

Why and when do racial microaggressions hurt? The role of perceived diversity credentials

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**Abstract**

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Racial microaggressions are brief, potentially ambiguous everyday exchanges that may send denigrating messages to racial minorities (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007). When appraised by racial minority targets as being relevant to their racial group membership, racial microaggressions are related to increased negative emotions (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011). Racial minority targets often face the problem of determining the intention of someone who commits a racial microaggression (i.e., perpetrator), such as whether the behavior is due to racial prejudice or not, and may use the perpetrator's characteristics to determine prejudice. Six studies investigated whether Asian American targets of microaggressions rely on the perpetrator's perceived diversity credentials (PDC), in the form of racial group membership and perceived diversity experiences (PDE), to determine prejudice in these situations. In Study 1, I explored the construct of PDC and identified the types of experiences representative of PDE

important in determining prejudice. In Study 2, I found that targets use racial group membership to attribute racial prejudice when they lack information about the perpetrator's PDE in hypothetical interactions involving racial microaggressions. However, when provided information about the perpetrator's PDE, targets based their appraisals on that information as opposed to racial group membership (Studies 3a, 4, 5, and 6). For example, in hypothetical interactions participants reported greater perceived racial prejudice and negative emotions like anger when a perpetrator had low versus high PDE. PDE mattered more for White versus Asian perpetrators, suggesting shifting standards (Biernat & Manis, 1994) for the same PDE. Situational boundary effects of PDC on perceived racial prejudice and emotion were also investigated (Studies 2 and 5). Finally, I examined whether perceived racial prejudice is the causal mechanism by which racial group membership and PDE are associated with emotion (Studies 2, 3a, and 4). Investigating how racial minority targets react to the same event differently based on the perpetrators' racial group membership and PDE is important to understanding the complex processes in perceiving racism, which may ultimately contribute to stress and well-being.

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## **Why and when do racial microaggressions hurt? The role of perceived diversity credentials**

“So, where are you really from?” For many White Americans, one may simply respond with their hometown and think nothing much of the question, other than as a means to get to know one further. In contrast, for many Asian Americans, this question may be more complex. An Asian American may feel negative emotions because she may wonder whether she is perceived as a foreigner, a racial stereotype common for her group. Imagine, however, if an Asian American is asked the same question by another Asian American or by a White American who has traveled extensively around the world. Do you think this person would react differently in these situations?

*Racial microaggressions* are defined by Sue and colleagues as “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group” (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007, p. 273). In these events, racial minority targets (i.e. recipients of behavior or comment) often face the burden of determining *intentionality* in whether the treatment they have received is due to racial prejudice or for more innocuous reasons. Why and when do racial microaggressions hurt from the target’s perspective? In my dissertation, I examine (1) the extent to which these seemingly innocuous situations may hurt emotionally for minorities and (2) the situational moderators minority targets may use to determine the perpetrator’s intention within an interaction. Specifically, this dissertation investigates from the target’s perspective whether racial microaggressions are less likely to be perceived as due to racial prejudice and evoke less negative emotions when they are perpetrated by someone with greater *perceived diversity credentials* (PDC), in the form of one’s given racial group membership and perceived diversity experiences. In other words, do racial microaggressions perpetrated by members of one’s own

in-group hurt less? And if so, does knowing more about the perpetrators' diversity experiences beyond one's racial group membership, however, attenuate the racial in-group effect on perceiving racial prejudice?

In this chapter, I first introduce racial microaggressions as a form of contemporary racism, and then situate the research within previous literature examining ambiguous discrimination. Next, I focus on the negative emotional consequences for targets of racial microaggressions. Finally, I propose that negative emotions may not always be felt by targets in these situations and that the perceived intentions of the perpetrator, as reflected by one's racial group membership and individuating information about one's perceived diversity experiences, may be important in understanding how targets determine racial prejudice and its effect on emotion.

### **Racial microaggressions as a contemporary form of “invisible” racism**

Racism has historically shifted from blatant forms of expressed prejudice to discrimination manifested in subtle and ambiguous ways. Many people perceive themselves to be non-prejudiced (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Sue et al., 2007). However, many instances of discrimination are perpetrated in subtle or ambiguous ways today, often making perceived prejudice difficult to identify from the target's perspective. Extensive research has examined the effect of attributing negative treatment to prejudice, as opposed to more neutral or ambiguous treatment (e.g., Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doozeje, 1999; p. 50; Crocker & Major, 1989, Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). What if the treatment was not unequivocally negative, for example, such as being asked where one is really from or having an empty seat next to you on a crowded bus? *Racial microaggressions* do not involve obvious

negative treatment but rather, commonplace differential treatment. These situations encompass potentially race-relevant behavioral actions, comments, questions, assumptions, and jokes that are often viewed by perpetrators of these behaviors to be relatively harmless (Schacht, 2008; Sue, 2008, Thomas, 2008). One of the predicaments that targets often face is determining intentionality in the behavior, whether it is due to racial prejudice or more benign sources.

Racial microaggressions are related to yet distinct from previous work focusing on discrimination and attributional ambiguity. Attributional ambiguity has often focused on understanding *why* unequivocally negative treatment has happened from the target's perspective: what is ambiguous is whether or not the negative behavior reflects the perpetrator's prejudice.<sup>1</sup> For example in many studies, participants are told that they received negative feedback on their performance and need to determine that the reason for their negative treatment (e.g., Crocker, Voekl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Hoyt, Aguilar, Kaiser, & Blascovich, 2007; Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2008; Mendes, McCoy, Major, & Blascovich, 2008; Stangor, Swim, Van Allen, & Sechrist, 2002). In many of these situations, the alternative attribution is that the behavior reflects the targets' own personal shortcomings. In contrast, for targets of racial microaggressions, the dilemma is often figuring out *what* has happened and *why* it has happened to them. In turn, targets are faced with the additional burden of not overreacting to the seemingly

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<sup>1</sup> Some research has also focused on attributional ambiguity and positive feedback (e.g., Hoyt et al., 2007). This line of research has found that attributions to discrimination had an overall negative impact on the target's depressed emotion and self-esteem. It remains to be seen whether future studies on emotional reactions to positive feedback are consistent with studies examining emotional reactions to microaggressions. Additionally, other research by Branscombe and her colleagues suggest that being reminded of one's lower status in society may be responsible for negative emotions in general, as opposed to having a self-protective function (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002ab; Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002). Branscombe and her colleagues argue that for stigmatized groups, thinking that one is mistreated based on one's social group can implicate both the target's social identities *and* personal identity, eliciting greater negative emotion intensity in general. In that research, however, the researchers did not specifically differentiate between discrete emotions to address their arguments and included both overt and subtle forms of mistreatment, making it difficult to tease apart these effects.

innocuous situation because the perpetrator likely had no awareness that the behavior was hurtful.

### **What are the emotional consequences of racial microaggressions?**

While racial microaggressions are theorized to be emotionally harmful, their association with discrete emotions has only been systematically investigated recently. Understanding discrete negative emotions, as opposed to general positivity and negativity, is important for at least three reasons. First, discrete emotions provide useful inferences for psychological processes, such as explaining actions (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000). Second, discrete emotions are important in understanding, in the long run, the role of subtle discrimination on mental and physical health outcomes (Brondolo, Gallo, & Myers, 2009; Gee, Ro, Shariff-Marco, & Chae, 2009; Williams & Mohammad, 2009; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). For example, negative *internalizing* emotions such as shame and sadness are linked to heightened risk for depression and anxiety (e.g., Okazaki, 1997), while negative *externalizing* emotions like anger and scorn/contempt are linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Kubzansky & Kuwachi, 2000). Third, understanding discrete emotions allows one to compare how racial microaggressions are related to or different from previous discrimination findings. For example, several studies suggest that attributing a negative outcome to prejudice relative to personal deservingness protects against internalizing emotions like shame and sadness because it deflects harm away from the self, but not externalizing emotions like anger (Crocker et al., 1991; Major et al., 2002; Major, Kaiser & McCoy, 2003; Mendes et al., 2008).

Cognitive appraisal theories of emotion suggest that one's appraisal, or interpretation process, is associated with one's emotional reaction to an event (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Smith

& Ellsworth, 1985). Wang, Leu, and Shoda (2011) were one of the first to provide quantitative evidence in this area. Their findings indicated that although Asian Americans were likely to make other social identity appraisals (i.e., gender, age, height/weight, and social class) in response to these situations, it was the appraisal of believing that one's own race was relevant that was most associated with increased negative emotion intensity, as modeled in the figure below. Investigating these situations among Asian Americans in particular is important in understanding these phenomena, as members of this group are often perceived as "model minorities" who are not often expected to experience racism yet nonetheless are viewed and treated ambivalently based on their race (Ho & Jackson, 2001; Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, & Polifroni, 2008).

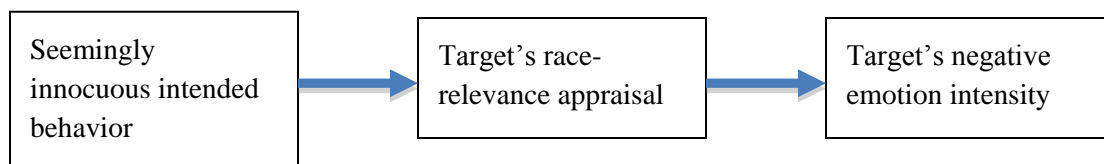


Figure I.1. Theoretical Model (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011)

Using a highly repeated within-person approach, two studies assessed the emotional impact of the belief that one is being treated differently, though not necessarily negatively, due to race. As predicted, for most Asian Americans, the intensity of their negative emotions was related to the belief that another person treated them the way he or she did because of their race. Increased externalizing emotions such as anger and scorn/contempt and internalizing emotions such as shame and sadness were both reported, suggesting that these situations were also elicited emotional responses similar to some attributional ambiguity and discrimination findings (e.g.,

Major et al., 2003; Major et al., 2002) while implicating the self (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002a; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002b). Notably, the White Americans in the study were more likely to believe other social identities (e.g., age) to be more relevant across the same situation and overall, did not report greater negative emotions when they thought their race was relevant. These findings are consistent with perspectives that argue that race-relevant treatment is emotionally harmful for disadvantaged groups relative to privileged groups (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002a; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002b; Schmitt et al., 2002).

Why may being a target of a potential racial microaggression increase one's internalizing *and* externalizing emotions? Because the kinds of seemingly innocuous situations examined in the studies are not intrinsically negative, thinking about one's own race may not represent a *less* painful alternative appraisal than not thinking about one's race. On the contrary, believing that one is treated differently due to one's race can make an otherwise seemingly innocuous situation painful and personally-targeted. Some evidence has suggested that among Asian Americans, experiences of racial discrimination are associated with internalizing emotions like shame (Chan & Mendoza-Denton, 2007), leading to lower self-esteem (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006) and greater depressive symptoms (Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004). At the same time, believing that one is treated differently due to one's race may increase externalizing emotions like anger as well. Differential treatment based on race is likely viewed as a transgression against individual autonomy (e.g., unfair harm of an individual), a central moral violation often evoking anger (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999).<sup>2</sup>

### **Are negative emotions always felt? Emotional ambiguity and racial microaggressions**

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<sup>2</sup> While one could argue a similar sense of injustice based on gender, historically, race mistreatment has been grounded as institutionally unacceptable (e.g., on the basis of Civil Rights) whereas gender differences are some sometimes justified by both men and women (e.g., benevolent sexism). However, this question remains to be systematically explored and tested.

Consistent with the findings by Wang and colleagues (2011), qualitative research using graduate student focus groups has found that the experience of racial microaggressions is associated with increased negative feelings (Sue et al, 2007a; 2007b). In the focus groups, Asian American participants reported strong and lasting negative emotions from racial microaggressions they experienced, such as belittlement, anger, frustration, alienation, and invalidation. In the present dissertation, however, I explore the possibility that negative emotions may not always be felt by the target. Instead, *emotional ambiguity*, or feeling both negative and positive emotions within a situation, may be characteristic of the ambiguity inherent in racial microaggressions from the target's perspective.

In certain situations, positive emotions may be as or more relevant than negative emotions in the experiences of racial microaggressions. Compared to negative emotions, positive emotions have received less attention in discrimination research, mostly because discrimination has been conceptualized as unfair negative treatment evoking little positive emotion. In contrast, positive emotions like pride and happiness may also be important emotions to consider in understanding the race appraisal–emotion association for racial microaggressions. On the one hand, believing that racial prejudice or one's race to be the reason for treatment has been found to be related to greater negative emotion outcomes (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002a; Wang et al., 2011). For example, being mistaken to be Japanese when one is not may be thought as being due to racial prejudice (i.e., assuming that all Asian Americans are the same ethnic group; Sue et al., 2007). Yet on the other hand, believing that one's race may be relevant in a situation may not always be construed as racial prejudice, but rather as a means of affiliation or other innocuous reasons. Sue and colleagues (2007) found that some focus group participants did not feel that a White person attempting to speak Japanese to a Chinese American was malevolent or reflecting

the stereotype that all Asians look the same. Rather, they believed that the White person may have been trying to establish a relationship by indicating that he could speak an Asian language (p. 76).

While Sue and his colleagues noted potential individual differences in perceiving and reacting to racial microaggressions, the process of appraising prejudice or other reasons may happen within a person as well. A target may need to determine the intention behind these situations, which may then influence the target's emotional reactions. Previous research suggests that beliefs based on one's race can represent a source of prejudice but also pride and happiness for racial minorities (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Zia, 2001). For example, racial identity experiences among American Indians (e.g., thinking about sports mascots) have been found to be both a source of prejudice and pride, depending on the context in which one associates these meanings (Peroff & Wildcat, 2002). In this dissertation, I thus examine situational variability in emotional ambiguity or potentially feeling negative and positive emotions among targets, which is likely to arise in some racial microaggressions and may depend on the perceived intentions of the perpetrator.

### **Determining the perpetrator's intention: The role of perceived diversity credentials (PDC)**

“Many people will never find humor that flirts with racism or sexism or homophobia funny and will continue to be offended and hurt by it. But the pass often works even if the humor is what comedy experts sometimes call “outsider to insider” joking — a white comedian wielding minority stereotypes; a straight woman making fun of lesbians — a much trickier proposition than insider humor.”

In this New York Times (2007) article, Randy Kennedy observes the complicated nature for when certain people are given leeway to tell offensive jokes. While forums like comedy shows can allow for blatant stereotyping by certain “insiders” to be more acceptable (e.g., Abrams & Bippus, 2011), are certain people given a pass for a potential racial microaggression in everyday life? While racial microaggressions are generally negative for most Asian Americans (Wang et al., 2011), are there instances when these experiences are not viewed negatively and the perpetrator is, in a sense, given a “pass”? One way for targets to determine the perpetrator’s intention is by extracting cues about the perpetrator’s characteristics from a real or imagined interaction (e.g., Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007; Shapiro, Baldwin, Williams, & Trawalter, 2010; Wout, Murphy, & Steele, 2010).

Targets may feel less negative emotion and more positive emotion when they think the perpetrator is less likely to be racially prejudiced. What might indicate a lack of prejudice? In my dissertation, I will focus on the person’s *perceived diversity credentials* (PDC), which consists of (1) one’s racial group membership and (2) perceived diversity experiences (PDE). Specifically, racial group membership focuses on stereotyping due to one’s given group membership, while PDE may be acquired to attenuate or minimize these initial perceptions. As described in this section, many racial minority targets may give the benefit of the doubt for racial microaggressions that are tied to stereotypes of their groups, when perpetrators are considered an in-group member because of their racial group membership. I also explore whether it is possible for an out-group member to accrue enough perceived diversity experiences in order to be given the same leeway. Examining these two factors is also important in order to understand whether a person can be seen as non-prejudiced beyond their given racial group membership.

**Racial group membership.** One situational cue minority targets may use to determine prejudice is the perpetrator's racial categorical membership. Social Identity Theory suggests that the mere fact of being *categorized as group member*, however "minimal" that group might be, can derive positive meaning from that in-group compared to out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Much research on group membership has suggested that in-group members tend to advocate, evaluate more favorably, and afford special privileges for each other compared to members of the out-group (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Castelli, Tomelleri, Zogmaister, 2008; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2004). Race, in particular, is an important group membership and is one of the first characteristics people notice (Ito & Urland, 2003; Fiske, 1998).

I expected that a racial microaggression perpetrated by another Asian American (i.e., an in-group member through racial membership) may be less likely to be perceived as due to racial prejudice when compared to a White individual (i.e., an out-group member) in the perspective of an Asian American target.<sup>3</sup> One possibility for this difference is because in-group members are assumed to be less prejudiced based on the expectation that they have shared experiences, knowledge, contact, and favorable attitudes towards Asian Americans. Therefore, an Asian American who perpetrates a potential microaggression may not be viewed as racist. Some work investigating the probability of prejudice is in line with this theory (Inman & Baron, 1996; Wout, Shih, Jackson, & Sellers, 2009). For example, Wout and colleagues found decreased stereotype threat among Black participants when the evaluator of an exam was part of the in-group (i.e., Black) than from the out-group (i.e. White). When the evaluator was part of one's group, it

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<sup>3</sup> In the introduction, I currently conflate racial group membership and status by focusing on White Americans as out-group members. Some preliminary evidence ( $N=107$ ) suggests that Black perpetrators who ask "Where are you REALLY from?" (see Study 3a) are perceived as less racially prejudiced than Asian and White perpetrators.

reduced the perceived threat that the evaluator believed in negative stereotypes against their group.

**Perceived diversity experiences (PDE).** Along with racial in-group membership, I am introducing another situational moderator that may be important in determining perceived prejudice in racial microaggressions. *Perceived diversity experiences* (PDE) is another component of PDC which may be *acquired*, and is defined as experience, knowledge, contact, and attitudes that demonstrate an appreciation of diversity and diverse groups. I expected that a racial microaggression perpetrated by a person with high PDE may be less likely to be perceived as due to racial prejudice when compared to a person with low PDE in the target's perspective.

What does PDE look like? Examples of PDE may include genuine expressions of egalitarian belief systems, affording minorities special treatment in some situations, participating in activist activities, signing a petition forwarded by minorities, or affiliating or being friends with a member of a particular group (Krumm & Corning, 2008; Monin & Miller, 2001). Other examples may include participating in cultural activities, foreign travel, and learning a foreign language.

Why would PDE matter in perceiving racial prejudice in potential racial microaggression situations? Much research dedicated to person perception has found that individuating information can modify or override initial social stereotypes or meta-stereotypes (e.g., Brewer, 1988; Smith & Collins, 2009; Thagard & Kunda, 1998; Wout et al., 2009). Perceived evidence of diversity experiences may influence targets' perceptions of non-prejudice. For example, in recent research focusing on meta-perceptions and experiences, Wout, Murphy, and Steele (2010) found that Black students expected to be perceived more positively by White students who had a

diverse group of close friends compared to White students with all White friends. Further, in work by Wout and colleagues (2009) mentioned earlier also found that a White evaluator who expressed non-prejudiced beliefs reduced stereotype threat among Black test-takers. These findings suggest that many minorities may take into account the evidence of diversity experiences of White individuals in determining how they will be perceived, which may then extend to how they perceive the prejudiced intentions of those White individuals.

The concept of PDE is related to but distinct from research examining the role of moral credentials, which has focused on a perpetrator excusing his or her own discriminatory behavior and also from certain third-party observers' perspective. In research focusing on moral credentials, if a perpetrator has proven herself to be a non-prejudiced person such as by endorsing a minority for a job, she may be more comfortable subsequently expressing prejudiced views (Efron, Cameron, & Monin, 2009; Monin & Miller, 2001). For example, in a study examining potential discrimination directed at a lesbian, gay, bisexual person (LGB) by a heterosexual person, Krumm and Corning (2008) found that third-party observers (i.e., not targets) belonging to a perpetrator's in-group (i.e., heterosexual) were less likely to perceive the heterosexual perpetrator's behavior as discriminatory when the perpetrator had high moral credentials (e.g., activist for gay rights, affiliation with LGB) than when the perpetrator had low moral credentials. Similarly, Efron and Monin (2010) found that in ambiguous transgressions (e.g., ambiguous discriminatory behavior perpetrated by a manager against his Black employees), observers licensed the manager's prior good deeds (e.g., supported affirmative action policy) regardless of domain, compared to blatant transgressions. These studies, however, did not examine the actual *target's* appraisal and emotional reactions to the perpetrator's behavior directed *toward the target*. In contrast, PDE focuses on the perceived experiences,

knowledge, attitudes, and contact with diversity and diverse groups *from the target's perspective* and whether high PDE may mitigate perceptions of prejudice and emotions in an interaction.

Do targets react similarly to outgroup members with high PDE compared to ingroup members? Some researchers have interviewed White Americans who are invested in being antiracist, have experience with diverse groups, and are active allies of racial minorities (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Reason & Broido, 2005). Yet are these White Americans seen as non-prejudiced by racial minorities? While Monin and Miller (2001) and Krumm and Corning (2008) argue that group membership (e.g., racial group membership) is a form of credential, this argument has not been empirically tested. Racial group membership alone may function independently from PDE. For example, while Asian Americans may be stereotyped to have greater PDE than White Americans in general, it may be possible that an Asian American perpetrator perceived as having low PDE may be reacted to more negatively than a White perpetrator with high PDE. If a White perpetrator of a racial microaggression is perceived to have high PDE in an interaction, his actions may be perceived as more innocuous and thus mitigate targets' perceptions of racial prejudice.<sup>45</sup>

### **Overview of studies and predictions**

In this dissertation, I examine the process in perceiving and reacting to potential racial microaggressions from the minority target's perspective. Specifically, I focus on why and when racial microaggressions hurt emotionally by examining the role of PDC, in the form of both the

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Asian Americans perpetrators with low versus high PDE may elicit more negative reactions. For example, Asian Americans may be assumed by other Asian Americans to have greater diversity experiences than Whites, and not having a perceived level of PDE may be threatening to some.

<sup>5</sup> There may be boundary effects to whether PDE can mitigate negative reactions for out-group members. For example, even if one has high PDE but perpetrates a blatant racist act, they may be seen as a hypocrite and reacted to negatively (e.g., Zia, 2001).

perpetrator's in-group racial membership and PDE. The main prediction is that racial microaggressions will be emotionally harmful when appraised as racial prejudice. However, because these experiences are often not "objectively" negative and are often argued to be neutral or even trivial, the target's perceptions of the perpetrator's PDC may attenuate the degree to which racial microaggressions are harmful. In other words, minority targets may rely on racial group membership only when they lack information about the perpetrator's PDE in an interaction. However, when provided information about the perpetrator's PDE, targets may base their appraisals more on that information compared to racial group membership.

The dissertation aims to understand how PDE of the perpetrator is perceived from the target's perspective, and also determine boundary effects in which PDE can mitigate perceptions of racial prejudice and emotion outcomes, by comparing racial microaggressions with individual-based slights and blatant discrimination experiences (which will be discussed in greater detail later in the dissertation). The following are my overall theoretical aims and study predictions.

Aim 1: To test for racial group differences in PDE and to test which experiences count as PDE.

- Prediction 1: Asian Americans will be stereotyped to have higher PDE than Whites (Study 1).
- Prediction 2: PDE will be perceived in the form of both sustained, social experience and knowledge with diversity in general and with Asian Americans (Studies 1 and 3b).

Aim 2: To test whether racial group membership and PDE moderate the negative effect of a potential racial microaggression on perceived racial prejudice and emotion (See Figure I.2).

- Prediction 3: Without individuating information on PDE, Asian Americans will be more likely to attribute racial prejudice and will react more negatively emotionally to White perpetrators of racial microaggressions, than other Asian American perpetrators (Study 2).
- Prediction 4: When information about PDE is known, those with lower PDE will be more likely to be perceived as racially prejudiced and be reacted to more negatively emotionally and than those with higher PDE, taking into account racial group membership (Studies 3a, 4, 5, and 6). This effect is expected to be stronger for White versus Asian perpetrators.

Aim 3: To test situational boundary effects of racial group membership and PDE on perceived racial prejudice and emotion.

- Prediction 5: Racial group membership and PDE will moderate racial microaggressions but not for individual-based slights (Study 2) and blatant discrimination situations (Study 5).

Aim 4: To test whether perceived racial prejudice is the causal mechanism by which racial group membership and PDE is associated with emotion (See Figure I.3).

- Prediction 6: Perceptions of racial prejudice will mediate the relationship between PDE and emotion outcomes, even after taking to account other potential mediators (Studies 2, 3a, and 4).

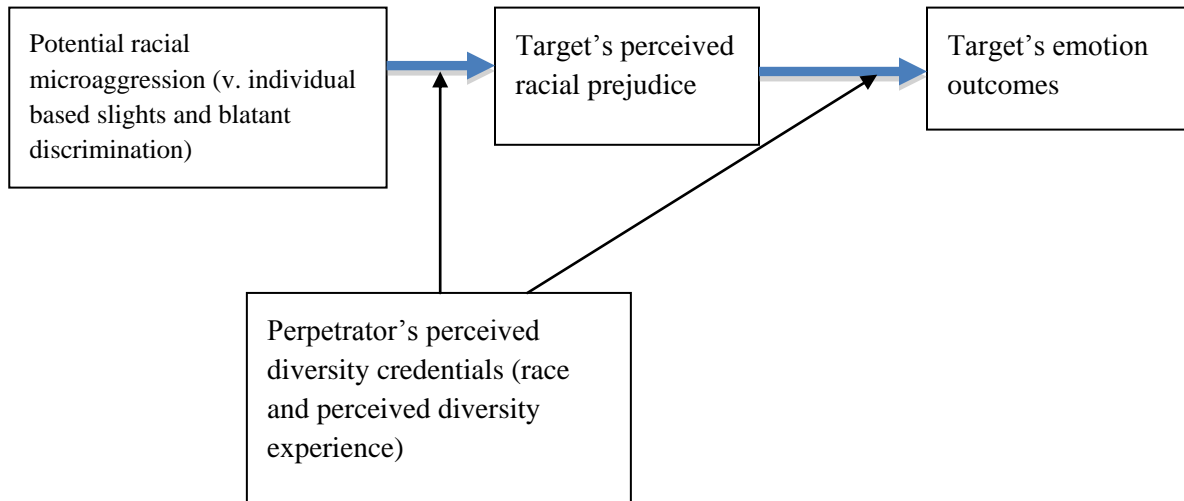


Figure I.2. Original theoretical model

Note: When a potential racial microaggression is attributed to racial prejudice by minority targets, it will be associated with greater negative emotion intensity and less positive emotion intensity. However, perceived diversity credentials (i.e., race of perpetrator and PDE of perpetrator) will attenuate or decrease the perception of racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity.

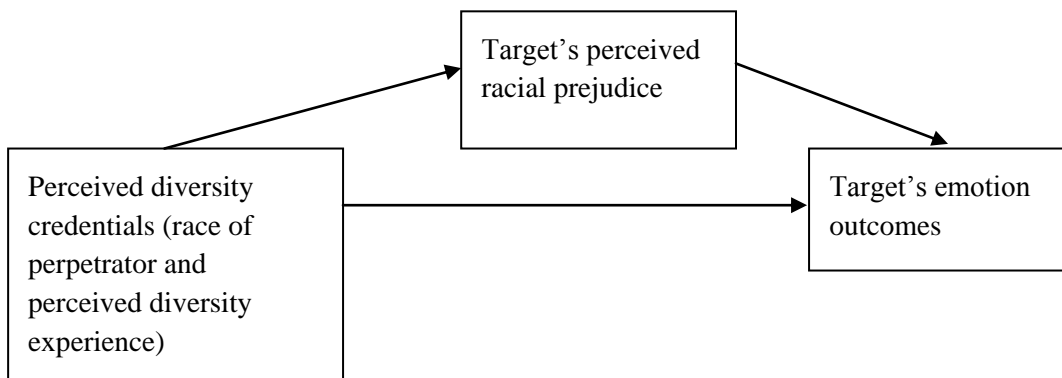


Figure I.3 Secondary theoretical model

Note: The secondary model tests whether perceived racial prejudice is expected to mediate the effect of PDC on emotion outcomes.

## Study 1

Prior to examining how racial microaggressions may be influenced by contextual factors, Study 1 aimed to understand the extent to which diversity experiences are perceived for Asian Americans and White Americans and what these experiences may look like. These aims are important in order to investigate the moderating role of perceived diversity experiences in the experience of racial microaggressions.

While research has focused on perceptions of racial prejudice of one's interaction partner, such as Whites compared to minorities (e.g., Richeson & Shelton, 2007), to our knowledge, no study has directly compared whether Whites are also stereotyped to have lower diversity experiences than racial minorities. This is important because racial prejudice and perceived diversity experiences (PDE) may be related but distinct constructs.

### **Are there group differences in stereotypes of diversity experience?**

Asian Americans are often stereotyped to be familiar with their ethnic background by White Americans and also by other Asian Americans (Tuan, 1998; Wu, 2002); however, perceived diversity experiences are less clear when comparing Asian Americans and White Americans. Both groups may be stereotyped to have low diversity experiences in general but based on different reasons. For example, Whites are often stereotyped to be racially prejudiced (e.g., Richeson & Shelton, 2007) and Asian Americans are stereotyped to be low on sociability (Chu & Kwan, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Lin, Kwan, Cheung & Fiske, 2005) along with historically being viewed as inassimilable (Chan, 2001; Espiritu, 1997; Goto, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2002; Kitano & Daniels, 2001). Based on those stereotypes, observers may also perceive

Asian Americans as “clannish” or only associating with other in-group members and lacking interaction with other people (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997).

Nonetheless, Asian Americans may still be more likely to be perceived as having more experience with general diversity than White Americans within the U.S. context. This perception could be based on their minority status (Wu, 2002), stronger international ties to their ancestral country of origin (Mankaker, 2002), and retention of ethnic and cultural practices compared to other groups (Chan, 2001; Espiritu, 1997; Kim, Wang, Deng, Alvarez, & Li, 2011). Many have also assumed that both foreign-born and U.S. born Asian Americans share similar cultural values of interdependence (Chan, 2001; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). Asian Americans may thus be stereotyped more to have more cultural and diversity experiences than White Americans.

### **What experiences “count” as diversity experience?**

Certain experiences are argued as evidence of non-prejudice that can be accrued by a person intentionally or unintentionally (Krumm & Corning, 2008; Monin & Miller, 2001). Krumm and Corning (2008) note that these experiences are often related to diversity, such as participating in activism to even trivial compliance such as signing a one-time petition. However, little research has differentiated behaviors that are most likely to represent perceived experience with and knowledge of diversity.

In the present study, we compared a range of different behaviors representing diversity experiences to understand their influence on target’s appraisals of potential racial microaggressions in subsequent studies. We expected that sustained intergroup experiences such as speaking a foreign language, having different friends of color, or traveling internationally, may be most reflective of PDE. We believed that sustained experiences would most likely

represent voluntary commitment to the other ethnic/cultural groups and general diversity. We predicted these experiences will be distinct from political engagement and merely expressing an egalitarian attitude, which may not necessarily involve engaging with diverse groups over time. We also expected, however, that less sustaining experiences like expressing an egalitarian attitude may also be perceived as a form of diversity experience.

### **Study Overview**

The present study tests the hypothesis that Asian Americans are stereotyped to have more perceived diversity experiences (PDE) with both Asian culture and with other ethnic/cultural groups in general compared to White Americans (Study 1a). The present study also aims to understand the most representative behaviors related to perceived diversity experiences (Studies 1a and 1b).

### **Study 1a**

To test our hypothesis that Asian Americans would perceive other Asian Americans as having higher diversity experiences than Whites, we conducted a study in which common Asian and White names were presented and participants inferred their levels of diversity experience with closed-ended responses. In this study, we examined both Asian-specific and general diversity experiences to understand the range of experiences which may be stereotyped.

#### **Development of stimuli and diversity experience questions**

*Development of Asian and White names.* Asian and White names were developed from a list of top first and surnames in a U.S. Census and Google search for popular “American” and “Asian” names born in 1980s, to represent the college population sample. A research assistant

narrowed down the list to five Asian male names, five Asian female names, five White male names, and five White female names. All first names used popular American names. Traditional Asian first names were not used in order to reduce perceptions of unfamiliarity and foreignness. In an on-campus study at the University of Washington, experimenters approached students individually or in groups to complete a short survey study evaluating the names. Forty-eight self-identified Asian/Asian American participants were recruited (61% women; 50% US-born;  $M$  age = 19.90,  $SD$  = 1.55). The top ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (31%), Korean (29%), Vietnamese (6%) and Japanese (6%). Participants completed demographic information and then read and responded to the 20 names presented in alphabetical order. For each name, participants rated how likely the person was Asian, White, Black, and Latino on a 7-point scale.

The names rated most likely to be perceived as “Asian” or “White” were chosen. From the original list of 20 names, 16 were chosen (4 from each group): Andrew Zhang, Brian Choi, Steven Kim, Tim Chen, Alice Cho, Jennifer Chung, Karen Wang, Michelle Nguyen, Emily Brown, Jessica Thomas, Laura Wilson, Rebecca White, Ben Clark, Eric Miller, Paul Scott, Tyler Hill. A within-subjects ANOVA compared whether there were significant differences within the Asian and White names. For the eight White names, there were no differences in likelihood to be White,  $F(7,329) = 1.70, p = .11$ . For the eight Asian names, there was a significant difference in the likelihood to be Asian,  $F(7,329) = 4.35, p < .001$ . Specifically, the difference was driven by the name Michelle Nguyen versus the other Asian female names. However, the name was kept to represent the large Vietnamese American population represented in the subject pool and on-campus.

***Development of PDE questions.*** Questions on diversity experiences were generated from previous research on moral credentials (i.e. Monin & Miller, 2001; Krumm & Corning, 2008).

These questions included both Asian-specific experiences and general diversity experiences. A total of 14 PDE questions were created (see Table 1.1 in results).

## Methods

### Participants

Participants were 109 self-identified Asian Americans (66% women; 49% US-born;  $M$  age = 19.52,  $SD = 2.26$ ) recruited from introductory courses at University of Washington for extra course credit. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (43%), Korean (23%), and Vietnamese (10%).

### Procedures

Participants were brought into a room in groups of one to five to complete the study on the computer. The study was programmed on MediaLab and all instructions were given on the computer. Participants were asked to rate 16 Asian and White names on PDE on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all likely*; 4 = *somewhat likely*; 7 = *extremely likely*). Specifically, Asian-specific diversity experiences included having Asian friends, participating in Asian culture, and being knowledgeable about Asian news.<sup>6</sup> General diversity experience items included studying a foreign language, speaking a foreign language, being knowledgeable about world news, taking diversity-related courses, having friends of color, being comfortable with all people of color, growing up/living in a diverse community, traveling internationally, studying abroad, experiencing racism, and participating in activism.

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<sup>6</sup> Asian-specific items may not represent diversity per se but were included to examine how perceived experiences with Asian Americans may be an important indicator as being seen as an in-group member, which is discussed later.

## Results

The reliability for all 14 PDE items was high (Asian-specific items:  $\alpha = 0.77$  for Asian names and  $\alpha = 0.83$  for White names; diversity-related items:  $\alpha = 0.83$  for Asian names and  $\alpha = 0.86$  for White names). An overall repeated measures t-test comparing White (i.e., averaged across 8 White) versus Asian (i.e., averaged across 8 Asian) names was computed for each diversity experience question (see Table 1.1 below).

For 13 of the 14 questions (with the exception of participating in activism), Asian American participants rated the Asian names ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = .55$ ) versus White ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = .58$ ) names higher for each perceived diversity experience, indicating greater perceptions of diversity experiences,  $t(108) = 16.97$ ,  $p < .001$ . When breaking down by Asian-specific experiences versus general diversity experiences, not surprisingly, Asian Americans rated the Asian names to be higher ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = .69$ ) on Asian-specific experiences than White names ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = .76$ ),  $t(108) = 23.61$ ,  $p < .001$ . When examining general diversity experiences, similarly, Asian Americans also rated the Asian names to be higher ( $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) than White names ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = .57$ ),  $t(108) = 12.56$ ,  $p < .001$ .<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> To rule out the possibility of in-group favoritism in greater PDE for other Asians over Whites, a separate sample of White participants ( $N=33$ ) completed the same study. White participants rated the Asian names to be higher ( $M = 5.13$ ,  $SD = .92$ ) on Asian-specific experiences than White names ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = .77$ ),  $t(32) = 10.66$ ,  $p < .001$ . In addition, White participants also rated the Asian names to be higher ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) on general diversity experiences than White names ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .65$ ),  $t(32) = 6.43$ ,  $p < .001$ . When examining the items separately, White participants rated all the items significantly greater in likelihood for Asian names versus White names except for being comfortable with all people of color and participating in activism. Thus, these findings suggest consistency in PDE for both Asian and White perceivers, as opposed to an in-group effect.

Table 1.1 Means and SD for Perceived Diversity Experiences

Perceived Diversity Experiences	Asian names	White names
<b>Asian-specific</b>		
Having Asian friends	5.88 (0.76)	3.34 (0.88)*
Participating in Asian culture	5.33 (0.84)	2.45 (0.92)*
Knowledgeable about Asian news	4.88 (0.91)	2.60 (0.84)*
<i>Asian-specific average</i>	<i>5.36 (0.69)</i>	<i>2.80 (0.76)*</i>
<b>General diversity-related</b>		
Speak foreign language	5.74 (0.77)	3.51 (1.10)*
Studied foreign language	5.25 (0.84)	4.13 (0.95)*
Traveled internationally	5.19 (0.84)	4.03 (0.94)*
Having friends of color	4.85 (1.13)	4.00 (0.92)*
Comfortable with all people of color	4.75 (1.05)	4.14 (0.89)*
Grew up/lives in diverse community	4.72 (0.98)	3.46 (0.77)*
Taken international, diversity, ethnic classes	4.68 (0.85)	3.86 (0.76)*
Studied abroad	4.61 (0.91)	3.84 (0.82)*
Experienced racism	4.56 (1.13)	2.70 (0.97)*
Knowledgeable about world news	4.48 (0.79)	4.12 (0.77)*
Participating in activism	3.66 (0.92)	3.87 (0.84)
<i>General Diversity average</i>	<i>4.77 (0.57)</i>	<i>3.79 (0.57)*</i>

Note: \*  $p < .05$  indicates significant difference between Asian and White names. Inter-item consistency was high.

## Discussion

Study 1a found that Asian Americans are perceived to have greater levels of diversity experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and contact (i.e., higher PDE) than Whites by Asian Americans. This included Asian-specific experiences such as having Asian friends, participating in Asian culture, and being knowledgeable about Asian news. Additionally, Asian Americans were stereotyped to having greater general diversity experiences as well, such as knowing a foreign language, knowledgeable about world news, taking diversity related courses, and having more diverse and international experiences. The only lack of difference perceived between Asian and Whites were activism experiences, which were rated lowest and below the midpoint, suggesting that activism was seen as unlikely to be representative of either group. In sum, when examining the Asian-specific or general diversity experiences, in both cases, Asian names were

perceived to have greater PDE than White names. This was evidenced by both quantity and likelihood in participation for each of the selected diversity experiences in our study.

### **Study 1b**

Which experiences and knowledge are perceived as most representing diversity? This question is important because a person with high PDE will unlikely acquire all these experiences or portray all the experiences in an interaction. As exploratory analysis for subsequent studies, a separate sample of Asian American participants rated the likelihood that each specific behavior was representative of demonstrating experience with or knowledge of diversity. We expected that more sustained, social experiences such as having friends of color and living in diverse communities would be rated as most representative, demonstrating greater engagement with diversity over longer periods. We also expected political involvement and expressions of egalitarian beliefs to be representative based on previous work on moral credentials (i.e., Monin & Miller, 2001; Krumm & Corning, 2008) but not to the same extent as sustained, social experiences.

### **Methods**

Thirty-nine Asian Americans were recruited (59% women; 56% US-born;  $M$  age = 21.74,  $SD = 2.33$ ). The top ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (46%), Filipino (10%), and Vietnamese (10%). Participants were asked to rate their agreement to the following question for each experience: “For each statement, imagine someone has done that behavior. How much does each behavior indicate experience with or knowledge about cultural diversity?” (9 point scale, 1 = *not at all*; 5 = *somewhat*; 9 = *extremely*). Participants rated 23 items, including the items which were originally developed in Study 1.

## Results

Table 1.2 below presents the descriptive results. Asian Americans rated most of the items above the midpoint (i.e., 5), suggesting that most of these items are perceived as somewhat related to diversity experiences. More sustained diversity experiences such as speaking a foreign language or having friends of color were rated the highest, while racial beliefs such as expressing non-prejudice and political behaviors such as participating in political activism were rated to be lowest in relation to the other items.

Table 1.2. Likelihood of behavior indicating experience with or knowledge about diversity (1-9 scale)

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	Mean (SD)
Speaking foreign language	7.28 (2.01)
Having friends of color	6.74 (2.22)
Traveled internationally	6.67 (1.91)
Grew up in diverse community	6.67 (2.26)
Comfortable with all people of color	6.56 (2.22)
Participating in cultural customs	6.51 (2.00)
Living in diverse community	6.49 (1.70)
Member of racial minority group	6.38 (2.56)
Speaking out against racism	6.08 (2.22)
Studied abroad	6.03 (3.00)
Experienced racism	5.97 (2.36)
Traveled nationally	5.72 (1.81)
Knowledgeable about world news	5.72 (2.33)
Expressing egalitarian beliefs	5.67 (2.16)
Taken international, diversity, ethnic classes	5.41 (2.12)
Majored in diversity related degree	5.36 (2.57)
Supporting affirmative action	5.10 (2.36)
Voting for minority political representative	5.03 (2.15)
Volunteering for social justice organization	5.00 (2.78)
Participating in social justice activities	4.41 (2.50)
Signing a social justice related petition	4.26 (2.52)
Expressing non-prejudice	4.21 (2.53)
Political activism	3.64 (2.18)

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To determine which items were viewed to be conceptually similar, an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was run on all of the items. Table 1.3 below presents the findings.

Table 1.3. Varimax rotated factor analysis

	Factor 1 Political	Factor 2 Sustained	Factor 3 Friends	Factor 4 Skills	Factor 5 Studied	Factor 6 Living
Member of racial minority group	.719					
Speaking out against racism	.676					
Experienced racism	.787					
Supporting affirmative action	.687					
Voting political	.841					
Participating in social justice activities	.674					
Signing a social justice related petition	.805					
Expressing non-prejudice	.475					
Political activism	.743					
Speaking foreign language		.777				
Traveled internationally		.515				
Comfortable with all people of color		.610				
Traveled nationally		.726				
Knowledgeable about world news		.729				
Expressing egalitarian beliefs		.478				
Taken diversity classes		.527				
Volunteering for social justice		.738				
Having friends of color			.824			
Grew up in diverse community			.743			
Participating in cultural customs				.596		
Majored in diversity related degree				.771		
Studied abroad					.913	
Living in diverse community						.761

The first two factors included the most number of items. The first factor consisted of items on political involvement and pan-ethnic experience (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2003), such as speaking out against racism, supporting affirmative action policy, and participating in social justice activities (34.91% of variance explained). Notably, this factor also included being a member of a minority group. The second factor concentrated on sustained or actively seeking diversity experiences, such as speaking a foreign language, traveling, and taking diversity related classes (10.90%) The last four factors consisted of one or two items each, specifically

friendship/community (9.70%), skills (7.62%), studying abroad (6.34%), and living in a diverse community (4.80%).

### **Discussion**

PDE may primarily encompass sustained social interactions, such as speaking a foreign language, having friends of color, international travel, growing in a diverse neighborhood and being comfortable with people of color. Interestingly, being a member of a minority group, which was part of the political involvement and pan-ethnic factor, was rated to be representative of experience with and knowledge or diversity. This suggests that mere racial group membership may be an important form of PDC. The items rated the lowest were social justice and politically oriented items, indicating that perceived diversity experience may be perceived more as social experiences as opposed to political-based experiences. The exploratory factor analysis supported the differentiation between the two groups of experiences in general as well.

Notably, we were also interested in whether PDE focused on the perceived *experiences*, as opposed to beliefs or knowledge, such as expressions of egalitarian beliefs. We found that expressing non-prejudice, although rated close to the mid point of the scale, was one of the lower rated diversity experiences items. This suggests that PDE may need to be demonstrated through experiences, as opposed to beliefs such as simply expressing non-prejudice. This point will be examined further in Study 3b.

### **Conclusion**

Together, Studies 1a and 1b suggest that Asian Americans stereotype PDE to groups differently, and that PDE are primarily viewed through the lens of social engagement with diverse groups. Specifically, two main hypotheses were supported. First, Asian Americans stereotyped Asian names to have more experiences with both Asian culture and other groups in

general compared to White names. Second, more sustained experiences such as speaking a foreign language or having friends of color were rated the highest in terms of reflecting diversity experience, while racial beliefs such as expressions of non-prejudice and political behaviors such as participating in political activism were rated relatively lower. Importantly, the items measured in Study 1a tapped into some of the most important issues related to diversity experiences for a separate sample of Asian Americans in Study 1b. This included behaviors such as speaking a foreign language and growing up in communities of color, which were indeed rated as representing perceived diversity experiences.

The present study was important in understanding stereotypes of diversity experiences among Asian Americans and White Americans. To build on these findings, the next few studies focus on the consequences of perceived diversity credentials (PDC), as represented by both the perpetrator's race and PDE, for targets of racial microaggressions.

## Study 2

Racial microaggressions, or situations that do not involve obvious negative treatment but rather differential treatment that is often viewed by perpetrators of these behaviors to be relatively harmless, have been found to be emotionally harmful for minority targets (Sue et al., 2007a; Wang et al., 2011). Study 1a found that Asian Americans were stereotyped to have higher PDE than White Americans. What is less known is whether the *race* of the person who perpetrates a racial microaggression may affect the target's perceived prejudice of the perpetrator and emotional reactions in these situations. These situations are thought to be common and often perpetrated by both out-group and in-group members (Sue et al., 2007b). The extent to which the race of the perpetrator may impact the target's emotional responses in these situations, however, is unclear. Do Asian Americans perceive less racial prejudice and report lower negative emotion intensity when a racial microaggression is perpetrated by an Asian American versus a White American and why?

### **Does the race of the perpetrator matter?**

The race of the perpetrator is important in perceiving prejudice and preferring in-group members (i.e., people sharing a sense of solidarity and commonality) during intergroup interactions. People have a tendency to *favor* in-group members and their messages even based on minimal group conditions such as sharing surface level commonalities (e.g., Jetten, Duck, Terry, & O'Brien, 2002; Mackie, Worth, & Asuncion, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and for existing group differences such as race (e.g., Castelli, Tomelleri, Zogmaister, 2008; Sidanius et al., 2004). Furthermore, prototypical instances of racial discrimination are often viewed as being perpetrated from White individuals to racial minorities (Inman & Baron, 1996). A paucity of research, however, has examined whether minority group members give leeway or benefit of the

doubt (as opposed to general favoritism) to an in-group member who perpetrates a potentially racist act against their own group. Some research suggests that some groups like Asian Americans are more likely to self-stereotype (e.g., good at math) when close others also stereotype them (Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery, 2006). One implication is that targets may be influenced by in-group members; however, this group membership distinction was not directly tested in the study. Thus, it remains to be directly tested whether minorities give leeway to an in-group member who perpetrates a potentially racist act.

It is important to note a potential boundary effect, such that the race of the perpetrator may not matter as much for situations irrelevant to race. When race is not immediately relevant, perceptions of prejudice from Whites may not be as salient for minorities in an interracial interaction (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). Thus, we expected that the contextual relevance of race may also have a moderating effect on who is perceived as racially prejudiced: for situations irrelevant to race, the race of the perpetrator may not matter as much on targets' perceptions of prejudice and emotions.

### **Racial prejudice versus race-relevance as potential mediators**

The link between racial group membership and emotions is predicted to be mediated by the perpetrator's perceived racial prejudice. Examining racial prejudice as a mediator would indicate that racial microaggressions are perceived by minority targets as instances of racism. This would be consistent with literature suggesting that in interracial interactions, Whites are more likely to be viewed as racially prejudiced and minorities as targets of prejudice (e.g., Inman & Baron, 1996; Richeson & Shelton, 2007).

Furthermore, we also examined another potential mediator, race-relevance. As noted before, Wang and her colleagues (2011) found that the greater extent to which Asian Americans believed that the situations were due to race (i.e., race-relevance), the greater negative emotion intensity was reported. In this study, Wang and her colleagues did not identify the perpetrator's race in the situations; however, in open-ended responses, many participants believed that the perpetrator was White (also see Wang, 2008). When a potential racial microaggression is perpetrated by an Asian American, believing that the treatment was due to one's race may not necessarily represent racial prejudice but instead a more innocuous reason such as racial affiliation. In the present study, we predicted that race-relevance will not be as strong of a mediator between racial group membership and emotions as racial prejudice. Thus, we aimed to examine the mediating role of both racial prejudice and race-relevance appraisals.

## **Predictions**

In the present study, we addressed whether more leeway is given to in-group members for perpetrating a racial microaggression compared to out-group members. Focusing on the racial group membership component of perceived diversity credentials, Study 2 addresses the hypothesis (1) that Asian Americans will react with lower perceived racial prejudice, lower negative externalizing and internalizing emotions, and greater positive emotions to racial microaggressions perpetrated by Asian Americans compared to White Americans. We expected that (2) the race of the perpetrator would not impact these outcomes differently for situations irrelevant to race. Finally, we also expected (3) perceptions of racial prejudice to explain the relationship between perpetrator's race and emotion intensity but not race-relevance.

## **Pilot Studies**

We first conducted pilot studies to identify potential racial microaggressions and individual-based slights (i.e. situations irrelevant to race) as control situations for Asian Americans. In the main study, we examined the role of the perpetrator's race on emotion and appraisals by using a *highly repeated within-person* approach (Shoda, 2003; Zayas, Whitsett, Lee, Wilson, & Shoda, 2008; Wang et al., 2011) to avoid stimulus sampling problems prevalent in research in social psychology (Wells & Windshitl, 1999) and to examine a large number of standardized situations. This method allows us to focus on the effects of the perpetrator's race on emotion *within* each participant first (Fleeson, 2007ab).

We identified a variety of potential racial microaggressions relevant for Asian Americans based on empirical data and past theory. Racial microaggressions were theorized to include differential or ambivalent treatment towards the target, involving themes such as perpetual foreigner/identity threat, model minority, and cultural values, and subtle discrimination experiences commonly addressed in previous literature (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Liang, et al., 2002; Sue et al, 2007; Wang et al., 2011; Wu, 2002). Based on previous qualitative studies by Sue, Bucceri, and colleagues (2007) and a pilot study,<sup>8</sup> we identified ten potential racial

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<sup>8</sup> Originally, we distinguished between negative rejections and ambiguous treatment to represent different types of racial microaggressions. However, very few of the situations were rated to be very negative, which would have not allowed us to compare across the situation types using highly repeated analysis. Therefore, we grouped all situations together as representing racial microaggressions and to be consistent with previous literature which suggested that negative rejections may also be considered microaggressions (e.g. Sue et al., 2007). In the original pilot study, participants were 32 self-identified Asian Americans (50% US-born) who were presented 35 race-relevant situations taken directly from a focus group study by Sue and colleagues (2007) and 10 success and failure situations as control situations (from Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). The control situations were included because they were not related to discrimination but were interpersonal. None of the situations identified the race of the perpetrator. Participants rated positive (average of happy and excited) and negative (average of bothered, offended, angry, shame, frustrated, sad, nervous, and upset) emotions, and the frequency they have personally experienced each situation. The three most negatively rated situations based on emotion were chosen as a proxy for objectively negative treatment (*Negative emotion*  $M = 5.05$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ; *positive emotion*  $M = 1.82$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ,  $\alpha = .90$ ). To select ambiguous racial microaggressions, situations that were not rated near the negative valence of the scale and were consistent

microaggressions that varied in valence but were race-relevant (which we tested later, as described below). While this method loses some internal validity, our goal was to select racial microaggressions that are ecologically valid for our participants.

We then validated that the racial microaggressions were perceived to be related to race. A sample of 27 self-identified Asian American participants (63 % US born; 67% women; mean age = 23.30,  $SD = 2.87$ ) rated the extent to which they believed each situation was relevant to their race on an 9-point scale (0 = *not at all likely* to 8 = *extremely likely*), embedded among other survey questions. The racial microaggression situations were highly reliable ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and as expected, were rated to be highly race-relevant (i.e., above the midpoint of the scale) ( $M = 6.18$ ,  $SD = 1.71$ ),  $t(26) = 21.19$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Finally, we piloted individual-based slights or non-social identity related situations as controls for our main study, to rule out the possibility that Asian Americans react more negatively in all situations involving Whites versus other Asian Americans. Thirteen self-identified Asian/Asian American participants (no additional demographic information was requested) rated how likely each of a total sixteen situations was related to his or her own race, including five racial microaggressions and eleven potentially individual-based slights developed in a lab meeting. The six lowest situations rated to be related to race were chosen as individual-based slights (see Table 2.1). A one sample t-test revealed that the average of the six individual-based slights was significantly different from zero,  $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ,  $t(12) = 11.60$ ,  $p < .001$ .

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with previous themes were chosen. These situations were rated at least a 4 on how frequently the situation was experienced (from a 0 = *never experienced* to 8 = *very frequently experienced*) to represent a proxy for commonplace experiences. Seven ambiguous racial microaggressions were selected (*negative emotion*  $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ; *positive emotion*  $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ,  $\alpha = .70$ ).

Nonetheless, the mean of the situations were still below of the midpoint (i.e., less than somewhat likely to be race-relevant).

## Methods

### Participants

Participants were 121 self-identified Asian Americans (49% women; 59% US-born;  $M$  age = 19.31,  $SD = 1.47$ ) recruited from introductory courses at University of Washington for extra course credit. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (28%), Korean (26%), and Vietnamese (14%).

### Procedures

Participants were brought into a room in groups of one to five to complete the study on the computer. The study was programmed on MediaLab and all instructions were given on the computer. Participants were first instructed to complete demographics.

**Repeated measures paradigm.** Prior to completing the demographics, participants were randomly assigned to one of four repeated measures versions where order was randomized. Complete randomization (i.e. with name and situation) was not incorporated due to the extremely large number of possible variables to consolidate and missing variables in the HLM analysis. For each condition, participants were asked to read and imagine themselves in each of the 16 randomly presented situations which were each paired with an Asian male, Asian female, White male, or White female name piloted from Study 1.

**Measures.** For each situation, participants were first asked of their emotions (9 point scale, 1 = *not at all*; 5 = *somewhat*; 9 = *extremely*): “How happy (proud, angry, anxious, ashamed,

embarrassed, offended, sad) would you feel in this situation?” These emotions are considered universal (Ekman, 1992) but also potentially relevant to subtle instances of discrimination (Chan & Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Major et al., 2003; Sue et al., 2007b). Positive emotions are relevant to appraisals other than racial prejudice. For each situation, the emotions were presented in random order and were presented before appraisals to reduce the likelihood of appraisals priming greater negative emotion intensity.

Next participants rated their appraisals and attributions to the each situation. Participants first responded to “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think the situation was related or due to your race? (1 = *not at all likely*; 5 = *somewhat likely*; 9 = *extremely likely*)”. They were then asked “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think this person is racially prejudiced?” These two questions were meant to distinguish between perceptions that the situation was race-relevant versus a more negative evaluation of perceived racial prejudice.<sup>9</sup>

## Results

**Descriptives.** To gain a baseline understanding of responses for each type of situation, the average means and standard deviations for emotions and appraisals are reported in Table 2.1. A paired samples t-test comparing racial microaggressions versus individual-based slights revealed that greater externalizing emotion was reported for individual based slights ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ), than racial microaggressions ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ),  $t(120) = 6.01$ ,  $p < .001$ . Greater internalizing emotions were also found for individual-based slights ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ )

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<sup>9</sup> To reduce the possibility that thoughts of race primed our effects, other questions were included for exploratory analysis including cultural sensitivity, friendliness, and curiosity. Participants also rated how frequently they experienced each situation personally: “How often have you experienced this situation or a similar situation? (1 = *never*, 5 = *sometimes*, 9 = *almost all the time*)” and a manipulation check of the perpetrator’s background: “What do you think is the racial background of this person? Asian/Asian American; White/European American; Black/African American; Hispanic/Latino American (choose options).”

compared to racial microaggressions ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ),  $t(120) = 14.35$ ,  $p < .001$ . Less positive emotion intensity was found for individual-based slights ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ) compared to racial microaggressions ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ),  $t(120) = -17.49$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The descriptive statistics for the main appraisals of racial prejudice and race-relevance are also described. As expected, race-relevance was rated to be higher for racial microaggressions ( $M = 6.12$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) compared to individual-based slights ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ),  $t(120) = 32.77$ ,  $p < .001$ . Racial prejudice was also rated to be higher for racial microaggressions ( $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) than individual-based slights ( $M = 2.26$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ),  $t(120) = 21.80$ ,  $p < .001$

Table 2.1. Means (SD) of emotions and situations averaged across versions

Situation	Externalizing Emotion ( $\alpha=.90$ )		Internalizing Emotion ( $\alpha=.84$ )			Positive Emotion ( $\alpha=.87$ )		Appraisals	
	Angry	Offended	Shame	Anxious	Sad	Happy	Proud	Race	Prejudice
<i>Racial microaggressions</i>									
This person asks you “where are you really from?”	3.14 (2.24)	3.70 (2.46)	2.42 (1.74)	2.90 (1.81)	2.61 (1.81)	3.35 (1.96)	3.24 (2.21)	6.66 (2.25)	4.07 (2.23)
This person asks you “where were you born?”	1.53 (1.18)	1.73 (1.46)	1.53 (1.21)	2.15 (1.74)	1.55 (1.78)	3.79 (2.18)	3.68 (2.44)	5.76 (2.57)	2.76 (1.66)
This person says to you that you are really good at math.	1.68 (1.38)	1.88 (1.61)	1.78 (1.53)	2.40 (1.84)	1.50 (1.28)	6.98 (1.82)	6.88 (2.00)	5.21 (2.38)	3.36 (2.14)
This person asks you “are you Chinese?”	2.81 (2.45)	3.41 (2.69)	2.51 (2.28)	2.83 (2.12)	2.57 (2.20)	3.39 (2.30)	2.97 (2.36)	7.41 (2.02)	3.96 (2.19)
This person says to you that you speak English well.	2.77 (2.59)	3.20 (2.81)	2.42 (2.08)	2.73 (2.03)	2.07 (1.70)	5.18 (2.71)	5.45 (2.81)	6.25 (2.49)	4.05 (2.48)
This person says to you that “if I see a lot of Asian students in my class, I know it’s going to be a hard class.”	3.38 (2.35)	3.83 (2.37)	2.43 (1.75)	3.26 (2.16)	2.36 (1.60)	3.59 (2.05)	4.57 (2.34)	6.81 (2.15)	5.77 (2.27)
This classmate brings every math question to you to solve	3.92 (2.49)	3.10 (2.16)	2.22 (1.64)	3.36 (1.93)	2.29 (1.76)	3.96 (2.24)	5.19 (2.42)	5.17 (2.56)	3.95 (2.25)
This server takes you and your family to the back of the restaurant even though there are available tables elsewhere.	4.94 (2.57)	5.09 (2.71)	3.55 (2.55)	3.97 (2.33)	3.67 (2.39)	2.37 (1.63)	1.98 (1.41)	4.49 (2.48)	4.46 (2.42)

Table 2.1 Continued

This clerk ignores you at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you.	7.28 (1.90)	7.75 (1.53)	4.50 (2.73)	5.45 (2.12)	5.09 (2.48)	1.55 (1.14)	1.51 (1.20)	6.73 (2.23)	6.91 (1.96)
You overhear this person say that Asians are poor drivers.	5.12 (2.53)	5.69 (2.54)	4.15 (2.52)	3.65 (2.21)	3.72 (2.32)	1.89 (1.38)	1.86 (1.43)	6.71 (2.42)	6.45 (2.11)
<i>Individual-based slights</i>									
This person says to you that you look really tired.	1.98 (1.41)	2.34 (1.81)	3.01 (2.06)	2.67 (1.88)	2.48 (1.87)	2.52 (1.67)	1.89 (1.40)	1.56 (1.19)	1.74 (1.26)
This person hands you a piece of gum and insists you have it during a conversation.	2.99 (2.20)	4.17 (2.73)	4.52 (3.01)	4.03 (2.52)	3.21 (2.36)	3.20 (2.33)	2.11 (1.71)	1.71 (1.31)	1.90 (1.49)
This person answers his/her cell phone while talking to you in the middle of a conversation.	4.03 (2.15)	4.88 (2.14)	2.89 (2.01)	3.30 (2.02)	3.24 (1.92)	2.29 (1.34)	1.84 (1.20)	1.83 (1.38)	1.91 (1.46)
This person spills his/her drink on your jacket.	5.64 (2.24)	3.99 (2.36)	4.40 (2.44)	4.23 (2.19)	4.48 (2.16)	1.43 (.86)	1.48 (.96)	1.72 (1.27)	1.89 (1.48)
You bump into an old classmate you don't know too well and he/she remarks that you looked like you've gained weight.	5.07 (2.52)	5.95 (2.52)	5.76 (2.50)	4.67 (2.28)	5.24 (2.50)	2.52 (2.04)	2.27 (1.91)	1.77 (1.41)	1.95 (1.39)
You put your hand out while introducing yourself to a person but he/she doesn't shake your hand.	5.51 (2.32)	6.83 (2.07)	6.26 (2.30)	5.13 (2.27)	5.25 (2.35)	1.74 (1.12)	1.83 (1.30)	3.97 (2.27)	4.19 (2.43)

***Level-1 HLM analyses.***

*Hypothesis 1: Asian Americans will report lower negative emotion intensity (both externalizing and internalizing), greater positive emotion intensity, and less perceived racial prejudice to racial microaggressions perpetrated by Asian Americans compared to White Americans.*

To examine the *within-person* association between race of the perpetrator and emotion intensity, Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM; Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2001) was used. We first focused on the ten racial microaggressions only for our analysis to address the first hypothesis that the racial microaggressions would hurt more when perpetrated by Whites versus other Asian Americans.

The first set of analyses examined emotion intensity as a function of the perpetrator's race. The HLM level-1 model examines such associations within each individual, such that each person serves as his or her own control. Specifically, the level-1 model of the HLM analysis predicts for each participant  $j$  (e.g.,  $j = 1-121$ ) emotion intensity for each situation  $i$  ( $i = 1-10$ ) as a function of the race of the perpetrator (0 = White; 1 = Asian). For example, with externalizing emotion as the outcome, the model for person  $j$  and situation  $i$  was:

$$[\textit{externalizing emotion}_{ij}] = b_{0j} + b_{1j} [\textit{race of perpetrator}] + r_{ij}.$$

The outcome variable (i.e., anger intensity for each situation) and level-1 predictor (i.e., race of perpetrator) were grand-mean centered.  $R_{ij}$  is the residual error term,  $b_{1j}$  is the regression coefficient (i.e., slope) predicting participant  $j$ 's externalizing emotion intensity from the race of the perpetrator of the potential racial microaggressions described in each of the ten situations. The slope characterizes the strength and direction of the association between externalizing emotion and race of perpetrator. For example, if a participant felt less externalizing emotion

when the perpetrator was Asian versus White, then the slope coefficient for her would be negative. Table 2.2 below presents the findings.

Table 2.2: Race of perpetrator on outcomes

Outcome	10 racial microaggressions	
	HLM Level-1 Slope	SD
<i>Emotions</i>		
Externalizing	-0.33*	0.19
Internalizing	-0.24*	0.13
Positive	0.21*	0.06
<i>Appraisals/Attributions</i>		
Race relevance	-0.27	0.66
Racial prejudice	-0.45***	1.35***

*Note:* Race of the perpetrator: 0 = White, 1 = Asian. Significant SD suggests that there are reliable individual differences in the race of perpetrator-emotion association. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Specifically, Asian Americans reported feeling less externalizing ( $b = -0.33$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ), less internalizing emotion ( $b = -0.24$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $SD = 0.13$ ) and more positive emotion ( $b = 0.21$ ,  $p < .03$ ,  $SD = 0.06$ ) when other Asians versus Whites perpetrated these situations. As predicted, less racial prejudice was perceived in situations perpetrated by Asians compared to Whites ( $b = -0.45$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ). There was, however, significant individual variability in the race of perpetrator-racial prejudice association. There was a marginal difference for race-relevance where less race-relevance was perceived in situations perpetrated by Asians compared to Whites ( $b = -0.27$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ).<sup>1011</sup>

<sup>10</sup> We did not find any main effects or interactions involving gender of the perpetrator.

<sup>11</sup> When focusing only on the seven ambiguous racial microaggressions, the perpetrator's race did not significantly predict internalizing ( $b = -0.11$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $SD = 0.06$ ) or positive emotions ( $b = 0.17$ ,  $p = .21$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ ) but were in the predicted direction. There was, however, a marginal effect of perpetrator's race

*Hypothesis 2: The race of the perpetrator will less likely impact these outcomes differently for situations irrelevant to race.*

In order to rule out that Asian Americans respond less negatively to other Asians versus Whites across all types of situations, racial microaggressions were compared against individual-based slights (see Table 2.3). For example, with externalizing emotion as the outcome, the model for person  $j$  and situation  $i$  was:

$$[\text{Externalizing emotion } ij] = b_{0j} + b_{1j} [\text{race of perpetrator}] + b_{2j} [\text{type of situation}] + b_{3j} [\text{perpetrator } \times \text{ situation}] + r_{ij}.$$

Here it was predicted that less externalizing emotion, less internalizing emotion, greater positive emotions, and less perceived racial prejudice would be reported for racial microaggressions perpetrated by White versus Asian perpetrators. However, the race of the perpetrator on the outcomes was not expected to differ for individual-based slights, to suggest a boundary condition in the effect.

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on externalizing emotion. Racial microaggressions perpetrated by other Asian Americans were related to less externalizing emotion ( $b=-0.23, p = .07, SD=0.23$ ). Less racial prejudice was perceived when perpetrated by Asians compared to Whites ( $b=-0.41, p<.01, SD=0.16$ ), but there was no difference for race-relevance ( $b=-0.17, p=.20, SD=0.17$ ). This suggests that race of the perpetrator may matter more for negative rejections, which may be similar to Study 5 findings.

Table 2.3: Race of perpetrator and type of situation (10 racial microaggressions versus 6 individual-based slights)

Outcome	HLM Level-1 Slope		SD
	Race of Perpetrator	Type of Situation	Interaction
<i>Emotions</i>			
Externalizing	-0.33* (0.45)	0.43** (0.45)	0.44* (0.64)
Internalizing	-0.24* (0.12)	1.12** * (0.23)	0.23 (0.21)
Positive	0.21* (0.06)	-1.43*** (0.22)	-0.31** (0.08)
<i>Appraisals/Attributions</i>			
Race relevance	-0.28(0.95***)	-4.06*** (0.88)	0.06 (1.21)
Racial prejudice	-0.45* (1.48***)	-2.41*** (1.08**)	0.20 (2.04***)

*Note:* Race of the perpetrator: 0 = White, 1 = Asian. Type of situation: 0 = racial microaggression, 1 = individual-based slight. Significant SD suggests that there are reliable individual differences in the race of perpetrator-emotion association. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

As seen in Table 2.3, the main effects of the perpetrator's race on emotion and appraisals were consistent with the results presented in Table 2.2. Additionally, Asian Americans reported greater negative externalizing ( $b=0.43$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $SD=0.45$ ), greater internalizing emotion ( $b=1.12$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SD=0.23$ ), less positive emotions ( $b=-1.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SD=0.22$ ), and unsurprisingly, less perceived race relevance ( $b=-4.06$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ) and racial prejudice ( $b=-2.41$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) to the individual-based slights compared to the racial microaggressions. For externalizing and positive emotions, however, the findings are qualified by a significant interaction ( $b=0.44$ ,  $p=.04$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ) and ( $b=-.31$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $SD=.08$ ), respectively. As seen in Figure 2.1, there was a greater effect of perpetrator's race for racial microaggressions than individual-based slights. Asian Americans reported less externalizing emotion in race-relevant situations perpetrated by Asians versus Whites, while there was no difference for individual-based slights which were rated higher on externalizing emotion.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> When examining the seven ambiguous racial microaggressions only, there was no interaction for emotions. Instead the main effect was found for type of situation: specifically, individual-based slights were rated more negatively in emotion than racial microaggressions.

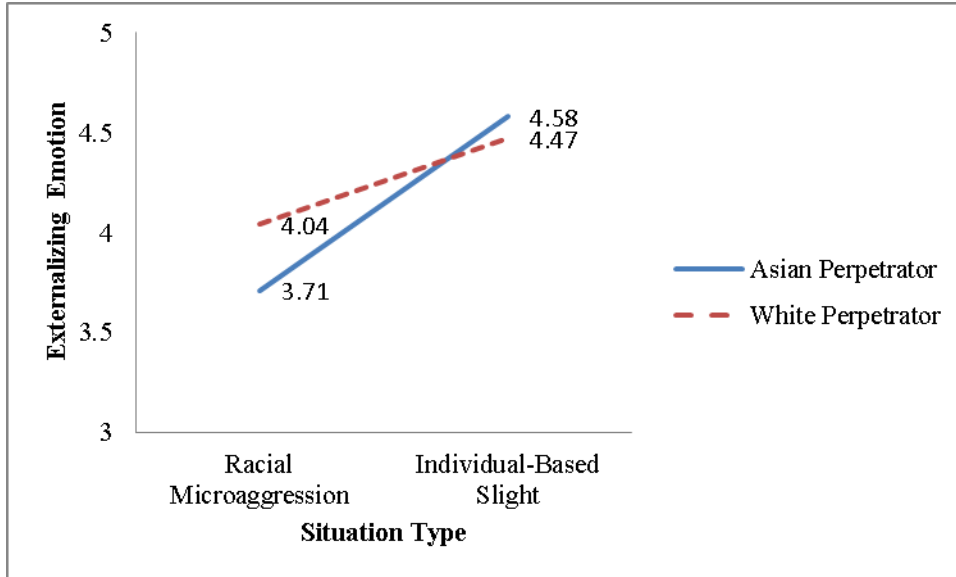


Figure 2.1: The effect of perpetrator’s race on externalizing emotion was greater for racial microaggressions than individual-based slights

For positive emotion, as seen in Figure 2.2 below, there was a greater effect of perpetrator’s race for racial microaggressions than individual-based slights. Asian Americans reported more positive emotions in race-relevant situations perpetrated by Asians versus Whites, but there was no difference for individual-based slights which were rated lower on positive emotion.

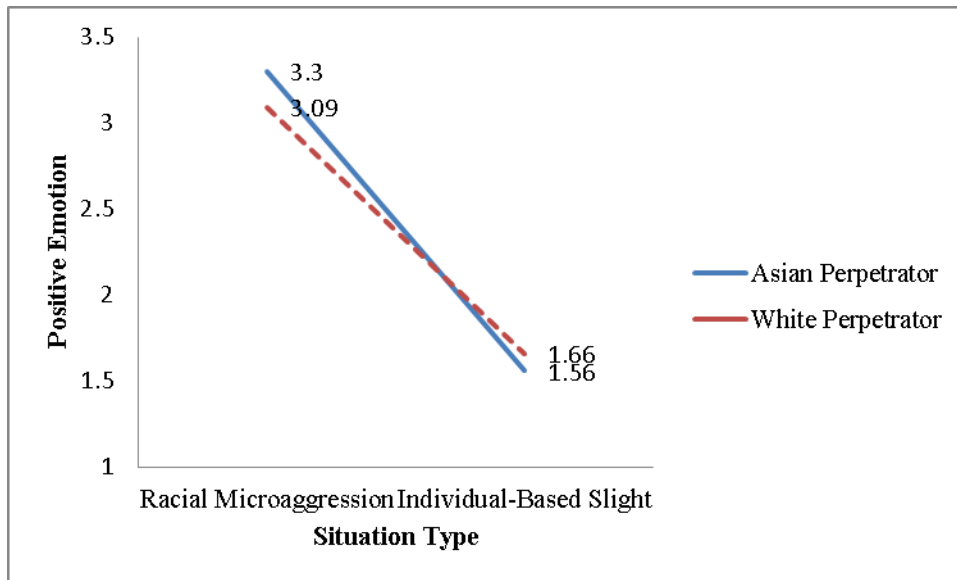


Figure 2.2: The effect of perpetrator’s race on positive emotion was greater for racial microaggressions than individual-based slights

*Hypothesis 3: Perceptions of racial prejudice will mediate the relationship between perpetrator’s race and emotion intensity, compared to race-relevance.*

Based on our theory, we expected that racial microaggressions perpetrated by Whites compared to Asians will predict greater negative emotion intensity and less positive emotion intensity for Asian Americans, mediated by perceptions of racial prejudice. To run this mediation, we conducted a within-person mediational analysis in HLM focusing on the ten racial microaggressions<sup>13</sup>, modeled after Baron and Kenny (1986).

<sup>13</sup> We also ran the meditations on just the seven racial microaggressions but only one marginal mediation emerged with externalizing emotion. In Step 1, race of perpetrator marginally predicted externalizing emotion,  $b = -.23$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p = .07$ . In Step 2, the relationship between race of perpetrator (White versus Asian) and racial prejudice attributions was significant,  $b = -.41$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .005$ . In Step 3, racial prejudice predicted greater externalizing emotion upon controlling for the perpetrator’s race,  $b = .43$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ . In Step 4, using the same regression equation as Step 3, the relationship between race of perpetrator and anger was non-significant upon controlling for racial prejudice,  $b = -.03$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p = .79$ . We speculate that this outcome occurred because we originally did not find many significant associations between race of the perpetrator and emotion in the original HLM analysis for these situations. In addition, we also aim to re-analyze the data by only examining racial microaggressions that do not mention race.

Table 2.4 below suggests that racial prejudice significantly mediates between the perpetrator's race and externalizing, internalizing, and positive emotions. Focusing on externalizing emotion as the example, in Step 1, the race of perpetrator significantly predicted externalizing emotion,  $b = -.33$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .02$ . In Step 2, the relationship between race of perpetrator (White versus Asian) and racial prejudice attributions was significant,  $b = -.45$ ,  $SE = .18$ ,  $p = .01$ . In Step 3, racial prejudice predicted greater externalizing emotion upon controlling for race of perpetrator,  $b = .64$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ . In Step 4, using the same regression equation as Step 3, the relationship between race of perpetrator and externalizing emotion was non-significant upon controlling for racial prejudice,  $b = -.03$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p = .76$ . The effect of the perpetrator's race on externalizing emotion was explained by perceptions of racial prejudice.

We also examined race-relevance as a mediator. Due to the within-person nature of the study, a multiple mediation model was not tested<sup>14</sup>; instead, a separate mediational model was run. As indicated in Table 2.4, race-relevance was also a significant mediator between race of the perpetrator and emotion; however, the significance of the associations between the mediator and emotion were not as strong compared to racial prejudice.

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<sup>14</sup> We attempted to run the same procedure by including both racial prejudice and race-relevance as mediators in the same model. If run simultaneously, racial prejudice remained significant as a mediator for externalizing emotions, internalizing emotions, and positive emotions. Interestingly, race-relevance was also a significant mediator for positive emotions.

Table 2.4: Mediation analysis for race of the perpetrator (IV) and emotion (DV)

	Step 1 (IV/DV)	Step 2 (IV/Med)	Step 3 (Med/DV)	Step 4 (IV/DV)
<b>Racial prejudice</b>				
Externalizing	-.33* (.14)	-.45* (.18)	.64*** (.03)	-.03 (.10), $p=.76$
Internalizing	-.24* (.09)	-.45* (.18)	.37*** (.02)	-.06 (.07), $p=.37$
Positive	.21* (.10)	-.45* (.18)	-.36*** (.03)	.04 (.10), $p=.70$
<b>Race-relevance</b>				
Externalizing	-.33* (.15)	-.28 (.15)	.31*** (.03)	-.24 (.13), $p=.07$
Internalizing	-.24* (.09)	-.28 (.15)	.15*** (.02)	-.19* (.08), $p=.02$
Positive	.21* (.10)	-.28 (.15)	-.08* (.04)	.16 (.10), $p=.10$

Note: \*  $p<.05$ , \*\*  $p<.01$ , \*\*\*  $p<.001$ .

### Discussion

In Study 2, we empirically examined racial microaggressions generated from qualitative research by Sue and colleagues (2007) to determine the effect of the perpetrator's race on emotion. Specifically, we examined racial microaggressions that were related to stereotypes of Asian Americans and were ecologically valid, compared to situations that are more relevant for many racial groups (i.e., Wang et al., 2011). Using a highly repeated-measures approach, this study supported the hypothesis that Asian Americans reacted with less negative emotion intensity, more positive emotion intensity, and were less likely to attribute prejudice to racial microaggressions perpetrated by Asians compared to Whites. Additionally, we found a boundary effect for the moderating effect of race on externalizing emotion: the race of the perpetrator did not moderate externalizing emotion and positive emotion for individual-based slights. Finally, perceptions of racial prejudice mediated the relationship between the race of the perpetrator and emotion. Perceptions of race-relevance was also a significant mediator but to a seemingly lesser extent.

Unexpectedly, individual-based slights were rated more emotionally harmful than racial microaggressions overall. One plausible interpretation relates to our theory: responses to racial microaggressions are more variable because they can be interpreted as being due to racial prejudice and thus reacted to negatively, but also be perceived as innocuous or harmless and reacted to more positively. In contrast, the individual-based slights chosen represented more negative situations and were less likely to be open to other interpretations. Nonetheless, the predictions regarding the effect race of the perpetrator on perceived prejudice and emotion was supported for racial microaggressions.

Sue and his colleagues noted that racial microaggressions could be perpetrated by both out-group and in-group members (2007). As noted earlier, previous work has found that people tend to favor ingroup members but the present study was among the first to examine in-group leeway for a potentially racist behavior, in form of racial microaggressions. The present study also identified specific, commonplace instances in which the race of the person perpetrating a race-relevant comment or behavior (i.e., racial microaggressions) matters on the target's emotional well-being and perceptions of prejudice. We speculate that the potential racial microaggressions may be perpetrated for different reasons in the eyes of the targets. For instance, targets may perceive that a racial microaggression perpetrated by an out-group member is an instance of racial prejudice, while the same experience may be seen as due to benign reasons like affiliation or joking among in-group members. We did not measure these alternative appraisals but examined those possibilities in later studies.

## **Conclusion**

Our findings suggest that Asian Americans reacted differently to the same racial microaggression depending on the context of the situation and whether the treatment they received was perpetrated by Whites or Asian Americans. Specifically, Asian Americans reacted with less negative emotion intensity, more positive emotion intensity, and were less likely to attribute prejudice to racial microaggressions perpetrated by Asians compared to Whites. This lends us to then examine in the next study other perpetrator characteristics beyond one's given racial membership which may influence Asian Americans' perceptions of bias and emotional reactions in these situations.

### Study 3

The ambiguity inherent in racial microaggressions may lead minority targets to focus on cues to determine whether the treatment they received was due to prejudice or not. As supported in Study 2, Asian American participants reported greater negative emotion intensity and more positive emotion intensity when the perpetrator of a racial microaggression was White versus Asian American, mediated by perceptions of racial prejudice. While Study 2 found that the perpetrator's race moderated the negative effects of racial microaggressions, do the perpetrator's perceived experiences also moderate the effects?

Study 3a begins to address the following question: can *non-racial* aspects of a perpetrator's perceived diversity credentials (PDC) attenuate the race effect, and if so, how? Study 3a aimed to compare the perpetrator's race and experiences in moderating the perceptions of prejudice and feelings of negative emotion. Comparing race and experiences is important in understanding whether a person can be perceived as less prejudiced beyond their given racial group membership. In other words, can the perpetrator's *perceived diversity experiences* (PDE), or experiences, knowledge, attitudes and contact with groups, mitigate the negative effects of racial microaggressions in the perspective of the minority target? Can the evidence of the perpetrator's PDE, as represented by examples such as speaking another language, having a diverse group of friends, and experience traveling internationally, decrease minority targets' negative emotions and perceptions of racial prejudice to racial microaggressions?

Study 3b examines perceptions of PDE profiles without an accompanying racial microaggression to investigate whether the low and high levels of PDE are perceived similarly for Asians and Whites. This is important to understand how the PDE profiles are seen and whether the same PDE is seen in the same way across racial groups.

### **Why experiences may matter: Do targets pay attention to the perpetrator's experiences?**

Some emerging work focusing on moral transgressions and meta-perceptions suggests that minority targets may focus on cues related to whether a person behavior is perceived as due to prejudice (Effron & Monin, 2010; Krumm & Corning, 2008). This research is relevant in understanding whether PDE may matter in the experience of racial microaggressions.

For example, previous research has examined how *third-party observers* (i.e. not targets) give leeway for ambiguous behavior based on previous experiences. A history of a person's moral behavior can make more legitimate for him or her to engage in morally questionable behaviors in the eyes of the observer. For example, heterosexual observers perceived ambiguous behaviors (e.g., denial of a bank loan to a gay couple) perpetrated by credentialed individuals (e.g., marched to support gay rights in the past) are rated as less discriminatory than those perpetrated by non-credentialed (Krumm & Corning, 2008). In ambiguous transgressions (e.g., manager did not promote minority employees for unclear reasons), people are given leeway by observers because of previous same-domain good deeds (e.g., manager supported anti-discrimination policy) (Effron & Monin, 2010). Previous good deeds altered the observers' construals so that the behavior did not seem like a transgression at all, and thus, increased the observer's tolerance of the behavior and decreased condemnation of one's character (Effron & Monin, 2010). It is important to emphasize, however, that these findings did not focus on the *target's* perceptions but rather from a third-party perspective.

Some emerging work beyond the domain of moral behavior has found that a person's background and experiences may influence the *target's* perceptions in an intergroup interaction. For example, Wout, Murphy, and Steele (2010) examined meta-perceptions, or how people

actively attempt to determine how others perceive them, and found that Black participants anticipated and perceived a more positive interaction with White participants who had a close network of racially diverse friends than those with primarily White friends. The authors speculated that the friendship networks indicated to Black participants that these Whites were unlikely to perceive or treat them solely due to their racial group membership and unlikely to harbor racial prejudice against them. Similarly, Shapiro, Baldwin, Williams and Trawalter (2010) found that Whites anticipated less rejection concerns when they evaluated a smiling Black man with a White friend versus a Black friend, suggesting that both low and high status groups are attuned to potential social cues in order to determine interaction outcomes. These studies, however, focused on anticipated rejection and did not examine whether a perpetrator is afforded leeway for potentially racist behavior.

Together, these previous findings suggest that both observers and targets may be attuned to cues other than racial group membership during an interaction to determine the likelihood of racial prejudice. To our knowledge, however, no study has examined whether targets give leeway for potentially racist behavior while considering both the perpetrator's race and experiences. In the next section, we assess how the perpetrator's race and experiences may affect targets' perceptions of prejudice and feelings of emotion in response to a racial microaggression.

### **How do race and PDE attenuate negative reactions?**

In this study, at least two predictions are plausible based on different frameworks, in attenuating the effect of the perpetrator's race on perceived racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity. These predictions are not mutually exclusive but to introduce them, we will first compare the rationale for both.

*Framework 1: Main effect of PDE*

The first prediction suggests that regardless of the race of the perpetrator, a racial microaggression perpetrated from a person with high PDE will hurt less than those with low PDE. This hypothesis is based on research that suggests that prejudice may be perceived within one's own social group and that not all Whites are perceived as racially prejudiced.

While within-group prejudice has been examined for gender (e.g., see examples among women; Eagley & Karau, 2002; Ely, 1994), little social psychological research has examined within-group perceptions of *racial* prejudice. Some research has begun to examine perceived prejudice across racial minority groups (Craig & Richeson, 2011). For example, some minority group members (i.e., Black men) are more racially prejudiced toward other minority group members (e.g., Native American men) in situations in which public norms are salient (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008). However, one may speculate that prejudice may be perceived from in-group members. For example, some research has found within-group racial prejudice based on skin color (e.g., Hall, 1992) and on generational status, such as between immigrant versus native-born Asian Americans (Lee, 1996; Pyke & Dang, 2003; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008).

Another reason why experiences may matter more than one's race is because minority targets may not perceive all Whites to be racially prejudiced. As mentioned earlier, Black participants who were aware that a White student had a racially diverse network of friends anticipated a more positive interaction with the student (Wout et al., 2009). Having experiences, positive attitudes, knowledge, and contact with a minority group may be associated with less racial prejudice towards the group. For example, Whites who are low in racial prejudice against

Asian Americans reported more experience and willingness to interact with Asian Americans, such as having greater curiosity, more active exposure, interest in taking Asian American classes, and reading books by Asian American authors (Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005).

Together, these findings suggest the possibility that racial prejudice may be perceived within one's in-group from other Asian Americans and not perceived from White Americans who have high levels of PDE. Therefore, this prediction suggests that individuating information about the perpetrator's non-race characteristics may outweigh racial categories in determining prejudice.

#### *Framework 2: Interaction between race and PDE*

Another possibility focuses on an interaction of the effects. Although a number of outcomes are possible, we concentrate on a prediction tied most closely to the findings so far. Given that Study 1 found that Asians were stereotyped to have higher PDE than Whites and Study 2 found that Asian Americans reacted more negatively to Whites than Asians perpetrating a racial microaggression, we expected that Asian Americans would react less negatively to an Asian perpetrator with low PDE than a White perpetrator with the same level of low PDE because the Asian perpetrator is assumed to have at least some PDE.

Specifically, Asian American targets may expect other Asian Americans with low PDE to have some experience because their racial group membership affords them more PDE than Whites to begin with. Thus, in reaction to a racial microaggression, both low PDE and high PDE Asian American perpetrators may be reacted to similarly by other Asian Americans based on

shared racial group membership.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, Whites may be assumed to have less PDE than Asian Americans at the baseline level, as suggested by Study 1. A possibility is that Whites are assumed to be “outsiders” unless they demonstrated behaviors that are unlikely to be racial prejudiced (i.e. have high PDE). Thus, a White perpetrator with low PDE of a racial microaggression may be reacted to more negatively than one with high PDE, suggesting that Whites may need to do extra to prove they are not racially prejudiced.

### **Perceived racial prejudice as potential mediator**

Like in the previous study, Study 3 tests racial prejudice as a potential mediator in the relationship between the perpetrator’s characteristics and negative emotions. Perceptions of racial prejudice involve the *unfair bias* of being treated due to one’s race, which would indicate that these situations may be perceived as instances of discrimination (i.e., unfair treatment) and be consistent with discrimination related emotion outcomes. In addition, Study 3 aimed to simultaneously test other potential mediators, specifically race-relevance. Again, race-relevance is predicted not to mediate the relationship. This is an important theoretical distinction because it can help demonstrate that believing that one’s treatment is due to race (i.e., a more neutral interpretation) may not always lead to negative emotions; instead, it is the attribution of racial prejudice (i.e., perception that one is treated *unfairly* due to one’s race) that leads to negative emotions.

### **Study 3a**

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<sup>15</sup> As noted earlier, there may be a number of other ways an interaction might apply. Another plausible alternative is that Asian Americans may react more negatively to a White perpetrator with high PDE versus low PDE, the latter whom may be perceived to be ignorant and thus given a pass. This possibility is tested in Study 5.

The present study compared the role of the perpetrator's race and experiences on targets' perceptions of prejudice and feelings of negative emotion in response to a racial microaggression. Study 3a had two main predictions.

*Prediction 1:* Even when accounting for the perpetrator's race, the perpetrator's PDE (i.e., high versus low) will decrease the perceived racial prejudice and also negative emotion intensity among Asian American targets. We expected PDE to have a larger effect on perceived racial prejudice and emotional reactions for White perpetrators compared to Asian perpetrators.

*Prediction 2:* Perceptions of racial prejudice will mediate the link between the perpetrator's PDE and negative emotion intensity among Asian American targets, even after taking into account race-relevance.

## **Methods**

### **Development of PDE profiles and microaggression scenario**

Profiles were developed from Study 1 (see Figure 3.1 below), where differences in stereotyped PDE were found between Asians and Whites. This included perceived group differences on items relating to general diversity in upbringing, major, coursework, friendships, knowledge of world news, language proficiency, and participation in student organizations. While some descriptions differed on Asian-specific experiences (i.e., classes and international travel), an attempt was made to focus more on differences in general PDE because the original construct tested in Study 1 focused more on these items. In developing the profiles, variables related to PDE were aimed to be consistent across both profiles, such as perceived intelligence and financial wealth. Names were used to manipulate the race of the racial microaggression perpetrator. The name "Steven Kim" represented an Asian male and the name "Paul Scott"

represented a White male. These names were piloted to be most likely to be Asian and White, respectively. Male perpetrators were chosen because there were no gender differences in most of the emotional reactions and perceptions of prejudice in Study 2.

<b>Name:</b> _____	<b>Name:</b> _____
<b>Year:</b> Junior	<b>Year:</b> Junior
<b>Race:</b> _____	<b>Race:</b> _____
<b>Where did you grow up?</b> Beacon Hill, Seattle, WA	<b>Where did you grow up?</b> Ballard, Seattle, WA
<b>What is your major?</b> International Studies	<b>What is your major?</b> English
<b>What classes are you currently taking?</b> CHIN 463 History of Chinese Literature LSJ 336 Comparative Law, Societies, and Courts SISA 412 South Asian Social Structure	<b>What classes are you currently taking?</b> ENGL 444 Dramatic Literature COM 331 Rhetorical Tradition in Western Thought ENGL Advanced Expository Writing
<b>What are the names of your closest friends?</b> Tim Chen, Chelsea Williams, Brian Martinez	<b>What are the names of your closest friends?</b> Tyler Hill, Rebecca White, Eric Miller
<b>Where do you get your news?</b> BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)	<b>Where do you get your news?</b> U.S. News
<b>Have you traveled internationally? If so, where?</b> Yes, I've traveled to Southeast Asia most recently.	<b>Have you traveled internationally or studied abroad? If so, where?</b> No, but I've traveled a lot around the US, especially to Florida.
<b>What languages do you speak other than English?</b> Proficient in Korean, Spanish	<b>What languages do you speak other than English?</b> None.
<b>What student organizations are you involved on-campus?</b> Husky Efforts Against Racism	<b>What student organizations are you involved on-campus?</b> <a href="#">ArtsLink</a>
<b>What do you like about the UW?</b> I like the UW because it's a big school and I get to meet many people from all different kinds of backgrounds.	<b>What do you like about the UW?</b> I like the UW because it's a big school and I get to meet many people who are similar to me.

Figure 3.1: High versus low PDE profiles

*Development of racial microaggression.* To develop the racial microaggression, I elaborated on one of the most commonly described racial microaggressions in previous studies (as identified by other Asian American participants) that was also rated to be ambiguous as opposed to strictly negative: “(Steven Kim or Paul Scott), who you don’t know very well, is in one of your classes. One day, you and \_\_\_\_\_ are having a conversation while you’re waiting for class to start. After a few minutes, he asks you where you are from, and when you say where you are living<sup>16</sup>, he says “I meant where are you really from?”

<sup>16</sup> The response of saying where one is currently living may not be considered the most direct response to the original question of where are you from. For example, participants could have interpreted a response

## Participants

One hundred fifty-five participants (70 women; 44.3 % US-born; 58% US citizens;  $M$  age = 19.58,  $SD = 1.70$ ) were recruited on-campus at the University of Washington and offered candy or snacks for their participation. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (32%), Korean (18%), and Vietnamese (10%). Twenty-four participants were dropped from the analyses because they did not self-identify as Asian American and/or did not correctly identify the race of the racial microaggression perpetrator in the study, leaving a sample of 131 Asian American participants.

## Procedures

Participants were approached one at a time or in small groups on-campus and were asked to complete a ten-minute study on forming impressions of a student at the University of Washington. Participants first completed demographic information.

*Manipulation of profiles.* Participants were then randomly assigned to read one of four profiles: Asian/High PDE, Asian/Low PDE, White/High PDE, and White/Low PDE. Participants then read about experiencing a racial microaggression (i.e., being asked where you are really from; Sue et al., 2007) by the person in the profile (i.e., perpetrator).

*Measures.* After reading the profile, participants first completed scaled emotion ratings on a 9-point scale (1 *not at all* to 9 *extremely*) on emotion intensity. Specifically, the emotion questions were phrased as “To what extent do you think you would feel \_\_\_?” Along with emotions of anger, offended, anxiousness, shame, sadness, happiness, and pride examined in

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such as a certain residence hall, as opposed to a city name. Nonetheless, the interest of this study was examining participants’ own responses to the question in the imagined situation.

Study 2, the present study assessed other emotions including hopeful/optimistic, positive/pleasant, friendly/engaged, and trusting. Hopeful/optimistic and positive/pleasant were included to incorporate a larger range of positive emotions, while friendly/engaged and trusting were affiliating types of emotions likely to occur in interpersonal contexts. Positive emotions were also included to incorporate an even number of positive and negative emotions in the study to reduce the possibility that a greater of negative emotion ratings primed reports of greater negative emotion intensity for participants.

Participants then responded to questions on their appraisals/attributions of the potential racial microaggression (i.e., “Where are you really from?”) on a 9-point scale (1 *not at all* to 9 *extremely*). The following outcomes were examined: racial prejudice (i.e. “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think the person was racially prejudiced?”), and race-relevance of the event (i.e. “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think the situation was related to or due to your race?”).

## **Results**

*Descriptives.* The means and standard deviations of the appraisal and emotion variables are reported in Table 3.1. Composite scores of negative externalizing emotions (anger, offended;  $\alpha=.85$ ), negative internalizing emotions (sadness, shame, anxiety;  $\alpha=.75$ ), and positive emotions (happy, proud, friendly/engaged, hopeful/optimistic, positive/pleasant, trusting;  $\alpha=.88$ ) were reliable.

Table 3.1: Means (SD) for emotion and attributions to being asked “Where are you *really* from?” (all 9-point scale)

	Asian/Low <i>N</i> = 34	Asian/High <i>N</i> = 35	White/Low <i>N</i> = 32	White/High <i>N</i> = 30
<i>Negative Emotions</i>				
<i>Externalizing</i>				
Angry	3.38 (2.54)	2.40 (1.31)	3.53 (2.14)	2.57 (1.63)
Offended	3.53 (2.45)	3.17 (1.81)	4.19 (2.13)	2.87 (1.85)
<i>Internalizing</i>				
Anxious	2.56 (2.09)	2.43 (1.50)	2.56 (1.80)	2.23 (1.50)
Ashamed	2.15 (1.99)	2.20 (1.43)	2.10 (1.45)	2.03 (1.33)
Sad	1.68 (1.43)	2.03 (1.38)	2.50 (1.46)	2.03 (1.38)
<i>Positive Emotions</i>				
Happy	3.97 (2.01)	4.34 (1.80)	3.41 (1.64)	3.90 (1.63)
Proud	4.65 (2.41)	4.83 (2.15)	4.72 (1.91)	4.60 (2.06)
Friendly/Engaged	4.65 (2.21)	4.97 (1.78)	4.00 (1.87)	4.47 (1.66)
Hopeful/Optimistic	3.88 (2.23)	4.34 (1.92)	3.31 (1.62)	3.60 (1.94)
Positive/Pleasant	4.71 (2.13)	4.86 (1.65)	3.66 (1.73)	3.87 (1.78)
Trusting	3.85 (1.84)	3.83 (1.92)	3.56 (1.61)	3.87 (2.01)
<i>Appraisals/Attributions of Interest (Potential mediators)</i>				
Racially prejudiced	4.24 (2.35)	3.37 (1.85)	4.31 (2.15)	3.03 (1.45)
Related to race	5.68 (2.41)	5.91 (2.47)	6.03 (2.65)	6.00 (2.24)

*Manipulation Check.* For the manipulation check on diversity experience, there was main effect of PDE ( $F(1,126) = 43.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$ ), in that the high PDE profile was successfully rated higher on *general diversity experiences* than the low PDE profile. There was no main effect of perpetrator race ( $F(1,126) = 2.12, p = .14$ ) nor an interaction ( $F(1,126) = .90, p = .35$ ) between perpetrator’s PDE and race. For the manipulation check on *Asian-specific experiences*, there was a main effect of perpetrator race,  $F(1,125) = 5.57, p = .02, \eta^2 = .04$ , and PDE,  $F(1,125) = 51.70, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$ . Specifically, those who saw the Asian name or high PDE profiles rated greater *Asian-specific experiences* than the White name or low PDE profiles, respectively. There was no interaction between PDE and race,  $F(1,125) = .18, p = .68$ .

*Main analysis.*

*Prediction 1: Even after accounting for perpetrator's race, are perceptions of racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity lower for perpetrators with high versus low PDE?*

To examine the effect of the perpetrator's race and PDE on the target's perception of prejudice and emotions, a 2 (race of perpetrator) x 2 (PDE) between-subjects ANOVA was run.

*Perceptions of racial prejudice.* As seen in Figure 3.2, there was a main effect of PDE for perceptions of racial prejudice,  $F(1,127) = 9.48, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$ , in that the low PDE profile was rated to be more racially prejudiced than the high PDE profile. There was no significant main effect of race ( $F(1,127) = .14, p = .71$ ) nor a significant interaction ( $F(1,127) = .36, p = .55$ ). However, when examining simple effects using pairwise comparisons, the White/low PDE perpetrator was perceived to be more racially prejudiced than the White/high PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,127) = 6.41, p = .01$ ). There was a *marginal* difference between the Asian/high PDE perpetrator and Asian/low PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,127) = 3.26, p = .07$ ), suggesting that credentialing (i.e., perceived PDE) may make a greater difference for White versus Asian perpetrators. There were no other significant pairwise comparisons.

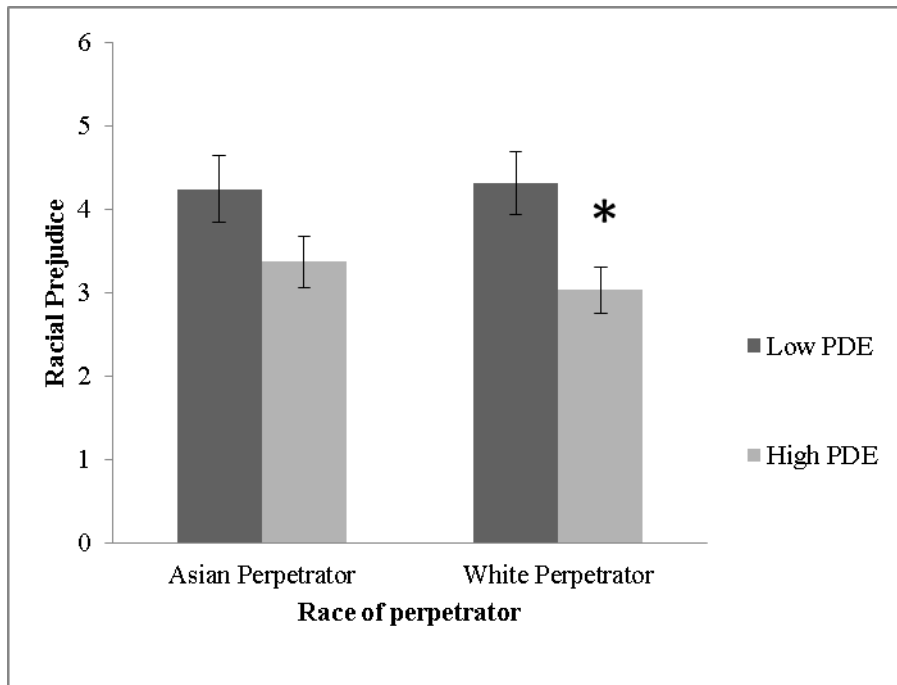


Figure 3.2: Greater perceived racial prejudice perceived from low versus high PDE perpetrators particularly for Whites to being asked “Where are you *really* from?”

*Emotion intensity.* As seen in Figure 3.3, when examining externalizing emotions, there was no main effect of race ( $F(1,127) = .26, p=.26$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,127) = .51, p=.48$ ). There was a main effect of PDE,  $F(1,127) = 7.56, p<.01, \eta^2=.06$ , in that participants in the low PDE condition reported greater externalizing emotion than those in the high PDE condition. When examining simple effects using pairwise comparisons for externalizing emotion, the White/low PDE perpetrator was reacted with greater externalizing emotion than the White/high PDE perpetrator,  $F(1,127) = 5.70, p=.02$ . There were no other significant pairwise comparisons.

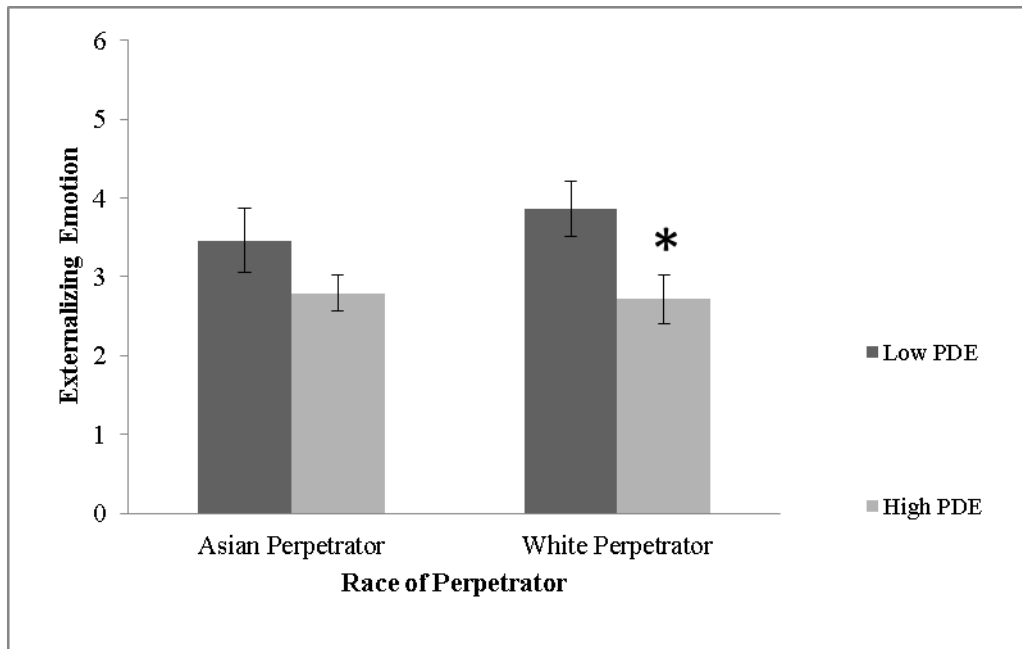


Figure 3.3: Greater externalizing emotion reported from low versus high PDE perpetrators particularly for Whites to being asked “Where are you *really* from?”

For internalizing emotions, there was no main effect of race ( $F(1,127) = .12, p=.73$ ), no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,127) = .22, p=.64$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,127) = .77, p=.38$ ). There were no significant simple effects between the conditions (all  $p$ 's > .09). Similarly, for positive emotions, there was a marginal effect of race ( $F(1,127) = 3.45, p=.07$ ), no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,127) = .93, p=.34$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,127) = .01, p=.94, \eta^2 < .001$ ). There were no significant simple effects between the conditions (all  $p$ 's > .17)

*Prediction 2: Does perceived racial prejudice mediate the relationship between the perpetrators' PDE and emotion intensity? Even after controlling for race-relevance?*

Because there was (1) no effect of the perpetrator's race on emotion and (2) no control condition as a comparison to the racial microaggression, we focused on the effect of the perpetrator's PDE on emotion as mediated by racial prejudice. Due to the relatively small sample size, we used a bootstrapping macro (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with 10000 samples to assess

racial prejudice as a mediator, then race-relevance as a mediator, and finally, both racial prejudice and race-relevance simultaneously.

*Racial prejudice only as mediator.* Racial prejudice emerged as a significant mediator between PDE and externalizing emotion. Specifically, higher PDE was associated with less externalizing emotion,  $b = -.90$ ,  $SE=.33$ ,  $p<.01$  (Step 1). Higher PDE predicted lower perceptions of racial prejudice,  $b = -1.06$ ,  $SE=.35$ ,  $p<.01$  (Step 2). Racial prejudice was a significant mediator of externalizing emotion,  $b = 0.57$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p<.001$  (Step 3). The relationship between PDE and externalizing emotion was significant,  $b= -.30$ ,  $SE=.27$ ,  $p=.28$  (Step 4). Perceptions of racial prejudice was a significant mediator of PDE because its 95% bias-corrected confidence interval did not include 0 (-1.13 to -0.21). For internalizing emotion, the mediational analysis was not significant because PDE was not related to internalizing emotion,  $b= -.10$ ,  $SE=.23$ ,  $p=.66$  (Step 2:  $b= -1.06$ ,  $SE = .35$ ,  $p<.01$ ; Step 3:  $b= .31$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Step 4:  $b= .23$ ,  $SE = .21$ ,  $p=.28$ , 95% CI: -.63, -.13). Similarly, the mediational analysis was not significant because PDE were not related to position emotions,  $b= .26$ ,  $SE=.26$ ,  $p=.32$  (Step 2:  $b= -1.06$ ,  $SE = .35$ ,  $p<.01$ ; Step 3:  $b= -.17$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Step 4:  $b= .09$ ,  $SE = .27$ ,  $p=.75$ , 95% CI: .04, .44).

*Race-relevance only as mediator.* For race-relevance of the situation, PDE was not related to race-relevance ( $b= .11$ ,  $SE=.43$ ,  $p=.81$ ). Mediation was not run for externalizing negative emotion, internalizing negative emotion, and positive emotions.

*Multiple mediation.* Finally, we examined racial prejudice and race-relevance simultaneously as potential mediators between PDE and emotion. We used a multiple mediation bootstrapping macro (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with 10000 samples to assess these mediators assessed simultaneously. Only perceived racial prejudice emerged as a significant mediator.

Specifically, higher PDE were associated with less externalizing emotion,  $b = -.90$ ,  $SE = .33$ ,  $p < .01$  (Step 1). Higher PDE predicted lower perceptions of racial prejudice,  $b = -1.06$ ,  $SE = .34$ ,  $p < .01$  (Step 2). Racial prejudice was the only significant mediator of externalizing emotion,  $b = 0.54$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$  (Step 3). The relationship between PDE and externalizing emotion was significantly reduced when controlling for the mediators,  $b = -.34$ ,  $SE = .27$ ,  $p = .21$  (Step 4). Perceptions of racial prejudice was a significant mediator of PDE even after controlling for the other mediators because its 95% bias-corrected confidence interval did not include 0 (-1.05, -0.18). Race-relevance was not a significant mediator when entered simultaneously in the mediational model (Step 1:  $b = -.90$ ,  $SE = .33$ ,  $p < .01$ ; Step 2:  $b = .11$ ,  $SE = .43$ ,  $p = .81$ ; Step 3:  $b = .10$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p = .09$ ; Step 4:  $b = -.34$ ,  $SE = .27$ ,  $p = .21$ , 95% CI: -.06, .14). The multiple mediational models for internalizing and positive emotions were not run because PDE was not related to these emotions.

## Discussion

Study 3a examined how the perpetrator's perceived diversity experiences (i.e., PDE) may mitigate the perpetrator's perceived racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity when accounting for racial group membership. Hypothesis 1 was supported. When accounting for the perpetrator's race, the perpetrator's perceived PDE (i.e., high versus low) decreased the perception of racial prejudice, and also externalizing emotion intensity among Asian American targets. Hypothesis 2 was also supported for externalizing emotion. Perceived racial prejudice was found to be a significant mediator between the perceived PDE of the perpetrator and emotion outcomes. Perceived racial prejudice remained a significant mediator even after controlling for race-relevance.

While the omnibus interaction effect was not significant, the significant a priori simple effects suggest that the effect was not the same for White and Asian perpetrators of racial microaggressions. Although not directly tested in the current study, the shifting standards framework may be one relevant possibility from the target's perspective (see Biernat, Vescio, & Manis, 1998). Specifically, when examining the simple effects of the perpetrator's race and PDE on perceived racial prejudice and externalizing emotion, the effect of PDE mattered more for White perpetrators than for Asian perpetrators. The White perpetrator who had the same high PDE description as the high PDE Asian perpetrator was reacted to less negatively than a low PDE White perpetrator. In contrast, the low PDE Asian American perpetrator was reacted to similarly as a high PDE Asian perpetrator. In other words, PDE may shift perceptions of racial prejudice and externalizing emotion more for White than Asian perpetrators.

### **Is being asked where one is really from a typical racial microaggression? The mediating role of perceived racial prejudice**

Because there was a significant main effect of PDE on prejudice (and not a significant omnibus interaction), our secondary model was examined (instead of the original model, see Figures 3.4 and 3.5) examining the effect of the perpetrator's PDE on perceived racial prejudice and emotion, as shown below.

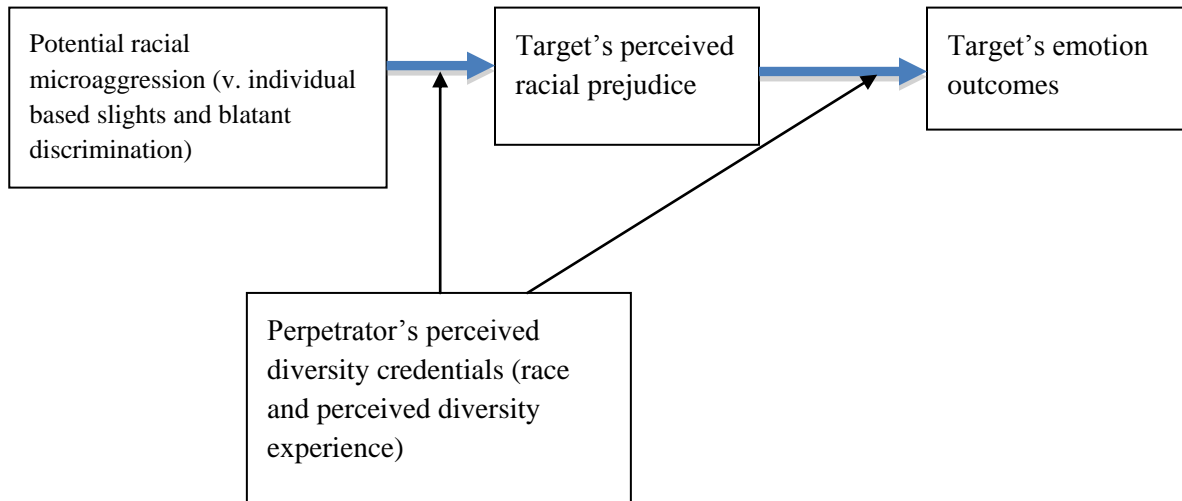


Figure 3.4 Original theoretical model

Note: In the original theoretical model, when a potential racial microaggression was attributed to racial prejudice by minority targets, it was associated with greater negative emotion intensity and less positive emotion intensity. However, PDE attenuated or decreased the perception of racial prejudice, and hence, negative emotion intensity, and therefore, the alternative model was run.

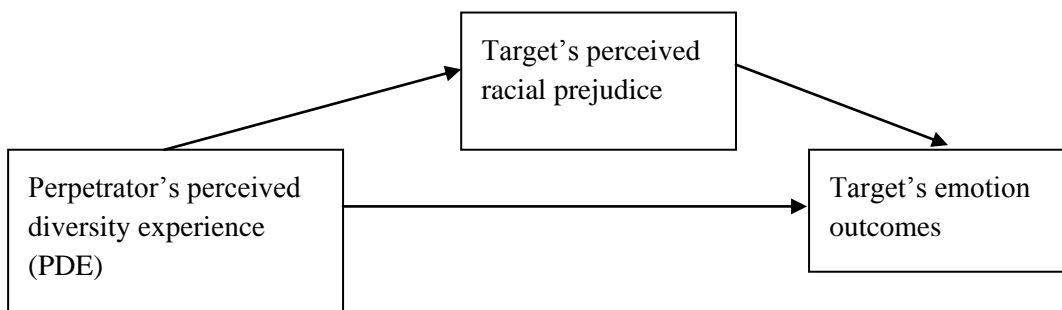


Figure 3.5 Secondary theoretical model

Note: The model in Study 3 focuses on a meditational model with PDE as the manipulated independent variable because we had no control situation to compare to the racial microaggression.

Being asked where one is really from is a common racial microaggression perpetuated by many individuals regardless of their racial background.<sup>17</sup> This situation, however, may evoke different interpretations depending on the person's race and PDE and suggests that being asked where one is from may not always represent a negative experience for Asian Americans. Yet what makes the situation complex for the target is that there may be many ways to interpret the situation (i.e., racial prejudice or other benign reasons). This complexity is one of many indicating the problematic nature of racial microaggressions.

Examining the potential mediator helps to address how being asked where one is really from is more a general instance of a racial microaggression, as opposed to being a unique effect that is only specific to the situation. In other words, had we found that the situation was not mediated by perceptions of racial prejudice, this would suggest that being asked where one was from was not generally an instance of a racial microaggression, as defined by the theoretical model (i.e., explained by perceived racial prejudice), but rather a more general interpersonal situation. The fact that perceptions of racial prejudice mediated the relationship between PDE and emotion suggests that the situation was related to race in a negatively valenced way, and thus was an instance of a *racial microaggression*.

More importantly, this study also investigated whether the findings were explained by mere race-relevance. It was important to include the race-relevance of the situation to differentiate between the construct from racial prejudice. Notably, when controlling for racial prejudice as a potential mediator, race-relevance was reduced to non-significance. This finding suggests that the relationship between PDE and emotions is explained by racial prejudice as

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<sup>17</sup> Study 4 found that being asked where you are really from did not differ in who was more likely to ask the question.

opposed to just believing that one's race is relevant in the treatment.. Furthermore, this suggests that when a situation is believed to be due to one's race, it may not necessarily be perceived as racial prejudice (i.e., when perpetrated by individuals with high PDE), and may instead be associated with more benign reasons.

### **PDE as individuating information?**

PDE served as information that exerted greater impact on impressions than racial group membership and its associated stereotypes. Our findings are consistent with some previous research. For example, Thagard and Kunda (1997) noted the following: "One way of determining the relative impact of stereotypes and individuating information on impressions is by examining studies in which both types of information were varied orthogonally. If stereotypes dominate impressions they should exert greater impact on impressions than does individuating information. But this is clearly not the case. Rather, when both types of information were varied in the same experiment, the effects of stereotypes were typically dwarfed in comparison to the effects of individuating information on impressions" (303). In relation to our study, this suggests that information about PDE overrode the stereotypical effects based on the perpetrator's race found in Study 2.

One potential limitation is that PDE construct is somewhat unclear. Do Asian-specific PDE (e.g., having Asian friends) or general PDE (e.g., having friends of color) matter more in attenuating the negative effects on emotion? Is PDE related to other constructs as well? While these questions are beyond the scope of the original theoretical model, attempts will be made in Study 4 to further examine the construct. In addition, while one could argue that our manipulation of PDE and individuating information is confounded, a future study could rule this

possibility out by manipulating both PDE information (high v. low) versus individuating information (more details versus fewer details) to examine their independent influence on emotion.

### **Study 3b**

Study 3b examined Asian Americans' perceptions of the PDE profiles without an accompanying racial microaggression. Specifically, we wanted to have a better understanding of PDE as a construct. Our goals were to examine whether (1) Asian Americans perceived the same PDE profiles to be similar across racial groups and (2) whether specific knowledge and experiences related to diversity are perceived to be an overlapping construct or distinct constructs.

For the first goal, without an accompanying potential microaggression, we wanted to investigate whether low and high levels of PDE are perceived similarly for Asian Americans and White Americans. We predicted no difference between Asians and Whites on high PDE based on a lack of differences in Study 3a. However, we expected a difference in perceptions for low PDE profiles: specifically, we expected that the Asian profile to be rated higher on PDE than the White profile, based on how Asians are stereotyped with greater baseline PDE compared to Whites without individuating information (i.e., Study 1 findings).

Our other goal was to examine whether participants differentiated the profiles based on diversity experience versus knowledge. This is an important question in order to understand for instance, whether PDE needs to involve *sustained experiences* with diverse groups other than one's own group or whether PDE can be knowledge that is acquired through education *without* sustained personal involvement and experience with diversity. While some researchers have

argued that declarations of knowledge may not represent authentic cues of non-prejudice (Bonilla-Silva & Foreman, 2000), other research has suggested that both experiences and knowledge may be important in perceiving who is non-prejudiced or an ally (Krumm & Corning, 2008; Reason & Broido, 2005). Thus, we expected that targets may perceive PDE to consist of both knowledge and experience based cues.

*Prediction 1:* Asian Americans will rate PDE to be similarly high for both Asian high PDE and White high PDE profiles. However, Asian Americans will rate PDE to be greater for the Asian low PDE than the White low PDE profile.

*Prediction 2:* Diversity experience and knowledge will be significantly correlated to encompass the construct of PDE.

## **Methods**

### **Creation of diversity experience and knowledge items**

In order to assess how participants viewed the profiles, we created questions to examine different types of diversity experiences and knowledge. Our questions focused on the operational definition of PDE of experience and knowledge with diverse groups other than their own and also specifically with Asian Americans, and we created items based off of Study 1. The following items were rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 4 = *somewhat*, 7 = *a lot*)

*General diversity experience and knowledge items.* One set of items focused on diversity experiences and knowledge with a range of racial, ethnic, or cultural groups other than the person's own group. For *experience*, we developed questions about personal experience with people, frequent contact, advocating for issues, choosing to socialize, and being familiar with

another language than English (i.e., general experience;  $\alpha=0.91$ ). For example, one sample item was “To what extent does this person have personal experience with a range of racial/ethnic/cultural groups other than his own?” For *knowledge*, we developed items about the knowledge about history, knowledge about current events, knowledge for the history, practices, values, and customs, knowledge from books, classes, and media (i.e., general knowledge;  $\alpha=0.91$ ).

*Asian experience and knowledge items.* We also asked the same items for Asian experience ( $\alpha=0.95$ ) and Asian knowledge ( $\alpha=0.92$ ). For example, one sample item was “To what extent does this person have personal experience with Asian Americans?”

### **Participants and procedure**

Ninety-four self-identified Asian Americans (52 women; 50% US-born) were approached on campus individually or in groups and were offered candy or snacks for their participation. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (45%), Korean (20%), and Vietnamese (13%) Participants were randomly assigned to rate one of four between-subject profiles: Asian/high PDE, Asian/low PDE, White/high PDE, or White/low PDE. The order of the types of questions was counterbalanced. All participants completed a brief demographic measure at the end.

## **Results**

### **Do Asian Americans differentiate the profiles across race?**

We ran separate 2 (race of the profile) x 2 (level of PDE) between-subjects ANOVA for each of the DVs: general diversity experience, general diversity knowledge, Asian experience, and Asian knowledge.

*General diversity experience and knowledge.* For general experience, there was a main effect for experience. The high PDE profile ( $M = 5.83, SD = 0.74$ ) was rated higher on general diversity experience than low PDE profile ( $M = 3.19, SD = 1.29$ ),  $F(1,90) = 170.63, p < .001, \eta^2 = .66$ . However, this effect was qualified by an interaction,  $F(1,90) = 8.03, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$ . Simple effects revealed as expected, that the Asian/low PDE profile ( $M = 3.65, SD = 1.37$ ) was rated to be higher than the White/low PDE profile ( $M = 2.65, SD = 0.94$ ),  $F(1,90) = 11.51, p = .001$ , suggesting that the Asian/low PDE profile was assumed to have more general diversity experience than the White/low PDE counterpart. As expected, there was no difference between Asian/high PDE ( $M = 5.75, SD = 0.86$ ) and White/high PDE profiles ( $M = 5.91, SD = 0.62$ ),  $F(1,90) = 0.34, p = .56$ . Unsurprisingly, the Asian/low PDE profile was rated to be lower on general diversity experience than Asian/high PDE profile,  $F(1,90) = 53.62, p < .001$ . Similarly, the White/low PDE profile was rated to be lower on general diversity experience than White/high PDE profile,  $F(1,90) = 123.35, p < .001$ .

A similar pattern emerged for general knowledge. A main effect of knowledge emerged,  $F(1,90) = 39.91, p < .001, \eta^2 = .31$ , which was qualified by a significant interaction,  $F(1,90) = 10.56, p < .01, \eta^2 = .11$ . Simple effects revealed as expected, that the Asian/low PDE profile ( $M = 4.11, SD = 1.56$ ) was rated to be higher than the White/low PDE profile ( $M = 3.02, SD = 1.10$ ),  $F(1,90) = 10.90, p = .001$ , suggesting that the Asian low experience profile was assumed to have more knowledge than the White counterpart. There was no difference between Asian/high PDE

( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ) and White/high PDE profiles ( $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ),  $F(1, 90) = 1.62$ ,  $p = .21$ . The Asian/low PDE profile was rated to be lower on general knowledge than Asian/high PDE profile,  $F(1,90) = 4.82$ ,  $p = .03$ . Similarly, the White/low PDE profile was rated to be lower on general knowledge than White/high PDE profile,  $F(1,90) = 44.69$ ,  $p < .001$ .

*Asian experience and Asian knowledge.* For Asian experience and knowledge, there was a main effect of experience, in that high PDE profiles were rated to be higher in both Asian experience ( $M = 5.95$ ,  $SD = 2.74$ ) and Asian knowledge ( $M = 5.13$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) than low PDE experience profiles ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ;  $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ),  $F(1,90) = 258.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .74$  and  $F(1,90) = 112.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .56$ , respectively. Unexpectedly, there were no differences between Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE profiles.

### **Are diversity experiences and knowledge highly correlated to represent PDE?**

We examined correlations between experience and knowledge for both general diversity and with Asians by collapsing across conditions. For general diversity, experience and knowledge were highly correlated,  $r = .80$ ,  $p < .001$ . Similarly, for Asian diversity, experience and knowledge were also highly correlated,  $r = .75$ ,  $p < .001$ . These findings suggest that experience and knowledge are likely seen as one construct.

To determine whether each profile is seen as more knowledge or experience based, we collapsed across the conditions and conducted a paired t-test to compare experience and knowledge for general and Asian diversity. For general diversity, experience ( $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ) was rated to be higher than knowledge ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ),  $t(93) = 1.98$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $d = .41$ . Similarly for Asian diversity, experience ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ) was rated to be higher than knowledge ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ),  $t(93) = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .80$ .

## **Discussion**

Study 3b examined whether Asian Americans perceived the same profiles incorporated in Study 3a to be similar across racial groups, and whether diversity knowledge and diversity experiences are perceived to be related as a construct across groups. The first hypothesis was supported. The same experiences and knowledge items for general diversity were perceived differently across racial groups. More specifically, Asian Americans reported similar levels of general diversity knowledge and experience for the high PDE profile regardless of race, but less knowledge and experience for Whites than Asians in the low PDE condition. This finding is consistent with Study 1 in which Whites were rated to have less PDE than Asians without individuating information. However, Asian experience and Asian knowledge were rated to be greater for high versus low PDE for both races. One possibility is that because information about Asian experience and knowledge is more specific, there is less ambiguity to infer racial group differences from the profiles.

The second hypothesis was also supported. Both knowledge and experience were highly associated with each other. When directly comparing between experience and knowledge, the profiles were perceived to be more experience based than knowledge based. Thus, consistent with recent work on credentialing (Krumm & Corning, 2010; Effron & Monin, 2010), both experiences, which may involve more sustained involvement, and knowledge, such as attitudes and education, may be important components of PDE from the target's perspective.

## **Conclusion**

Recent work has focused on how Whites adopt strategies to avoid being seen as racially prejudiced. For example, perceptions of prejudice in interracial interactions have been found to

be shaped by active strategies such as adopting a colorblind ideology or a race-relevance perspective (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). In the present study, we found that perceived diversity experiences (PDE) from the perspective of the minority target is also important in determining whether a person is likely to be racially prejudiced or not. Specifically in Study 3a, we found that perpetrator's of racial microaggressions with low PDE are perceived as more racially prejudiced and are reacted to with greater externalizing emotion than those with high PDE, and this difference was primarily driven by the difference between White/low PDE and White/high PDE Whites. Furthermore in Study 3b, we found that for Whites with the same low experiences and knowledge as Asians are perceived to have lower PDE whereas there were no racial group differences with high PDE profiles. We also found that PDE was perceived in terms of both knowledge and experiences, suggesting that both components are important to consider in understanding the construct. In Study 4, we aimed to replicate these findings as well as further explore what the construct of PDE means for minority targets.

## Study 4

Perceived diversity experiences (PDE), or the experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and contact that one has with diversity or with diverse groups, may be an important construct in understanding when racial microaggressions may hurt or not for minority targets. Study 3a found that the PDE of a person who asks “Where are you *really* from?” mitigated the negative reactions (i.e., perceived racial prejudice and negative externalizing emotion) among Asian American targets. In the following chapter, we aimed to (1) replicate the findings from Study 3a, (2) examine racial prejudice in the context of other potential mediators to explain the effect of PDE on emotion, and (3) rule out potential confounds related to PDE.

### **Racial prejudice and other potential mediators**

Like in Study 3, the present study tests racial prejudice as a potential mediator or mechanism that drives the relationship between the perpetrator’s characteristics and negative emotions among Asian American targets. Perceptions of racial prejudice involve the *unfair bias* of being treated due to one’s race, which would indicate that these situations may be perceived as instances of discrimination (i.e., unfair treatment) and be consistent with discrimination related emotion outcomes (Wang et al., 2011).

Additionally, we tested two potential alternative mediators - similarity to the self and open-mindedness – as mechanisms explaining the relationship between the perpetrators' PDE and the target’s emotional reactions. *Similarity to the self* is a broad construct which may be analogous to social connection (Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer, 2011). Very small cues of similarity or social connectedness may increase a sense of interpersonal closeness or liking (Walton et al., 2011). For example, research on incidental similarities such as a shared birthday

(Burger, Messian, Patel, del Prado, & Anderson, 2004; Walton et al., 2011) and on arbitrary or “minimal” groups can develop into a sense of group identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). By extension, perpetrators of a racial microaggression who have high PDE (i.e. more experience with general diversity and Asians) may be seen as more similar to targets and may be reacted to with less negative emotion. However, we predicted that the effect of PDE on negative emotion will not be predicted by similarity of the perpetrator’s background and experiences to targets when accounting for other mechanisms. Instead, we believe that for racial microaggressions, the primary mechanism is the expectation that the perpetrator is *unfairly* biased towards the target, which would increase negative emotions. Because many racial microaggressions may involve ambiguity in intention, we believe that the strongest predictor of negative reactions will be the perceived intention of racial prejudice, as opposed to a lack of a similar background.

We also tested *open-mindedness* as a potential alternative mediator to explain the relationship between PDE and negative emotions. Open-mindedness represents the curiosity and willingness to be open and try new things which may be associated with more positive outcomes, such as liking by others (e.g., Flynn, 2005; McCrae & John, 1992). People who are open to experience have been found to be more tolerant of diversity (McCrae, 1996). Thus, a perpetrator of a racial microaggression with high PDE may be seen as more open-minded (relative to a low PDE perpetrator) and reacted to less negatively. While open-mindedness may be a potential mediator, we expected that perceived racial prejudice would be a stronger mediator when accounting for open-mindedness because open-mindedness is a general construct that is not necessarily focused on being open to diversity.

### **Potential confounds related to PDE**

Because PDE is a newly developed construct, we aimed to examine potential confounds related to PDE that may have theoretically irrelevant effects on perceptions of racial prejudice and emotional reactions among Asian Americans. Specifically, we wanted to rule out cultural sensitivity, intelligence, political orientation, and financial wealth as explanations for the effect of PDE on our outcomes of interest. Our goal was to keep these potential confounds consistent across all conditions; however, these potential confounds may affect our outcomes in different ways.

Cultural sensitivity, or one's sensitivity or awareness of cultural issues, is considered part of the operationalization of PDE (e.g., knowledge of cultural difference, favorable or supportive attitudes of diverse groups), but we argue is not the same construct as PDE (i.e., not focused on *experience*). If cultural sensitivity is relevant, those perceived to be higher in cultural sensitivity may be reacted to less negatively. Similarly, political orientation, defined as how conservative or liberal one is, may also be part of the PDE construct (e.g., experience in political activism). Thus, someone who is perceived as more liberal may be reacted to less negatively. Finally, we included intelligence and financial wealth as potential covariates related to perceptions of social class (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; Kraus, Piff, & Kelter, 2011). For these covariates, it was less clear how they may impact negative reactions. While we expected that the covariates would be related to PDE, we did not expect any of the covariates to exclusively have a significant effect on perceived prejudice and negative emotion.

### **Study Overview**

In the present study, we aimed to replicate the findings that imagining oneself interacting with a perpetrator of a racial microaggression with high PDE (versus low PDE) mitigates one's

negative reactions to the event. Furthermore, we examined racial prejudice in the context of other potential mediators to explain the effect of PDE on emotion, and aimed to rule out potential confounds related to PDE.

## **Predictions**

*Prediction 1:* Even when accounting for the perpetrator's race, the perpetrator's PDE (i.e., high versus low) will decrease the perception of racial prejudice and also negative emotion intensity (1A), while accounting for other potential perceptions such as perceived cultural sensitivity, intelligence, political orientation, and financial wealth among Asian American targets (1B). We expected PDE to have a larger effect on perceived racial prejudice and emotional reactions for White perpetrators compared to Asian perpetrators.

*Prediction 2:* Perceptions of racial prejudice will mediate the link between the perpetrator's perceived PDE and negative emotion intensity (2A), even after taking into account other related potential mediators, specifically open-mindedness and similarity to the self, among Asian American targets (2B).

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Participants were 71 self-identified Asian Americans (56% women; 44% US-born; 78% US citizens;  $M$  age = 19.97,  $SD$  = 1.96) recruited on-campus at the University of Washington who were offered candy or snacks for their participation. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (32%), Korean (21%), and Vietnamese (9%). Nine participants (of 80 total participants recruited) were dropped from the analyses because they did not self-identify as

Asian American and/or did not correctly identify the race of the racial microaggression perpetrator in the study.

## **Procedures**

Like in Study 3a, participants were approached one at a time or in small groups on-campus and were asked to complete a ten-minute study on forming impressions of a student at the University of Washington. Participants first completed demographic information.

*Manipulation of profiles.* Participants were then randomly assigned to read one of four profiles: Asian/High PDE, Asian/Low PDE, White/High PDE, or White/Low PDE. Participants then read about experiencing the same racial microaggression as in Study 3a (i.e., being asked where you are really from) perpetrated by the person in the profile (i.e., perpetrator).

*Measures.* Participants responded to a series of questions that were the same as from Study 3a on a 9-point scale (1 *not at all* to 9 *extremely*) on emotion intensity (happy, proud, angry, anxious, ashamed/embarrassed, offended, sad). Specifically, the emotion questions were phrased as “To what extent do you think you would feel \_\_\_?” Participants rated their attributions/appraisals of racial prejudice (i.e., “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think this person is racially prejudiced?”), along with similarity to oneself (i.e., “How similar is this person is to you?”), perceptions of cultural sensitivity (i.e., “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think this person is culturally sensitive?”), and open-mindedness (i.e., “If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think this person is open-minded?”). Unlike Study 3, this study did not ask for whether the situation was related to one’s race. Participants also responded to perceptions related to the PDE of the perpetrator: intelligence (i.e., “How intelligent is this person?”), political orientation (i.e., “How conservative

or liberal is this person?”), and financial wealth (i.e., “How financially well-off is this person?”). Finally, participants completed manipulation checks on the perpetrator’s race and experiences (both general diversity and Asian-specific) related to the profile.

### **Data analytic strategy**

The results section is divided into three main parts: descriptive statistics (including manipulation checks), Prediction 1 (main and secondary analyses), and Prediction 2 (main and secondary analyses). Prediction 1 focuses on the effect of manipulating race and PDE on perceptions of racial prejudice and emotion responses. Prediction 2 incorporates a mediational analysis to examine perceptions of racial prejudice as the mediator.

## **Results**

*Descriptives.* The means and standard deviations of the appraisal and emotion variables are reported in Table 4.1. Composite scales of externalizing (anger, offended,  $\alpha=.90$ ), internalizing (sadness, shame, anxiety;  $\alpha=.67$ ), and positive emotions (happy, proud,  $\alpha=.78$ ) were reliable.

Table 4.1: Means (SD) for emotion and attributions to being asked “Where are you *really* from?” (all 9-point scale)

	Asian/Low <i>N</i> = 20	Asian/High <i>N</i> = 19	White/Low <i>N</i> = 15	White/High <i>N</i> = 17
<i>Emotions</i>				
<i>Externalizing</i>				
Angry	3.15 (2.01)	2.47 (1.76)	4.40 (2.26)	2.94 (2.05)
Offended	3.05 (2.16)	2.63 (2.03)	4.47 (2.85)	2.76 (2.36)
<i>Internalizing</i>				
Anxious	3.05 (1.82)	2.26 (1.56)	3.73 (2.25)	2.82 (1.91)
Ashamed	1.60 (0.94)	2.58 (2.19)	2.07 (1.75)	1.82 (1.33)
Sad	1.75 (1.21)	1.63 (1.30)	1.80 (1.61)	1.71 (1.40)
<i>Positive</i>				
Happy	5.00 (1.38)	5.32 (1.64)	4.60 (1.88)	4.94 (2.21)
Proud	6.34 (1.95)	6.00 (1.67)	4.93 (1.98)	5.25 (2.35)
<i>Attributions of interest (Potential Mediators)</i>				
Prejudiced	3.55 (2.37)	3.05 (1.62)	5.20 (2.73)	3.24 (2.25)
Open-minded	4.70 (1.78)	6.05 (1.31)	4.13 (1.89)	5.71 (1.61)
Similar to you	3.70 (2.23)	4.67 (2.25)	2.47 (2.13)	4.18 (1.98)
<i>Related perceptions of perpetrator (Covariates)</i>				
Culturally Sensitive	4.50 (2.33)	5.74 (1.56)	4.13 (2.53)	4.82 (1.81)
Intelligent	4.90 (1.59)	4.89 (2.06)	3.80 (1.94)	5.40 (1.60)
Political	4.85 (1.39)	5.39 (1.42)	4.13 (1.68)	5.18 (1.47)
Financial Wealth	6.00 (1.34)	5.00 (2.09)	5.60 (1.45)	4.81 (1.68) <sup>18</sup>

*Manipulation Checks.* We checked whether participants correctly identified the race of the perpetrator and also whether high PDE was rated higher than low PDE, as measured by questions focusing on general diversity and Asian-specific experiences. Five participants did not correctly identify the race of the perpetrator and were not included in the analyses. When comparing the PDE of the profiles as a manipulation check, there was a main effect of race ( $F(1,67) = 6.20, p=.02, \eta^2 = .09$ ) and PDE ( $F(1,67) = 34.86, p<.001, \eta^2 = .34$ ) on *general diversity experiences*. There was no significant interaction ( $F(1,67)=1.26, p=.27$ ). Specifically, the Asian profiles were perceived to have higher general diversity experiences than White

<sup>18</sup> We also included other attributions. Most interestingly, there was no difference in conditions between typicality of the comment (main effect of race:  $F(1,67) = .05, p=.83$ ; main effect of PDE:  $F(1,67) = .04, p=.85$ ; interaction  $F(1,67) = 1.51, p=.22$ ) suggesting that the comment is likely asked by most people.

profiles, and the high PDE profiles were perceived to have higher general diversity experiences than the low PDE profiles. Additionally, there was a main effect of PDE for the perpetrator's *Asian-specific experiences*, in that high PDE profiles were rated to have higher experience than the low PDE profiles,  $F(1,65) = 38.09, p < .001, \eta^2 = .37$ . There was no main effect of race ( $F(1,65) = .45, p = .33$ ) nor an interaction ( $F(1,65) = .97, p = .33$ )

*Main analysis.*

*Prediction 1A: Even when accounting for the perpetrator's race, are perceptions of racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity lower for high PDE compared with low PDE perpetrators?*

To examine the effect of the perpetrator's race and PDE on the target's perceptions of prejudice and emotions, a 2 (race of perpetrator) x 2 (PDE) between-subjects ANOVA was run.

*Perceptions of racial prejudice.* We examined whether the perpetrator's race and PDE moderated the effect of participants' racial prejudice perceptions (see Figure 4.1). There was a main effect of perceived experiences for racial prejudice, in that the low PDE versus high PDE perpetrator was seen as more racially prejudiced,  $F(1,67) = 5.25, p = .03, \eta^2 = .07$ . The main effect of perpetrator's race ( $F(1,67) = 2.91, p = .09$ ) and interaction ( $F(1,67) = 1.86, p = 0.18$ ) were not significant. Although the omnibus test for the interaction was not significant, when examining simple effects using pairwise comparisons, the White/low PDE perpetrator was perceived to be more racially prejudiced than the Asian/low PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,67) = 4.61, p = .04$ ) and than the White/high PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,67) = 6.07, p = .02$ ). There was no difference between the Asian/high PDE perpetrator and Asian/low PDE perpetrator in perceived prejudice,  $F(1,67) = .48, p = .49$ . There was also no difference in perceived prejudice between the

Asian/high PDE perpetrator and the White/high PDE perpetrator,  $F(1,67) = .06, p=.81$ . These findings suggest that the main effect for high versus low PDE may be driven by the White low PDE condition.

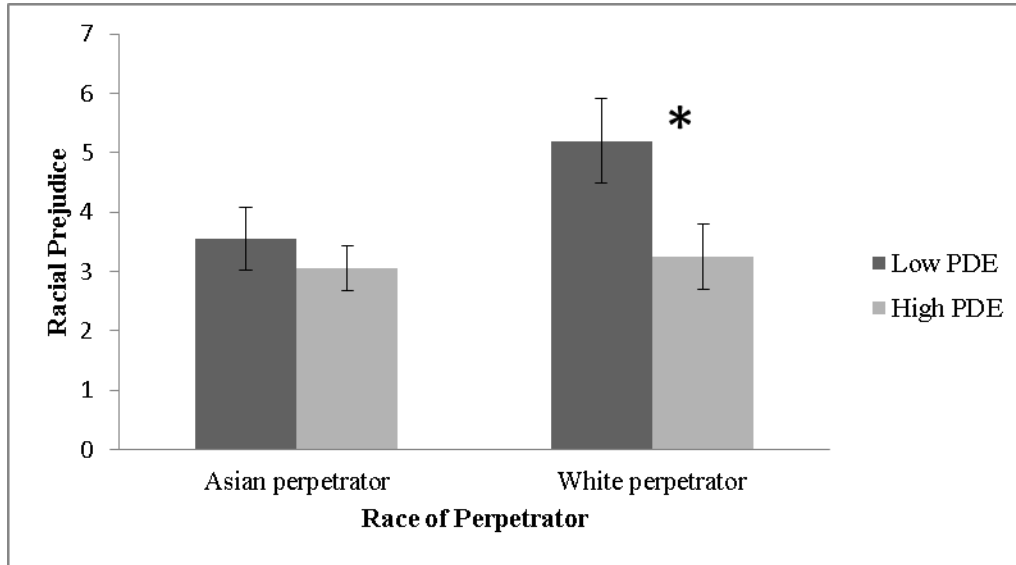


Figure 4.1: Greater perceived racial prejudice perceived from low versus high PDE perpetrators particularly for Whites to being asked “Where are you *really* from?”

*Emotion intensity.* We also examined the potential moderating effect of the perpetrator’s PDE and race on negative and positive emotions (see Figure 4.2). The main effect of PDE was found for externalizing emotions, in that greater externalizing emotions was reported for perpetrators with low versus high PDE, regardless of race,  $F(1,67) = 4.65, p=.04, \eta^2 = .07$ . The main effect of race ( $F(1,67) = 2.74, p=.10$ ) and interaction was not significant for externalizing emotions ( $F(1,67) = 1.10, p=.30$ ). Simple effects for externalizing emotions revealed that, White/low PDE perpetrators were reacted to with greater externalizing emotion than White/high PDE perpetrators,  $F(1,67) = 4.66, p=.03$ . There was a marginal difference when directly comparing the Asian/low PDE perpetrator to White/low PDE perpetrator, in that marginally greater externalizing emotions were reported for the White perpetrator,  $F(1,67) = 3.57, p = .06$ .

There were no differences comparing the Asian/low PDE versus Asian/high PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,67) = .68, p=.41$ ), nor when comparing the Asian/high PDE perpetrator to the White/high PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,67) = .19, p=.67$ ).

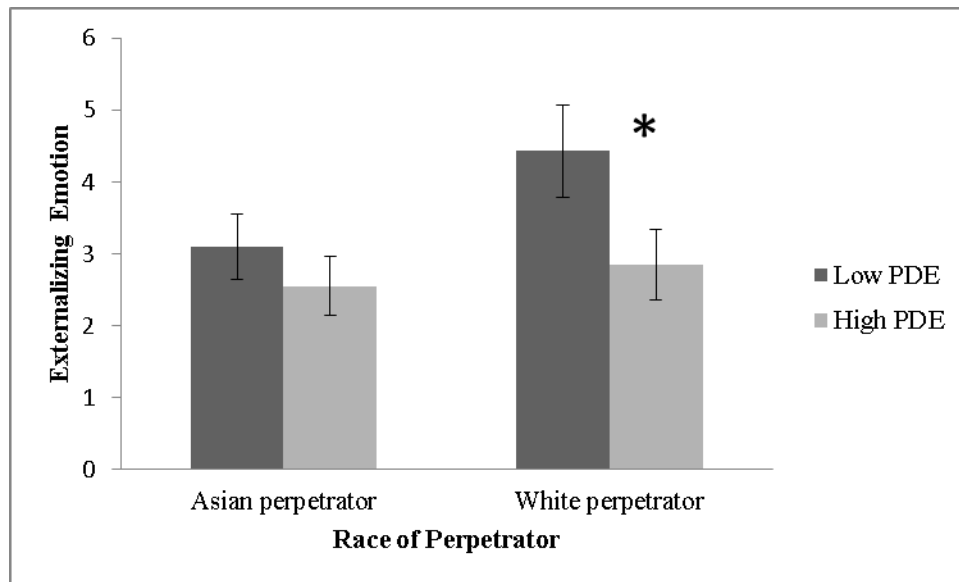


Figure 4.2: Greater externalizing emotion reported from low versus high PDE perpetrators particularly for Whites to being asked “Where are you *really* from?”

For internalizing emotions, there was no main effect of race ( $F(1,67)=.34, p=.56$ ), no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,67) = .40, p=.53$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,67) = .51, p=.48$ ). When examining simple effects, there were no significant differences between the conditions (all  $p$ 's>.37). For positive emotions, participants reported marginally greater positive emotions for the Asian perpetrator than White perpetrator ( $F(1,66) = 3.22, p = .08$ ), but there was no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,66) = .14, p=.71$ ) nor interaction ( $F(1,66) = .18, p=.68$ ). There were no significant simple effects between the conditions (all  $p$ 's>.12).

*Prediction 1B: Even when accounting for the perpetrator’s race, are perceptions of racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity lower in high PDE compared with low PDE, controlling for other predictors?*

*Perceptions of racial prejudice.* Evidence so far has suggested that accounting for the race of the perpetrator, a racial microaggression perpetrated from a person with high PDE is perceived to be less racially prejudiced and decreases externalizing emotions than those perpetrated from a low PDE person, primarily driven by the White/low PDE profile. To investigate the possibility that the manipulation focused on perceptions other than PDE, we included cultural sensitivity, perceived intelligence, political orientation, and financial wealth as covariates entered simultaneously in a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANCOVA, to isolate the effect of PDE when controlling for the other potential factors. When examining racial prejudice as the DV, there were no main effects (Race:  $F(1,59) = 2.65, p=.11$ ; PDE:  $F(1,59) = 1.10, p=.30$ ) or interaction ( $F(1,59) = .68, p=.41$ ) after controlling for cultural sensitivity, perceived intelligence, political orientation, and financial wealth. For the covariates entered in the model, there was a main effect of financial wealth,  $F(1,59) = 6.84, p=.01, \eta^2 = .10$ , and intelligence,  $F(1,59) = 5.14, p=.03, \eta^2 = .08$ . Cultural sensitivity also had a marginal effect on perceived prejudice,  $F(1,59) = 3.41, p=.07, \eta^2 = .06$ . This suggests that financial wealth and intelligence may have influenced perceptions of racial prejudice beyond PDE. As mentioned earlier, PDE had a significant main effect on perceptions of racial prejudice. These findings suggest that social class, in the form of financial wealth and intelligence, and PDE may be related for participants in this study.

*Perceptions of racial prejudice with White perpetrators only.* In addition, we ran a hierarchical regression with White perpetrators only to examine the effect of financial wealth and intelligence on perceptions of racial prejudice. In the first model, PDE was the only predictor entered, in which greater PDE significantly predicted less perceived prejudice ( $b=-1.97, SE=.88, p=.03$ ). In the second model, financial wealth and intelligence were added as additional predictors. PDE did not predict perceived racial prejudice ( $b=-.77, SE=1.00, p=.45, ns$ ); however,

financial wealth ( $b=.49$ ,  $SE=.29$ ,  $ns$ ) and intelligence were significant predictors of perceived prejudice. The final model included political orientation and cultural sensitivity along with the previous predictors. Only financial wealth emerged as a *marginally* significant predictor,  $b=.57$ ,  $SE=.30$ ,  $p=.07$ , suggesting that beyond the other predictors, perceived financial wealth may be the strongest predictor of perceived prejudice among White perpetrators. None of the other predictors were significant (all  $p$ 's  $>.10$ ). To follow up, we ran a mediational analysis between PDE on prejudice with wealth as the mediator. However, wealth was not a significant mediator (Step 1:  $b= -2.08$ ,  $SE = .90$ ,  $p=.03$ ; Step 2:  $b= -.79$ ,  $SE = .57$ ,  $p=.18$ ; Step 3:  $b= .49$ ,  $SE = .29$ ,  $p=.10$ ; Step 4:  $b= -1.69$ ,  $SE = .90$ ,  $p=.07$ , 95% CI: -1.39, .06)

*Emotion intensity.* When examining emotion, the results differed slightly. Specifically, when examining externalizing emotions, there was no main effect of race ( $F(1,59) = 2.66$ ,  $p=.11$ ), no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,59) = 1.56$ ,  $p=.22$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,59) = .10$ ,  $p=.75$ ) when controlling for cultural sensitivity, intelligence, political orientation, or financial wealth. However, perceived intelligence was a significant covariate in this model,  $F(1,59) = 6.81$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $\eta^2=.10$ , suggesting that perceived intelligence may have influenced externalizing emotion responses beyond PDE. For internalizing emotion, unsurprisingly, there was no main effect of race ( $F(1,59) = .10$ ,  $p=.75$ ), no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,59) = .16$ ,  $p=.70$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,59)= .27$ ,  $p=.60$ ). None of the covariates predicted internalizing emotion (all  $p$ 's  $>.38$ ). Similarly for positive emotion, there was no main effect of race ( $F(1,59) = 1.29$ ,  $p=.26$ ), no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,59) = .01$ ,  $p=.92$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,59)= .35$ ,  $p=.56$ ). None of the covariates predicted positive emotion (all  $p$ 's  $>.25$ ).

*Emotion intensity with White perpetrators only.* Like with perceived racial prejudice, we ran a hierarchical regression with White perpetrators only but examined the effect of intelligence

on perceptions of externalizing emotion. In the first model with PDE as the only predictor, greater PDE *marginally* predicted less externalizing emotion ( $b=-1.58, SE=.79, p=.06$ ). In the second model with PDE and intelligence as predictors, neither PDE ( $b=-.91, SE=.89, p=.32$ ) nor intelligence ( $b=-.41, SE=.24, p=.09$ ) predicted externalizing emotion. For the final model in which cultural sensitivity, political orientation, and financial wealth were entered as predictors as well, only intelligence emerged as a *marginally* significant predictor of externalizing emotion, in that those who are perceived as more intelligent are reacted to with less externalizing emotion,  $b=-.61, SE=.31, p=.06$ . The other predictors were not significant (all  $p's > .40$ ). We examined whether intelligence mediated the relationship between PDE and externalizing emotion and found that intelligence was not a significant mediator (Step 1:  $b = -1.57, SE = .84, p = .07$ ; Step 2:  $b = 1.60, SE = .65, p = .02$ ; Step 3:  $b = -.41, SE = .23, p = .09$ ; Step 4:  $b = -.90, SE = .89, p = .32$ , 95% CI:  $-2.03, .25$ ).

*Prediction 2A: Does perceived racial prejudice mediate the relationship between PDE of the perpetrator and emotion?*

*Mediation.* In the original model and as supported in Studies 2 and 3a, the association between perpetrator's race/PDE and emotion was mediated by perceptions of racial prejudice. Like in Study 3, a mediational model was run with PDE as the IV and emotion as the DV for this study because (1) there was no main effect of perpetrator's race on emotion but a main effect of PDE, and (2) there was also no control condition comparing to the racial microaggression that participants read. This allowed us to examine the effect of the perpetrator's PDE on emotion, as opposed to focusing on the situation on emotion, as shown in the original model.

Due to a relatively small sample size, we incorporated a bootstrapping mediational model (Preacher & Hayes) with 10000 samples. High PDE was associated with less externalizing emotion,  $b = -.98$ ,  $SE=.50$ ,  $p=.05$  (Step 1). High PDE predicted lower perceptions of racial prejudice,  $b = -1.12$ ,  $SE=.55$ ,  $p=.04$  (Step 2). Racial prejudice significantly mediated the relationship between PDE and externalizing emotion,  $b = 0.55$ ,  $SE=.09$ ,  $p<.001$  (Step 3). The relationship between PDE and externalizing emotion was significantly reduced when controlling for racial prejudice,  $b= -.36$ ,  $SE=.41$ ,  $p=.38$  (Step 4). Perceptions of racial prejudice were a significant mediator of PDE and externalizing emotion because its 95% bias-corrected confidence interval did not include 0 (CI: -1.28, -.08).

For internalizing emotion, the mediational analysis was not run because PDE were not related to internalizing emotions,  $b= -.17$ ,  $SE=.30$ ,  $p=.59$ . Similarly, the mediational analysis was not run for positive emotion because PDE were not related to positive emotions,  $b= .11$ ,  $SE=.41$ ,  $p=.78$ .<sup>19</sup>

*Alternative analysis.*

*Prediction 2B: Does perceived racial prejudice mediate the relationship between PDE of the perpetrator and negative emotion, controlling for other potential mediators?*

*Mediation.* Racial prejudice, open-mindedness, and similarity to the self were simultaneously included as potential mediators between perceptions of the perpetrator's PDE and the target's emotion. We used a multiple mediation bootstrapping macro (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with 10000 samples to assess these mediators assessed simultaneously. Only perceived

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<sup>19</sup> When the simple mediation was split by race of the perpetrator, the mediation was significant for White perpetrators ( $N=32$ ) but not for Asian perpetrators ( $N=39$ ; PDE was not associated with externalizing emotions or perceived racial prejudice).

racial prejudice emerged as a significant mediator. Specifically, higher PDE were *marginally* associated with less externalizing emotion,  $b = -.93$ ,  $SE = .50$ ,  $p = .07$  (Step 1). Higher PDE predicted *marginally* lower perceptions of racial prejudice,  $b = -1.06$ ,  $SE = .55$ ,  $p = .06$  (open-mindedness:  $b = 1.43$ ,  $SE = .40$ ,  $p = .001$ ; similarity to self:  $b = 1.26$ ,  $SE = .52$ ,  $p = .02$ ; Step 2). Racial prejudice was the only significant mediator of externalizing emotion, when controlling for cultural sensitivity, open-mindedness, and similarity to self,  $b = 0.48$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$  (open-mindedness:  $b = -.26$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $p = .09$ ; similarity to self:  $b = .09$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p = .40$ ; Step 3). The relationship between PDE and externalizing emotion was significantly reduced when controlling for the mediators,  $b = -.15$ ,  $SE = .44$ ,  $p = .73$  (Step 4). Perceptions of racial prejudice were a significant mediator of PDE even after controlling for the other mediators because its 95% bias-corrected confidence interval did not include 0 (CI: -1.16, -.04). All other mediators included a 0 in the CIs. The mediational models for internalizing emotions and positive emotions were not run because PDE was not related to these outcomes.

## Discussion

The present study had three goals: (1) to replicate the findings from Study 3a, (2) to examine racial prejudice in the context of other potential mediators to explain the effect of PDE on emotion, and (3) to rule out potential confounds related to PDE. For the first hypothesis, as predicted and consistent with Study 3a, Asian Americans reported less externalizing emotion and perceived racial prejudice when a potential racial microaggression was perpetrated from an individual with high versus low PDE, while taking into account the perpetrator's race. When examining simple effects and consistent with Study 3a, PDE mattered more for White perpetrators of racial microaggressions than for Asian perpetrators. The second hypothesis was also supported. Perceptions of racial prejudice mediated the link between the perpetrator's PDE

and negative emotion intensity, even after taking into account open-mindedness and similarity to the self, among Asian American targets. This finding was consistent with Study 3a.

Furthermore, we aimed to rule out potential confounds related to PDE that may affect negative emotional reactions. When examining perceived racial prejudice as an outcome, surprisingly, financial wealth and intelligence had significant effects, while the effect of PDE on racial prejudice was reduced. When focusing on White perpetrators only, financial wealth *marginally* predicted greater perceptions of racial prejudice but did not mediate between PDE and racial prejudice. None of the other predictors were significant. For externalizing emotion, intelligence was a significant covariate but did not mediate between PDE and externalizing emotion. When examining White perpetrators only, perceived intelligence *marginally* predicted less externalizing emotions for participants. In the next section, we turn to why we may have found these results.

### **PDE and social class**

What may be the role of financial wealth and intelligence in understanding the effect of PDE on perceived racial prejudice and negative externalizing emotion? Financial wealth was found to be related to increased prejudice and intelligence related to decreased externalizing emotion. These constructs may be related to the perception of social class, often measured in terms of education and income (Adler et al., 2000; Kraus et al., 2011; Kraus & Stephens, 2012). In the present study, we found that social class and PDE may be related for participants in our study.

Specifically, we found that greater perceived financial wealth predicted greater perceptions of racial prejudice. Income, a form of financial wealth, is an important indicator of

social class, particularly during times of increased economic inequality (e.g., Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009). One possibility of our findings is related to the perceptions of how different class members relate to other people. For example, Kraus and Kelter (2009) had college students from different social class backgrounds as measured by family income, engage with strangers in an interaction. While students from a lower social class background were more socially engaged (e.g., more head nods, laughing), students from a higher social class background were relatively more disengaged (e.g., check their phones, groom themselves). Thus, the norms that are reinforced by different social classes may relate to perceptions of those groups, such as higher social class individuals being perceived as selfish, inattentive to others, and low on warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). In relation to our present study, targets of a potential racial microaggression may thus have perceived more prejudice from a perpetrator who is seen as financial wealthy versus someone who is not for the same ambiguous behavior.

We also found that intelligence, arguably a proxy for education, alternatively predicted less externalizing emotion. One possibility is that higher intelligence or education provides individuals with a wider range of important cultural knowledge (e.g., manners, customs) (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1998). For example, some studies have found that higher education is associated with greater tolerance for diversity (Bobo & Licari, 1989) and increased commitment to cultural awareness and racial understanding (Antonio, 2001). In turn, targets of a potential racial microaggression may react with less externalizing emotion such as anger to a perpetrator with greater perceived intelligence.

While these constructs may be related to PDE, it does not necessarily rule out the importance of PDE. Instead, when focusing on PDE as a construct, it is important to note that it may be linked to other related perceptions. This suggests an advantage of our study is identifying

potential covariates. Although financial wealth and intelligence may be related to PDE, the covariates did not exclusively explain the effects on perceived prejudice and on externalizing emotion. Thus, it suggests that PDE is an important construct to consider in situations involving ambiguity, such as racial microaggressions. Future studies should continue to tease apart how specific PDE experiences may be related to the covariates, of financial wealth and intelligence.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, our findings replicated the mitigating effect of PDE on racial prejudice and negative externalizing emotion from Study 3a, particularly for White perpetrators. Perceived social class, in the form of financial wealth and intelligence, may be a necessary but insufficient ingredient in the PDE construct which explains the influence of PDE on perceived racial prejudice and emotions. Furthermore, we found that perceived racial prejudice was a significant mechanism in explaining why perpetrators' with high PDE were reacted to with less externalizing emotion than those with low PDE, when accounting for other potential explanations. In the next chapter, we turn to generalizing our findings to a different microaggression.

## Study 5

In the present study, we aimed to examine the boundary effect for different types of race-relevant situations in which perceptions of racial prejudice and emotional reactions may be mitigated by perceived diversity credentials. Specifically, when a perpetrator makes an explicit reference to race, do their personal characteristics matter on target's reactions, compared to racial microaggressions (i.e., Studies 3a and 4)? We focused on comparing racial microaggressions to more blatant forms of racial discrimination, to examine the role of credentialing (i.e., perpetrator's race and PDE) on Asian Americans' reactions. We expected that because blatant discrimination experiences may involve a direct reference to race, these situations would be less affected by credentialing than racial microaggressions.

### **Racial microaggression versus blatant discrimination**

Some researchers have argued that racial microaggressions may encompass a variety of situations, including situations that explicitly mention race or are focused on a blatant stereotypes (e.g., Sue et al., 2007b). For example, Sue and colleagues (2007) argue that experiences which involve blatant stereotyping may be considered a microaggression because the perpetrator's intent is unclear. Examples may include remarking that Asians study like crazy or are poor drivers (Sue et al., 2007ab). In these examples, while an Asian American may perceive the perpetrator as racially prejudiced, other alternative interpretations are also possible. For instance, an Asian American may interpret that situation more innocuously such as a joke or poking fun at one's own group in a good-natured way.

In contrast, other researchers have argued the need to distinguish between subtle and ambiguous forms of discrimination such as microaggressions from more blatant forms that make

explicit references to stereotypes (Dovidio, 2001; Yoo, Steger, & Lee, 2010). Some studies have suggested that in more subtle and ambiguous forms of mistreatment, targets may be subject to more contextual factors in terms of determining prejudice (Inman & Baron, 1996). Subtle and ambiguous forms of discrimination are less likely to be seen as due to prejudice than blatant forms by perceivers (Operario & Fiske, 2001) and require a more active and difficult appraisal of the situation, making it more difficult to ascertain prejudice (Noh, Kasper, & Wikrama, 2007).

### **Role of PDE on microaggressions versus blatant discrimination**

Examining the role of PDE is important in understanding if situations that make explicit reference to race will be reacted to more like a racial microaggression or a blatant discrimination experience. We expected that a blatant discrimination experience would be less likely to be moderated by perceived diversity credentials (both racial group membership and PDE of the perpetrator) compared to a racial microaggression because blatant instances are recognized as potentially prejudiced in general (Operario & Fiske, 2001). Furthermore, because racial microaggressions and other subtle forms of discrimination often involve ambiguity in the perpetrator's intention *and* outcome, targets may need to engage in a more difficult appraisal process of the situation (Noh et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2007), and therefore, look for cues from the perpetrator to determine potential bias.

### **Prediction**

The overall prediction for Study 5 was that that the perpetrator's PDE is expected to moderate the relationship for racial microaggressions (and not for blatant discrimination) on perceived racial prejudice and emotional reactions. We ran a study in which Asian Americans read a perpetrator's profile, imagined themselves interacting with the perpetrator, and being a

target of a racial microaggression or a blatant discrimination situation. By focusing on perceptions of racial prejudice and emotional reactions, this allowed us to examine whether mistreatment that makes explicit the target's race is reacted to more like a racial microaggression or blatant discrimination. For example, if perceived racial prejudice and emotional reactions to a situation which explicitly mentions race is moderated by PDE, the situation may be similar to our previous finding with racial microaggressions. However, if perceived racial prejudice and emotional reactions to a situation which explicitly mentions race is unaffected by PDE, we may be more inclined to perceive the situation as an instance of blatant discrimination as opposed to a racial microaggression.

## Methods

### **Piloting the potential racial microaggression and blatant discrimination situation**

Because it was difficult to develop a blatant discrimination situation as a control for the racial microaggression used in Studies 3a and 4 (i.e. being asked where you are *really* from), we developed a new situation adapted from Sue and colleagues (2007a). To pilot the racial microaggression and blatant discrimination situation used in the present study, 22 Asian Americans were asked to read and imagine themselves as a target of a comment or question, and to rate their reactions.<sup>20</sup> Participants were randomly assigned to read the racial microaggression or control (i.e., blatant discrimination situation) statement which included a racial marker. For the racial microaggression and control (bracketed) statements, participants read the following “I’m sure you know but a lot of students [Asians] in these classes study like crazy and have no life, but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.” Participants were then asked to rate

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<sup>20</sup> Separate samples of 24 and 23 Asian Americans were also asked to rate two other sets of racial microaggressions and controls, which were not selected because they differed on other dimensions than race. No additional demographic information was collected from participants.

the extent to which they found the comment to be positive, negative, offensive, and related to gender, race, and social class (5 point scale; 1= *not at all*, 3= *somewhat*, 5= *very much*). The items on gender and social class were included to reduce the priming of race-relevance.

When comparing the racial microaggression and control statements, we found no differences between conditions for positivity ( $M=2.18, SD=1.17$  v.  $M=2.55, SD=1.04, t(20) = -0.77, p=.45$ ), negativity ( $M=3.55, SD=0.93$  v.  $M=3.36, SD=0.92, t(20) = 0.46, p=.65$ ), offensiveness ( $M=3.36, SD=1.12$  v.  $M=3.18, SD=1.33, t(20) = 0.35, p=.73$ ), gender-relevance ( $M=1.55, SD=0.93$  v.  $M=1.55, SD=0.93, t(20) = 0.00, p=1.00$ ), and social class-relevance ( $M=2.64, SD=1.12$  v.  $M=3.09, SD=0.70, t(20) = -1.14, p=.27$ ). However, unsurprisingly, we found that the blatant discrimination situation ( $M=4.73, SD=0.65$ ) was rated to be significantly more race-relevant than the control condition ( $M=2.55, SD=1.13$ ),  $t(20) = 5.57, p<.001, d=2.49$ .

## **Participants**

Participants were 189 self-identified Asian Americans (55% women; 51% US-born; 69% US citizens;  $M$  age = 19.68,  $SD = 1.39$ ) recruited on-campus at the University of Washington who were offered candy or snacks for their participation. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (21%), Korean (17%), and Vietnamese (12%). Twenty-three participants (of 212 total participants recruited) were dropped from the analyses because they did not self-identify as Asian American and/or did not correctly identify the race of the racial microaggression perpetrator in the study.

## **Procedure**

Participants were approached one at a time or in small groups on-campus and were asked to complete a ten-minute study on forming impressions of a student at the University of Washington. Participants first completed demographic information.

*Manipulation of profiles.* Participants were then randomly assigned to read one of four profiles: Asian/High PDE, Asian/Low PDE, White/High PDE, or White/Low PDE, similar to Studies 3a and 4. The only change was the addition of hometown, specifically San Francisco, California for the high PDE conditions and Denver, Colorado for the low PDE conditions.

*Manipulation of the situation.* Participants then read about experiencing a racial microaggression or a blatant discrimination situation perpetrated by the person in the profile (i.e., perpetrator). For the racial microaggression and blatant discrimination (bracketed) statements, participants read the following “I’m sure you know but a lot of students [Asians] in these classes study like crazy and have no life, but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.”

*Measures.* Like in Studies 3a and 4, participants responded to a series of questions on a 9-point scale (1=*not at all*, 5=*somewhat*, 9=*extremely*) on emotion intensity (happy, proud, angry, anxious, ashamed/embarrassed, offended, sad). Specifically, the emotion questions were phrased as “To what extent do you think you would feel \_\_\_ ?” Similarly, participants rated their attributions/appraisals of race-relevance (“If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think the situation was related or due to your race?”) and racial prejudice (“If this situation happened to you, how likely would you think this person is racially prejudiced?”). Finally, participants completed manipulation checks for the race of the perpetrator and experiences (both general diversity and Asian-specific) related to the profile.

## **Results**

*Manipulation checks.* A 2 (race) x 2 (PDE) between-subjects ANOVA to the question “To what extent does the person have diverse experiences with different people, cultures, or racial groups?” (9 point scale).<sup>21</sup> A significant main effect emerged for PDE. The low PDE profiles ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=1.84$ ) were seen as less experienced than high PDE profiles ( $M=5.37$ ,  $SD=1.91$ ),  $F(1, 185) = 17.48$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.09$ . This effect, however, was qualified by a significant interaction between race and PDE,  $F(1,185) = 6.55$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ . Specifically, there was no difference between Asian/high PDE ( $M=5.22$ ,  $SD=1.78$ ) and White/high PDE ( $M=5.52$ ,  $SD=2.03$ ) ( $F(1,185)=0.64$ ,  $p=.43$ ) and Asian/low PDE conditions ( $M=4.78$ ,  $SD=1.62$ ) ( $F(1,185)=1.28$ ,  $p=.26$ ), respectively. However, the White/low condition PDE ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=1.90$ ) was rated to be lower than the White/high ( $F(1,185) = 23.33$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and Asian/low conditions PDE ( $F(1,185) = 7.98$ ,  $p=.01$ ), respectively, a finding consistent with Study 3b.

For the question “To what extent does the person have diverse experiences with Asians/Asian Americans?” (9 point scale), there was a main effect of race. The Asian

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<sup>21</sup> A 2 (race) x 2 (PDE) x 2 (situation) between-subjects ANOVA was run for the question “To what extent does the person have diverse experiences with different people, cultures, or racial groups?” (9 point scale) One a significant interaction emerged between race and PDE,  $F(1,181) = 6.43$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $\eta^2=.01$ . Specifically, the White/low PDE profile ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=1.90$ ) was seen to have less experience than the White/high PDE profile ( $M=5.52$ ,  $SD=2.03$ ) ( $F(1,181)=23.33$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and the Asian/low PDE profile ( $M=4.78$ ,  $SD=1.62$ ) ( $F(1,181) = 7.98$ ,  $p<.01$ ). There was no difference between the Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE profiles,  $F(1,181) = 0.64$ ,  $p=.43$ . Surprisingly, there was no difference for the Asian/low PDE and Asian/high PDE profiles ( $M=5.21$ ,  $SD=1.78$ ),  $F(1,185) = 1.28$ ,  $p=.26$ . For the question “To what extent does the person have diverse experiences with Asians/Asian Americans?” (9 point scale), there was a main effect of race ( $F(1,180)= 6.03$ ,  $p=.01$ ;  $\eta^2=.03$ ), PDE ( $F(1,180)= 23.19$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $\eta^2 = .11$ ), and situation ( $F(1,180)= 8.14$ ,  $p=.01$ ;  $\eta^2=.04$ ). However, these effects were qualified by an interaction between race and PDE,  $F(1,180) = 7.53$ ,  $p=.01$ ;  $\eta^2=.04$ . Like with the general experience manipulation check, the White/low PDE profile ( $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=1.85$ ) was seen to have less experience than the White/high PDE profile ( $M=5.40$ ,  $SD=2.09$ ) ( $F(1,185) = 28.49$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and the Asian/low PDE profile ( $M=4.76$ ,  $SD=1.78$ ) ( $F(1,185)= 13.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ). There was no difference between the Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE profiles,  $F(1,185) = .02$ ,  $p=.89$ , and no difference for the Asian/low PDE and Asian/high PDE profiles ( $M=5.35$ ,  $SD=1.89$ ),  $F(1,185)= 2.18$ ,  $p=.14$ . There was a marginal three-way interaction for the manipulation check on Asian experience,  $F(1,180) = 3.62$ ,  $p=.06$ .

perpetrator ( $M=5.05$ ,  $SD= 1.85$ ) was seen to have higher experience with Asians than the White perpetrator ( $M=4.34$ ,  $SD=2.22$ ),  $F(1,184) = 6.13$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $\eta^2=.03$ . There was also a main effect of PDE. Those with high PDE ( $M=5.38$ ,  $SD=1.98$ ) were rated higher than those with low PDE ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=1.95$ ),  $F(1,184)= 22.94$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.11$ . These effects, however, were qualified by a significant interaction between race and PDE,  $F(1,184) = 7.18$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $\eta^2=.04$ . Specifically, there was no difference between Asian/high PDE ( $M=5.35$ ,  $SD=1.89$ ) and White/high PDE ( $M=5.40$ ,  $SD=2.09$ ) ( $F(1,184)=0.02$ ,  $p=.89$ ) and Asian/low PDE conditions ( $M=4.76$ ,  $SD=1.78$ ) ( $F(1,184)=2.18$ ,  $p=.41$ ), respectively. However, the White/low condition ( $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=1.85$ ) was rated to be lower than the White/high PDE ( $F(1,184) = 28.49$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and Asian/low PDE conditions ( $F(1,184) = 13.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ), respectively. These manipulation checks are consistent with the perception of different baseline diversity experiences for White Americans and Asian Americans in Study 1.

#### *Main analysis.*

To examine the effect of the perpetrator's race and PDE and type of situation on the target's perceptions of prejudice and emotion responses, a 2 (race) x 2 (PDE) x 2 (situation) between-subjects ANOVA was run. However, in order to compare the racial microaggression and blatant discrimination responses, much of the analyses focused on 2 (race) x 2 (PDE) ANOVA analyses separated by situation.

*Perceptions of racial prejudice.* As expected, there was a main effect of type of situation, in that in the blatant discrimination ( $M=5.00$ ,  $SD=2.10$ ), the perpetrator was seen as more racially prejudiced than in the racial microaggression ( $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=2.28$ ),  $F(1,180) = 13.45$ ,  $p<.001$ ,

$\eta^2=.07$ . This effect, however, was qualified by a significant three-way interaction,  $F(1,180)=7.25, p=.01, \eta^2=.04$ .

When focusing on just the blatant discrimination situation, there were no main effects of the perpetrator's race ( $F(1,89)=.26, p=.61$ ) or the perpetrator's PDE ( $F(1,89)=.46, p=.50$ ). There was a marginal interaction,  $F(1,89) = 2.97, p = .09$ ). Specifically, when examining simple effects, there were no differences between Asian/high PDE and Asian/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89)=2.74, p=.10$ ) or between White/high PDE and White/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89) = 0.57, p=.45$ ). There were also no differences between Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89) = .75, p=.39$ ) or between Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89) = 2.46, p=.12$ ).

When focusing on just the racial microaggression, there were also no main effects of the perpetrator's race ( $F(1,91)=.52, p=.47$ ) or the perpetrator's PDE ( $F(1,91)=.66, p=.42$ ). However, there was a significant interaction,  $F(1,91) = 4.32, p=.04, \eta^2=.05$ . Specifically, when examining simple effects, participants reported greater perceived prejudice from the White/low PDE versus White/high PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,89)= 4.14, p=.05$ ) and Asian/high versus White/high PDE perpetrator,  $F(1,91)= 3.88, p=.05$ . There was no difference between Asian/high PDE and Asian/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89)=.81, p=.37$ ) and between the Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,91) = .93, p=.34$ ). Figure 5.1 below illustrates the results for perceived racial prejudice.

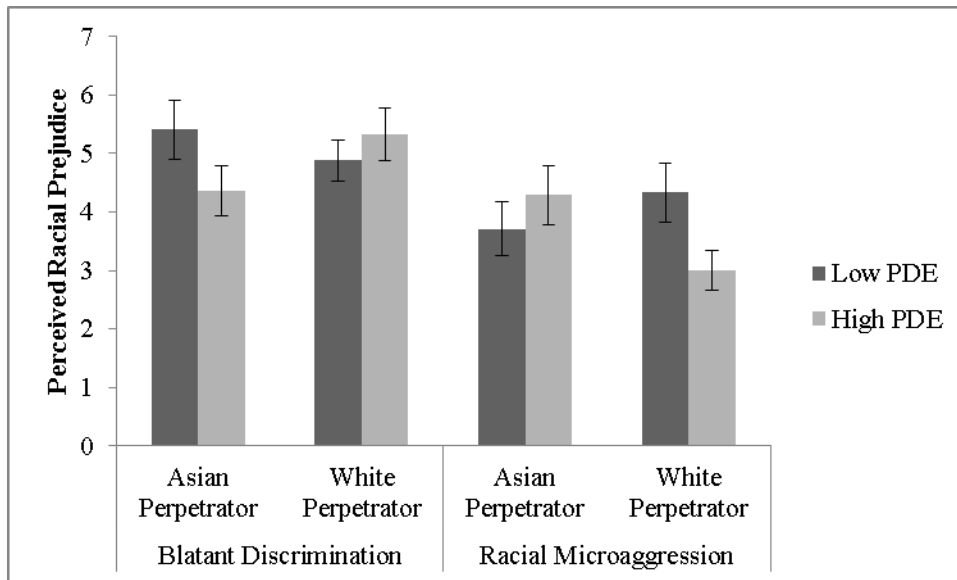


Figure 5.1. Targets perceived greater racial prejudice attribution from low versus high White PDE perpetrators in the racial microaggression (i.e., “I’m sure you know but a lot of students [Asians] in these classes study like crazy and have no life, but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.”)

*Emotion.* Like in previous studies, we examined emotions in terms of externalizing ( $\alpha=0.84$ ), internalizing ( $\alpha=0.76$ ), and positive emotions ( $\alpha=0.86$ ) because they were reliable.

*Externalizing emotion.* For externalizing emotion, there was a main effect of situation type, in that participants reported greater externalizing emotion in the blatant discrimination situation ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=2.14$ ) than for the racial microaggression ( $M=2.80$ ,  $SD=1.67$ ),  $F(1, 181) = 13.46$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.07$ . This effect, however, was qualified by a significant race x situation interaction,  $F(1,181) = 8.33$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $\eta^2=.04$ . As reported below, greater externalizing emotions were reported in response to White versus Asian perpetrators in the blatant discrimination situation, but marginally greater externalizing emotions in response to Asian versus White perpetrators in the racial microaggression.

When examining the blatant discrimination situation only, there was a main effect of the perpetrator's race, in that White perpetrators were reacted to with greater externalizing emotion than Asian perpetrators,  $F(1,89) = 4.54, p=.04, \eta^2=.05$ . There was no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,89) = .01, p=.93$ ) or interaction ( $F(1,89)=.19, p=.67$ ). When examining simple effects, marginally greater externalizing emotion was reported for White/high PDE versus Asian/high PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,89) = 3.26, p=.07$ ). There was no difference between Asian/high PDE and Asian/low PDE ( $F(1,89) = .13, p=.72$ ), between White/high PDE and White/low PDE ( $F(1,89) = .07, p=.80$ ), or between Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE ( $F(1,89) = 1.45, p=.21$ ).

When examining the racial microaggression only, there was a marginal effect of the race: Asian Americans reported marginally greater externalizing emotion to Asian versus White perpetrators ( $F(1,92) = 3.78, p = .06$ ). There was no main effect of PDE ( $F(1,92) = .28, p=.60$ ) or interaction ( $F(1,92)=.92, p=.34$ ). When examining simple effects, greater externalizing emotions were reported in the Asian/high PDE versus White/high PDE condition ( $F(1,92) = 4.21, p = .04$ ). There was no difference between Asian/high PDE and Asian/low PDE ( $F(1,92) = 1.10, p=.30$ ), between White/high PDE and White/low PDE ( $F(1,92) = .09, p=.76$ ), or between Asian/low PDE versus White/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,92) = .49, p=.49$ ). Figure 5.2 below illustrates the results for externalizing emotion

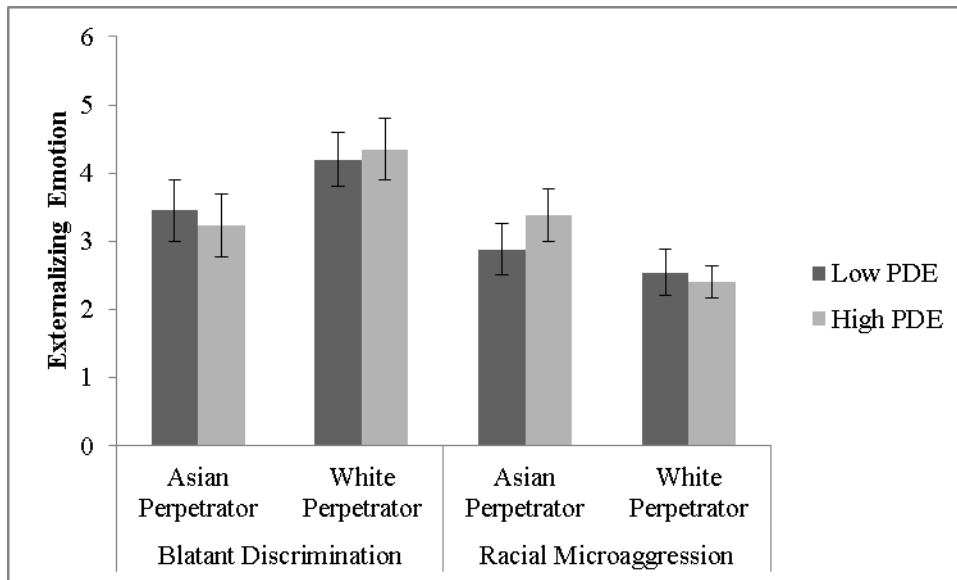


Figure 5.2. Target’s reported greater externalizing emotion to White versus Asian perpetrators in the blatant discrimination but marginally more externalizing emotion to Asian versus White perpetrators in the racial microaggression (i.e. “I’m sure you know but a lot of students [Asians] in these classes study like crazy and have no life, but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.”)

*Internalizing emotion.* For internalizing emotion, there was a significant interaction between race and situation,  $F(1,181) = 6.05, p=.02, \eta^2=.03$ . This interaction, however, was qualified by a significant three-way interaction,  $F(1,181) = 6.75, p=.01, \eta^2=.04$  When collapsing across PDE, there was a significant 2 (race) x 2 (situation) interaction. Specifically, Asian Americans reported greater internalizing emotion for the Asian versus White perpetrator for the racial microaggression, but there was no difference for race of perpetrator for the blatant discrimination situation,  $F(1,185) = 5.86, p=.02, \eta^2=.03$

When examining the blatant discrimination situation only, there were no main effects (race:  $F(1,89) = .30, p=.58$ ); PDE:  $F(1,89) = .06, p=.81$ ) or an interaction ( $F(1,89) = 1.21, p=.27$ ). When looking at simple effects, there were no differences between Asian/low PDE and

Asian/high PDE ( $F(1,89) = .86, p=.36$ ), White/low PDE and White/high PDE ( $F(1,89) = .39, p=.54$ ), Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE ( $F(1,89) = .15, p=.70$ ), and Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89) = 1.35, p=.25$ ).

When examining the racial microaggression, however, there was a main effect of race ( $F(1,92) = 9.97, p<.01; \eta^2=.10$ ) which was qualified by a significant interaction ( $F(1,92) = 7.39, p<.01, \eta^2=.07$ ). Specifically, participants reported greater internalizing emotion from the Asian/high PDE versus Asian/low PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,92) = 7.87, p<.01$ ) and Asian/high PDE versus White/high PDE perpetrator ( $F(1,92) = 17.26, p<.001$ ). There was no difference between White/low PDE and White/high PDE ( $F(1,92) = 1.08, p=.30$ ) or between Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,92) = .10, p=.76$ ). Figure 5.3 below illustrates the results for internalizing emotion.

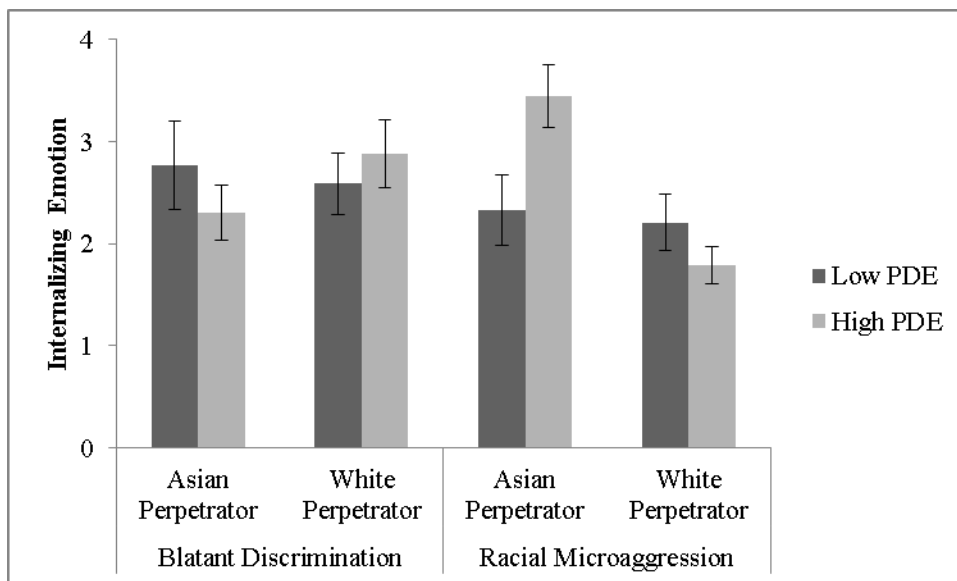


Figure 5.3. Targets reported greatest internalizing emotion to Asian perpetrators with high PDE in the racial microaggression (i.e., “I’m sure you know but a lot of students [Asians] in these classes study like crazy and have no life, but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.”)

*Positive emotions.* For positive emotion, there were no main effects or interactions. The grand mean across all profiles was 3.75 ( $SD = 1.38$ ). When collapsing across PDE, there were no main effects or interactions. For the blatant discrimination situation, there were no simple effects: Asian/low PDE and Asian/high PDE ( $F(1,89) = .84, p=.36$ ), White/low PDE and White/high PDE ( $F(1,89) <.001, p=.99$ ), Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE ( $F(1,89) = .11, p=.75$ ), and Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,89)=1.62, p=.21$ ). For the racial microaggression, there were also no simple effects: no differences between Asian/low PDE and Asian/high PDE ( $F(1,92) = .28, p=.60$ ), White/low PDE and White/high PDE ( $F(1,89) = .99, p=.32$ ), Asian/low PDE and White/low PDE ( $F(1,92)=.01, p=.94$ ), and Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE perpetrators ( $F(1,92)=2.12, p=.15$ ).

## **Discussion**

In the present study, we aimed to examine whether a situation involving the explicit mention of race would be affected by the perpetrator's diversity credentials (i.e., race and PDE) compared to a potential racial microaggression. While Sue and his colleagues (2007) suggested that comments such as "Asians study like crazy" or "Asians are poor drivers" are racial microaggressions, evidence from our study suggest that such situations are reacted to more like blatant forms of discrimination.

### **Perceived racial prejudice and credentialing: The role of context**

For perceived racial prejudice, we replicated the findings for the third time, with a different racial microaggression. Overall, we found that perpetrators in the blatant discrimination situation (i.e., "I'm sure you know but a lot of Asians in these classes study like crazy and have no life but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.") were perceived as more racially

prejudiced than those in the racial microaggression (i.e., “I’m sure you know but a lot of students in these classes study like crazy and have no life but probably have near perfect grades and test scores.”). However, more importantly and replicating the results from Studies 3a and 4, Asian Americans reported greater perceived prejudice from the White perpetrator with low PDE compared to the White perpetrator with high PDE for the racial microaggressions but no difference emerged between the Asian perpetrators with low versus high PDE. In contrast and as predicted, neither the perpetrator’s race nor PDE moderated perceived racial prejudice for the blatant discrimination situation.

Thus, the findings were consistent with our expectation that credentialing depends on the type of discrimination examined. Specifically, perceived diversity credentials (PDC) mattered more for the racial microaggression compared to the blatantly discriminatory remark where situational cues may be less relevant because the insult is less ambiguous in intention and outcome. In contrast, for a racial microaggression that is more ambiguous in intention, Asian Americans perceived greater prejudice from the White perpetrator with low versus high PDE suggesting that credentialing may be more likely to occur for ambiguous situations where a racial marker is not salient. Surprisingly, Asian Americans perceived greater prejudice to the Asian perpetrator with high PDE versus the White perpetrator with high PDE (but no difference from White perpetrator with low PDE). One possibility is that Asian Americans may not want an in-group member’s negative biases (especially when using past experiences as justification) to reflect on their personal attitudes. While this was an unexpected finding, the overall findings for perceived racial prejudice are nonetheless consistent with our original hypothesis.

### **Racial microaggressions and negative emotion**

For emotions, the findings were more complicated. Surprisingly, Asian Americans reported greater externalizing emotions to the Asian perpetrator than the White perpetrator. There was no effect of PDE. Specifically, Asian perpetrators with high PDE were reacted to with greater externalizing emotion than White perpetrators with high PDE. Similar to perceived racial prejudice, one possibility is that Asian Americans may not want an in-group member's negative biases to reflect on their personal attitudes. One question that arises is why the emotional findings (for externalizing emotion and others) were not predicted by PDE. While we did not incorporate potential mediators to address this theory, one possibility is that the present racial microaggression was not an interpersonal question such as being asked where one is from. Instead, participants imagined themselves hearing a comment that was not self-directed, which may be less dependent on *who* made the comment.

For internalizing emotion, Asian Americans unexpectedly rated the highest internalizing emotions when imagining their interaction with an Asian perpetrator with high PDE. One possibility noted before is that Asian Americans may not want an in-group member's negative biases (especially using experiences as justification) to reflect on their personal attitudes and were thus, more ashamed and sad because this member reflected their group and potentially themselves. Other possibilities concern individual and situational variability. Although random assignment should have reduced preexisting individual differences, it is possible that participants in this condition were just more likely to report internalizing emotions in general. We do not have a baseline measure to compare, unfortunately. In addition, this particular situation may be more likely to elicit internalizing emotions in general. While it is unclear why this may be the case, this study illustrates the importance of examining situational variability in understanding when and why racial microaggressions may hurt or not.

## **Blatant discrimination and negative emotion**

For the blatant discrimination situation, White perpetrators were reacted to more negatively than Asian perpetrators. This is consistent with evidence suggesting that Whites are more likely to be seen as prototypical perpetrators of racial prejudice (Inman & Baron, 1996). Furthermore, in-group membership seems to matter more when comparing those with high PDE: White perpetrators with high PDE were reacted to with greater externalizing emotions than Asian perpetrators with high PDE. For White perpetrators with high PDE, making this comment could be related to the perception of being “elitist” or having a “know it all” assumption because of their background. When reconciling with the perceived prejudice results, one possibility is that for the situation chosen, prejudice is seen as more blatant across groups (less influenced by perpetrator’s characteristics) but minorities may still react more negatively to Whites when race is made salient in a situation when it should not be particularly relevant (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008).

In general, internalizing emotions were rated to be lower than externalizing emotions. For the blatant discrimination situation there were no differences between conditions, which is similar to Study 3a and 4 findings (i.e. the perpetrator’s characteristics do not matter as much for internalizing emotion). This may be because this situation was more blatant, was perpetrated by another person, and not necessarily tied to one’s personal actions.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, we have some evidence that the blatant discrimination situation was reacted to differently from the racial microaggression in both perceived prejudice and negative emotion. Although not as clear-cut as we hypothesized, PDE was found to be a stronger mitigating factor

on perceived prejudice and negative emotion for the racial microaggression compared to the blatant discrimination situation. In sum, we found a boundary effect in the moderating effect of credentialing: that the type of race-relevant situation matters in terms of when credentialing may have an effect on perceived prejudice and emotion.

## Study 6

In the present study, our main goal was to compare targets' reactions to the same racial microaggression used in Studies 3a and 4 (i.e., being asked where you are really from) in an interaction experiment perpetrated by either an Asian or White person with either low or high perceived diversity experiences (PDE). The purpose of the present study was to examine whether the findings from the imagined scenarios generalized to more real-time interactions.

### **Racial microaggressions in real life contexts: Utilizing an interaction experiment**

Researchers who first began conceptualizing how racial microaggressions were manifested in everyday life theorized that such exchanges were so pervasive and automatic in daily interactions that they were often dismissed and glossed over by others as being innocuous (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Wills, 1977;. Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b). For example, Sue and his colleagues (2007ab) found in focus groups that racial microaggressions did not occur just with strangers but also in everyday encounters with family, friends, and acquaintances such as peers. Oftentimes, racial microaggressions may not only involve random, isolated events but also occur in more engaging interactions in everyday life. The present study thus aimed to extend our findings to a more life setting involving an interaction, as opposed to imagining an isolated event.

To do so, we adapted an online interaction method involving instant messaging from Czopp, Monteith, and Mark (2006) for several reasons. First, online forums are popular, contemporary forms of communication and their ability to facilitate potentially racist messages allowed us to examine the perpetuation of racial microaggressions (Steinfeldt, Foltz, Kaladow, Carlson, Pagano, Benton, & Steinfeldt, 2010). Second, incorporating an online interaction

allowed us to create a cover story on computer communication and standardize large amounts of dialogue. Specifically, we incorporated Google Chat's instant messenger program, which allows people to "talk" to each other by typing their responses back and forth. This program and other related chat platforms stores the entire dialogue on its screen, making it possible for the experimenter to copy and paste the entire transcription of the participant and their partner (Czopp et al., 2006). This also allows the experimenter to hold all instructions constant and also for the confederate's information to be scripted and held constant across all participants as well.

### **Potential differences comparing imagined and interaction methods**

Transitioning from research incorporating vignettes to experimental interactions may elicit several differences in findings. Some social psychologists have argued a trade off in terms between vignette designs and more elaborate experiments. For example, simple vignettes may be less compelling for participants in realism yet more elaborate experiments may engender a loss of experimental control (Blascovich, Loomis, Beall, Swinth, Hoyt, & Bailenson, 2002). While we predicted that our main findings from Studies 3-5 will generalize to the present study, we also expected several differences between incorporating an imagined scenario paradigm compared to a more engaging, online interaction.

First, by focusing on a real-time interaction as opposed to an imagined vignette, the present design builds in a friendly interaction. Because our interaction experiment involved participants talking with another newly acquainted peer to exchange information about one's background (as opposed to reading about a complete stranger's profile), this change may potentially lead to a decreased reporting of negative emotions and increased reporting of positive emotions. Second, because of directly engaging in an interaction, participants may be less likely

to report perceptions of prejudice, possibly based on the fear of being seen as a complainer or in a negative light (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). In the present study, we thus examined other ways to capture participants' attributions of potential bias other than labeling prejudice, such as by identifying the interaction as being race-relevant. Finally, we expected participants to rate their responses based on the general impression of their partner over the entire interaction, as opposed to an isolated comment. This possibility may also lead to a less intense reporting of reactions to the racial microaggression compared to previous findings.

### **Study Overview**

In the present study, we aimed to replicate the main findings from imagining oneself interacting with a perpetrator of a racial microaggression with an experimental interaction involving communicating with a partner with high PDE (versus low PDE). Participants completed the experiment individually but were told they would be interacting with a partner on instant message to learn about computer communication and impressions (Czopp et al., 2006) which allowed us to manipulate personal information that is exchanged. The study was framed to participants as consisting of two parts: first, completing a getting to know each other discussion facilitated by the experimenter and second, conversing with their partner when assigned specific communication roles. In reality, the second part was where the partner (i.e., confederate) perpetrated a potential racial microaggression against the participant.

As secondary analyses, we also incorporated perceptions of likeability for one's partner and affiliation motives. Perceptions of likeability or favorability are often incorporated in research examining perceptions of prejudice in interpersonal interactions (Czopp, 2008; Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Trawalter, 2005; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). For example, feeling greater

negative emotions toward group members is associated with less anticipated liking towards group members (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). We also explored affiliation motives, defined as accepting a person as part of one's in-group, as an extension based on perceived liking for that person (e.g., Bersheid & Reis, 1998). Affiliation motives were included to examine whether participants are willing to associate or connect further with a partner, and would offer additional evidence for when a racial microaggression may be perceived as harmless.

### **Prediction**

Similar to Studies 3-5, we expected to find a main effect of PDE, where perpetrators with high PDE will be seen as less racially prejudiced and be reacted to with less negative emotion than those with low PDE. Consistent with previous studies, we also expected these differences to be greater for White perpetrators than for Asian perpetrators. However, because of the changes made to the study design (i.e., shifting to a more engaging, interpersonal interaction) we expected the effects to be weaker than previous studies. Finally, we aimed to explore whether interacting with those with high PDE will lead to greater liking and affiliation motives.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Participants were 90 self-identified Asian Americans (66% women; 88% US-born<sup>22</sup>; 91% US citizens;  $M$  age = 18.82,  $SD$  = 1.12) at the University of Washington who received extra course credit for their participation. The top three ethnicities represented were Chinese/Taiwanese (42%), Korean (16%), and Vietnamese (11%). Twelve participants (of the

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<sup>22</sup> An attempt was made to recruit US-born Asian Americans. When removing the foreign-born participants from the analysis, the findings remained the same.

original 102) total participants recruited) were dropped from the analyses because they did not correctly identify the race of their partner or expressed suspicion that their partner was not an actual UW student.

## **Procedure**

### ***Pre-interaction***

On arrival to the participant waiting area, the experimenter called out the participant's name and then the confederate's name, Jamie Thomas (manipulated White partner name) or Jamie Wong (manipulated Asian partner name). In reality, the confederate was never there. The experimenter told the participant that she would bring her to the lab space while they waited for the other participant to arrive.

After seating the participant in an individual lab room, the experimenter told the participant that she will check to see whether the other participant had arrived and asked the participant to look over the consent form. Once the experimenter returned to the room, she explained to the participant that her partner had arrived late and was in a separate room. Participants were then told that they would be interacting with another UW student in another room exclusively over the computer and that they would not interact face to face in order to study online interactions. Once the participant had completed the consent form, the experimenter pulled up a demographic survey online for the participant and had the participant complete a brief demographic handout to be exchanged with his/her partner. This form required participants to include their first name, gender, year in school, and race. After participants completed the form, the experimenter took the form and left the room to allow the participant to complete the online survey.

When the experimenter returned to the room, she handed the participant her partner's ostensibly completed form (e.g., Name: Jamie, Gender: matched to the participant; Year: Junior; Race: Asian or White) and stated that her partner was also instructed to look over the form. Then the experimenter prepared the instant message window for the participant and gave the instructions on instant message (i.e., Google Chat).

### ***Instant message interaction***

The instant message interaction involved two parts, in which participants were led to believe to be unrelated discussions. For the first portion, an experimenter guided the interaction where participants exchanged personal background and experiences such as hometown, names of closest friends, classes taken, recent travel, and languages spoken other than English (where we manipulated low versus high PDE). Below, illustrates the scripted responses from the confederate for the low versus high PDE conditions, which were adapted from Studies 3a and 4. The participants always responded first, followed by the confederate.

Table 6.1 Low and High PDE Partner Responses

Low PDE Responses	High PDE Responses
What classes are you currently taking this quarter?	What classes are you currently taking this quarter?
<i>Dramatic Lit, Microbiology, Intro to Psych</i>	<i>Chinese Lit, Microbiology, Intro to Psych</i>
Are you involved in any student organizations? If so, which one(s)?	Are you involved in any student organizations? If so, which one(s)?
<i>Health Equity Circle UW Chapter</i>	<i>Husky Efforts Against Racism</i>
What are the first and last names of three of your friends?	What are the first and last names of three of your friends?
<i>Tyler Hill, Rebecca White, Eric Miller</i>	<i>Tim Wang, Rebecca White, Manuel Martinez</i>
How did you meet these friends in general?	How did you meet these friends in general?
<i>We went to the same high school.</i>	<i>Most through clubs and classes</i>
Have you traveled recently? If so, where?	Have you traveled recently? If so, where?
<i>Yeah, I went to Florida over break.</i>	<i>Yeah, I went to Southeast Asia last summer.</i>
How did you decide on going there?	How did you decide on going there?
<i>I have family there.</i>	<i>I wanted to study abroad and experience new cultures.</i>
Can you speak any other languages than English? If so, how did you learn?	Can you speak any other languages than English? If so, how did you learn?
<i>Nope.</i>	<i>Spanish.</i>
	<i>I started taking classes in middle school and I've taken some here at UW.</i>

Note: Italicized refers to the confederate's responses.

The second portion was introduced as involving a brief conversation between the participant and confederate when assigned specific communication roles. The participant believed that she randomly selected her role as either the “questioner” or “responder” from slips of paper in a basket. In reality, all slips of paper had “responder” and participants were always

assigned this role. The experimenter instructed the questioner to only ask questions and not respond to her partner. The responder was told to answer the questions as honestly as possible.

During the conversation which lasted approximately 4-5 minutes, the confederate asked a standardized list of generic questions as the questioner to evoke neutral responses (i.e., “So how are you today?” “How are your classes?” “I see that you’re taking a psych class...are you majoring in psych or planning to major in psych?” “What do you do for fun?” “Do you commute to school or live in the dorms?”). After waiting for the participant’s response to the last question, the confederate asked “So where are you from?” When the participant answered, the confederate responded by typing “No, I meant where are you REALLY from.” The experimenter either waited for the participant to respond or for approximately 30 seconds before ending the online conversation. When the conversation was finished, participants responded to a series of measures.

## **Measures**

All measures were rated on a nine-point scale (1= *not at all*, 5=*somewhat*, 9=*extremely*) and were completed after the interaction and task. Participants completed in the following order items on their negative and positive emotions, liking of partner, perceived prejudice of partner, affiliation motives, and perceived race-relevance of the interaction with their partner. Finally, participants rated on the partner’s perceived experiences with general diversity and Asian Americans as manipulation checks for PDE and responded to open-ended questions focused on suspicion.

*Race-relevance of interaction.* One item assessed the extent participants saw that their partner focused on race in the second task. This item was assessed by the question “To what extent do you think your partner focused on race during the discussion?”

*Prejudice.* To assess the extent to which participants viewed their partner as racially prejudiced, we asked one item on “To what extent is your partner prejudiced?”

*Emotion.* Emotion was assessed using the same emotion items as before in Studies 3-5 (“For the following emotions, to what extent do you feel \_\_\_\_ right now?”): anger, anxiousness, shame, friendliness, happiness, hopefulness, offended, positivity/pleasantness, pride, sadness, and trustfulness. However, because the reliabilities were low when we examined externalizing and internalizing emotions separately, we combined these items to create a negative emotion composite ( $\alpha = 0.67$ ). The positive emotions were reliable ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ).

*Liking.* The liking items were adopted from Czopp (2008) and included how friendly, pleasant, likeable, nice, and sociable they perceived their partner to be ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ).

*Affiliation motives.* Three items assessed the extent to which participants wanted to further affiliate with their partner: add their partner as a friend on Facebook, follow their partner’s Twitter account, and their desire to potentially be roommates with their partner ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ). For example, one sample item was “How likely would you add your partner as a “friend” on Facebook?”

## **Results**

*Manipulation Check.* To check whether the PDE manipulation was successful, a 2 (race) x 2 (PDE) between-subjects ANOVA was run for the question “To what extent does your partner

have diverse experiences with different people, cultures, or racial groups?” A main effect emerged for PDE, in that those who interacted with a partner with high PDE ( $M=7.09$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ) rated the question higher than those who interacted with a partner with low PDE ( $M=4.80$ ,  $SD=1.73$ ),  $F(1,86) = 40.48$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.32$ . We ran the same analysis for the question “To what extent does your partner have diverse experiences with Asians/Asian Americans?” Like the previous question, those who interacted with a partner with high PDE ( $M=7.27$ ,  $SD =1.62$ ) rated the question higher than those with a partner with low PDE ( $M=5.39$ ,  $SD=2.73$ ),  $F(1,86) = 24.52$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.22$ . Additionally, there was a main effect of partner race, in that participants rated the response higher for Asian ( $M=7.00$ ,  $SD= 1.90$ ) versus White partners ( $M=5.52$ ,  $SD=2.19$ ),  $F(1,86) = 13.75$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.14$ . Overall, the manipulation checks were consistent with previous studies.

#### *Main Analyses.*

A 2 (race) x 2 (PDE) between-subjects ANOVA was run for our main DVs of interest: race-relevance, perceived prejudice, negative emotion, positive emotion, liking, and affiliation motives.

*Race-relevance.* There was no main effect of race ( $F(1,86) = 0.01$ ,  $p=.92$ ) but a *marginal* effect of PDE in that high PDE partners ( $M=3.98$ ,  $SD = 2.52$ ) were seen as focusing on race more than low PDE partners ( $M=3.13$ ,  $SD = 1.97$ ), ( $F(1,86) = 3.70$ ,  $p=.06$ ,  $\eta^2 =.04$ ). This effect was qualified by a *marginal* interaction, ( $F(1,86) = 3.70$ ,  $p=.06$ ,  $\eta^2 =.04$ ). Specifically, interactions with White/high PDE ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = 2.88$ ) partners involved race more than those with White/low PDE partners ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ),  $F(1,86) = 6.93$ ,  $p=.01$ .

*Prejudice.* For the item “To what extent is your partner prejudiced?”, there were no main effects of race ( $F(1,86)=.003, p=.96$ ), PDE ( $F(1,86)= 1.30, p=.26$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,86)=.04, p=.85$ ). There were no simple effects (all  $p$ 's $>.42$ ).<sup>23</sup> Overall, participants did not think their partners were racially prejudiced (i.e., below the midpoint; grand  $M=2.28, SD=1.77$ ). Figure 6.1 below illustrates the difference in means between race-relevance and prejudice.

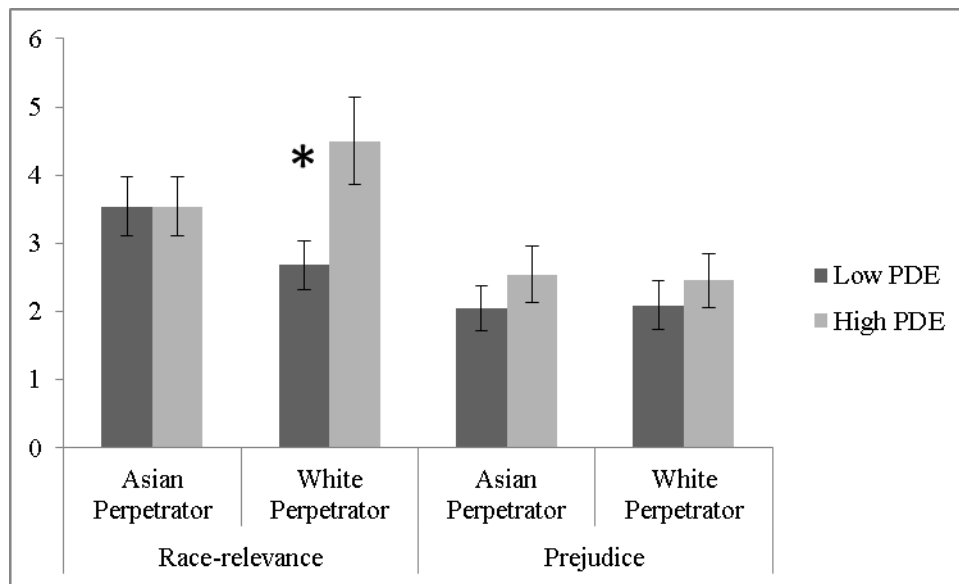


Figure 6.1. Targets reported greater perceived race-relevance to the White perpetrator with high versus low PDE to “No, I meant where are you REALLY from.”

*Negative emotion.* As seen in Figure 6.2, there was no main effect for race ( $F(1,86)= 2.25, p=.14$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86) = .67, p=.42$ ). However, there was a significant interaction,  $F(1,86) = 4.82, p=.03, \eta^2 =.05$ . Surprisingly, participants reported greater negative emotions when interacting with Asian/low PDE ( $M=2.23, SD=1.08$ ) versus White/low PDE partners ( $M = 1.50,$

<sup>23</sup> We also incorporated Czopp’s (2008) measure of prejudice. The prejudice items included how prejudiced, racist, biased, offensive, and bigoted they perceived their partner to be ( $\alpha=0.88$ ). There were no main effects of race ( $F(1,86)=0.05, p=.83$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86)= 1.03, p=.31$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,86)=.002, p=.97$ ). There were no simple effects (all  $p$ 's $>.47$ ). Overall, participants did not think their partners were racially prejudiced (i.e., below the midpoint; grand  $M=1.88, SD=1.16$ ).

$SD = .64$ ) ( $F(1,86) = 7.00, p=.01$ ) and Asian/high PDE partners ( $M = 1.63, SD = .99$ ) ( $F(1,86) = 4.88, p=.03$ ). There was no difference between Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE partners ( $M = 1.77, SD = .93$ ) ( $F(1,86) = .24, p=.63$ ) and White/low and White/high PDE partners ( $F(1,86) = .89, p=.35$ ).

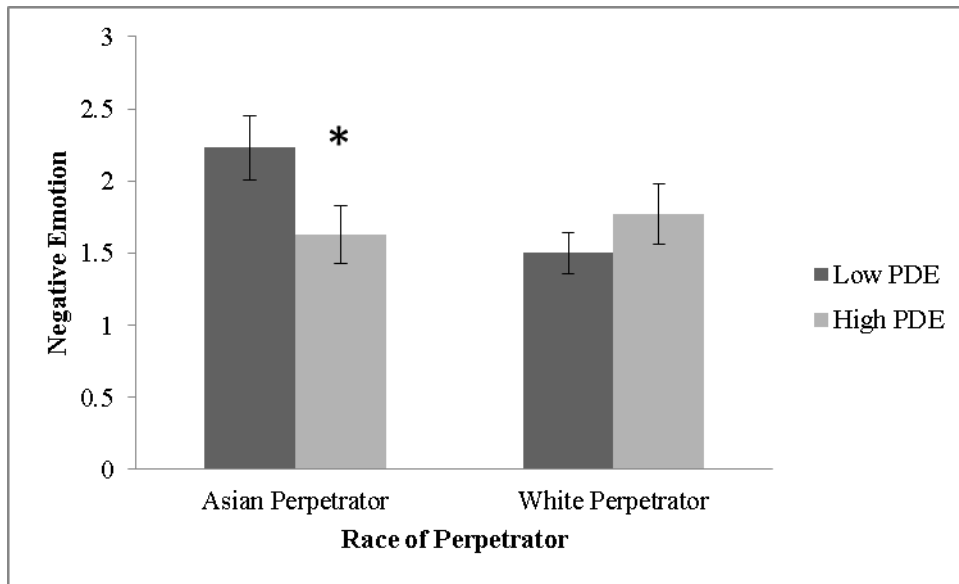


Figure 6.2. Targets reported the greatest negative emotion for Asian perpetrators with low PDE to “No, I meant where are you REALLY from.”

Because the reliability between negative emotions was not high, we also examined discrete negative emotions. For anger (as seen in Figure 6.3), there was no main effect for race ( $F(1,86) = .18, p=.67$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86) = .08, p=.78$ ). However, there was a significant interaction,  $F(1,86) = 11.61, p=.001, \eta^2 = .12$ . Specifically, when examining simple effects, participants reported greater anger to White/high PDE partners ( $M=1.80, SD= 1.70$ ) than White/low PDE partners ( $M=1.09, SD= .29$ ),  $F(1,86)=4.59, p=.04$ , and Asian/high PDE partners ( $M=1.13, SD=.34$ ),  $F(1,86)=4.34, p=.04$ . Participants also reported greater anger to Asian/low

PDE partners ( $M=1.96$ ,  $SD= 1.30$ ) than Asian/high PDE partners,  $F(1,86)=7.27$ ,  $p=.01$  and White/low PDE partners,  $F(1,86)=7.53$ ,  $p=.01$ .

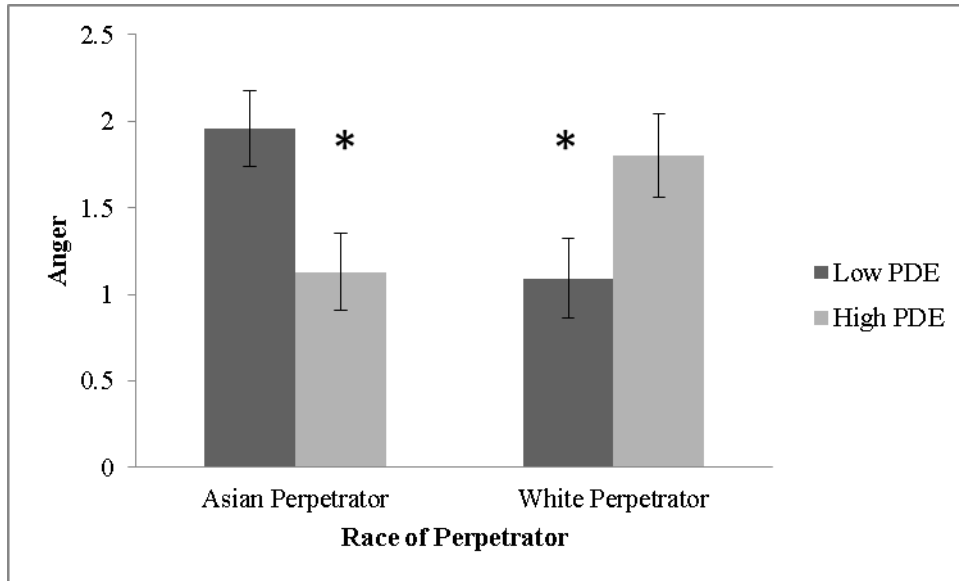


Figure 6.3. When examining within race of the perpetrator, targets reported greater anger to the Asian perpetrator with low versus high PDE but greater anger to the White perpetrator with high versus low PDE to “No, I meant where are you REALLY from.”

For feeling offended (as seen in Figure 6.4), there was no main effect for race ( $F(1,86)= .07$ ,  $p=.80$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86) = 1.23$ ,  $p=.27$ ). However, there was a significant interaction,  $F(1,86) = 3.87$ ,  $p=.05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ . Specifically, participants reacted with more negative emotion to White/high PDE partners ( $M=2.55$ ,  $SD=2.33$ ) than White/low PDE partners ( $M=1.50$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ),  $F(1,86)=4.43$ ,  $p=.04$ . There was no difference between Asian/high PDE ( $M=1.79$ ,  $SD=1.29$ ) and White high/PDE partners,  $F(1,86)=2.41$ ,  $p=.13$ , between Asian/low PDE ( $M=2.08$ ,  $SD=1.56$ ) and White/low PDE partners,  $F(1,86)=1.50$ ,  $p=.22$ , or between Asian/high PDE and Asian/low PDE partners,  $F(1,86)=.39$ ,  $p=.53$ .

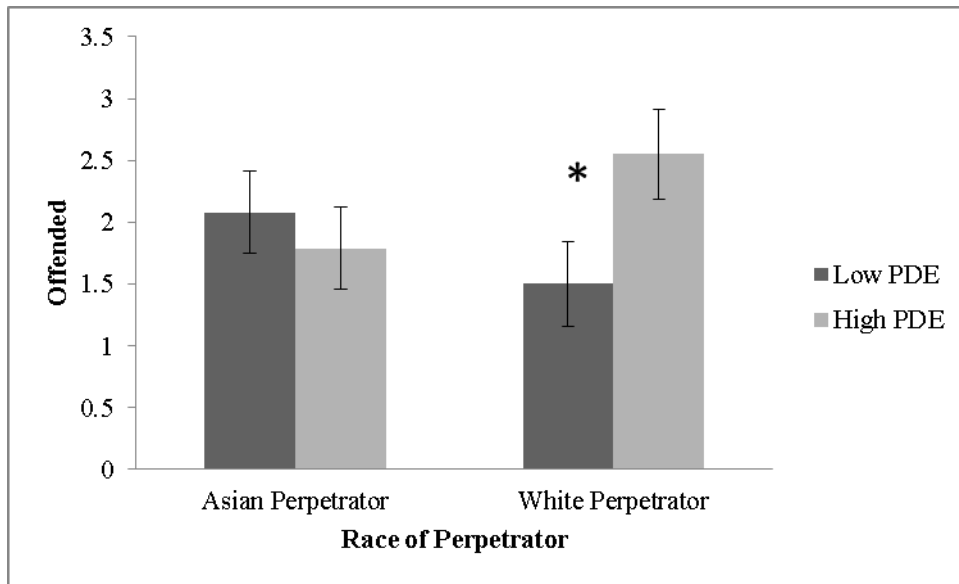


Figure 6.4. When examining within race of the perpetrator, targets reported no difference for the Asian perpetrator but greater offense to the White perpetrator with high versus low PDE to “No, I meant where are you REALLY from.”

For anxiousness (as seen in Figure 6.5), there was a main effect of race, in that participants reported more anxiousness to Asian ( $M=2.69$ ,  $SD=2.04$ ) versus White partners ( $M=1.81$ ,  $SD=1.42$ ),  $F(1,86) = 5.79$ ,  $p=.02$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ . A main effect also emerged for PDE, in that participants reported more anxiousness to low PDE perpetrators ( $M=2.65$ ,  $SD=1.92$ ) than high PDE perpetrators ( $M=1.89$ ,  $SD=1.65$ ),  $F(1,86) = 4.23$ ,  $p=.04$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ . There was no significant interaction for anxiousness,  $F(1,86) = 1.51$ ,  $p=.22$ . When examining simple effects, participants reported greater anxiousness to the Asian/low PDE partner ( $M=3.29$ ,  $SD=2.12$ ), compared to the Asian/high PDE partner ( $M=2.08$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ),  $F(1,86)=5.79$ ,  $p=.02$ , and White/low PDE partner ( $M=1.96$ ,  $SD=1.43$ ),  $F(1,86)=6.78$ ,  $p=.01$ . There were no differences between the Asian/high PDE and White/high PDE partners ( $M=1.65$ ,  $SD=1.42$ ),  $F(1,86)=.68$ ,  $p=.41$ , nor between the White/low PDE and White/high PDE partners,  $F(1,86)=.32$ ,  $p=.57$ .

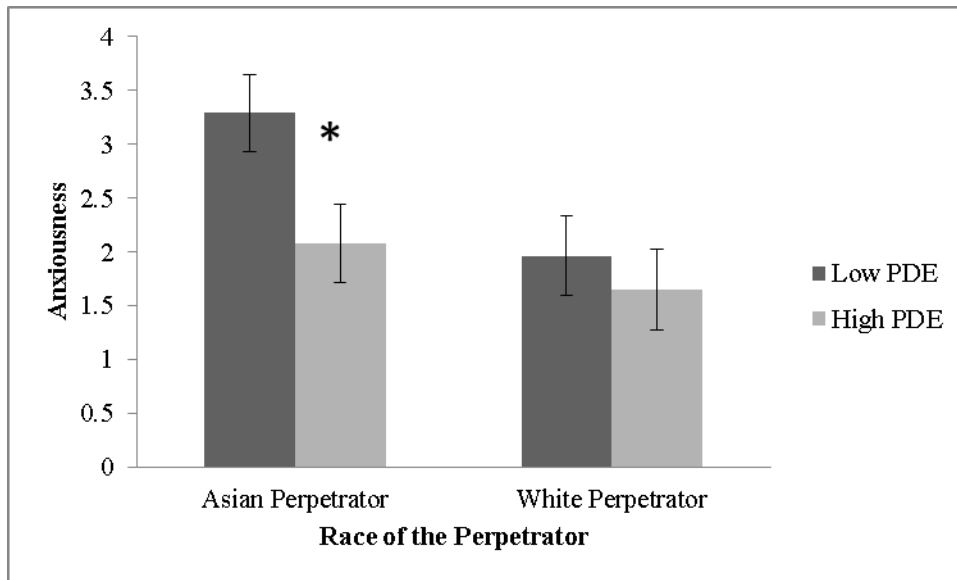


Figure 6.5. When examining within race of the perpetrator, targets reported greater anxiety for the Asian perpetrator with low versus high PDE but no difference for the White perpetrator to “No, I meant where are you REALLY from.”

There were no main effects or an interaction for sadness (grand  $M=1.63$ ,  $SD=1.23$ ; all  $p$ 's > .10) and shame (grand  $M=1.58$ ,  $SD=1.34$ ; all  $p$ 's > .40).

*Positive emotion.* There were no main effects of race ( $F(1,86)=0.86$ ,  $p=.36$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86)=0.57$ ,  $p=.45$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,86)=0.41$ ,  $p=.52$ ). Positive emotion was rated at about the midpoint of the scale (grand  $M=4.98$ ,  $SD=1.45$ ), indicating that participants generally felt somewhat positive during the interaction.

*Liking.* There were no main effects of race ( $F(1,86)=0.32$ ,  $p=.57$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86)=0.02$ ,  $p=.88$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,86)=1.23$ ,  $p=.27$ ). Overall, participants liked their partners (i.e. above the midpoint; grand  $M=5.80$ ,  $SD=1.22$ ).

*Affiliation motives.* There were no main effects of race ( $F(1,86)=2.30$ ,  $p=.13$ ) or PDE ( $F(1,86)=0.48$ ,  $p=.49$ ), nor an interaction ( $F(1,86)=1.36$ ,  $p=.25$ ) ( $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ).

Overall, participants were less inclined to affiliate more with their partners in the future (i.e. below the midpoint; grand  $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ).

## Discussion

Study 6 incorporated an interaction study to examine reactions to being asked where one is really from, a common racial microaggression experienced by Asian Americans. Studies 3a and 4 which incorporated imagined scenarios had found that Asian Americans reacted more negatively (e.g., greater perceived prejudice and externalizing emotion) to those with low PDE versus high PDE but the present study did not replicate those findings. While the manipulation check suggested that our PDE manipulation was successful and was consistent with previous studies, our findings did not support our original outcomes of interest.

Asian American participants reported the greatest perceptions of race-relevance, originally theorized as a proxy for perceived racial prejudice in a more engaging interaction, among White partners with high PDE. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies. Perceived racial prejudice did not differ between conditions and was rated below the mid-point of the scale, or unlikely to be perceived for their partner. Negative emotions were rated to be low but surprisingly, were reported to be the highest for participants who interacted with an Asian partner with low PDE. When examining discrete negative emotions, participants reported greater anger to Asian partners with low versus high PDE partners but greater anger to White partners with high versus low PDE partners. Participants reported feeling more offended to White partners with high PDE versus low PDE partners; however, there was no difference for Asian partners. Additionally, participants reported feeling most anxious when interacting with the Asian partners with low PDE. For positive reactions, there were no differences in positive

emotion, liking, or affiliation. Participants reported somewhat positive emotions after interacting with their partner and generally liked their partner. However, they were generally unlikely to want to affiliate with their partners more. In sum, the interaction was mostly a neutral interaction for most participants.

### **Race-relevance, negative emotions, and credentialing**

While PDE did not appear to have an effect on most outcomes, it mattered on perceptions of race-relevance and negative emotions but in surprising ways. For race-relevance, interactions with White partners with high PDE were more likely to be appraised more race-relevant than those with White partners with low PDE, whereas there was no difference for Asian partners. One possibility is that interacting with another Asian American, regardless of whether they had high or low PDE, may not elicit much perceived race-relevance in general because Asian Americans were assumed to have some PDE (i.e., Study 1). However, interacting with a White partner with high PDE may make race more salient because race was mentioned extensively in the first part of the interaction (e.g., having an Asian friend, part of Husky Efforts Against Racism club, traveling abroad, etc.). Having high PDE may make race especially salient for a group stereotyped to have low PDE (i.e., Study 1).

Although inconsistent with previous findings which examined both the influence of the perpetrator's race and PDE on target's reactions to racial microaggressions, the variability in negative emotions felt may suggest that PDE may matter even for in-group members under some circumstances. Because the reliability for negative emotions was not high, we examined discrete emotions and found that when interacting with Asian partners, Asian Americans reported greater anger and anxiousness to Asian partners with low PDE versus those with high PDE. One

possibility is that participants interacting with the Asian partner with low PDE may have perceived their partners to be ignorant for asking the question, and thus felt greater anger and greater anxiousness towards their partner. To potentially support this argument, there was a marginally interaction for perceived intelligence,  $F(1,86) = 3.14, p=.08$ , in which Asian partners with low PDE were rated as being lowest in perceived intelligence out of all four conditions ( $M=5.37, SD=1.38$ ). In contrast, for the interactions with White partners, Asian Americans reported feeling greater anger and offense to White partners with high PDE versus low PDE, which is inconsistent with previous studies. One possibility is that participants may have perceived their White partners with high PDE to be (perhaps overly) racially conscious (as supported by the higher race-relevance mean) and subsequently, felt more insulted when asked where one was really from because it seemed insensitive. However, it was important to recognize that the means for negative emotions were still quite low.<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly, in secondary analyses, we found that participants interacting with partners with low PDE ( $M=2.63, SD=1.96$ ) perceived them as more likely to be joking than their high PDE counterparts ( $M=1.77, SD=1.20$ ),  $F(1,86) = 6.23, p=.01, \eta^2 = .07$ . Thus, it is possible that many participants erred on the side of giving their partners the benefit of doubt, particularly for low PDE partners, for one ambiguous question in the context of a larger discussion.

### **Other potential limitations and future directions**

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<sup>24</sup> Another possibility to why we did not find the expected negative emotion results is because negative emotion is expected to be predicted by racial prejudice attributions (as opposed to mere race-relevance), based on our model. Indeed, race-relevance appraisals did not predict negative emotion in the present study,  $b=.02, SE=.04, p=.62$ .

While the manipulation check for PDE (both for general diversity and Asian-specific) was successful, participants for the most part were unaffected by the manipulation in their responses. There may be several possibilities for this outcome. One possibility is that while participants may have been taken aback by the racial microaggression, they may be focused on the context of the entire interaction, as opposed to thinking about an isolated event. A short interaction may have reduced prejudiced perceptions overall, even though in Studies 3 to 5 the question “So where are you really from?” was found to have a strong effect. In Studies 3 to 5, participants immediately responded to questions about imagining themselves as a target of a racial microaggression right after reading about a student’s profile. A future direction to address this concern is potentially making the portion of the study involving the racial microaggression feel more like a completely different study (e.g., collaborating on a new task as opposed to continuing to get to know each other), so that participants may be more likely to rate their reactions to the specific microaggression in the second study.

Second, although the interaction was fairly standard (i.e., positive emotions rated at midpoint of scale), this may have lead to somewhat favorable interactions, making it less likely for participants to report perceived prejudice of their partners. One potential future direction is to keep the first portion similar (i.e. exchanging information about backgrounds) but allow the racial microaggression to be perpetrated earlier on, as opposed to interacting further which may have increased one’s affiliation with their partner. Additionally, one could also include more relevant measures of affiliation to tap into the possibility of favorable perceptions. Although we included items on affiliation, these items may have focused more on *future* forms of affiliation that may require a stronger foundation for connection (e.g., “How likely would you want to be roommates with your partner?”).

Furthermore, participants rated perceptions of racial prejudice of their partner to be very low. Because the racial microaggression used in the present study did not make explicit reference to one's race, this may have been related to less intense negative emotional reactions in the context of the rest of the interaction. Indeed, Study 5 had found that for situations in which a racial marker was made salient (i.e., blatant discrimination), Asian Americans reported greater negative emotion intensity than when race was not made salient (i.e., racial microaggression).

Finally, another possibility for why the racial microaggression may not have elicited more variable responses is that while imagining a racial microaggression may conjure up negative reactions more quickly because it is an isolated event, it is possible that participants needed more cues in a more engaging interaction to determine whether a potential racial microaggression was perpetrated due to prejudice. While we analyzed only participants who did not express suspicion in the study, it still may be difficult for participants to feel confident in gauging the intention of their partner in an online interaction. Future studies should thus incorporate more real-time interactions in which participants engage with their partners face-to-face or include dependent variables that can capture more immediate reactions, such as the video-taped coding of facial expressions or body movement.<sup>2526</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>25</sup> We also ran a similar interaction study ( $n = 60$ ) with a blatant discrimination comment from Study 5 ("I'm sure you know but a lot of Asians in these classes study like crazy and have no life, but probably have really good grades and test scores."). Asian Americans reported greater negative emotion intensity and perceived racial prejudice when they interacted with a White partner who perpetrated a potential racial microaggression, compared to an Asian partner. There was no effect of PDE. Perceptions of racial prejudice mediated the link between partner race and negative emotion. In addition, participants were marginally more likely to want to affiliate with Asian partners than White partners in the future.

<sup>26</sup> Another future direction is examining whether there may be an ironic effect of PDE, where Asian Americans *think* that they perceive less prejudice and react with less negative emotion intensity to high versus low PDE perpetrators. However, Asian Americans may in actuality perceive more prejudice and react with more negative emotion intensity to high versus low PDE perpetrators, especially in contexts in which race may be an irrelevant topic to focus on.

Overall, our findings from the experimental interaction differed from findings in previous studies that included hypothetical scenarios. However, the present study demonstrated the perpetrator's racial group membership and PDE were still important considerations for perceived racial prejudice and negative emotion. In addition, this study helped to support that potential microaggressions may not always be perceived as a negative experience and are highly dependent on the contextual cues that may be salient to the target during an interaction.

### **General Discussion**

Racial microaggressions are brief, potentially ambiguous everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to racial minorities and are theorized to be harmful on emotional and psychological well-being (Sue et al., 2007a; Wang et al., 2011). This dissertation focused on the complexity in which minorities may encounter to determine racial prejudice in everyday interactions involving racial microaggressions. People use many cues in interactions to determine acceptance or rejection (e.g., Shapiro et al., 2010; Wout et al., 2010). Although stereotypes are widely known by many people (Devine, 1989), most people vary in endorsing stereotypes (Devine & Elliot, 1995). For minority targets, awareness of this variability makes it inefficient to be constantly vigilant towards prejudice every time the possibility may exist (Wout et al., 2009). This may be particularly true for situations that may be perceived to be initially trivial or innocuous.

Across six studies, I focused on comparing two particular situational cues that targets of racial microaggressions may focus on in order to determine racial prejudice: the perpetrators' racial group membership and perceived diversity experiences (PDE). In general, Asian Americans reacted with greater perceived racial prejudice and negative emotion intensity to

microaggressions perpetrated by those with high versus low PDE, and this effect was stronger for White perpetrators than for Asian perpetrators. When considering other potential mediators, perceived racial prejudice was the strongest mechanism in explaining the relationship between PDC (i.e., both race and PDE) and negative emotion intensity. In this chapter, I first begin by further reviewing the main findings of my dissertation. Next I turn to the significance of this work as it relates to previous research on racism and also implications for the construct of perceived diversity credentials. Finally, I focus on future directions related to microaggressions.

### **Overview of Findings**

In the following section, I review the main study findings and relate their contributions to previous research. Specifically, the overview is organized by reviewing the effect of perceived diversity credentials on (1) perceived prejudice, (2) emotional ambiguity, and (3) potential mediating mechanisms.

#### **Influences of perpetrator's race and PDE on target's perceived prejudice**

*Perceived racial prejudice findings.* While previous research has examined race-relevance, or the extent to which one's race is relevant for one's treatment (Wang et al., 2011), the present work focused on perceived racial prejudice as the main mediator in explaining why racial microaggressions may be harmful or not. Asian American perpetrators (Study 2) and perpetrators with higher PDE (Studies 3a, 4, and 5) were perceived to be less racially prejudiced, which then predicted to less negative emotion intensity among our Asian American targets, compared to when racial microaggressions were perpetrated by White Americans and those with low PDE. When the perpetrator's race and PDE were simultaneously examined in Studies 3 to 5, we found an overall main effect of PDE, in that those with high PDE were perceived to be less

prejudiced than those with low PDE. This was especially the case for White perpetrators: low PDE perpetrators were perceived as more racially prejudiced than high PDE perpetrators, while the effect of PDE was absent for Asian perpetrators in these studies.. Perceived racial prejudice was found to be the primary mechanism that explained the effect of the perpetrator's race on targets' negative emotion (Study 2) and the effect of the perpetrator's race and PDE on targets' negative emotion (Studies 3a, 4, and 5).

Our findings were qualified by boundary effects. Specifically in Studies 2 and 5, we found that PDE made little difference on perceived racial prejudice for both individual-based slights and blatant discrimination situations respectively, which we had predicted to be less affected by contextual cues. We believe this is a particular strength of our set of findings. By focusing on a spectrum of situations which ranged from individual slights to racial microaggressions to blatant discrimination situations, we were able to identify boundary effects for the effect of PDE on perceived racial prejudice. We discuss these results more later in this chapter.

Unexpectedly, in Study 6 we found that PDE did not impact perceived racial prejudice when a more real time interpersonal interaction was incorporated. As discussed earlier, we speculate that this may have occurred several reasons, including the possibility that because participants rated their perceived racial prejudice after a friendly interaction, this may have decreased perceptions of their partner's bias.

***Contributions beyond previous studies.*** Our findings contribute to past research on shifting standards, blatant discrimination, and attributional ambiguity. Our findings suggest that the shifting standards framework (Biernat et al., 1998) may be important in perceiving prejudice

in interpersonal interactions. We are unaware of previous studies which have examined shifting standards in perceived racial prejudice and emotional reactions from the target's perspective. Asian Americans may assume that another Asian who demonstrates little diversity experience (i.e., low PDE) still has a higher baseline level than a White person with the same level of PDE. Without evidence of high PDE, our study findings suggest that many Whites may need to accrue evidence of diversity experience in order to prove that they are not racially prejudiced, compared to Asians.

The one exception was in Study 6 where we found that Asian Americans perceived more racial prejudice from a White perpetrator with high versus low PDE. This may have been because a White person with high PDE may seem to have extraordinary diversity experience and knowledge compared to an Asian with the same high PDE, which may seem more typical for Asians. Ironically, in some instances this may actually backfire. In some contexts such as in Study 6, a White person with high PDE may be seen as overly race-focused and reacted to more negatively than a White person who has a typical level of assumed PDE (i.e., low PDE). However, this is speculation at this point because we have not replicated this finding yet.

The present findings also contribute to previous work on blatant discrimination experiences by identifying boundary effects. As noted earlier in Study 5, blatant instances of discrimination are recognized as prejudiced in general (Operario & Fiske, 2001) while subtle and ambiguous forms of discrimination require more active and difficult appraisals of the situation, often making it difficult for targets to ascertain prejudice (Noh, Kasper, & Wikrama, 2007). The present set of studies demonstrated that subtle and ambiguous forms of discrimination such as racial microaggressions are highly context dependent in order for targets to determine prejudice. As demonstrated in Study 5, perceiving a racial microaggression as racial prejudice depended on

the perpetrator's race and PDE more than the blatant discrimination situation which made the explicit mention of race. Thus, our work extends on previous findings by focusing on how the perpetrator's cues of non-prejudice may extend to perceptions of prejudice from the target's perspective for racial microaggressions but less so for blatant discrimination situations.

In addition, our work on microaggressions extended on previous work relating to attributional ambiguity and discrimination (e.g., Major et al., 2002). While attributional ambiguity has often focused on understanding why unequivocally negative treatment has happened from the target's perspective (i.e., is the treatment due to prejudice or my own personal deservingness?), the dilemma for targets on racial microaggressions focuses on figuring out what has happened (i.e., is this situation negative or not?) and why it has happened. In such situations, targets may need to first figure out the perpetrator's intentions by extracting cues of racial prejudice from the perpetrator. While some attributional ambiguity research has focused on manipulating statements which revealed varying cues of prejudice to negative treatment (Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003), to our knowledge no studies have focused on comparing the perpetrator's racial group membership and PDE as cues for prejudice to treatment that is not objectively negative.

### **Influences of perpetrator's race and PDE on target's emotions**

*Negative emotions.* We had focused on comparing negative externalizing and internalizing emotions because examining emotion beyond general valence may have different consequences on behavior and well-being (e.g., Major et al., 2002; Major et al., 2003; Mendes et al., 2008) and has been found to be common reactions to experiences of racial microaggressions (e.g., Sue et al., 2007b; Wang et al., 2011). Overall, we found that racial group membership

affected both externalizing and internalizing emotions in Study 2. Asian Americans reacted less negatively emotionally to other Asians compared to Whites in potential racial microaggressions. However, when the perpetrator's race and PDE were examined together, PDE had a greater effect on the targets' externalizing emotion such as anger, particularly for those imagining themselves interacting with White perpetrators (Studies 3 to 5). Thus, a potential microaggression perpetrated by a White person with low PDE may be more likely to be seen as a transgression against the one's autonomy, a state that often evokes anger (Rozin et al., 1999).

In contrast, there was no effect of PDE on internalizing emotions such as shame. Low PDE among White perpetrators, representing individuating information about the perpetrator's *lack* of experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and contact with diversity and diverse groups, was related to greater perceptions of prejudice. Internalizing emotions such as shame may be less affected by the perpetrator's PDE because the racial microaggression examined (i.e., being asked where one is really from) was a question that was imposed by another person as opposed to reflecting one's personal attributes.

In Studies 5 and 6, however, we found exceptions to these findings. In Study 5, race was a significant moderator on externalizing emotion. Surprisingly, Asian perpetrators with high PDE were reacted to with greater externalizing than White perpetrators with high PDE. As mentioned earlier, one possibility is that hearing the comment that Asians study like crazy and have no life but have great grades is not a self-directed comment yet refers to one's social group membership, which may elicit greater anger. Furthermore, hearing an Asian who says such a comment may be seen as hypocritical or even self-hating (Osajima, 1998) from that targets' perspective, which may also lead to one's increased anger.

The negative emotion findings in Study 6 were somewhat puzzling. Because reliabilities were low, we first examined negative emotions as a composite and found that surprisingly, negative emotions were reported to be the highest for those who interacted with an Asian/low PDE perpetrator who asked participants where are they really from. Some evidence suggested that the Asian perpetrator with low PDE was seen as most ignorant out of the four conditions. When examining the emotions separately, Asian Americans reported greater anger and anxiousness to the Asian perpetrator with low PDE compared to the Asian perpetrator with high PDE but greater anger and offense to the White perpetrator with high PDE compared to the White perpetrator with low PDE. One possibility is that Asian Americans perceived the White perpetrator with high PDE to be overly racially conscious and felt more insulted when they were asked the question because it seemed insensitive given their PDE. Even with these mixed findings, however, our findings demonstrated that the perpetrator's racial group membership and PDE are important considerations in targets' emotional responses to racial microaggressions.

***Positive emotions.*** Emotional ambiguity or feeling both negative and positive emotions was argued to be characteristic of the ambiguity inherent in racial microaggressions from the target's perspective. Compared to blatant discrimination situations in which positive emotions are not expected to be a common reaction, we examined positive emotions such as pride and happiness (Study 2) and also feeling friendly/engaged, hopeful/optimistic, positive/pleasant, and trusting (Studies 3 to 6). Compared to negative emotions, on average positive emotions were often rated to be higher than negative emotions across the studies. Evidence was mixed in terms of the role of PDC (i.e., race and PDE) on positive emotions. In Study 2, the race of the perpetrator predicted positive emotion such as pride. Asian Americans reacted with greater positive emotions to Asian perpetrators of racial microaggressions compared to White

perpetrators. In contrast, neither the perpetrator's race nor PDE moderated targets' positive emotions in Studies 3 to 6.

One possible conclusion from these findings is that contrary to expectations, many of the racial microaggressions examined may represent somewhat positive experiences for Asian Americans, such as a source of pride (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). Previous research suggests that beliefs and treatment based on one's race can represent both a source of prejudice and pride for racial minorities (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Zia, 2001). For example, racial identity experiences among American Indians (e.g., thinking about sports mascots) have been found to be both a source of prejudice and pride, depending on the context in which one associates these meanings (Peroff & Wildcat, 2002). This may suggest that many Asian Americans may approach both imagined and real-time interactions with more favorable perspectives but experiencing a racial microaggression may shift targets' negative emotions more, which may be more dependent on attributions of racial prejudice based on the perpetrator's characteristics. Thus, the perpetrator's race and PDE may make more of a difference on negative emotions, particularly externalizing emotions such as anger.

*Contributions beyond previous studies.* By examining both negative and positive emotions, our findings suggest that targets may experience both negative and positive emotions in racial microaggressions. This is in contrast to blatant discrimination situations, in which positive emotions are less likely to be experienced. For Asian Americans and other minority groups, potentially race-relevant experiences such as being asked where one was born or being mistaken for another Asian ethnicity may be perceived as due to racial prejudice. At the same time, these experiences may be perceived to be due to more benign sources and this associated with greater positive emotions. As these examples illustrate and consistent with our evidence,

positive emotions may be more frequently experienced than theorized by some researchers (e.g., Sue et al., 2007) and experienced along with negative emotions in the same situation, supporting our emotional ambiguity theory.

Positive emotions were rated to be higher in the real life interaction study where participants were asked where they are really from (Study 6), compared to the vignette studies (Studies 3 to 5). As noted earlier, one possibility is that participants may have affiliated with their partners throughout the study before the racial microaggression was perpetrated against them. Participants may have then based their emotion ratings on the context of the more favorable interaction, as opposed to a single ambiguous question. Interestingly, this finding lends itself to the question of whether potential affiliation or even friendship may reduce the negative effects of racial microaggressions. While the role of friendship was not empirically tested, one implication is whether racial microaggressions perpetrated by family, friends, and peers may be less affected by PDE than by strangers. For example, does knowing more about the person in general and having a potential bond increase the perception of viewing the interaction as more favorable, and therefore make less important the moderating effects of PDE on emotion?

### **Mediational findings and alternative mediators**

*Racial prejudice as a mediator.* We primarily focused on racial prejudice as a mediator for the effect of the perpetrator's race (Study 2) and PDE (Studies 3 to 5) on emotion. Racial prejudice involves the unfair bias of being treated due to one's race, which would indicate that the situations would be perceived as instances of racism. Indeed, we found that perceived racial prejudice was the causal mechanism in the relationship between the perpetrator's race and PDE on negative emotion intensity, particularly externalizing emotion.

*Alternative mediators.* One particular strength of our work was differentiating between perceived racial prejudice and race-relevance, which may have implications for different forms of racism. As noted earlier, racial microaggressions may often be seen to be related to one's race but not necessarily racial prejudice, which we believe is an important contribution beyond previous research on discrimination. Whereas thinking about one's own race as being relevant in situations where one is rejected or excluded may be akin to thinking about perceived racial prejudice (e.g., unfair treatment based on my race), our findings differentiated between appraisals of race-relevance and racial prejudice in experiences of microaggression. We found that it was ultimately racial prejudice that mediated the effects of race and PDE on some emotions. Comparing racial prejudice and race-relevance illustrates how racial microaggressions can be seen as a unique form of contemporary racism from other previously studied forms.

In Study 4, we had also explored other potential mediators relevant for racial microaggressions: similarity to self and open-mindedness. These alternative mediators predicted that targets may have responded less negatively to those with high versus low PDE because high PDE perpetrators are seen as more similar to the target or more open-minded than low PDE perpetrators. When entered simultaneously as potential mediators, only perceived racial prejudice explained the relationship between PDE and negative emotion intensity. This suggested that racial microaggressions may hurt less perpetrated by a person with high PDE because it involves less perception that the perpetrator is treating them unfairly because of their race, as opposed to being less similar or open-minded in general.

*Contributions beyond previous studies.* Our mediational findings contribute to the previous literature on attributional ambiguity and also theory related to racial microaggressions. Concerning attributional ambiguity, previous research had found that attributing negative

outcomes to perceived prejudice may be protective of internalizing emotions like shame but evokes greater externalizing emotions like anger (e.g., Major, Kaiser, & McCoy, 2003). Our findings are consistent in the sense that perceived racial prejudice consistently predicted greater externalizing emotions as well. Furthermore, our studies examined how perceived racial prejudice played a mediating role between PDC and externalizing emotion, so we were also able to account for the perpetrator's characteristics in informing prejudice. While other work examining meta-perceptions has examined the role of the other person's characteristics in an imagined interaction (e.g., Wout et al., 2009), our work is among one of the first to integrate the two lines of research to focus on the perpetrator's characteristics and perceived racial prejudice and emotion from the target's perspective.

In addition, we began to compare perceived racial prejudice and other more innocuous attributions which may be relevant in experiences of racial microaggressions. In one of first qualitative studies by Sue and his colleagues (2007ab), the researchers created a taxonomy of potential racial microaggressions examples for racial minority groups, including Asian Americans. However, in their paper, they did not distinguish between the different ways in how these situations could be seen as being potentially due to racial prejudice versus more innocuous reasons. For example, asking an Asian American where they are really from could be due to the perpetrator's perceived racial prejudice or for benign reasons like actually wanting to learn more about the target's background.

While we tested perceived racial prejudice as a mediator along with other alternative mediators, we did not examine in detail the ways different microaggressions may be seen as innocuous. Other dilemmas regarding microaggressions for targets may include deciding on whether these experiences happened because of the perpetrator's actual stereotypical beliefs or

whether the perpetrator was just joking. For example, being told that Asians are poor drivers could be a sign that one actually believes in the racial stereotype or that one is aware of the stereotype but only poking fun at the group in a good natured way. Another type of dilemma for targets may involve determining whether a perpetrator's action is due to actual racial prejudice or unawareness that the situation is potentially racist and hurtful. For example, having an open seat next to oneself on a crowded bus may be due to the racial bias of others who do not want to sit next to one because of their race or lack of awareness that such experiences even may represent bias. In all, these examples illustrate that targets may face difficulty in determining how to respond and react to potential racial microaggressions. Understanding these different dilemmas may be important in relation to PDE. For example, PDE may be more important in interactions that involve stereotyping (e.g. Asians are poor drivers) as opposed to interactions where one is slighted behaviorally (e.g., no one sits next to you on the bus).

### **Significance and Implications**

In the following section, I extend on the findings to examine the significance of focusing on the process in which racial microaggressions come to hurt or not, and why. Specifically, I concentrate on implications relating to racism, interpersonal communication, and interpersonal interactions. In addition, I discuss further the construct of PDC as it relates to racial group membership and PDE.

#### **Implications**

*Racism implications.* While racism is still manifested in everyday American life, many Americans still believe in a post-racial era (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions may be a particularly harmful form of contemporary racism because these exchanges can be so pervasive

and automatic that they are often dismissed and perceived as seemingly innocuous. Our data suggests that when racial microaggressions are perpetrated by Whites and those with low PDE in general, these situations are perceived as racist experiences for Asian American targets. However, in general, when the same situations are perpetrated by other Asian Americans and those with high PDE, they are less likely to be perceived as due to prejudice from the targets' perspective. Because racial microaggressions are highly dependent on the context in terms of determining intentionality, this experience often differs from experiences of blatant discrimination.

Sue and colleagues (2007) found that many racial minorities in their focus group studies believed that it was often easier to deal with a clearly blatant act of discrimination than racial microaggressions, which created a "guessing game" (p. 78). Many had also expressed conflict in terms of how to respond to perpetrators. Unlike a number of attributional ambiguity studies which have found that targets' attributions of an event to racial prejudice elicits greater anger yet protects self-directed emotions like shame (e.g. Major et al., 2002), many racial microaggressions may implicate both perceptions of racial bias perpetrated by others and perceptions that these behaviors implicate the self. For example, Sue and colleagues noted that many minority targets felt anger towards the other person for perpetrating the microaggression, yet at the same time anger at themselves for not doing anything to respond and feeling personally ashamed to have their racial difference singled out. Our data suggests that racial microaggressions were related to both internalizing and externalizing emotions. However, PDE was more likely to affect varying levels of externalizing emotion, as opposed to internalizing emotion.

*Interpersonal communication implications.* One possible conclusion from our studies that may seem obvious is to not inquire about another person's social group membership, background, or experiences in an interaction and to treat people as unique individuals. This conclusion is not necessarily what we feel should be advocated. Research suggests that many people like to be seen for their personal characteristics and wish to belong in groups (Brewer, 1991). From the perpetrator's perspective, many racial microaggressions may seem like seemingly innocuous or innocent questions, and one may see himself or herself as being culturally sensitive. For example, when people attempt to speak to an Asian American in an Asian language or compliment one on their English skills, many think they are being nice (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Sue et al., 2007; Wu, 2002). However, these behaviors and comments become an everyday occurrence, it can serve as an oppressive reminder of the targets' racial difference.

Given that inquiries or comments about race frequently occur for a variety of reasons, how can one potentially show appreciation without being seen as racially prejudiced and reacted to negatively? One possibility is to avoid making assumptions which may be based on stereotypes (i.e., "So where are you REALLY from?"), and instead, ask questions such as "Where is your hometown?" or "Where did you grow up?". This can serve several purposes. First, asking such questions can show interest and appreciation for one's experiences and background without blatantly stereotyping the person's social group. Second, this may allow the questioner for the opportunity to begin a conversation which allows both sides to share their own experiences and backgrounds without it seeming forced. As minority targets often react more negatively to outgroup members to potential racial microaggressions and perceive them as lacking diversity experience (Studies 1 and 2), having the opportunity to have a fuller

conversation may allow racial minorities to then hear individuating information about the questioner's diversity experiences in an unthreatened state.

***Intergroup relations implications.*** Finally, our work has implications for intergroup interactions and relations in general. We believe that one powerful implication of the findings is that people's actions and comments are not necessarily limited to ascribed racial categories and stereotypes. For example, previous research had found that White Americans are often seen as perpetrators of racism and racial minorities as targets of racism (e.g., Inman & Baron, 1996; Richeson & Shelton, 2005). Our findings suggest that in reality, this distinction may not be so clear-cut. In both imagined and real-time interactions, we found that both the perpetrator's racial group membership and PDE mattered for targets in determining perceived racial prejudice and their emotional reactions. Thus suggests that many targets of subtle and ambiguous race-relevant behaviors focus on other cues of information available to them (beyond race) to determine prejudice.

In fact, PDE may make a much bigger difference for outgroup members in particular. Across Studies 3 to 5, we found evidence to suggest that those with high versus low PDE were seen as less prejudiced, and this effect was primarily driven by the difference between high and low PDE White perpetrators. Thus, instead of Whites being seen as perpetrators of racism in all situations, the evidence of PDE may attenuate perceptions of bias for this group.

### **Understanding Perceived Diversity Credentials (PDC)**

As noted throughout the dissertation, PDC is theorized to consist of at least components, one's racial group membership and one's perceived diversity experiences (PDE). While we theorized potential overlap in the components, racial group membership was found to be

important in determining prejudice without knowing more information about the person's PDE. When both race and PDE were examined, there was a consistent interaction effect in which PDE mattered on perceived prejudice, primarily driven by White perpetrators.

*Understanding the role of racial group membership as PDC.* Racial group membership is an important group membership (Fiske, 1998) and ingroup members are afforded special privileges compared to outgroup members (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Sidanius et al., 2004). Without individuating information about a person's PDE, the perpetrator's racial group membership was an important mitigating factor on perceived racial prejudice and emotion. This suggests that mere categorization based on race alone can affect one's perceived prejudice. Interestingly, we found in Study 1b that racial group membership alone was an important indicator for when a person has experience with or knowledge about cultural diversity.

*Understanding the role of perceived diversity experience (PDE) as PDC.* As mentioned earlier, racial group membership may not be the only cue for targets to determine one's racial prejudice. In the present set of studies, I had proposed the new construct of PDE, which focused on experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and contact with diversity and diverse groups that may be accrued. PDE was conceptualized as individuating information that may override initial stereotypes about a person related to their racial group membership. In Study 1, we had found that Asian Americans were perceived to have a higher baseline level of PDE than White Americans and in Study 2, we had also found that when given only racial group membership about a perpetrator, Asian American perpetrators were reacted to less negatively than White perpetrators of the same racial microaggressions. However, when comparing race and PDE, we found an interactive effect. Those with high PDE were reacted to less negatively than those with low PDE but that this effect was stronger for White perpetrators than Asian perpetrators.

For the dissertation, I focused on more of a “Gestalt” impression of a person’s PDE at a single point, as opposed to teasing apart isolated examples. However, it is hard to imagine interactions where only one situational cue for PDE is present. As James (1890, p. 462) aptly stated, “the world is a buzzing, blooming confusion” which is often made more so in many new situational encounters (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007). In reality, PDE is constantly shifting and from the perspective of the target, this may involve the constant recalculation of other people’s PDE. A potentially interesting future direction is to have participants read about the PDE of a person that changes over time, such as changing from a person with low PDE to one with high PDE or vice versa, and examine their perceived racial prejudice. One possible outcome is that those who have shifted from low to high PDE will gradually be seen as less prejudiced as they gain more diversity-related experiences and knowledge, while those who shift from high to low PDE may have already “established” their non-prejudice and be less likely to be seen as more prejudiced when they lack current PDE.

In the present set of studies, I primarily focused on personal testimonials of diversity-related experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and contact as opposed to the target’s personal observation of PDE. Some researchers have argued that personal testimonials are seen as inauthentic and masking racial prejudice. In qualitative work focusing on Whites’ perceptions of racism, Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2003) refers to testimonials as an “account in which the narrator in the story or close to the characters in the story” (p. 76). Examples include remarks like “I had a friend who was Black,” “Some of my best friends are Asian,” and “My parents are racist but I’m not like them.” Bonilla-Silva and Forman argue that these testimonials give an aura of authenticity and seem to illustrate first-hand experience with racial minorities for the commenter. However, this image of racial sensitivity may be viewed as a self-presentation to

mask prejudice when perceived by racial minorities, or even evoke perceptions of elitism. Therefore, the perceived level of PDE of the perpetrator in reaction to a racial microaggression must be “credited” through experience by racial minorities, as opposed to being claimed by the perpetrator. In our studies, however, we found that personal testimonials on one’s diversity experiences made an impact on perceived prejudice and negative emotions, at least for imagined situations. In contrast, the argument proposed by Bonilla-Silva and Forman may be valid for the real life interaction in Study 6, in which White partners with high PDE were reacted to more negatively (i.e. greater anger and offended) than White partners with low PDE. This finding may suggest that White partners with high PDE were possibly seen as less authentic and masking prejudice. Future studies could thus tease out this possibility by comparing personal testimonials and observed behavior among those with low versus high PDE.

Finally, PDE and perceived racial prejudice are arguably independent constructs. It is possible that an individual may have high PDE yet be perceived as racially prejudiced. For example, referring back to the research on moral credentials (e.g. Monin & Miller, 2001), some individuals who have previously endorsed non-prejudiced behaviors may be more likely to perpetrate prejudiced behaviors in the future. Although not empirically supported, these individuals could be perceived as racially prejudiced by the target while also be credentialed (e.g., elitist), particularly for majority group members. This remains an empirical question to be tested in the future.

### **Future Directions**

As noted throughout this chapter, there are many possible directions for this present line of research. In this section, I introduce three other general directions: examining other forms of

microaggressions, understanding the perpetrator's perspective, and connecting the findings to health consequences.

### **Other forms of microaggressions**

One direction is examining other social identities which may be targeted by microaggressions such as gender and social class, and the intersection between these identities. This is important because other social identities have received less attention compared to race yet are often salient identities for many. For example, can perceived experiences related to the targets' gender or social class mitigate the negative effects of microaggressions on emotions as well? In particular, because PDE in the present studies (i.e., Study 4) was related to social class, this might be one fruitful direction. For example, how does knowing that one's education, perceived income, and occupation potentially mitigate or attenuate perceived prejudice towards oneself and also one's social class? This may be a particularly interesting direction given recent events involving Occupy Wall Street and the perceived disdain of higher class individuals' attitudes toward those from lower classes. However, can information about one's similarity to a person of lower social class and emphasis on honest hard work and class mobility mitigate the targets' perceptions of bias and negative emotions?

### **Understanding the perpetrator's perspective**

Additionally, it will be important to examine the perpetrator's perspective in whether they perceive racial microaggressions as truly innocuous or not. For example, we can examine individual difference moderators such as experience with racial minorities or U.S. regional differences (e.g., West coast versus Midwest) to see whether unfamiliarity in the harmfulness of microaggressions play a role in the perpetuation of microaggressions. Thus, one can use the

findings to further develop interventions to help reduce the perpetuation of microaggressions and also allow targets to understand and cope with the intentions of perpetrators. For example, if many White Americans are unaware of the negative effects of racial microaggressions, interventions could be developed to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity of one's own behavior and comments toward racial minorities.

### **Connection to health consequences**

In this work and in previous studies (Wang et al., 2011), we examined the extent to which racial microaggressions may be associated with negative emotions. However, we did not examine actual health outcomes of racial microaggressions or the processes in which negative emotions may contribute to health. For example, research examining social identity threat, a psychological state when a target fears being judged by through the lens of a group stereotype (e.g., Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002), has found that such threat can lead people to experience increased stress, emotion, cognitive and physiological responses (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008; Major, Mendes, & Dovidio, 2012). While some work has found that some people are more sensitive to threats to their social identity (e.g., Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis & Pietrzak, 2002; Pinel, 1999), it is also possible that for minorities who experience ambiguous events like racial microaggressions day in and day out may have high perceived prejudiced concerns that increase vigilance to future signs of impending mistreatment. This may be particularly important because these situations are sometimes perceived to be due to perceived racial prejudice and sometimes not.

Vigilance and negative emotion may lead to poorer health in a number of pathways. Acute episodes of discrimination may increase anger and cardiac reactions (Mendes et al., 2008).

For example, people who reported more experiences of past discrimination reacted to recalled instances of discrimination with more anger, rumination, and high blood pressure reactivity (e.g., Guyll, Matthews, & Bromberger, 2001). Repeated stress may lead to “wear and tear” to the body over time (Major et al., 2012). What remains to be seen is whether experiences of racial microaggressions may lead to worry, rumination, and uncertainty about mistreatment, which may then lead to worse physical and mental health problems over time.

### **Conclusion**

... one must not look for the gross and obvious. The subtle, cumulative miniassault is the substance of today’s racism... (Pierce, 1974, p. 516)

In 1974, psychiatrist Chester Pierce introduced racial microaggressions, as a form of subtle racism that may have a dramatic impact on the lives of Black Americans. In the present work, we focused on the experiences of Asian Americans, a group often to perceived to be a “model minority” unaffected by racism. Nonetheless, we found that racial microaggressions may have a negative impact on a group who are currently one of the most frequently targeted groups of racism today. In this dissertation, I aimed to further understand the problematic nature of racial microaggressions, by focusing on the dilemma many racial minorities face in order to determine intentionality and types of cues in which they may use to determine racial prejudice. While the empirical evidence for the harmfulness of racial microaggressions is still relatively new, the phenomenon itself is nothing but new. This dissertation hopes to begin addressing the need to focus on situational factors to determine when these situations are harmful. While the types of racial microaggressions may be different for different groups and even within groups,

the complexities of these experiences are important to examine as we continue to ask whether, how, and why racism hurts.

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