

PERCEPTION OF RACISM IN AMBIGUOUS EVENTS:  
A CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY ANALYSIS

BY

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Glenn Adams, Ph.D., Chair

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### Abstract

Previous research indicates that Black Americans are more likely than White Americans to think that racism still plays a role in current events. Mainstream accounts often explain these differences as the product of something about Black Americans that leads them to over-perceive racism. This paper applies a cultural psychology analysis to this phenomenon and suggests a more neutral account of the differences. This study examined whether engagement with history knowledge and various identity constructions (national and racial identity) were related to racism perceptions among White ( $n = 85$ ) and Black ( $n = 65$ ) undergraduates. As hypothesized, the present research replicated group differences in perception and found a positive relationship between historical knowledge and perceptions of racism in Hurricane Katrina-related events. The present research suggests that there are representations of American history that reconcile these racial differences in perception and allows all Americans, regardless of their identity, to find common ground.

### Perception of racism in ambiguous events: A cultural psychology analysis

*White folks have been quick to accuse Blacks...of playing the race card, as if their conclusions have been reached not because of careful consideration of the facts as they see them, but rather, because of some irrational (even borderline paranoid) tendency to see racism everywhere.*

–Tim Wise, (2008) What kind of card is race?

Historically, psychologists have linked perceptions of racism with irrational fear and considered them indicators of pathology (Whaley, 2002; Guthrie, 1976). In fact, clinicians are still likely to misdiagnose Black Americans who express a general mistrust of White society (i.e., cultural paranoia and cultural mistrust) as schizophrenic or otherwise disturbed (Whaley, 2002; 2006). Although research suggests that cultural mistrust is a normative and adaptive response to a system of racism and oppression (Whaley 2001), these constructions of racism claims as paranoia imply that Black communities are somewhat out of touch with reality in ways that White communities are not.

In contrast to mainstream accounts, this paper applies a cultural psychology analysis to the topic of group differences in perception of racism (Adams & Salter, 2007). Applied to this phenomenon, a cultural psychology analysis makes two important contributions. First, by *adopting the perspective of the oppressed*, a cultural psychology analysis reveals a less pathologizing account of racism perceptions. In contrast to the prevailing belief that perceptions of racism are grounded in paranoia or unfounded concern, a cultural psychology perspective suggests that it is precisely “careful consideration of the facts”—accurate knowledge of the historical past—that

influences divergent perceptions of racism in ambiguous events. Second, by *turning the analytical lens*, a cultural psychology analysis reveals how apparently neutral constructions of reality, too, are culturally grounded. In contrast to prevailing beliefs that perceptions of racism are solely linked to Black identity concerns, a cultural psychology analysis suggests that perceptions of racism (and denial) are tied to identity-relevant concerns among White Americans, as well.

### *Group Differences in Perception of Racism*

Previous research indicates that Black Americans are more likely than White Americans to think that racism still plays a role in American society (Feagin, 2006). Following the Hurricane Katrina disaster, the U.S. media reported similar racial differences in perceptions of racism in the aftermath of the storm. While the majority of Black respondents (71% ) agreed that the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that racial inequality was still a problem in the U.S., only 32% of White respondents agreed with this statement (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2005). How is one to explain this difference?

### *"Playing the Race Card"*

Media and scientific reports often explain group differences in perception of racism as the product of something about Black Americans that leads them to perceive racism in events. For example, a widely cited study examined racial group differences in beliefs about government conspiracies perpetrated against Black Americans (Crocker, Luhtanen, Broadax, & Blaine, 1999). The investigators explain

Black Americans' beliefs in conspiracy theories as the product of "system blame": attributing problems facing the Black community to prejudice and discrimination.

For Black Americans, these conspiracy theories may represent an attempt to cope with a predicament posed by stigma—the fact that Black Americans are faring poorly, as a group, relative to White Americans. Attributing problems facing Black Americans to something about Blacks themselves threatens the personal and/or collective self-esteem of Blacks. Attributing those problems to prejudice and discrimination deflects these potentially self-threatening implications. (Crocker et al., 1999, p. 943)

The researchers suggest that system blame beliefs can have self-protective consequences for Black Americans. Highlighting the same idea, work on attributional ambiguity also suggests that members of stigmatized groups are motivated to attribute negative outcomes to prejudice against their group in order to protect self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989). They found that Blacks were more likely to attribute negative feedback from a White evaluator to prejudice than were Whites (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991). If the Black participants believed the fictional White evaluator could see them, they were more likely to attribute the feedback, whether positive or negative, to prejudice more than if they believed their evaluator could not see them. The researchers suggest that members of stigmatized groups will attribute negative feedback to prejudice whenever it is plausible, and that these attributions have protective consequences for self-esteem.



Regardless of researcher intentions (see Crocker & Major, 2003), this sort of explanation—the idea that Black Americans endorse various conspiracy theories, inflate attributions to prejudice, and deflect personal blame in order to protect their self-esteem—is akin to the suggestion that Blacks are “playing the race card”. Implicit in “playing the race card” framings is the idea that attributions to racism and discrimination represent motivated exaggerations, delusions, and deviations from accurate perceptions of reality.

Responses to this idea have generally challenged the extent to which attributions to racism and discrimination necessarily have positive consequences. Specifically, researchers have questioned the extent to which constant attributions to racism protect self-esteem. Branscombe and colleagues found that stable attributions to prejudice did not have positive consequences for well-being; instead, attributions were negatively related to both personal and collective self-esteem (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). The rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999) suggests that it is increased minority group identification that protects self-esteem, not attributions to pervasive discrimination, per se. By noting that attributions to discrimination can have negative consequences, Branscombe and colleagues challenge the idea that people might be motivated to perceive racism for self-esteem purposes.

*“Perceptual Baggage”*

Another way in which mainstream social psychology pathologizes racism perception comes from investigations that have focused on explaining individual

differences among members of stigmatized groups (e.g., Pinel, 1999; Operario & Fiske, 2001; Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002; Johnson, Simmons, Trawalter, Ferguson, & Reed, 2003). First, these studies locate the phenomenon of group differences in perceptions of racism in something about Black Americans. Specifically, research suggests that perceptions of racism might be grounded in expectations of negative treatment among members of stigmatized groups (i.e., belief in White anti-Black bias, stigma consciousness, and rejection sensitivity). Second, these studies primarily focus on the negative implications of racism perception.

In one study, Johnson and colleagues (2003) examined perceptions of ambiguously racist behavior among Black and White college students. They found that Blacks were more likely than were Whites to attribute racist dispositions to persons acting in an ambiguously racist fashion, but only when they were provided cues that the person's behavior did not reflect their actual feelings. Johnson and colleagues suggest that the racial group difference in perceptions of racism might be the result of Black Americans' prior beliefs that White people harbor anti-Black biases. They found support for this assertion and suggested that Blacks may have ignored, distorted, or reinterpreted the subtle non-racist cues in ways that corresponded with their previous beliefs about Whites' racist attitudes towards Blacks. They concluded that this type of "perceptual baggage" (Johnson et al., 2003, p. 621) might have a profound impact on subsequent interpretations of ambiguous behavior.

Another research example suggests that members of stereotyped groups who are high in stigma consciousness—that is, the extent to which people focus on their stigmatized status (Pinel & Paulin, 2005)—are more likely to perceive discrimination to be directed at their group and their personal selves. Because of this, persons high in stigma consciousness may forgo opportunities to disconfirm the stereotypes about their group (Pinel, 1999; Study 6) and are perhaps more susceptible to stereotype threat (Brown & Pinel, 2003). This line of work suggests that ruminating on one’s stereotyped status is problematic. Although stigma consciousness is positively associated with group consciousness—thus making persons high in stigma consciousness more apt to fight discrimination—it also may come at a price.

Similar conclusions emerge from research on racial rejection sensitivity: the extent to which people “anxiously expect, readily perceive, and intensely react to rejection” based on social group membership (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002, p. 897). Researchers investigated the relationship between racial rejection sensitivity and reported college experiences among Black Americans. Mendoza-Denton and colleagues found that first-year Black American college students who were highly sensitive to race-based rejection reported more negative race-based experiences (e.g., experiencing racial profiling on campus), incurred more negative consequences (e.g., lowered well-being and decreased academic performance), and reported less university belongingness over the course of the study. Work on racial rejection sensitivity suggests that students expecting race-based rejection on campus are also well-equipped to perceive and experience such negative treatment.

### *A cultural perspective*

Rather than concentrating on the motivation or affective consequences associated with racism perception, the present paper takes a somewhat different approach to the topic. The first step of a cultural psychology analysis is to articulate a less pathologizing account of racism perceptions. One might do this by considering the phenomenon from the perspective of the oppressed (see Martín-Baró, 1994), incorporating community expertise, values, and insights. From this perspective, one can (and should) critically assess the dominant views. The second step of a cultural psychology analysis is to turn the analytic lens from explanations of the “other” and shine light on the typically unquestioned, dominant perspective. The purpose of this second step is to illuminate the psychology of the dominant perspective as interesting phenomena as well. Together, these steps aim to present a more adequate and culturally-sensitive analysis of racial group differences in perceptions of racism.

#### *Step 1: A less pathologizing account of Black American perceptions of racism*

In contrast to the motivational or perceptual-bias type explanations of racism perception, a cultural psychology perspective suggests that racial differences in perceptions of racism are also linked to a more neutral source: cultural engagement. One aspect of cultural engagement with a community is identification (Adams, Fryberg, Garcia, & Delgado-Torres, 2006). Research indicates that a positive relationship among minority group members between community engagement (as measured by racial/ethnic identification) and perceptions of racism (Adams et al., 2006; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Sellers & Shelton, 2003), perhaps

especially in subtle rather than overt manifestations (Operario & Fiske, 2001, Shelton and Sellers, 2000, Study 2). Another aspect of community engagement might be the extent to which one utilizes the ideologies and cultural constructions within that community.

An important set of ideologies and cultural constructions are representations of history (i.e., collective understandings of the past; Howarth, 2006). Particularly, representations of history shape group-based identities and perceptions of intergroup conflict (Liu & Hilton, 2005). With this in mind, differences in historical knowledge are another potential source of differences in perception of racism (Essed, 1991). Previously reviewed studies examining individual differences in perceptions of racism among Black Americans seemingly share a common thread: expectation of bias. However, one might ask from where do these negative expectations stem? On one hand, they might stem from previous personal encounters with racism (Sellers & Shelton, 2003); but, are experiences with racism and discrimination necessary to construct another experience as due to racism? On the other hand, perceptions of racism might stem from knowledge of racism obtained through other means (i.e., information containing narratives about racism or racial socialization; Essed, 1991). Moreover, familiarity with differing representations of the historical past, which may or may not incorporate narratives of discrimination or racism, might be enough to shape perceptions of racism in the present (Nelson, Branscombe, Adams, & Schmitt, 2007).

Evidence for this possibility comes from research that examined the role of historical knowledge in beliefs about conspiracies perpetrated against Black Americans by the U.S. government (Nelson et al., 2007; Study 1). They found that not only did the Black American participants in their study have greater knowledge of historically documented conspiracies, but also this knowledge of historically-documented conspiracies mediated the racial group difference in plausibility of new conspiracies (Nelson et al., 2007; Study 1). In a follow-up experiment, they also found that exposure to instances of historically-documented anti-Black government harm-doing increased the plausibility of contemporary anti-Black conspiracies among White American participants (Nelson et al., 2007; Study 2). This suggests that for both Black and White Americans, engagement and familiarity with anti-Black conspiracies in the past shape perceptions of anti-Black conspiracies in the present.

One limitation of Nelson and colleagues (2007) is that it could not rule out whether reported familiarity with past racism represented motivated exaggeration. Perhaps, ratings of familiarity with historical conspiracy theories actually reflect “the tendency to perceive allegations of racism in past events as true, regardless of their actual truth status” (Nelson et al., 2007; p. 25). In other words, it may be that Black Americans responses to items regarding familiarity with historical racism reflect, not historical knowledge, but instead another case of willingness to “play the race card”.

*Step 2: Turning the analytic lens toward White American perceptions of racism*

Implicit in many of the investigations on racism perception is an interest in explaining when and why Black Americans attribute ambiguous situations to

prejudice or racism. A cultural psychology analysis suggests that focusing solely on the behaviors of Black Americans constructs the experience of Black Americans as somehow deviant, strange, and the only perspective warranting explanation (see also Hegarty & Pratto, 2001, on the topic of social category norms). Certainly, one would hope that racism was an uncommon occurrence, but history suggests that racism is embedded in the very fabric of American society. The reality is that Black Americans and other minority groups are not the only persons living in a context in which racism pervades. At very least, denials of this reality warrant exploration. Recent work provides support for the idea that American and White identities, too, are linked to perceptions of racism (i.e., denial).

Just as Black Americans may be motivated to perceive racism to protect self-esteem, might White Americans be motivated to deny racism? Research by Adams, Tormala, and O'Brien (2006) suggests that this is the case. In two separate experiments. White American participants who received a self-affirmation manipulation (i.e., in the face of a personal threat, self-affirmation reduces self-protective motives) perceived higher rates of racism than those who did not. This and other research suggests that White Americans are motivated to deny the impact of racism in American society to the extent that it threatens the legitimacy of a status quo from which they derive benefits (e.g., meritocracy beliefs; O'Brien & Major, 2005) and constitutes a threat to a positive racial identity (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Schiffhauer, 2007).

Mainstream representations of history and racism are likely to be another important source of information regarding perceptions of racism. Just as Black American perception of racism may have its roots in greater knowledge of historical racism; might White American denial of racism have its roots in greater ignorance of historical racism? Although narratives about racism are not wholly absent, mainstream American accounts of the historical past frequently construct racism as the product of “a few bad apples” (Loewen, 1995). While scholars have introduced nuanced definitions of racism that include systems of privilege and disadvantage embedded in American society and culture; research suggests that the White American lay person conceptualizes racism simply as hostile, individual prejudice (Bobo, 2001; Esses & Hodson, 2001; Sommers & Norton, 2006).

What are the consequences of individualistic constructions of racism? In a longitudinal study, O’Brien and her colleagues (2008) found that the more participants endorsed an individualistic conception of racism at Time 1, the less racism they perceived in Katrina-related events at Time 2. An individualistic definition of racism that requires an agent vastly limits what possibly constitutes racism and the likelihood that systemic instances of racism are labeled as such. If racism is included in community narratives, research suggests that what constitutes racism, in the first place, informs perceptions of racism in America’s past and present (Adams, Biernat, Branscombe, Crandall, & Wrightsman, 2008; Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, in press; O’Brien et al., 2008).



### *The Present Study*

From a cultural psychology perspective, this study investigates how knowledge of historical racism and various identity constructions inform divergent perceptions of racism in the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. To examine this question, I compared perceptions of racism among White participants attending a predominantly White institution (PWI) and Black participants attending a historically Black institution (HBI). These are groups for whom collective representations associated with identity and knowledge of historical racism are likely to differ substantially.

One set of hypotheses concern between-racial group differences in the tendency to perceive racism in Katrina-related events. Previous research has documented group differences in perception of racism, such that Black Americans are more likely than White Americans to perceive racism in many events (e.g., Klugel, 1990). Applied to the case of Hurricane Katrina, one can hypothesize a similar pattern.

H1: The White American participants (a) will perceive less racism in Katrina-relevant events; (b) will express greater endorsement of statements that deny a role for racism in Katrina, (c) will score lower on a measure of accurate knowledge about historical instances of racism, and (d) will endorse systemic conceptions of racism less than do the Black American participants.

The next set of hypotheses is an extension of the first set and concerns within-community variation in tendency to perceive racism as a function of identification

with different social entities (e.g., Operario & Fiske, 2001). Given an understanding of identification as cultural engagement with identity group (e. g., Phinney & Ong, 2007), one can hypothesize that racial differences in outcome variables will be greater among highly identified (or more engaged) participants than less identified (or less engaged) participants. Further support for this hypothesis comes from previous research that found one aspect of racial identity (i.e., private regard) was positively related to beliefs in conspiracies perpetrated against Blacks by the U.S. government among Black Americans, but negatively related to belief in conspiracies among White Americans (Crocker et al., 1999). If belief in anti-black conspiracies includes belief that the government might perpetuate racism, then one can hypothesize a similar pattern in this study.

H2a: Racial identification will moderate racial group differences in perception of racism, such that racial/ethnic private regard should be negatively related to perceptions of racism among the White American participants; but, positively related to perceptions of racism among the Black American participants.

Recent work suggests that identity is not a unidimensional endorsement of group importance, but is multidimensional (e.g., Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). Because different dimensions of the same identity category can have diverging relationships with the same outcome variable (e.g., Roccas et al., 2006), I

also included identity measures from another identity dimension (i.e., centrality<sup>1</sup>; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) to explore the relationships of racial and national identification with perceptions of racism. While *private regard* refers to one's personal positive evaluation of that social group identity, *centrality* refers to the overall importance of one's social group to one's self-concept, (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Researchers note that it is important to examine multiple dimensions of identity because these concepts are independent of one another (e.g., Ashmore et al., 2004). For example, Roccas and colleagues (2006) found contradictory relationships between two identity dimensions (i.e., glorification and attachment) and responses to information about an in-group's transgressions against an out-group's members. Glorification is an identity dimension that primarily considers the positive aspects of one's group identity, much like private regard. In the study by Roccas and colleagues, glorification was positively related to justifying these actions and low levels of collective guilt. When controlling for glorification, attachment (inclusion of the group into one's self concept) was negatively related to justifying the negative actions. The centrality measure used in this study parallels their measure of attachment; thus, to the extent that denial of racism among White Americans mirrors justification for one's groups negative past, I expect a similar pattern of results with centrality among the White American participants. A positive relationship between racism perception

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<sup>1</sup> In the original Collective Self-Esteem scale, this measure is referred to as *identity*. However, in order to avoid confusion, I refer to this subscale as *centrality* (as described in Sellers et al., 1998) since I am considering multiple dimensions of "identity" in this study.

and racial centrality is anticipated among the Black American participants, as well. Since racism perception does not implicate Black identity in the same way that it might White identity (evoke justifications), the present research does not hypothesize differing relationships on this dimension among the Black American participants.

H2b: When controlling for racial/ethnic private regard, identity centrality should be positively related to perceptions of racism among the Black and White American participants.

Beyond measures of ethnic/racial identity and their relationship to perception of racism, a cultural approach to identification (as cultural engagement) extends existing research in two important ways. The first is to consider engagement with multiple dimensions of identity that are relevant to perceptions of racism. Although previous research has emphasized racial or ethnic identification as a relevant indicator of community engagement, people understand themselves in terms of a variety of identity communities, beyond ethnic-racial membership, that influence their experience of everyday events. An important source of collective identification that is likely to influence perception of racism is national identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). To the extent that a group's negative actions might threaten a group's positive identity (Doojse, Branscombe, Spears & Manstead, 1998), research suggests that group identity should be negatively related to perceptions of actions that negatively implicate that group. Subsequently, one can anticipate that American identity would be negatively related to perceptions of racism among the White American participants. However, among the Black American participants, engagement with

both their American-ness and their Black-ness may present somewhat of a paradox (i.e., “double consciousness”; Du Bois, 1903/1989, p. 5; Lyubansky & Eidelson, 2005). As an indicator of engagement with this American-ness, a cultural perspective suggests that American identification (private regard) should to be negatively related to perceptions of racism among the Black American participants, as well. This perspective is consistent with previous research documenting positive relationships between nationalism scores and endorsement of classical racism items (i.e., prejudice against minority groups) for both White and Black Americans (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997).

H3a: A commonly shared identity, national identification (private regard) will be negatively related to perceptions of racism for White and Black American participants. This relationship will be particularly true among White participants.

Again, to the extent that denial of racism mirrors justification for America’s wrong doings, then one can anticipate that when controlling for private regard, national identity centrality should be positively related to perceptions of racism.

H3b: When controlling for national private regard, identity centrality should be positively related to perceptions of racism among White and Black American participants.

More generally, research on ethnic minority-majority asymmetry (e.g., Staerkle, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2005) and the "American equals White" effect (Devos & Banaji, 2005) suggest greater resonance between national identity and racial identity for ethnic majority groups than for ethnic minority groups. The present

hypothesis of similar patterns of results for national identity and racial identity among White Americans, but dissimilar or even diverging patterns of results for national identity and racial identity among Black Americans, extends this idea of "greater resonance" to the relationship between identification and perception of racism.

The second way in which a cultural psychology approach extends existing research beyond a concern with ethnic identification is to consider an alternative measure of community engagement—knowledge of Black American cultural representations of the historical past—and its role in informing perceptions in the present. A cultural psychology perspective suggests that racism perception is not restricted to personal experience, but might be influenced by engagement with various cultural narratives about racism. As such, one can anticipate positive relationships between historical knowledge and perception of racism measures. Similar to Nelson and colleagues (2007), I suggest that accurate knowledge of historical racism might explain the hypothesized racial group differences. A meditational hypothesis proposes that the strength of the racial group differences in perceptions of racism will decrease when history knowledge is taken into account.

H4: Accurate knowledge of historical racism and African American achievements will be positively related to perceptions of racism in Hurricane Katrina.

Moreover, Black history knowledge will mediate the racial differences in perceptions of racism.

Although conceptually similar to Nelson and colleagues (2007) the present study extends this work in some important ways. First, this study incorporates a

signal detection paradigm that can assess whether knowledge of historical racism reflects a tendency to see racism everywhere; or, instead, reflects accurate awareness of historically documented instances of racism in the past (e.g., Adams & Nelson, 2008). Nelson and colleagues did not directly test whether Black Americans indiscriminately see racism in any situation (past or present). Second, the present study extends work by Nelson and colleagues by incorporating multiple dimensions of racial and national identity. This aspect differs from the follow-up study by Adams and Nelson (2008), as well.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 211 undergraduates ranging in age from 17 to 34 years old ( $M = 18.96$  years,  $SD = 1.75$ ), including 96 students at Howard University, a HBI in Washington, D. C., and 115 students at the University of Kansas, a PWI in Lawrence, KS. One hundred eighty-two participants indicated American nationality. Sixty-two percent of the participants were women ( $n = 131$ ) and 38% were men ( $n = 80$ ). The modal response for socioeconomic status was “middle class.”

Among the Howard participants in this sample, 77 indicated that their race/ethnicity was *African American* or *Black*; 9 indicated *African*, *West Indian*, *Jamaican*, or *Caribbean*; 5 participants indicated multiple racial/ethnic identities or said that they were *bi-racial* or *mixed*; 1 participant indicated *Hispanic*; and 1 participant indicated *Native American*. Other responses included *American* ( $n = 2$ ), *ethnic* ( $n = 2$ ), *human* ( $n = 1$ ), *minority* ( $n = 1$ ), and *n/a* ( $n = 1$ ). Among Kansas

participants, 89 indicated that their race/ethnicity was *Caucasian* or *White*; 18 indicated *Asian*, *Asian American*, or *Chinese*; 4 indicated *Hispanic* or *Mexican*, 3 participants indicated *Black*; 2 indicated *Native American*; 2 indicated multiple racial/ethnic identities; 1 participant indicated *Jewish*; 1 participant indicated *Italian*; 1 participant indicated *African*; and 1 participant indicated *Southwest Pacific*. Other responses included *American* ( $n = 2$ ), *ethnic* ( $n = 1$ ), and *other* ( $n = 1$ ).

### *Procedure*

I recruited participants from introductory psychology participant pools at both research settings. A White woman distributed surveys at the University of Kansas and a Black woman distributed surveys at Howard University. After reading the informed consent form and agreeing to participate in the study, participants completed the survey in one of two pre-arranged orders. The first version began with identification questions as in the appendix. The second order began with the open-ended historical knowledge measure, but otherwise followed the same order as in the appendix.

### *Materials*

Each participant completed a questionnaire containing measures of national and racial identification (adapted from Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), historical knowledge (adapted from Adams & Nelson, 2008), conceptions of racism (adapted from Adams et al., in press) and perceptions of racism in Hurricane Katrina (see Appendix). Demographic questions included age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

*Racial/Ethnic Identification.* To assess self-identification tendencies, I adapted the open-ended response question, “In terms of racial/ethnic group, I prefer to identify



with the label [blank]” from the *Multigroup Ethnic Identification Measure* (Phinney, 1992). To assess level of identification for participant race and/or ethnicity, I used two subscales of the Collective Self Esteem measure (CSE; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The CSE private regard (e.g., *In general, I’m glad to be a member of my racial/ethnic group*; Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .69$ ) and identity centrality (e.g., *The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am*;  $\alpha = .78$ ) subscales measure individual differences in the positive assessment and importance of one’s social or collective identity. Participants responded to these questions with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

*National Identification.* Participants indicated their nationality by checking either *American, Canadian, or other*. Again, I adapted private regard ( $\alpha = .79$ ) and identity centrality subscales ( $\alpha = .70$ ) of the CSE to measure the level of national identification for each participant (e.g., *I feel good about the nation I belong to*; *The nation I belong to is an important reflection of who I am*). Participants responded to these questions with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

*Claims of Racism Denial.* Five items assessed denial of racism in Hurricane Katrina ( $\alpha = .83$ ). Participants used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to indicate their agreement with claims that dismissed accounts of racism in Hurricane Katrina (e.g., *Claims of racism in events surrounding Hurricane Katrina were wildly exaggerated*).

*Perceptions of Racism.* Seventeen items assessed perceptions of racism in the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. Participants used a 7 point Likert scale (1 = *not at all due to racism*; 7 = *certainly due to racism*) to indicate the extent to which each of the 17 instances were due to racism. A principal components analysis using varimax rotation yielded two reliable factors. The first factor ( $\alpha = .94$ ) consisted of 12 items that one can interpret as systemic manifestations of racism (e.g., *The U.S. Government's slow response in aiding New Orleans residents during the Katrina disaster*). The second factor ( $\alpha = .84$ ) had 5 items that one can interpret as isolated, individual manifestations of possible instances of racism (e.g., *A White man in a pick-up truck fleeing New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina decides not to pick up some Black people walking alongside the highway*). Table 1 shows the factor loadings for both Black and White participants.

*Conceptions of Racism.* Participants placed an "x" along a 16.5 cm line in order to respond to the question, "Where do you think racism in modern America comes from?" Participant responses were recorded as the number in centimeters where their "x" crossed the 16.5 cm line. This measure treated conceptions of racism as a bipolar scale item with an individualistic conception of racism (i.e., *biased individuals*) at zero endpoint and a systemic conception of racism (i.e., *socio-cultural structures*) at the other 16.5 cm endpoint (Adams et al., in press; see also O'Brien et al., 2008).

Table 1  
Factor loadings for perception of racism factors

Item	Factor 1 (Systemic)			Factor 2 (Individualistic)		
	Black	White	Combined	Black	White	Combined
1.	.413	.809	<b>.703</b>	.357	.152	.462
2.	.393	.325	.208	-.224	.603	<b>.579</b>
3.	.461	.798	<b>.716</b>	.334		.261
4.	.564	.848	<b>.827</b>	.318		
5.	.654	.178	.340	.169	.769	<b>.756</b>
6.	.764	.618	<b>.710</b>	.159	.196	.351
7.	.706	.605	<b>.691</b>	.152	.383	.395
8.	.643	.776	<b>.732</b>		.198	.296
9.	.325	.457	<b>.439</b>	.129	.418	.125
10.	.696	.587	<b>.645</b>	.240	.522	.500
11.	.521	.751	<b>.759</b>	.517	.381	.404
12.	.223		.211	.396	.846	<b>.832</b>
13.	.425	.782	<b>.771</b>	.631	.121	.272
14.		.805	<b>.685</b>	.777	.285	.493
15.	-.229		.156	.775	.836	<b>.818</b>
16.	.526	.498	.538	.374	.484	<b>.601</b>
17.	.407	.684	<b>.685</b>	.650	.484	.555

*Note.* Bold numbers indicate the scale on which the item was included. Empty cells represent items that did not load onto the factor.

*Historical Knowledge.* To measure knowledge of Black history, participants completed a ‘true-false’ test, consisting of 25 items. History items included instances of historical racism (e.g., *After slavery ended, Jim Crow laws—which enforced segregation, limited black job opportunities and kept Black Americans from voting—remained in effect during the 1960s*) and African American achievements (e.g., *Fredrick Douglas, born a slave, escaped and became America's most prominent abolitionist and anti-slavery agitator during the 19th century*). First, participants indicated whether the history item was true or false. Then participants used a 5 point Likert scale (1 = *guessing*; 5 = *certain*) to indicate the level of confidence in their

answer. Seventeen of these items were “true” while the remaining eight items were “false” (see Appendix).

I analyzed data using a signal detection paradigm that measures knowledge of Black history while controlling for guessing (Adams & Nelson, 2008). History scores were calculated by subtracting z-score false alarm rates from z-score hit rates. Hits denote that participants indicated a history item as “True” when, in fact, the item was *true*. False alarms convey participants indicated an item as “True” when the item was actually *false*. Higher scores on this index ( $d'$ ) reflect detection sensitivity; that is, the ability to identify true history items without being “distracted” by false items. I incorporated certainty information by counting a response as “correct” only when participants indicated certainty of 3 or greater.

### Results

For data analyses, I retained only participants who indicated “American” as their national identity ( $n = 182$ ). In addition, I retained only those Kansas participants who self-identified as White or Caucasian ( $n = 85$ ) and those Howard participants who identified as Black or African American ( $n = 65$ ).

Preliminary versions of the analyses below included order as a factor in the design. These analyses revealed no main effects of order or interactions involving order for any of the dependent measures. As a result, I report analyses without order as a factor in the design.

### *Group Differences*

The purpose of this study is to examine group differences in perception of racism from a cultural perspective. As a first step, I conducted analyses of variance (ANOVAs) on all dependent measures with gender (male = 0, female = 1) and racial group (Black = 0, White = 1) as between-subjects factors. These analyses revealed extensive main effects of gender and racial group. With two exceptions that I describe shortly, gender did not interact with racial group.

#### *Identification*

Results for measures of racial identification indicated main effects of racial group on racial centrality,  $F(1, 146) = 16.97, p < .001$ , and racial private regard,  $F(1, 146) = 3.77, p = .054$ . White participants reported that their racial identity was less central to their identity than did the Black participants. Additionally, White participants reported lower levels of private regard for their racial identity than did the Black participants. There were no effects of gender, either by itself or in interaction with racial group,  $F_s(1, 146) < 1$  (Means and standard deviations for each variable appear in Table 2).

Results for measures of national identification revealed a different pattern. White participants reported that American identity was more central to their identity than did the Black participants,  $F(1, 146) = 4.37, p = .038$ ; likewise, White participants reported higher private regard for American identity than did Black participants,  $F(1, 146) = 20.10, p < .001$ .

Table 2  
Racial group by gender means and standard deviations.

	Black Americans		White Americans		
	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	
	(n = 53)	(n = 12)	(n = 39)	(n = 46)	
Racial Private Regard	6.37 (0.77)	6.38 (0.96)	6.21 (0.85)	5.92 (0.81)	6.18 (0.83)
Racial Centrality	5.07 (1.17)	4.88 (1.15)	3.84 (1.46)	3.99 (1.40)	4.25 (1.43)
National Private Regard	5.78 (1.02)	5.25 (1.35)	6.22 (0.90)	6.41 (0.65)	6.05 (0.99)
National Centrality	4.26 (1.08)	4.06 (1.36)	4.33 (1.23)	4.96 (1.26)	4.47 (1.22)

*Note:* Cells contain means (and standard deviations) for each group.

Similar to work by Sidanius and colleagues (1997) on ethnic and national attachment, the present pattern of results indicates that racial-ethnic and national identity resonates differently for members of the racial majority and minority. White American participants reported less racial identification (private regard and centrality) than did Black American participants; but, White American participants reported more national identification (private regard and centrality) than did the Black American participants.

The main effects of gender were non-significant; however, there was a significant interaction of school and gender for national private regard,  $F(1, 146) = 4.06, p = .046$ , and a marginal interaction of school and gender for national centrality,  $F(1, 146) = 3.10, p = .081$ . To interpret the interactions, I examined racial group differences separately for male and female participants. Simple effects tests on national private regard indicated that racial group differences were particularly true of

men,  $F(1, 146) = 16.18, p < .001$ , and smaller, but still significant, for women,  $F(1, 146) = 5.65, p = .019$ , (see Table 2). Simple effects tests on national centrality indicated that racial group differences were true of men,  $F(1, 146) = 10.11, p = .002$ , but not true of the women,  $F(1, 146) < 1$  (see Table 2).

### *Racism denial*

Results revealed the hypothesized main effect of racial group on racism denial,  $F(1, 144) = 68.94, p < .001$ . Kansas participants ( $M = 4.42, SD = 1.01$ ) endorsed claims minimizing and denying the role of racism in Hurricane Katrina more than did the Howard participants ( $M = 2.73, SD = .96$ ). There were no effects of gender, either by itself,  $F(1, 144) = 2.32, p = .13$ , or in interaction with racial group,  $F(1, 144) < 1$  (see Table 3).

Table 3  
Racial group by gender means and standard deviations

	Black Americans		White Americans		
	<u>Women</u> (n = 53)	<u>Men</u> (n = 12)	<u>Women</u> (n = 39)	<u>Men</u> (n = 46)	
Racism Denial	2.70 (0.92)	2.89 (1.17)	4.21 (1.12)	4.61 (0.88)	3.67 (1.27)
Systemic Racism	4.87 (0.93)	4.16 (1.58)	2.80 (1.28)	2.49 (1.14)	3.58 (1.57)
Individualistic Racism	6.06 (0.68)	5.48 (1.14)	4.43 (1.34)	3.96 (1.24)	4.98 (1.33)
Conception of Racism	9.38 (3.77)	7.66 (3.42)	7.45 (3.66)	7.46 (3.52)	8.31 (3.61)
Historical Knowledge (d')	1.27 (0.74)	1.06 (0.41)	0.60 (0.59)	0.57 (0.55)	0.86 (0.71)

*Note:* Cells contain means (and standard deviations) for each group.

### *Perceptions of racism*

Results revealed the hypothesized main effects of racial group on perceptions of racism in the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. Consistent with previous research, perception of systemic manifestations of racism in Katrina-related events was lower among White participants ( $M = 2.63, SD = 1.21$ ) than among Black participants ( $M = 4.74, SD = 1.10$ ),  $F(1,146) = 70.59, p < .001$ . Similarly, perception of individualistic manifestations of racism in Katrina-related events was lower among White participants ( $M = 4.17, SD = 1.30$ ) than among Black participants ( $M = 5.95, SD = .81$ ),  $F(1,146) = 70.59, p < .001$ .

To the extent that the identity relevance of racism perception is greater for systemic manifestations than for isolated incidents, one can hypothesize parallel group differences in perception of racism. To test this hypothesis, I performed a mixed-model ANOVA with racial group as a between-participants factor and racism type as the within-participants factor. Besides the main effect of racial group noted in the previous paragraph, there was a main effect of racism type  $F(1,148) = 231.75, p < .001$ , such that participants perceived more racism in the individualistic scenarios ( $M = 4.95, SD = 1.42$ ) than the systemic scenarios ( $M = 3.55, SD = 1.56$ ). The relevant Racism Type x Racial group interaction testing the hypothesized difference in size of racial group effect across racism type was marginally significant,  $F(1,148) = 3.27, p = .073$ . Considered as differences in racism type within racial group, both White and Black participants perceived more racism in the individualistic events than systemic



manifestations, but the difference was larger among White participants  $t(84) = -12.04$ ,  $p < .001$ , than among Black participants,  $t(64) = -9.98$ ,  $p < .001$ .

There was a main effect of gender on perceptions of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina,  $F(1,146) = 5.24$ ,  $p = .024$ . Women ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ) reported more racism in the systemic manifestations of racism surrounding Hurricane Katrina than did men ( $M = 2.84$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ). Women ( $M = 5.37$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ) also perceived more racism in the individualistic scenarios than did men ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ),  $F(1, 146) = 6.11$ ,  $p = .015$ . The interactions involving racial group and gender were non-significant,  $F_s(1, 146) < 1$ .

#### *Conceptions of Racism*

White participants ( $M = 7.45$ ,  $SD = 3.56$ ) endorsed a less systemic conception of racism than did the Black participants ( $M = 9.10$ ,  $SD = 3.73$ ). Likewise, men ( $M = 7.49$ ,  $SD = 3.47$ ) endorsed a less systemic conception of racism than did women ( $M = 8.55$ ,  $SD = 3.82$ ). However, ANOVA results indicate that these effects did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance,  $F(1,143) = 2.07$ ,  $p = .153$  and  $F(1,143) = 1.32$ ,  $p = .252$ , respectively (see Table 3 for means and standard deviations of each design cell).

#### *Historical Knowledge*

As anticipated, Black participants performed better on the measure of Black history knowledge than did the White participants. This was primarily evident in a main effect of racial group on the rate of hits (i.e., saying "True" when, in fact, the item was *true*; Black  $M = .66$ ,  $SD = .16$ ; White  $M = .37$ ,  $SD = .15$ ),  $F(1,136) = 65.90$ ,

$p < .001$ . In contrast, there was no effect of racial group on rate of false alarms (i.e., saying "True" when, in fact, the item was *false*; Black  $M = .25$ ,  $SD = .15$ ; White  $M = .21$ ,  $SD = .15$ ). This suggests that while Black participants were more likely than White participants to say true when the item was indeed true, they were no more likely than White participants to say true when the item was actually false.

In Signal Detection Theory, the statistic  $d'$  takes into account information about rate of hits and false alarms to provide a unified index of the tendency to correctly discriminate true information from false information. A 2 X 2 ANOVA indicated that Howard participants ( $M = 1.24$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) scored higher on this measure of historical knowledge than did the Kansas participants ( $M = .58$ ,  $SD = .57$ ),  $F(1,135) = 19.41$ ,  $p < .001$ . There were no effects of gender, either by itself,  $F(1, 136) = 1.03$ ,  $p = .312$  or in interaction with racial group,  $F < 1$  (see Table 2).

#### *Mediation Effects: A Closer look at history knowledge*

Can knowledge of history explain the group differences in perceptions of racism? In light of the racial differences observed in the data, I conducted a series of simple mediational analyses using Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure. Mediational analyses assess whether the racial differences in historical knowledge can account for racial differences in perceptions of racism.

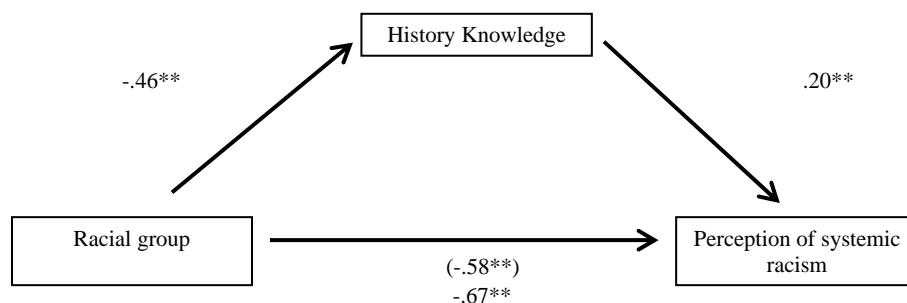
#### *History Knowledge*

First, I tested whether overall Black history knowledge, computed as  $d'$ , mediated the relationship between racial group and racism denial. Racial group was a reliable predictor of history knowledge ( $\beta = -.459$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and racism denial ( $\beta =$

.648,  $p < .001$ ). However, when simultaneously entered into the regression model with racial group, history knowledge did not remain a significant predictor ( $\beta = - .103$ ,  $p = .16$ ); thus, there is little evidence or reason to test for mediation on this variable.

Next, I tested whether  $d'$ , mediated the relationship between racial group and perceptions of systemic racism. Racial group was a reliable predictor of history knowledge ( $\beta = -.459$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceptions of systemic racism ( $\beta = -.670$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When simultaneously entered into the regression model with racial group, history knowledge remained a significant predictor ( $\beta = .195$ ,  $p = .006$ ), and partially mediated the relationship between racial group and perceptions of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina (see Figure 1). Although the relationship between racial group and systemic racism remained significant, ( $\beta = -.583$ ,  $p < .001$ ), these analyses provide some support for hypothesis 2b. A Sobel's (1982) test confirmed that the indirect relationship between racial group and systemic racism perceptions, as mediated through history knowledge, differed from zero,  $z = -2.54$ ,  $p = .011$ .

Figure 1. Test of the hypothesis that racial group difference in perception of systemic racism is mediated by history knowledge.



*Note.* Racial group coded as Black = 0 and White = 1. Numbers represent standardized beta coefficients, with parentheses representing beta coefficients when racial group and history knowledge are entered simultaneously. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

I then tested whether  $d'$  mediated the relationship between racial group and perceptions of individualistic manifestations of racism. Racial group was a reliable predictor of history knowledge ( $\beta = -.459, p < .001$ ) and perceptions of individualistic racism ( $\beta = -.373, p < .001$ ). However, when simultaneously entered into the regression model with racial group, history knowledge was only a marginally significant predictor ( $\beta = .377, p = .10$ ), and evidence for mediation did not reach conventional levels of significance, Sobel's  $z = -1.60, p = .11$ .

*Moderation effects: Engagement with identity and history*

Thus far, this research replicates previous work demonstrating racial group differences in perceptions of racism. There is some evidence that one aspect of cultural engagement (i.e., history knowledge) can account for these differences. To further investigate the role of cultural engagement and how historical knowledge and identity might interact to inform perceptions of racism. I conducted two sets of hierarchical multiple regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991). Each set of analyses first tested the relationships of the hypothesized predictors (i.e., racial group, identity, and history knowledge) with the dependent variables and then tested the higher order moderating relationships with each predictor (the interaction terms). The first set of analyses examined moderating effects of the racial identity subscales. The second set of analyses examined moderating effects of national identity subscales.

*Racial Identity and History Knowledge*

The analyses that follow investigate this relationship with multiple dimensions of racial identification (centrality and private regard), while simultaneously

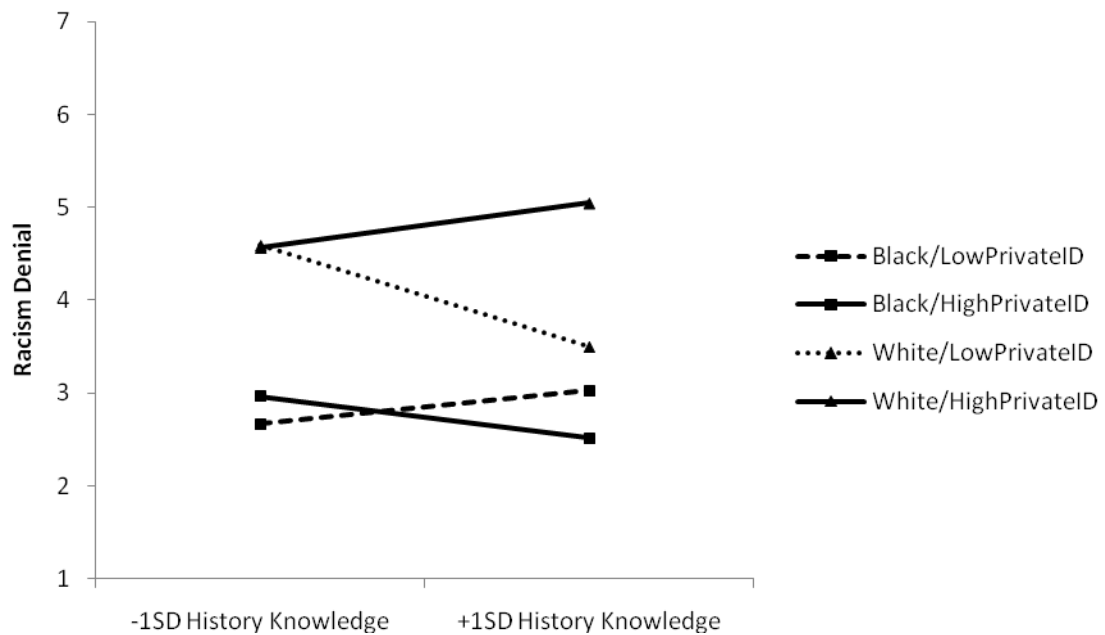
examining the role of historical knowledge (computed as  $d'$ ). To the extent that White and Black participants identify with their respective racial entities, racial/ethnic private regard should be negatively related to perceptions of racism among the White participants; but, among the Black participants, private regard should be positively related to perceptions of racism. In addition, racial centrality should be positively related to perceptions of racism among the White and Black American participants. Furthermore, the relationships of historical knowledge with perceptions of racism in the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina should be independent of these identity concerns.

*Claims of Racism Denial.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = .657, p < .001$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = -.110, p = .130$ ), racial/ethnic private regard ( $\beta = .071, p = .297$ ), and racial/ethnic centrality ( $\beta = .072, p = .317$ ) was a significant predictor of racism denial,  $F(4, 132) = 28.26, p < .001$ . When included with the higher order interactions, the effect of racial group remained significant, but was qualified by a three-way interaction with racial private regard, and history knowledge ( $\beta = .372, p = .006$ , see Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> To interpret this interaction, I regressed racism denial on historical knowledge and racial private regard separately within each racial group. The 2-way interaction between history knowledge and racial private regard was significant among the White participants ( $\beta = .469, p = .004$ ), but not the Black participants ( $\beta = -.129, p = .511$ ). The simple slope for low identifying White Americans was  $-.97$ , and the simple slope for high identifying White Americans was

<sup>2</sup> Simple slopes and Figures 2-9 were generated using a web-based computational tool for probing interactions (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006).

-.43. The simple slope for low identifying Black Americans was .32, and the simple slope for high identifying Black Americans was -.40. Simple slope *t*-test analyses revealed that the lines at each moderator level did not significantly differ from zero,  $ps > .28$ .

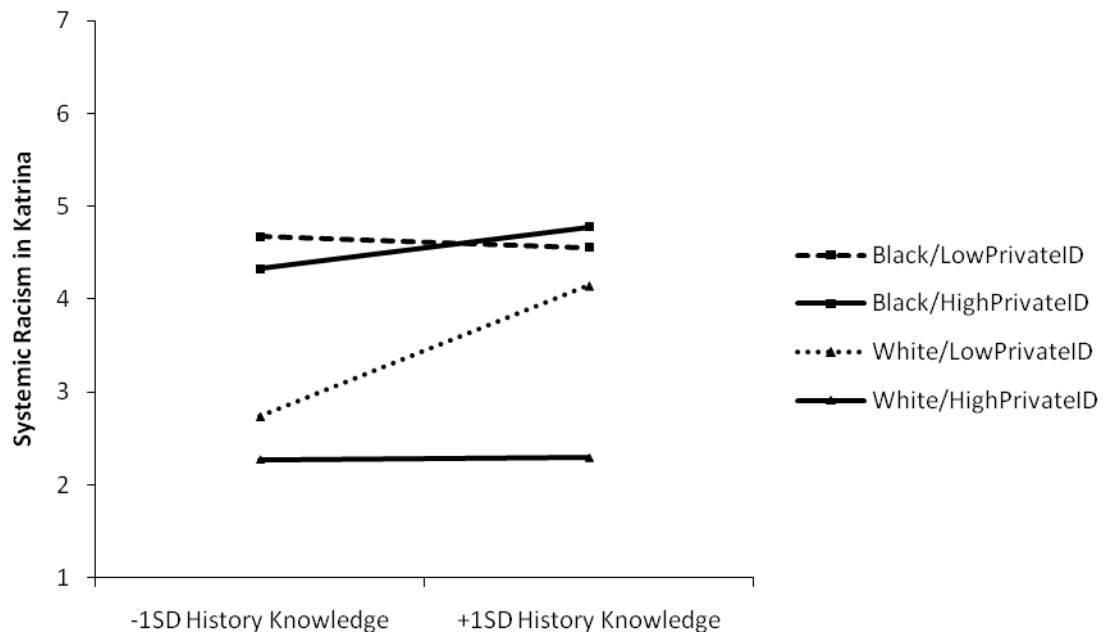
Figure 2. Racial group x racial private regard x history knowledge interaction for endorsement of claims denying racism in Hurricane Katrina interaction



*Perceptions of Systemic Racism.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = -.575, p < .001$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = .191, p = .006$ ), racial/ethnic private regard ( $\beta = -.099, p = .128$ ), and racial/ethnic centrality ( $\beta = .155, p = .025$ ) was a significant predictor of perceptions of systemic racism,  $F(4, 134) = 34.12, p < .001$ . When included with the higher order interactions, the effect of racial group remained significant but was qualified by a three-way interaction with racial private regard and history knowledge ( $\beta = -.259, p = .042$ , see Figure 3). To interpret this interaction, I

regressed perceptions of systemic racism on historical knowledge and racial private regard separately within each racial group. The 2-way interaction between history knowledge and racial private regard was significant among the White participants ( $\beta = -.349, p = .024$ ) but not the Black participants ( $\beta = .096, p = .616$ ). The simple slope for low identifying White Americans was 1.25, and the simple slope for high identifying White Americans was  $-.07$ . The simple slope for low identifying Black Americans was  $-.10$ , and the simple slope for high identifying Black Americans was  $.39$ . Simple slope  $t$ -test analyses revealed that the lines at each moderator level did not differ significantly from zero,  $ps > .21$ .

Figure 3. Racial group x racial private regard x history knowledge for perception of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina interaction



These results revealed hypothesized racial group differences, such that White participants perceived less systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina than the Black

participants did. This relationship was moderated by history and identity, such that for White participants scoring relatively low on the private regard dimension of racial identity, perceptions of systemic racism increased with history knowledge.

Regression results also revealed a marginal, three-way interaction of racial group, historical knowledge, and racial/ethnic centrality, ( $\beta = .238, p = .053$ ; see Figure 4).

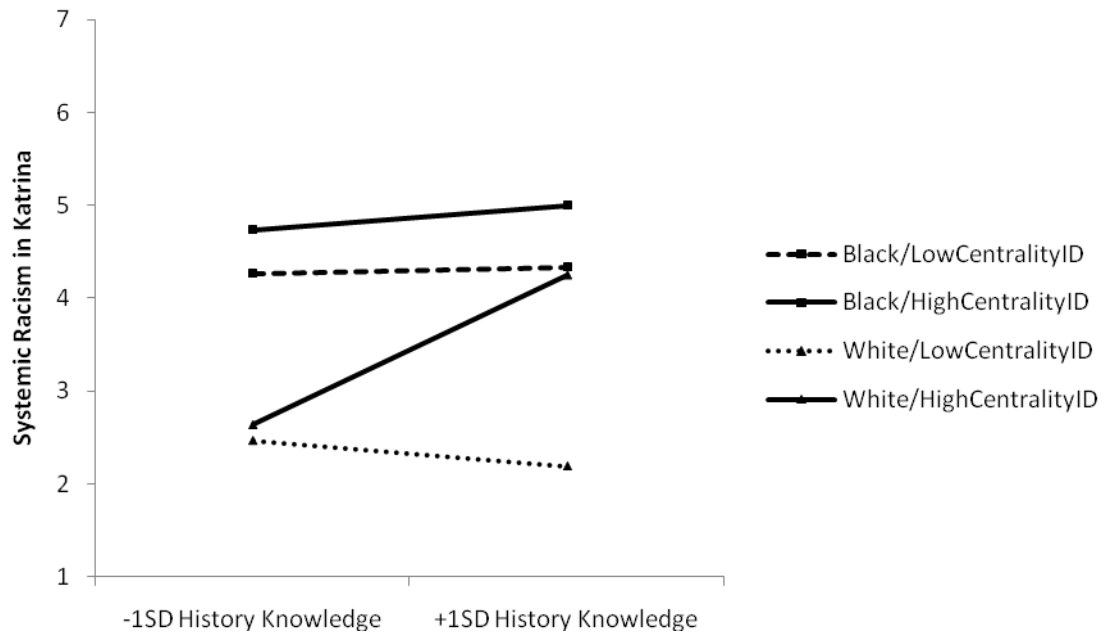
Again, to interpret this interaction, I regressed perceptions of systemic racism on historical knowledge and racial centrality separately within each racial group. The 2-way interaction between history knowledge and racial centrality was significant among the White participants ( $\beta = .475, p = .002$ ). Among the Black participants, perceptions of systemic racism do not appear to change as a function of racial centrality and history knowledge ( $\beta = .006, p = .981$ ). The simple slope for low identifying White Americans was  $-.25$ , and the simple slope for high identifying White Americans was  $1.42$ . The simple slope for low identifying Black Americans was  $.06$ , and the simple slope for high identifying Black Americans was  $.23$ . Simple slope *t*-test analyses revealed that the lines at each moderator level did not differ from zero,  $ps > .19$ .

In contrast to the previous moderating relationship of private regard and history, high racial centrality was associated with increased perceptions of systemic racism among White participants with history knowledge. Perception of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina does not seem to change as a function of history knowledge for Kansas participants' whose race is not a central aspect of their identity.



Among the Howard participants, perceptions of systemic racism did not appear to change as a function of racial centrality and history knowledge.

Figure 4. Racial group x racial centrality x history knowledge interaction for perceptions of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina



*Perceptions of Individualistic Racism.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = -.545, p < .001$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = .126, p = .103$ ), racial/ethnic private regard ( $\beta = -.009, p = .906$ ), and racial/ethnic centrality ( $\beta = .006, p = .937$ ) was a significant predictor of racism perception in individual events,  $F(4, 134) = 23.03, p < .001$ . When included with the higher order interactions, the effect of racial group remained significant. There was a significant three-way interaction of racial group, racial/ethnic centrality, and history knowledge ( $\beta = .266, p = .050$ ). The positive relationship between history knowledge and perceptions of individual racism was primarily true of the White participants for whom racial/ethnic identity was central

(see Figure 5). In order to interpret this interaction, I regressed perceptions of individualistic racism on historical knowledge and racial centrality separately within each racial group. The 2-way interaction between history knowledge and racial centrality was significant among the White participants ( $\beta = .425, p = .007$ ), but not the Black participants ( $\beta = -.051, p = .841$ ). This mirrors the pattern observed for systemic racism. Again, high racial centrality and history knowledge are positively associated with increased perceptions of racism among the White participants. The simple slope for low identifying White Americans was  $-.23$ , and the simple slope for high identifying White Americans was  $1.30$ . The simple slope for low identifying Black Americans was  $-.09$ , and the simple slope for high identifying Black Americans was  $.01$ . Simple slope  $t$ -test analyses revealed that the lines at each moderator level did not differ from zero,  $ps > .24$ .

*Conceptions of Racism.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = -.130, p = .197$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = .187, p = .049$ ), racial/ethnic private regard ( $\beta = -.031, p = .728$ ), and racial/ethnic centrality ( $\beta = .027, p = .774$ ) was a significant predictor of tendencies to indicate a systemic conception of racism,  $F(4, 125) = 2.77, p = .030$ . In this case, history knowledge was the only significant predictor in the main effects model. When included in the model with the higher order interactions, history knowledge did not remain a significant predictor. Instead, there was a significant interaction of racial private regard and history knowledge,  $\beta = .473, p = .004$ , qualified by a higher-order (i.e., three-way) interaction with racial group;  $\beta = -.509, p = .004$ ; see Figure 6.

Figure 5. Racial group X race centrality X history knowledge interaction for perceptions of individualistic racism

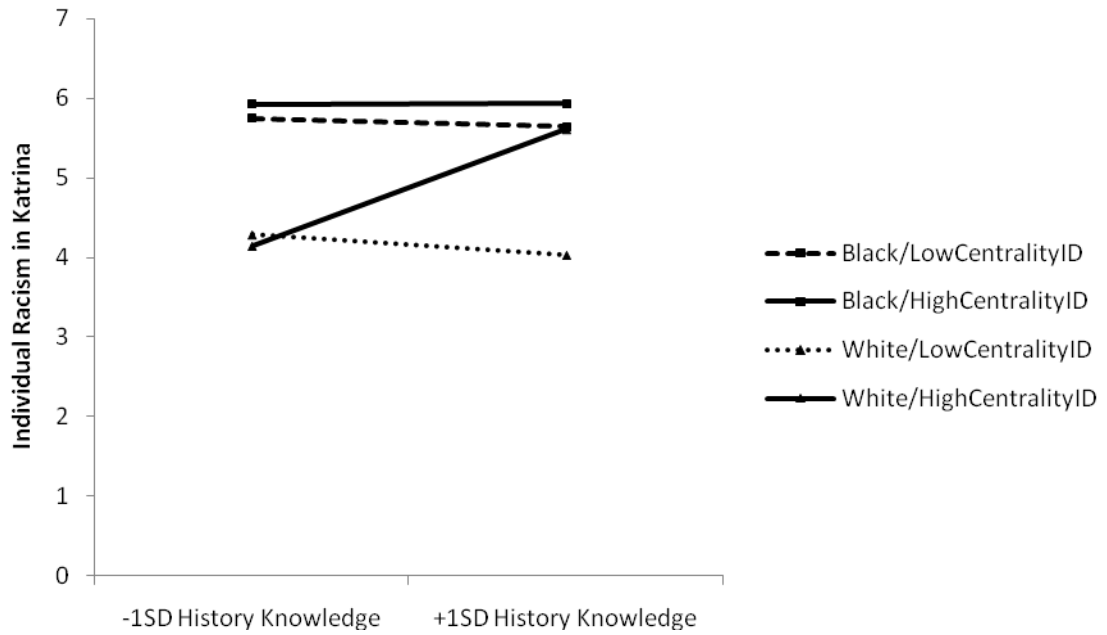
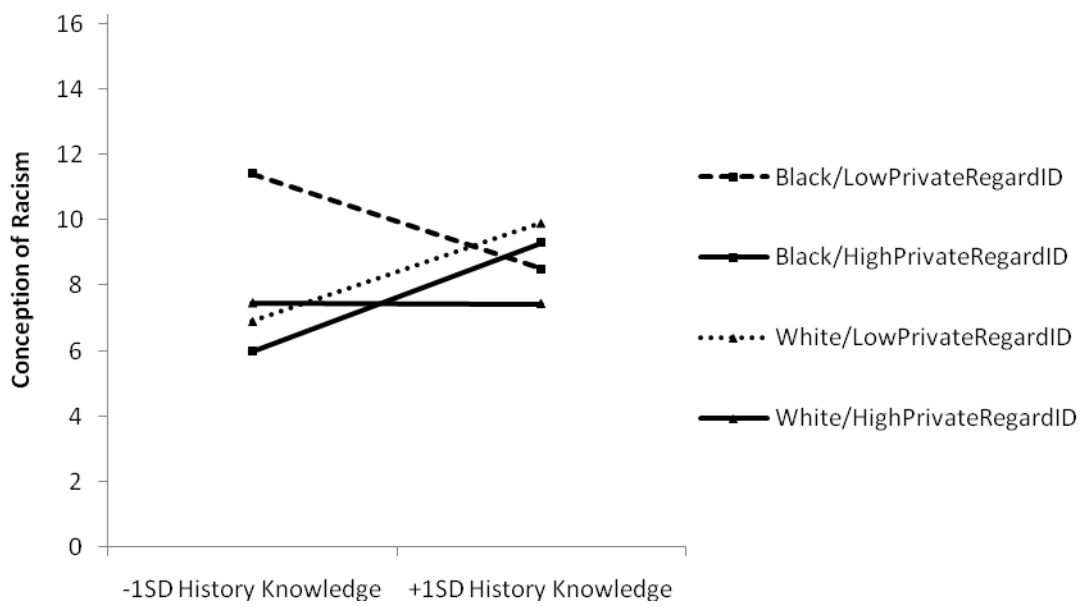


Figure 6. Racial group x racial private regard x history knowledge interaction for conception of racism



Note. Higher numbers indicate more systemic conceptions of racism

To interpret these results, I regressed conception of racism on historical knowledge and racial private regard separately within each racial group. The 2-way interaction between history knowledge and racial private regard was not significant among the White participants ( $\beta = -.227, p = .184$ ), instead, the 2-way interaction was primarily true among the Black participants ( $\beta = .499, p = .010$ ). The simple slope for low identifying White Americans was  $2.66, p < .001$ , and the simple slope for high identifying White Americans was  $-0.02, t < 1$ . The simple slope for low identifying Black Americans was  $-2.56, p=0.08$ , and the simple slope for high identifying Black Americans was  $=2.93, p =0.007$ . Subsequent simple slope analyses revealed that only one of the simple slopes did not at least marginally differ from zero.

Results revealed that the more some participants knew about Black history, the more participants endorsed a systemic conception of racism. Among Black participants who positively regarded their racial identity, knowledge of history was positively related to endorsement of a systemic conception of racism. For White participants reporting low racial private regard, knowledge of history was positively related to systemic conceptions of racism as well. Conversely, among Black participants who reported low levels of racial private regard, knowledge of history was negatively related to endorsement of systemic conceptions of racism. Among White participants reporting high racial private regard, history knowledge appears unrelated to endorsement of systemic racism conceptions.

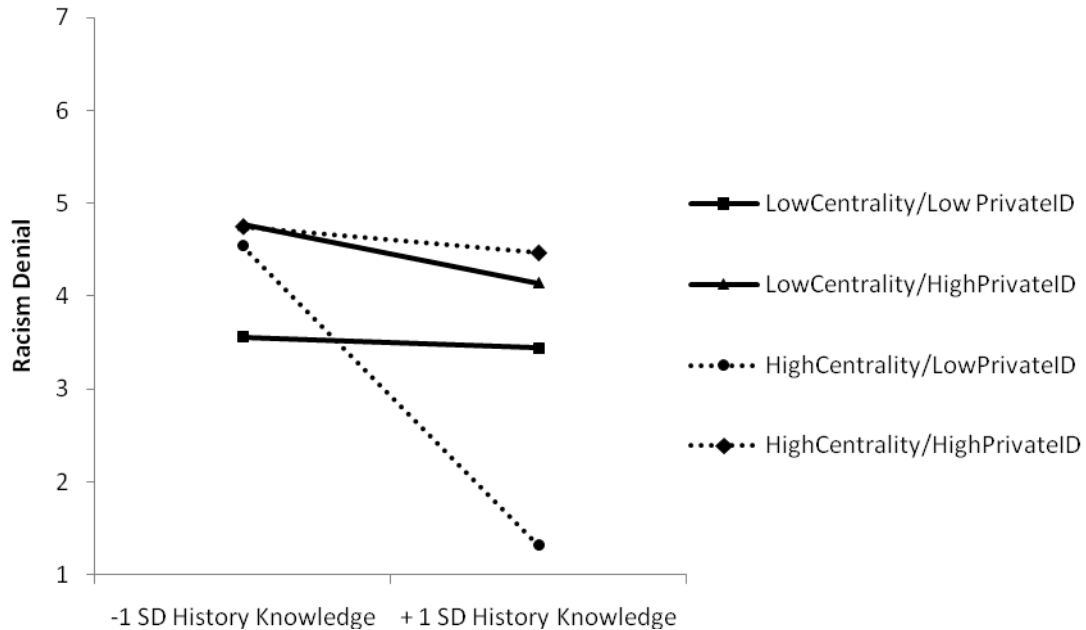
#### *National Identity and History Knowledge*

Similar to the previous section, I conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses to investigate the relationships of history and multiple dimensions of national identity with the dependent variables. Unlike the previous section on racial identity and history, national identity is an identity category that White and Black participants share. For this reason, one can hypothesize that national private regard is negatively related to perceptions of racism in both communities.

*Claims of Racism Denial.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = .520, p < .001$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = -.111, p = .101$ ), national private regard ( $\beta = .267, p < .001$ ), and national centrality ( $\beta = .072, p = .286$ ) was a significant predictor of racism denial,  $F(4, 134) = 38.01, p < .001$ . When included with the higher order interactions the effect of racial group remained significant ( $\beta = .477, p < .001$ ), but was qualified by several higher-order interactions, including two-way interactions with private regard ( $\beta = .318, p = .010$ ) and history knowledge ( $\beta = -.294, p = .014$ ); by a three way interaction of racial group, history knowledge, and national private regard, ( $\beta = .263, p = .040$ ), and a 4-way interaction of racial group, history knowledge, national private regard, and national centrality, ( $\beta = .435, p = .013$ ). In order to interpret this four-way interaction, I regressed racism denial on history knowledge, private regard, and identity centrality separately within each racial group. This analysis revealed a significant, three-way interaction of history knowledge, national private regard, and national centrality for the White participants ( $\beta = .580, p = .016$ ). Figure 7 illustrates the nature of this interaction. The results reveal the hypothesized relationship between history knowledge and racism denial only for

White participants who are both (a) low in racial private regard and (b) high in racial identity centrality.

7. National centrality x national private regard x history knowledge interaction for endorsement of claims denying racism in Hurricane Katrina



*Note.* This interaction represents the White American participants only.

Subsequent simple slope analyses revealed that only one of simple slopes significantly differed from zero: the simple slope for low identifying White Americans was  $-2.85, p = .05$ . The lines at each of the other moderator levels did not differ from zero,  $ps > .58$ . The simple slope for low centrality and low private regard was  $-.11$ ; the simple slope for low centrality and high private regard was  $-.56$ ; and the simple slope for high centrality and high private regard was  $-.25$ .

These results suggest that to the extent that White participants indicated low national private regard, but high national centrality, knowledge of history negatively

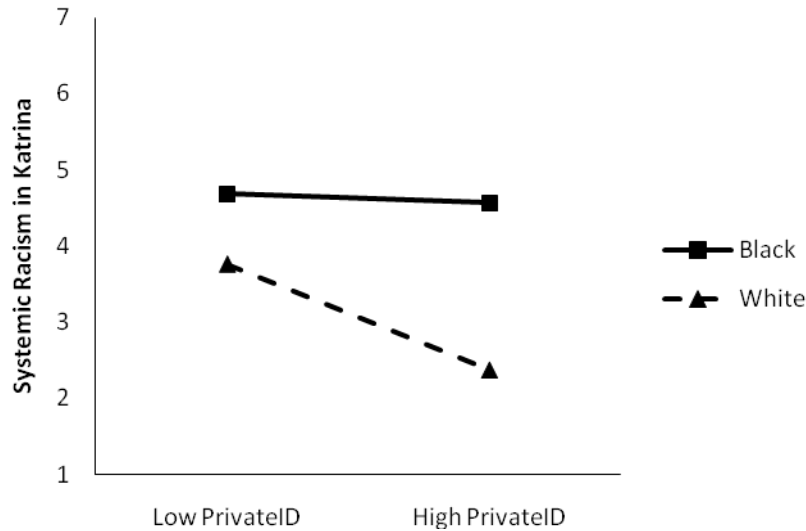
relates to racism denial. Otherwise, history knowledge did not appear to moderate the relationships of national identity with racism denial.

*Perceptions of Systemic Racism.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = -.516, p < .001$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = .201, p = .003$ ), national private regard ( $\beta = -.205, p = .004$ ), and national centrality ( $\beta = -.031, p = .643$ ) was a significant predictor of racism perception in systemic manifestations,  $F(4, 134) = 37.26, p < .001$ . When included in the model with the higher order interactions, only the main effect of racial group remained significant. This main effect was qualified by a 2-way interaction of racial group and national private regard ( $\beta = -.274, p = .023$ ; see Figure 8). To interpret this interaction, I examined the relationship between private regard and perceptions of systemic racism separately within each racial group. Results indicated that the negative relationship between national private regard and perceptions of racism in systemic manifestations was particularly true of White participants ( $\beta = -.593, p < .001$ ). Although not significant, the relationship was slightly negative for Black participants, as well ( $\beta = -.177, p = .358$ ). Simple slope analyses revealed that the slopes for the Black and White American participants did not differ from zero,  $ps > .19$ .

Results suggest a significant relationship between historical knowledge and perceptions of systemic racism, even when controlling for the national identity subscales. Historical knowledge was positively related to perceptions of systemic racism and was not qualified by any higher order interactions. National private regard was negatively related to perceptions of systemic racism. Although seemingly the

case for both communities, it was particularly true among the White American participants.

Figure 8. Racial group x national private regard interaction for perception of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina

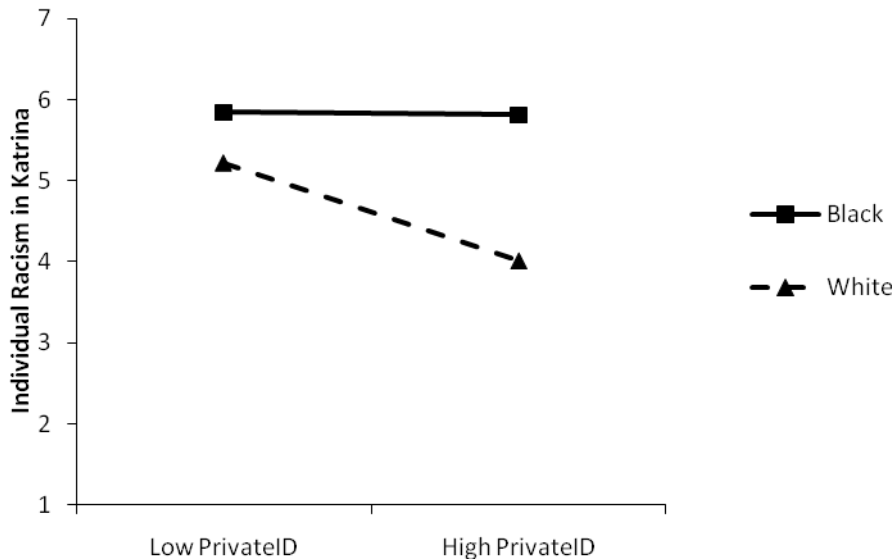


*Perceptions of Individualistic Racism.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = -.187, p < .001$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = .033, p = .085$ ), national private regard ( $\beta = -.049, p = .014$ ), and national centrality ( $\beta = -.020, p = .288$ ) was significantly related to perception of racism in isolated, individual events,  $F(4, 134) = 25.13, p < .001$ . When included in the model with the higher order interactions, the effect of racial group remained significant, but was again qualified by a 2-way interaction of racial group and national private regard ( $\beta = -.076, p = .019$ ). To interpret this interaction, I again examined the relationship between private regard and perceptions of individualistic racism separately within each racial group (see Figure 9). Results indicated that the negative relationship between national private regard and perception of racism in isolated, individual events was more true of the



White participants ( $\beta = -.384, p = .010$ ), than the Black participants ( $\beta = -.100, p = .614$ ). Simple slope analyses revealed that the slopes for White and Black Americans did not differ from zero,  $ps > .30$ .

Figure 9. Racial group x national private regard interaction for perceptions of individualistic racism in Hurricane Katrina



Similarly to the results for systemic racism, national private regard was negatively related to perceptions of individualistic forms of racism. Although seemingly the case for both communities, again, it was particularly true among the White participants.

*Conception of Racism.* The linear combination of racial group ( $\beta = -.130, p = .189$ ), historical knowledge ( $\beta = .206, p = .032$ ), national private regard ( $\beta = -.136, p = .173$ ), and national centrality ( $\beta = .067, p = .488$ ) was a significant predictor of tendencies to indicate a systemic conception of racism,  $F(4, 125) = 3.78, p = .006$ . History knowledge was the only significant predictor in this main effects model, and the model did not suggest any higher order interactions. The present research suggests

that believing that racism stems from social and cultural structures is related to knowledge of historical racism.

*Relationships among the predictor variables*

Table 4 summarizes the correlation coefficients among the hypothesized predictor and dependent variables for the White and Black participants. Although I did not directly test the predictive relationships between cultural engagement variables, the correlations suggest that in addition to being related to perceptions of racism, they are also related to each other. Among the White participants, racial private regard was positively related to the other identity variables: racial centrality ( $r = .24, p = .025$ ), and national private regard ( $r = .37, p < .001$ ). Similarly, racial centrality was positively related to national centrality ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ). National private regard and national centrality were moderately correlated ( $r = .44, p < .001$ ). With the exception of national private regard ( $r = .20, p = .077$ ), the identity variables were not related to knowledge of history among the White participants. Among the Black participants, racial private regard was positively related to the other racial identity subscale ( $r = .32, p = .009$ ), but negatively or unrelated to the national private regard ( $r = .07, p = .601$ ) and national centrality ( $r = -.24, p = .58$ ). However, racial centrality was positively related to national private regard ( $r = .29, p = .020$ ) and national centrality ( $r = .14, p = .263$ ). History knowledge was unrelated or negatively related to measures of national identity (private regard,  $r = -.09, p = .514$ ; centrality,  $r = -.17, p = .209$ ), but positively related to measures of racial identity (private regard,  $r = .14, p = .275$ ; centrality,  $r = .10, p = .447$ ) among the Black participants.

Table 4  
Zero-order correlations among the measured variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Nation Private	--								
2.Nation Central	.45*** .44***/.44***	--							
3.Race Private	.14† .07/.37***	-.05 -.24†/.13	--						
4.Race Central	.05 .29*/.13	.22** .14/.42***	.32*** .32**/.24*	--					
5.Denial	.48*** .28*/.46***	.29*** .13/.26*	-.02 -.03/.23*	-.14† .07/.19†	--				
6.Systemic	-.40*** -.19/-.35**	-.23** -.16/-.13	.06 .08/-.20†	.36*** .17/.13	-.70*** -.50***/-.43***	--			
7.Individual	-.41*** -.19/-.37***	-.27** -.18/-.21†	.07 -.04/-.07	.22** .01/-.05	-.59*** -.17/-.38***	.73*** .51***/.56***	--		
8.Conception	-.16† -.09/-.09	.01 .00/.08	.00 .02/-.07	.09 .01/.01	-.33*** -.32*/-.22*	.32*** .29*/.19†	.27** .04/.24*	--	
9.Knowledge	-.10 -.09/.20†	-.13 -.17/.01	.15† .14/-.02	.23** .10/.02	-.39*** -.15/-.10	.46*** .18/.29*	.38*** .06/.20†	.25** .13/.22†	--

Note: Overall correlations (top) and correlations by racial group (Black/White) \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , † $p < .10$

## Discussion

The present results provide support for a cultural psychology perspective and the primary hypotheses in this study. First, the present research replicates previous findings of racial group differences in perception of racism in ambiguous events (e.g., Crocker, Luhtanen, Broadnax, & Blaine, 1999; Operario & Fiske, 2001; Adams, Tormala, O'Brien, 2006). White American participants attending a PWI perceived less racism in Katrina-relevant events; expressed greater endorsement of statements that deny a role for racism in Katrina; endorsed systemic conceptions of racism less, and scored lower on a measure of accurate history knowledge that incorporated instances of historical racism than did the Black American participants attending a HBI (H1). Of additional interest, the results also replicate previous findings of group differences in levels of identification (e.g., Sidanius et al., 1997). The White American participants reported less racial identification (private regard and centrality) than did Black American participants; but, White American participants reported more national identification (private regard and centrality) than did the Black American participants.

Second, given the consistency of the racial differences in perception across various scenarios and time, this study also sought to investigate potential cultural explanations of why these perceptual differences might persist. One explanation proposed is an aspect of cultural engagement: Black History knowledge. Specifically, this study proposed that differences in perception of racism might be explained by differences in knowledge of historical racism. There was some support for the

mediational hypothesis. Knowledge of Black history partially mediated the differences on systemic manifestations of racism in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This suggests that an aspect of the racial differences in perceptions of systemic racism might be explained by differences in historical knowledge. Although correlational in design, this study suggests that engagement with Black American cultural constructions of the past might influence racism perceptions in present-day events.

Important aspects of cultural engagement, various identity constructions, are a second set of variables of explanatory interest in this study. When conceptualized as cultural engagement, one can consider identification with a category as active participation in the construction of what that identity category means. Furthermore, one can consider the meanings and ideologies constituting any identity category and their implications for interpreting the social world.

Previous research found that racial private regard was negatively related to beliefs in conspiracies allegedly perpetrated against Blacks by the U.S. government among White Americans, but positively related to belief in conspiracies among Black Americans (Crocker et al., 1999). To the extent that anti-black conspiracies include claims of racism, previous studies suggest that perceptions of racism might be linked to Black and White racial identity. Results in the present study provide evidence that engagement with various racial identity constructions are related to perceptions of racism in the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. Supporting hypothesis 2a, racial private regard was negatively related to perceptions of systemic racism among White

Americans and positively related to racism denial; however, there is little evidence that perception of racism is related to racial private regard among the Black American participants in this study (see bivariate correlations, Table 4).

Although the present study does not replicate the relationship found among the Black participants by Crocker and colleagues, this lack of relationship between racism perception and this specific aspect of identity is consistent with other research findings. For instance, racial private regard was unrelated to past and future attributions to prejudice in a study on well-being (Branscombe et al., 1999). Perhaps, there is a ceiling effect suppressing the relationship between racial private regard and racism perception in the Black American sample (the mean was 6.37 on a 7 point scale). Alternatively, it may be that perceiving racism is linked to both increased and decreased private regard for Black racial identity depending on individual differences in what it means to be Black (e.g., whether what it means to be Black is grounded in an experience of oppression versus having a unique culture; on different meanings of Black identity, see Sellers et al., 1998).

There is support for hypothesis 2b, as well. Overall, when controlling for racial private regard (and history knowledge), racial centrality is positively related to perceptions of systemic racism. While the positive relationship between racial identity and perceptions of racism might seem surprising for the White American participants, this finding is consistent with work on group-based guilt (Roccas et al., 2006). Results suggest that when controlling for identity dimensions that only consider the positive aspects of one's group identity (private regard), White

participants who felt their race was an important aspect of their identity (i.e., centrality) denied or minimized events that ostensibly implicate their group in a negative fashion (i.e., admitting the possibility of racism in Katrina-related events) less than those who reported that their race was not a central part of their identity (see Figure 3). This finding did not extend to perceptions of individualistic manifestations of racism. Perhaps this is because perceiving racism in individualistic forms is less identity-relevant than perceiving systemic manifestations of racism in Katrina related events. Evidence for this possibility comes from the larger racial group differences on the measure of systemic racism than the individualistic racism perception measure.

This study also found some support for the hypotheses regarding engagement with American identity. Consistent with the predictions, national private regard was negatively related to perceptions of systemic and individualistic manifestations of racism, and positively related to racism denial in both communities (H3a). As predicted, this relationship is stronger among the White American participants (see Table 4). However, there was little evidence to support hypothesis 3b. If anything, bivariate correlations suggest a negative relationship between nation centrality perceptions of racism (Table 4). Overall, when controlling for identity dimensions that only consider the positive aspects of national identity (and history knowledge), national centrality is not related to perceptions of racism (systemic and individualistic), or racism denial ( $\beta$ s ranging from -.031 to .072).

Additionally, there is some empirical support for Du Bois' "Double Consciousness" in the present data. For Black American participants, to the extent

that race was a central and important aspect of their identity, there was a positive relationship between racial identity and perceptions of racism (although not significant by conventional standards). However, to the extent that their national identity was a positively regarded and an important aspect of their identity, participants perceived less racism in Hurricane Katrina. This was also true of the White American participants in this study. Perhaps a liberal extension of Du Bois' ideas, one might suggest that the racial centrality data involving White Americans suggest that viewing oneself through the lens of race in general—whether Black or White—represents a paradox when viewing oneself through the lens of American national identity.

Lastly, there is support for the fourth hypothesis regarding history knowledge and perceptions of racism (H4). As previously discussed, historical knowledge mediated the racial group differences in perception of racism in Hurricane Katrina-related events. However, independent of various racial and national identity constructions, accurate knowledge of historical instances of racism and African American achievements remained positively related to perceiving racism and endorsement of systemic conceptions of racism, and negatively related to endorsement of claims that deny racism in Hurricane Katrina.

Interestingly, many of these relationships were qualified by 3-way interactions of history knowledge with racial group and the various identity constructions. Consistent across the dependent measures, perceptions of racism were positively related to Black history knowledge among White American participants considered



“low identifiers” on the private regard dimension of racial identity and “high identifiers” on the centrality dimension of racial identity. This pattern is illustrated in Figures 3, 4, and 5 (this pattern is also illustrated in Figure 2, but as a negative relationship since the dependent variable is denial).

Endorsement of a systemic conception of racism was also qualified by an interaction of history knowledge with racial group and racial private regard. Among Black American participants considered “high identifiers” on racial private regard, the more they knew about Black History, the more they endorsed a systemic conception of racism. Among Black Americans participants considered “low identifiers” on racial private regard, the more they knew about Black history, the less they endorsed systemic conceptions of racism. Although an unanticipated result, one might suggest that while high identifiers might prefer conceptions of racism as individual bias and low identifiers might prefer a more socio-cultural conception, knowledge of history encourages conceptions of racism that include both (hence, responses meeting at the midpoint of the scale).

#### *Careful Consideration of the facts*

The primary goal of this study was to provide a less pathologizing explanation of the racial group differences in perception of racism. Instead of locating perceptions of racism in something about exaggerated beliefs or paranoia, I examined perceptions of racism as culturally grounded phenomena reflecting resonance with culturally-patterned worlds. Of special consideration in this study, Black history knowledge is one possible indicator of engagement with narratives about racism present in the

Black community. Racial identity is another. However, one might suggest that there is little evidence signaling that perceptions of racism among the Black American participants were actually culturally grounded. Although correlations between history knowledge and perceptions of racism were in the hypothesized directions, they were non-significant. Similarly, with the exception of one non-significant positive relationship between racial centrality and systemic racism, racial identity seemed unrelated to perceptions of racism among Black American participants.

One explanation, as suggested by the opening quote, is that cultural engagement variables are unrelated to perceptions of racism because Black Americans are indeed paranoid; thus, they subsequently (over) perceive racism in events like Hurricane Katrina. However, if one is to come to that conclusion, then one must concede that the same must be true of White Americans who are armed with accurate knowledge of the historical past. The present results suggest that White American participants who are open to critical narratives about the past, perceived Katrina-related events similarly to the Black American participants. Furthermore, Black American participants were no more likely than White American participants were to incorrectly identify “false” items as “true”. In other words, Black American responses to items regarding historical racism reflect knowledge—not a tendency to believe anything that sounds like racism to be true. Because the measure of historical knowledge incorporated instances of historical racism, this suggests that Black American participants did carefully assess potential instances of racism (in the past and present).

### *Turning the Lens*

Notably, in an effort to provide a less pathologizing account of Black American perceptions, a cultural psychology analysis illuminated several variables pertinent to understanding the psychology of White American perceptions of racism. This research suggests that White American disbeliefs about the presence of racism in Hurricane Katrina is related to cultural engagement with mainstream American history narratives and cultural understandings that leave out systemic manifestations and conceptions of racism. When forced to choose a conception of racism, White American participants endorsed a less systemic definition than did the Black American participants (although this difference was marginal). This is consistent with work that suggests that White Americans prefer a less systemic conception of racism (e.g., Adams et al., in press; O'Brien et al., 2008).

Furthermore, research suggests that perceiving social inequality and injustice in American society can be somewhat threatening to a positive American identity (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Schiffhauer, 2007). Consistent with this idea, American private regard was consistently and negatively related to perceptions of racism in this study. Interestingly, independent of any identity-related defensiveness (captured in private regard), White American participants who knew more about Black history and said race mattered in their lives (i.e., racial centrality), were more likely to say the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina might be due to racism.

### *Limitations and future directions*

One potential limitation of this study is that the racial differences observed are not independent of institution type. This likely prompts the question as to whether the differences observed are due to *race* or *institutional context*. The White American participants are from a predominately White institution and the Black American participants are from a historically Black institution. In the present study, these two variables cannot be easily disentangled. Importantly, each sample comes from an institution in which the participants are members of the majority and in both contexts, racial identity is not likely to be a source of rejection (Postmes & Branscombe, 2002), but positively reinforced. Thus, it is equally likely that the differences observed are the product of engagement with a particular culture (which in this case, conventional standards typically refer to as race), or the cultural settings. Ideally, a larger sample of White Americans from the HBI or a larger sample of Black Americans from the PWI would allow further analysis of this idea. However, the focus of the study was to compare two different communities (whether based on race or institution) with divergent perceptions of racism and for who collective representations associated with identity and knowledge of historical racism were likely to differ substantially.

Another limitation of the present research is the correlational design of the study. Cultural engagement variables were measured rather than manipulated. Although one might suggest a measure of “knowledge” should be relatively stable, causal directions cannot be ascertained. Although I suggest knowledge of history inform perceptions of racism, it is equally plausible that perceptions of racism in present-day America aids recall of knowledge about racism in the past. Moreover,

this Black history test only represents a small amount of historical knowledge that people have available to them to draw upon.

Future research should address the present limitations of this study by utilizing increased sample sizes. Many of the non-significant findings were in the hypothesized directions (particularly among the simple slopes analyses) and might be due to low power. Increased sample sizes might also allow for further exploration of race and institution effects. In addition, future research would benefit from employing experimental designs to further investigate the relationships between the cultural engagement variables and perceptions of racism. For instance, manipulating historical knowledge content and identity would illuminate their possible effects on perception of racism. Remaining for future consideration are the links between history and identity, and the consequences of perceiving racism for these variables (e.g., reconstructing the past).

### *Implications*

The present research tries to highlight the utility of a cultural analysis. This research suggests that work grounded in the perspectives of the oppressed is theoretically rich and not by any means limited to “the minority experience.” Specifically, by utilizing this perspective to “turn the analytic lens,” psychologists can illuminate previously “invisible” psychological constructions among dominant members. Previous research has focused on exploring why Black Americans believe conspiracy theories or perceive racism in ambiguous events. However, in the present study engagement with White identity was related to perceptions of racism, too, if not

more strongly related than Black identity. In the least, this suggests that denials of racism are not an anchor by which one should judge objective neutrality. Perceptions (and denials) of racism are identity relevant for White Americans, too.

Also, psychologists typically study psychological phenomena as individual-level, culture-neutral processes. A cultural psychology approach suggests one can examine how mind is also represented externally and “inscribed” in everyday cultural worlds (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertch, 2002). While the present study does not directly focus on external representations of mind, by exploring representations of Black history, the study supports this approach. Perceptions of racism are linked to many individual-level variables, but they are also linked to collective representations of the past.

Finally, this project presents an important direction for research on prejudice, discrimination, and racism. The present research suggests that there are liberating representations of American history that allow all Americans, regardless of their identity, to reconcile their collective past in hope of building a better collective future. This is important because the extent to which one believes racism should be eradicated from American society today probably reflects the extent to which one believes racism is still present.

One way people come to define and recognize racism is through engagement with varying cultural environments. However, many Americans are living in segregated communities and mainstream representations of history and racism are likely to be the primary source of information regarding views on racism. To the

extent that history textbooks, museums, and mainstream American narratives of the past shape our present views on the topic, this work suggests America might have more writing and editing to do. Ignoring the perspectives and narratives of the oppressed may do more harm than good. This research suggests an alternative sociocultural strategy for improving intergroup relations in America: exposure to liberating representations of history.

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## Appendix

### Racial/Ethnic Self-Identification

1. Please complete the sentence: In terms of racial/ethnic group, I prefer to identify with the label \_\_\_\_\_.

### Collective Self Esteem adapted for race/ethnicity

1. I often regret that I belong to my racial/ethnic group. *reverse scored* (private regard)
2. Overall, my race/ethnicity has very little to do with how I feel about myself. *Reverse scored* (identity centrality)
3. In general, I'm glad to be a member of my racial/ethnic group. (private regard)
4. The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am. (identity centrality)
5. Overall, I often feel that my racial/ethnic group is not worthwhile. *Reverse scored* (private regard)
6. My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. *Reverse scored* (identity centrality)
7. I feel good about the race/ethnicity I belong to. (private regard)
8. In general, belonging to my race/ethnicity is an important part of my self-image. (identity centrality)

### Collective Self Esteem adapted for nationality

1. I often regret that I belong to my nation. *reverse scored* (private regard)
2. Overall, my national identity has very little to do with how I feel about myself. *reverse scored* (identity centrality)
3. In general, I'm glad to be a citizen of my nation. (private regard)
4. The nation I belong to is an important reflection of who I am. (identity centrality)
5. Overall, I often feel that my nation is not worthwhile. *reverse scored* (private regard)



6. My national identity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.  
*reverse scored* (identity centrality)
7. I feel good about the nation I belong to. (private regard)
8. In general, belonging to my nation is an important part of my self-image.  
(identity centrality)

#### Claims of Racism Denial

1. Claims of racism in events surrounding Hurricane Katrina were wildly exaggerated.
2. Hurricane Katrina laid bare the reality of racism in America. *reverse*
3. During the aftermath of Katrina, it was common to see Whites helping Blacks.
4. The number of White people who donated resources to Katrina victims shows that claims of racism in Katrina were exaggerated.
5. It is hard to believe accusations of racism in post-Katrina New Orleans when the mayor of the city is Black.

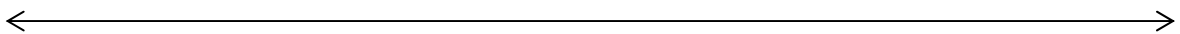
#### Perceptions of Racism in Hurricane Katrina

1. The U.S. Government's slow response in aiding New Orleans residents during the Katrina disaster. (systemic)
2. A White man in a pick-up truck fleeing New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina decides not to pick up some Black people walking alongside the highway.  
(individualistic)
3. Levee breaks that left the poorest areas of New Orleans devastated beyond repair while the affluent areas (i.e., French Quarter and Uptown) suffered minor damage. (systemic)
4. Separation of families (including those with young children) during evacuation and rescue efforts. (systemic)
5. A White New Orleans police officer stops a car full of Black people fleeing New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and asks to see their vehicle registration.  
(individualistic)
6. Media use of the term "refugees" to describe hurricane evacuees. (systemic)

7. Gretna police refuse to let New Orleanians cross a bridge to the West Bank in order to escape the city. (systemic)
8. Attempts to bulldoze homes in the lower ninth ward. (systemic)
9. A White New Orleans police officer arrests a Black man for stealing a TV the day after Hurricane Katrina strikes. (systemic)
10. St. Charles parish's decision to ban new trailer parks to house Katrina refugees. (systemic)
11. Media descriptions of White Americans as "finding" food while Black Americans were labeled "looting". (systemic)
12. Proposals to turn some flooded neighborhoods back into wetlands. (individualistic)
13. Attempts to reduce the physical size of the city. (systemic)
14. Leaving New Orleans residents trapped for days inside the Superdome. (systemic)
15. A White rescue worker searching the city in the aftermath of Katrina passes by a group of stranded Black people in his boat without stopping to help. (individualistic)
16. Barbara Bush's statement that poor people at a relocation center in Houston were faring better than before Katrina struck. (individualistic)
17. Claims that violence in New Orleans was so prevalent that rescue attempts had to be postponed, leaving thousands of residents stranded. (systemic)

#### Systemic-Individual Conception Continuum

1. Some people think that racism stems primarily from racist individuals who discriminate against ethnic minorities and treat them badly. Other people think racism stems primarily from social or cultural structures that keep ethnic minorities poor and fail to provide them with adequate education. Where do YOU think racism in modern America comes from? Please place an "x" on the line below to indicate your answer.



Biased  
Individuals

Social-Cultural  
Structures

### Open-Ended History Measure

1. Imagine that you are responsible for organizing an educational bulletin board to commemorate Black History month. In the space below, please list up to 5 Black History events that you think would be the most important to portray.

### True/False Historical Knowledge Test

1. An African American doctor invented the process of extracting plasma from whole blood for the purpose of storage and transfusion. T
2. Booker T. Washington helped to initiate the civil rights movement in 1955. F
3. Fourteen year old African American Emmett Till was kidnapped, brutally beaten, shot, and dumped for allegedly whistling at a white woman. The two white men acquitted for his murder by an all-white jury later boasted about committing the murder in a Look magazine interview. T
4. Among many pursuits, African American Benjamin Banneker contributed to the historic survey that laid out the District of Columbia. T
5. In Tuskegee, Alabama the U.S. Government deceived over 600 African American men by hiding their diagnosis of syphilis, and for the next forty years denied them medical treatment for this potentially fatal disease. T
6. George Washington Carver invented hundreds of uses for the peanut and other plants. T
7. Medgar Evers struggled for the civil rights of Black Americans and was assassinated for his writings. T
8. In the 1980's Congress passed the Preservation Act which made it difficult for African immigrants to enter the U.S. F
9. The Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery completely throughout the entire United States. F

10. African American Paul Ferguson was shot outside of his Alabama home for trying to integrate professional football. F
11. Ralph Bunche was the first African American to receive Nobel Prize for Peace. T
12. An African American operated in the first successful open heart surgery. T
13. After slavery ended, Jim Crow laws—which enforced segregation, limited black job opportunities and kept Black Americans from voting—remained in effect during the 1960s. T
14. The U.S. Government promised payment of 40 acres of land and a mule for their “services” as slaves but never delivered such payment. T
15. Garrett Morgan invented and patented the rotary blade lawnmower. F
16. The Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) declared that separate facilities for whites and blacks were constitutional, thus facilitating segregation. T
17. Fredrick Douglas, born a slave, escaped and became America's most prominent abolitionist and anti-slavery agitator during the 19th century. T
18. Bernice Bethune was a leader in the black women's club movement and served as president of the National Association of Colored Women. F
19. The F.B.I. has employed illegal techniques (e.g., hidden microphones in motels) in an attempt to discredit African American political leaders during the civil rights movement. T
20. The African American slave Dred Scott sued for his freedom. The Supreme Court ruled that he was property, not a citizen of the United States and therefore could not sue in federal court. T
21. Less than 200 Black people were lynched in the U.S. during the one hundred year span between 1870 and 1970. F
22. Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman elected to Congress. T

23. The U.S. government deliberately created and administered the HIV virus to over 900 African Americans in a secret project during the 1980s. F
24. Mae Jemison was the first Black Female astronaut. T
25. In 1927, rich White New Orleans residents intentionally blew the levees to protect their property and flood other areas. Consequently, Black Americans lived in refugee camps and were forced at gunpoint to repair the broken levees. T

#### Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your socioeconomic status?