has been reported at .68 (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) whereas internal stability coefficient has been observed at ..83 (Swim & Miller, 1999).

A modified version of the scale focusing on racial identification was used. For example, one item asks: *Overall, being White has very little to do with how I feel about myself.* Each item was rated from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) with the average score indicating the level of identification with Whiteness for each participant. Alpha coefficient for the current sample was calculated at .77.

Exposure to multiculturalism. The control variable consisted of five items that assessed the level of exposure to multicultural and race-related issues as a result of coursework and other extra-curricular activities. For example, one item asked respondents: "*To what extent have you chosen coursework to further your understanding of racial issues?*" Response choices ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a great deal*). Alpha coefficient for this sample was calculated at .73.

Anti-Racist Presentation

A novel stimulus was created to be able to preliminarily explore the relation among racial affect and demonstrated knowledge. Prior to completing the dependent measures, every participant viewed a standardized, 2-minute audio-video presentation on the topic of a racialized social system, a concept focused on the institutional nature of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 1996; see Appendix for text). The presentation was designed in consultation with a professor in American Studies for accuracy and cohesion. A confederate instructor with a pseudonym delivered the audio-video lecture.

Procedures

Participants were recruited via student email listserves in three public universities spanning the West Coast, Southwest, and Midwest regions of the United States. Every participant received a $5 gift card to a local coffee shop for his/her involvement in the study. The study was conducted in an office on two laptop computers that were running *SuperLab 4.5*, a stimulus presentation and data collection software. Participants were asked to use headphones for audio clarity as well as instructed to follow additional prompts on the screen, which began with the

informed consent. Demographic information was collected first along with information for control and moderator variables. The brief lecture followed, and then the measures for White racial affect, racist attitudes, and demonstrated knowledge, in that order.

Analytic Approach

A power analyses for an F test of R^2 increase using G*Power 3.1 indicated that a sample size of 138 was needed to achieve a power of .80 when detecting a small to medium effect size at an alpha of .05. The total recruited sample was 159. After removing cases found to be univariate or multivariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), a final sample of 153 respondents was reached. All subsequent calculations were done with this reduced sample size.

The screening methods of Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) revealed that less than 5%, or five data points, were missing. Little's missing completely at random test (MCAR) was performed and found to be non-significant ($p > .05$), suggesting that the missing cases were not significantly different from the non-missing cases in a systematic fashion. Multiple imputations procedure was used to estimate missing values (Schlomer, Bauman, & Card, 2010). No significant skews or deviation from normality was observed.

Using hierarchical moderated regression the three hypotheses were tested using two statistical models (i.e., one for each dependent variables) and each model was subjected to an inference test. Alpha levels were set at .05 to indicate significant individual regression weights as well as change in variance accounted for (i.e., ΔR^2). Generally speaking, parceling out the unique effects of guilt and shame is statistically important given their similarities (Tracy et al., 2007). Thus, White guilt and shame were entered into each model sequentially. Per Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004), the covariate and moderator variable were entered in Step 1 followed by guilt in Step 2, shame in Step 3, and the interactions in Step 4. All variables were centered prior to analyses. Strength of effect was determined by observing the squared correlation (i.e., R^2). Later examination of regression output provided additional assurance that multicollinearity was not a problem: variance inflation factor range = 1.02 to 1.94 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Results

Bivariate correlations and central tendencies are displayed in Table 2 and show guilt ($M = 3.4$, $SD = .86$) and shame ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .84$) as significantly related to each other ($r = .64$, $p < .01$). Guilt was also significantly and negatively correlated with racist attitudes ($r = -.52$, $p < .01$) and positively with

Table 2
Bivariate Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations (N=153)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Guilt	---					
2. Shame	.64**	---				
3. Racism	-.52**	-.58**	---			
4. Knowledge	.24**	.13	-.24**	---		
5. Whiteness	.04	.05	-.09	.00	---	
6. Exposures	.34**	.29**	-.27**	.13	.17*	---
M	3.4[†]	2.5[†]	1.8[††]	5.7[x]	3.4[xx]	3.3[†]
SD	.86	.84	.52	1.96	1.30	.67

Note. *p<.05. **p<.01. [†] indicates out of a 5-point scale. [††] indicates out of 4-point scale. [x] indicates out of an 8 point scale. [xx] indicates out of a 7-point scale

Table 3
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses (N=153)

	B	SE B	β	t	R^2	Adj R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	f^2	dfs
Racist Attitudes										
Step 1					.07	.06	.07	5.91*	.07	2, 150
Prior multicultural experience	-.20*	.06	-.26	-3.23						
White identity salience	-.02	.03	-.05	-.63						
Step 2					.29	.28	.22	46.58**	.28	1, 149
Guilt	-.31**	.39	.31	4.24						
Step 3					.38	.36	.09	21.171**	.09	1, 148
Guilt	-.16**	.05	-.25	-.29						
Shame	-.25**	.05	-.39	-6.82						
Step 4					.41	.38	.02	2.59	.02	2, 146
Guilt x Whiteness	-.07	.04	-.13	-1.53						
Shame x Whiteness	.00	.04	-.01	-.13						
Demonstrated Knowledge										
Step 1					.02	.00	.02	1.43	.01	2, 150
Prior Multicultural experience	.40	.24	.13	1.69						
White identity salience	-.03	.12	-.02	-.28						
Step 2					.06	.04	.04	6.88*	.04	1, 149
Guilt	.51*	.19	.22	2.62						
Step 3					.06	.03	.00	.20	.00	1, 148
Guilt	.58*	.24	.25	2.35						
Shame	-.11	.24	-.04	-.45						
Step 4					.08	.04	.02	1.77	.02	2, 146
Guilt x Whiteness	.40	.21	.20	1.85						
Shame x Whiteness	-.30	-.30	.19	-.17	-1.53					

Note. Adj = adjusted. *p<.05, two-tailed. **p<.01, two-tailed

knowledge (*r* = .24, *p* < .01).   Shame also was negatively and significantly associated with racism (*r* = -.58, *p* < .01) but not with knowledge (*r* = .13, *p* > .05). As expected, participants who indicated having had greater amounts of exposure to multicultural material also tended to report lower levels of racist attitudes (*r* = -.27, *p* < .01), but no significant correlation existed with demonstrated knowledge (*r* = .13, *p* > .05).

The results of the regression analyses (Table 3) partially supported the hypotheses.   Overall, the statistical models showed White racial culpability as uniquely associated with multicultural outcomes better than chance alone and above and beyond the variability accounted for by prior exposure to multiculturalism. For the model predicting racist attitudes, Step 3 showed significant main effects, $\Delta F(4, 148) = 21.71$, $\Delta R^2 = .09$, *p* < .01 for both guilt, $t(148) = -2.93$, *p* < .01 and shame,

$t(148) = -4.66$, $p < .01$. Together, guilt and shame accounted for 31% of the variability in the dependent variable. The inclusion of shame in Step 3 contributed an additional 9% explanatory power to the model, markedly lower than that for guilt (22%). For the model predicting demonstrated knowledge, Step 2 showed main effects $\Delta F(3, 149) = 6.88$, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $p < .05$ that were attributed to guilt, $t(149) = 2.62$, $p < .05$; however, the addition of shame in Step 3 did not explain any significant variability in the dependent measure, $\Delta F(4, 148) = .21$, $p > .05$. The tendency for participants to feel guilty accounted for 4% of the variability in the outcome measure.

According to Cohen's (1988) strength effect values, the effect (i.e., f^2) of White racial culpability was greater for racist attitudes than for demonstrated knowledge, with guilt showing stronger effects compared to shame. Last, the addition of the interaction terms in Step 4 in both statistical models did not yield significant results, $\Delta F(2, 146) = 2.59$, $p > .05$ for racist attitudes and $\Delta F(2, 146) = 1.77$, $p > .05$ for demonstrated learning. This means that the interaction between White culpability and racial identity salience did not explain any significant portion of variability in the dependent measures above and beyond main effects.

Discussion

The findings here align with existing scholarship on self-conscious emotions by suggesting that perceived race-informed culpability, operationalized as White guilt and shame, is a potentially facilitative force in critical multicultural education at the postsecondary level. Despite not seeing an interaction effect, results showed that race-informed guilt and shame were uniquely associated with lower levels of modern racial prejudice after parceling out the effects from prior exposure to multicultural content. Preliminary evidence also showed White guilt, but not shame, predicting better performance on a brief, multiple-choice quiz on structural racism. Emotions work in tandem with other mechanisms to direct student attention and sustain motivation and engagement in class (Linnenbrink-Garcia & Pekrun, 2011). Exploring such possibilities within multicultural education frames the next section, followed by a review of limitations and considerations for future scholarship.

Understanding and Responding to Perceived Race-Informed Culpability

The evidence suggests that the tendency to feel guilt and shame among the current sample of White U.S. college students was associated with lower levels of racist attitudes. The feeling of personal responsibility for existing racism, despite the discomfort it produces, might signal an emerging awareness of the self in relation to the environment, which Brotherton (1996) considered key for a shift to truly occur in one's racist attitudes. Endorsement of a racist ideology in the current study was operationalized as a blend of factors related not just to conservative values (e.g., endorsement of meritocracy) but also the sense of racial apathy and antipathy (e.g., denial of existing discrimination), which can characterize the experiences of many Whites towards racism and oppression (Bonilla-Silva, 2013; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). Therefore, as an instructor, stimulating cognitive as well as emotional processes among students might bolster efforts to help dislodge a deeply rooted ideology.

For example, a didactic activity (e.g., lecture on structural racism) could be followed with a participatory task (e.g., journaling) in order to draw out of students personal experiences related to race and racism that could potentially unveil race-based contradictions (e.g., belief in meritocracy), which can be used to prompt further reflection. If feelings of guilt and shame emerge for a student, an instructor could facilitate a process-oriented discussion with the aim of helping the student see the potential relevance between the course content and personal life experiences, as such a strategy can result in learning that is more meaningful (e.g., Mio & Barker-Hackett, 2003).

Importantly, while both guilt and shame constructs stem from a perceived moral transgression—thus behaving in similar ways (see Table 2)—guilt, in theory, draws attention to a specific behavior, whereas shame casts blame over the entire person. This has pedagogical implications for bringing about positive shifts in racist attitudes. For example, a student might express guilt after realizing a tendency not to speak out against jokes that are racist. This level awareness could assist an instructor to direct the student's attention to other similar incidents that, in turn, might lead to new goals for the student to pursue. Shame, however, is generally more self-deprecating and associated with the urge to withdraw (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). For example, a student's sudden realization of having condoned racist jokes might bring to focus a perceived deficiency in assertiveness and other dispositional traits. Repeated episodes of anxiety of this type can have counterproductive effects on student engagement and motivation (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Seeing an opportunity to temper a student's self-blame, an instructor might highlight the larger structural forces at play that ultimately orchestrate *everyone's* participation in a racist society (Bonilla-Silva, 1996). This strategy, also referred to as normalizing, can be an effective way to contain a learner's anxiety and reduce the potential for defensiveness (Hill, 2014).

White shame did not predict the second dependent variable (i.e., demonstrated knowledge), but White guilt showed a significant and positive main effect such that

higher levels of guilt were associated with more correct responses on a multiple-choice quiz focused on structural racism. The finding is preliminary given the study-specific stimulus and measure but incrementally important given the dearth of research. Emotions can direct attention (Linnenbrink-Garcia & Pekrun, 2011) and are intertwined with memory making (Zembylas, Charalambous, & Charalambous, 2014). Also, general forms of guilt can inhibit anger and aggression and brings to one's awareness past behavior (Tracy et al., 2007). In this way, perhaps, White guilt can make an ambiguous and emotionally laden topic like institutional racism more palatable and personally meaningful, possibly explaining the higher quiz scores observed here. While our finding aligns with the extant literature on general guilt, the lack of sufficient student-level covariates in the statistical model makes alternative explanations plausible and highlights the need for more empirical studies to fully understand the emotional-cognitive link within a critical multicultural education setting.

Study Limitations and the Need for More Scholarship

While the findings here are encouraging of pedagogical practices that attend to the fuller student experience, it is important to first consider some of the limitations of our study, beginning with the use of a non-representative sample of White college students and the limitation it places on the generalizability of our results. Also, the use of information recall as a measure for demonstrated knowledge, arguably a more surface-level outcome, prevents generalizability to deeper forms of learning such as critical thinking skills. Additionally, the lack of student-level variables that could control for alternative explanations (e.g., GPA) signals a need to see the finding related to demonstrated knowledge as preliminary.

Another limitation concerns the measure for White guilt and shame, which is a relatively new measure in need of additional validity studies. Also, while no moderator effect from White identity salience was observed, the idea of a racial self-concept is truly multidimensional, and the current conceptualization might have influenced the null results observed here.

A more nuanced understanding of student emotions in higher education is a worthwhile line of inquiry, particularly as it relates to emotionally laden coursework. Researchers in the future will want to test the effects of White guilt and shame on deeper-level outcomes like critical thinking skills. Within a professional training setting, White guilt has been associated with enhanced counselor case conceptualization (Spanierman et al., 2008). It is unknown at this time how White shame would impact

these and other related outcomes. Additional, theory-driven studies are needed to explore other moderating variables that can bring greater sophistication to intervention design.

Racism is a dynamic construct, and so researchers will want to investigate in the future whether the findings observed here extend to other ideas of modern racism such as micro-aggressions. Earlier in the paper we also identified social stratification as a key factor in making it possible for White Americans to have a racially driven emotional reaction like White guilt. However, social stratification is a global phenomenon and not restricted only to race. Thus, future scholarship rooted in varying socio-political realities and ideologies will want to explore self-conscious feelings shaped by gender- or religious-based stratification and the influence (i.e., strength effect) that those emotional states have on education outcomes. Researchers in the U.S. might want to consider exploring differences in effect stemming from regional differences, like comparing scoring patterns based on whether the participant is in the Western versus the Southern part of the nation.

Affect-Sensitive Pedagogy in Critical Multicultural Education

The findings of the current study, at minimum, invites multicultural educators seeking to enhance the learning environment for their students to consider working pedagogically with race-informed feelings such as White guilt and shame. This can be facilitated by a deeper knowledge on how emotions intersect with teaching and learning (see Schutz & Pekrun, 2007), as well as on concepts like self-conscious emotions (see Tracy et al., 2007). Before closing, we direct the reader to Goodman's (2011) book, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups*. Highlighted below are three of Goodman's recommendations that we believe can assist instructors pursuing to enhance their pedagogical response to White guilt and shame, and other race-related emotions, in critical multicultural and anti-racist education.

Affirm, validate, and convey respect. The experience of perceived culpability within multicultural education is normal. Therefore, normalizing White guilt and shame and conveying compassion for the discomfort that students might feel are ways to affirm and validate their experience. This can be challenging when, for example, students' prejudices manifest in class, sometimes unabashedly (e.g., Garcia & Van Soest, 1999). But concepts like strategic empathy (Zembylas, 2012) can help instructors maintain an appreciation of a range of affective experiences within multicultural education.

Help identify feelings and discuss reactions. It is not easy to openly acknowledge feelings of guilt and

shame, of any kind. Storrs (2012) observed that for course curricula laden with reactive material, private journaling, as compared to group discussions, resulted in a higher number of students opening up about sensitive topics. Mio and Barker-Hackett (2003) also discussed ways to combine journaling with other course activities to offer students a more comprehensive learning experience. The concept of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005) might be another useful tool, as it can help students acquire skills to be aware of and manage their feelings, build empathy, and ultimately learn how to relate to one-self and others.

Build the relationship. As an instructor, cultivating a positive relational milieu in class is essential for a student to feel safe enough to verbalize uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Higher education scholars (e.g., Estrada, 2015; Myers, 2008) recommend the use of the pedagogical concept known as the teaching alliance to strengthen the quality of the dyadic student-instructor relationship. In addition, Estrada (2015) offers a summary of interventions proposed by other multicultural education pedagogues aimed at bolstering the sense of interpersonal trust with students, which can facilitate their expression of White guilt and shame should they experience it.

Conclusion

It is important to have an empirical body of knowledge on the interdependence between student emotions and learning outcomes in critical multicultural education, as this can further the development of more sophisticated teaching interventions. In fact, those teaching blueprints call for instructors to work with a range of student emotions or, in other words, to be able to teach using the whole student experience.

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FERNANDO ESTRADA is an assistant professor of counseling in the School of Education at Loyola Marymount University. His work focuses on understanding how cultural factors like gender, race, and sexual orientation intersect with psychological and pedagogical interventions.

He received his BS in psychology from the University of California, San Diego and both an MA and EdM in counseling psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. He received his PhD in counseling psychology from Arizona State University.

GENEVA MATTHEWS is an Assistant Principal at Environmental Charter Middle School in Inglewood, California. She graduated with a MA in counseling from the School of Education at Loyola Marymount University and a BA in sociology from the University of California, Riverside. She is currently a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Loyola Marymount University.

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Appendix

PRESENTATION

"Hello. I teach at a university and would like you to learn a new concept called racialized social systems. There are 2 parts to this presentation, each about 1 minute long, followed by some questions. Ok, let's get started.

The concept of race, as when I refer to myself as a White man, is in fact socially constructed. But why? The answer lies in the idea that modern social systems, such as the United States and Spain, are governed by hierarchical social patterns. These are essentially types of social relations between people based on uneven power and resources. They exist to establish social order.

So, the concept of race was created to help distribute power and resources among people based on physical features and to maintain social order. Today, a racialized social system reproduces these relational patterns.

Racialized social system are highly influenced by powerful institutions like the educational system. Through them, a racialized system orders human relations by promoting a real difference in social status. In other words, a real difference in living with social privilege or social oppression based on race.

On a final note, because a racialized social system operates on an institutional level, it is racial group membership and not individual choice that dictates whether a person receives privileges or experiences oppression. That's the end of the presentation. Before you go, there are some final questions for you to answer."