SOCIAL IDENTITY SHIFTS ACROSS NATIONALITY AND RACE
IN RESPONSE TO SOCIO-POLITICAL EVENTS

BY

JENNIFER L. ROSNER

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Doctoral Committee:
Professor Ying-yi Hong, Chair
Professor Dov Cohen
Assistant Professor Jesse Preston
Professor Thomas Srull
Associate Professor Patrick Vargas
ABSTRACT

Two studies investigated the idea of social identity dynamicism, that social identity is flexible, context dependent, and strategic, at the intersection of nationality and race in the United States. In Study 1, following exposure to a stimulus intended to induce feelings of vicarious shame in the American identity, both Black and White Americans indicated their levels of four types of collective self-esteem: public American, public racial, private American, and private racial (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Findings showed that only Black Americans were able to shift between their national and racial identities in response to American shame, such that the relative valuation of their private racial identity over their private American identity was increased, compared to the control condition. Study 2 extended the idea of a social identity shift to the concept of target-shifting of a racially ambiguous American target. We found that in response to a threatening American identity associated with President Obama, Black Americans high in White American Centrism perceived the President to be physically “Whiter,” compared to Blacks low in White American Centrism. We discuss the apparent differences between the racial groups in both studies as a function of varying degrees of perceived association between the American identity and each of the racial identities (Study 1) and societal norms and constraints at play in the United States (Study 2).
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth, and addressed her in a languid, sleepy voice. ‘Who are YOU?’ said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, ‘I-I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.’

‘What do you mean by that?’ said the Caterpillar sternly. ‘Explain yourself!’

‘I can’t explain MYSELF, I’m afraid, sir,’ said Alice, ‘because I’m not myself, you see.’

‘I don’t see,’ said the Caterpillar.

‘I’m afraid I can’t put it more clearly,’ Alice replied very politely, ‘for I can’t understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.’

‘It isn’t,’ said the Caterpillar.

‘Well, perhaps you haven’t found it so yet,’ said Alice; ‘but when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you’ll feel it a little queer, won’t you?’

‘Not a bit,’ said the Caterpillar.

‘Well, perhaps your feelings may be different,’ said Alice; ‘all I know is, it would feel very queer to ME.’

‘You!’ said the Caterpillar contemptuously. ‘Who are YOU?’”

– Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Events that have the potency to elicit shame in Americans (e.g., the Iraq War, the 2007 financial crisis and the Obama Administration’s subsequent bailout efforts, etc.) may lead us to question the degree to which we want to be associated with our national identity. Given that how individuals define themselves (i.e., self-categorization) is considered to be inherently variable, fluid, and context dependent (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), we question whether individuals are capable of strategically shifting away from their national identity in response to such events. At the same time, if individuals are capable of momentarily moving away from the currently threatening national identity, so as to replace or compensate for the general loss of self-esteem previously derived from that identity, we wonder whether individuals will shift toward a different, currently less threatening, social identity. In effect, one goal of the present work is to find support for the idea that, because individuals carry with them multiple social selves whose
varying degrees of valence are context dependent (Deaux, 2001), people will selectively recruit, from their collection of social identities, the one that is currently the best source of self-esteem. We locate the study of this idea at the intersection of nationality and race, two historically provocative social identities within the United States. Specifically, we propose that Black and White Americans will differentially experience a social identity shift across nationality and race given the varying degrees of perceived association between the American identity and each of the racial identities (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997), as well as the two groups’ dissimilar levels of identification with both the national and racial identities (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994) and their respective degrees of ability or willingness to explain away the currently threatening American identity.

A second goal of the current research is to extend this idea of social identity shift beyond just self-shifting across the social identities of nationality and race. We also investigate the concept of target-shifting; that is, in the particular case of a biracial American target (specifically, President Barack Obama), we suggest that Black and White Americans can subjectively categorize the target’s racial identity in the context of a threatening American identity. Much like personally shifting away from one social identity and toward a currently more desirable one, we conjecture that individuals may also push away an ambiguously classified target who is a current source of threat related to a shared social identity (i.e., President Obama shares the American identity with both Black and White Americans, and in the event he disparages the American identity, perhaps he can be subjectively moved away from either of the groups’ racial identities).

In sum, the following dissertation seeks to explore the dynamic nature of social identity and how this dynamicism may be contingent upon the social groups to which an individual
belongs, the strength of association between those groups, and the societal and political norms at play. Ultimately, we argue that the choice of social identity, which social identity to emphasize and which to minimize – both for the individual himself and for a targeted other – is strategic and context dependent. The value currently derived from a specific social identity, though the individual may have many from which to choose (Study 1), and how the individual wishes to categorize the social identity of another who can be conceptualized as either an in-group or out-group member (Study 2), may be very much motivated by the individual’s need to maintain a positive self-image.

The subsequent chapter will be organized in the following way: I will begin with a general overview of the social identity approach within social psychology, and then specifically emphasize the idea of social identity dynamicism that allows us to pursue a so-called “social identity shift.” Within this section, I will discuss what might compel a social identity self-shift, including how various forms of threat lead to this self-protective strategy. Next, I will address the specific social identities of nationality and race, and how these two identities are related to each other differently for Black and White Americans; here, I will also outline hypotheses for Study 1. Finally, I will focus on the idea of target-shifting, specifically with regards to a racially ambiguous target who shares the currently threatening social identity with the perceiver. I will address the concepts of hypodescent (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998; Hickman, 1997) and White American Centrism (Dach-Grushow, 2006) to better understand why and predict who within the two racial groups will (or will not) engage in racially ambiguous target-shifting; this section will also include the hypothesis for Study 2.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Social Identity Approach

The social identity approach that includes both the original social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the reconceptualized and revised self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982, 1984; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner et al., 1994) defines “social identity” as those subjective self-categories that are derived from the social groups to which an individual belongs and in which the individual shares common characteristics or social experiences with other members. Brewer (2001) elaborates on this construct with her definition of group-based social identity or “we” identities, where “group identities are not forged from interpersonal relationships between and among individual group members, but rather from common ties to a shared category membership” (p. 119). When social identity of this type is engaged, the individual is depersonalized and extends his self-construal to a more inclusive social unit; in like fashion, the attributes and behaviors of the individual self are assimilated to the representation of the group as a whole (Turner et al., 1987). In short, as we define social identity for the purposes of this paper, the individual and the social groups to which that individual ascribes membership are intricately bound up; identification with a social group has the direct implication that what applies to all, applies to one.

Fundamental to the theories within the social identity approach is the idea that people are motivated to maintain or bolster a positive image of the self. To this end, identification with a social group is at least partially motivated by the desire to be associated with a group that is positively regarded, perhaps both publicly (by others) and privately (by the self) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; see forthcoming discussion on public and private collective self-esteem, Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). If a social group is currently failing to provide an adequate amount
of positive self-regard, Tajfel & Turner (1986) suggest three coping strategies that the individual may employ in an effort to adjust either self-status or collective-status. For one, the individual may simply leave the social group via the method of individual mobility. Whereas this strategy may allow for the physical mobility of the individual, more often than not, individuals will only be able to subjectively “leave the group” by lowering their identification with that group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Importantly, this tactic does not provide for a change in the status of the social group – just the individual within the group, if even that. The remaining ways in which individuals may alter the perceived status of their in-group include social creativity (i.e., comparing the in-group to the out-group on some other dimension, redefining the values attached to the in-group’s attributes, and/or selecting a different comparison out-group) and social competition (i.e., seeking positive regard via direct competition with the out-group over scarce resources) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Via either of these two strategies, both the individual and the social group should be positively affected if these methods prove effective. However, for the purposes of laying a foundation for our proposed idea of a social identity shift, only the first aforementioned strategy will be relevant.

2.2 Social Identity Dynamicism

Within self-categorization theory specifically, the authors emphasize the inherent variability of self-categorization, such that how individuals currently define the content of their social categories (and their own representativeness of this category based on this content) is context dependent; self-categories and in-groups can be defined in entirely opposite ways on different occasions given the presence of different environmental stimuli and/or the presence of different out-groups (Hogg, Turner, & Davidson, 1990). According to Turner et al. (1994), category content is selective and hardly dependent upon the long-term knowledge one has about
what different kinds of people are like. The content of a social category to be used in context is, for all practical purposes, created on-the-spot.

Similarly, just as within-social-category content is comparative, variable, and contextually based, any current representation of the self as a whole is also not a fixed construct, but is rather the expression of a dynamic process of social judgment (Turner et al., 1994). According to Barsalou (1987), categories in general (not just social ones) are generated in context as a function of an interaction between long-term, higher-order knowledge and the specific set of circumstances within the current situation. Applied to the social world, the social category one recruits to help define oneself at any given point in time will vary with goals, current context, and recent experience. In effect then, what social category to apply when so as to define the self in the moment (even if the content of the social category itself remains stable over time) is a decision made from an adaptive, self-regulatory process such that the individual might actively select one social category over another to better fit his or her relationship to the current social reality (Turner et al., 1994).

Given that all social identity theories recognize that every individual simultaneously belongs to an indefinite number of social categories, almost everyone identifies with multiple types of “social identities,” and multiple “social identities” within each type (see Deaux, 1996, for a review). According to Bodenhausen & Macrae (1998), there are a variety of different factors that determine which one of these social categories or identities will be momentarily emphasized in self-perception. First, contextually salient (e.g., distinct) categories will influence current perceptions of the self (McGuire & McGuire, 1988). For instance, a Black American might be more apt to think of himself as Black if he is surrounded by White people, but should primarily think of himself as American when he is abroad, surrounded by non-Americans. As the
physical composition of the environment shifts, so it is likely that one’s awareness of a particular social category will also shift (even though the actual repertoire of social categories from which the individual can choose will remain the same). Other work in the area of priming research has shown that which social category takes precedence is a function of how recently and frequently the category has been used (Bargh, Lombardi, & Higgins, 1988; Higgins, Rholes, & Jones, 1977; Srull & Wyer, 1979). Returning to the previous example, this same Black American should be more likely to see himself as Black if this social category is easily accessible because it was either recently activated in a previous situation and/or it is activated frequently across situations.

More important to the current line of research, however, Bodenhausen & Macrae (1998) explain that motivational factors can also influence the selection (conscious or not) of a social category within a particular situation. For instance, in a series of experiments, researchers have found that categorizations of the self and the activation of related social categories can be contingent upon the need to maintain a positive self-image (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000). In one study within this line of work, female European American participants who were each told that they were outperformed by an Asian American woman actually shifted their social identity and focused on their ethnicity, the unshared social category, opposed to their gender, the shared social category. In this way, the participants were able to deflect a threatening social comparison by acknowledging that the target of comparison was an

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1 To assess the relative emphasis of ethnicity over gender, Mussweiler et al. (2000) adapted three questions taken from the Identity subscale of Luhtanen & Crocker’s (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale and one question from the Centrality subscale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). The four questions were as follows: (a) “Overall, which has more to do with how you feel about yourself?” (b) “Which is a more important part of your self-image?” (c) Which is more important to your sense of what kind of person you are?” and (d) “Which group do you have a stronger sense of belonging to?” Answers were giving on a rating scale that ranged from 1 (definitely my gender) to 8 (definitely my ethnicity).
out-group member whose performance was thereby immaterial for personal evaluation (according to the similarity hypothesis; Festinger, 1954). According to these researchers, “it is reassuring that our social identities are sufficiently complex and flexible to allow us to elegantly sneak out of such potentially ego-deflating situations” (Mussweiler et al., 2000, p. 407).

Roccas and Brewer (2002) describe the more recent idea of (high) social identity complexity as referring to an individual’s acknowledgment that memberships in multiple social categories or in-groups are not fully convergent or overlapping. One benefit of having a complex, more compartmentalized social identity structure where social categories are context specific is that high social identity complexity may help individuals confront threats to the status of any single in-group (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). For instance, Roccas (2003) found that individuals who are high in social identity complexity and who are simultaneously members of multiple social groups that differ in status can shift between the lower status and higher status groups. For example, individuals will perceive a social group as having higher status and will identify with it more if they are simultaneously members of a different social group of lower status (Roccas, 2003). In effect, having high social identity complexity can allow for a social identity shift that might buffer against the adverse effects of being threatened by the current status of any particular social group to which one belongs. Researchers add that this very process may be one reason why members of low-status, stigmatized social groups experience similar levels of self-esteem as members of high-status social groups (Crocker & Major, 1989). In effect, despite being a member of a stigmatized group, as long as the individual is also a member of a more highly regarded group, he or she can derive a positive self-image from that group.

Clearly, social identity is not only flexible, but it is also strategic. In the face of threat, such as an upward social comparison (Mussweiler et al., 2000) or being reminded that one is a
member of a low-status group (Roccas, 2003), social identity can be mobilized in an effort to preserve a positive self-image.

2.3 Applying National and Racial Identities to “Social Identity Shift”

To our knowledge, no work to date has investigated the social identities of nationality and race in the United States within the context of a social identity shift. We believe that the study of a social identity shift across nationality and race should prove interesting, especially given that the national and racial identities are differentially related for Blacks and Whites in the United States. As the following discussion will detail, we believe there will be differences in the ability for Blacks and Whites to shift between their national and racial identities in the context of a currently threatening American identity primarily because of the varying degrees of perceived association between the American identity and the respective racial identities.

In their seminal work, “American = White?” Devos and Banaji (2005) explored the extent to which certain American racial groups are each associated with the category “American.” Though the researchers discuss that most Americans hold an inclusive definition of national identity (Citrin, Haas, Muste, & Reingold, 1994; Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2001), they also argue that there remains a discrepancy between individuals’ explicitly stated beliefs and their more implicit responses (Barth, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Devine, 1989; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Moreover, because White Americans, as a group, have been immersed in American society for an extensive period of time (though not necessarily longer than other groups, i.e., Black Americans) and constitute the numerical majority, they are perhaps more likely to be thought of as most representative of the category “American.”

Devos and Banaji (2005) set out to test the possible assumption that “American = White”
at both explicit and implicit levels. Findings showed that participants expressed strong egalitarian abstract principles and valued a nonexclusionary definition of American identity. However, even when participants were told to consider only those Americans who were born in the United States, lived in the United States, and held U.S. citizenship, White Americans were considered to best embody the concept “American,” followed by Black Americans, and then Asian Americans (though both White and Black Americans were perceived as having strong ties to the American culture). Further results of an implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) completed solely by White Americans revealed more fine-tuned distinctions with relative associations between each American-race pair. In effect, whereas there was no difference in the speed of pairing “Black and American” and “Asian and American,” it was in fact easier for these White American participants to associate “White and American” than either “Black and American” or “Asian and American.” As for the implicit associations made by Black Americans, a somewhat unexpected result was found. In fact, Black Americans showed an equal association of “Black” and “White” with “American,” though they did not associate “Asian” with “American” nearly as strongly as they associated either of the other two races with “American” (Devos & Banaji, 2005). As an important aside and to provide contrast, Asian Americans affirmed the “American = White” assumption and did not implicitly associate their own group with the American category to the same extent that they associated “White” and “American.”

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2 Some readers may question whether the “American = White” phenomenon is a fixed, all-or-none designation such that only Whites are considered American, or if the “American = White” system of classification is more flexible and fluid, such that those who are categorized as “American” must display some degree of “Whiteness” to be so named. For the purposes of this paper and our conceptualization of which race qualifies as “American,” we emphasize that it should not matter whether the “American = White” effect is all-or-none or more fluid in its inclusion and exclusion of members; we argue that because such characterization may be
This single body of research is foundational to our framework for a differential shift across nationality and race for Black and White Americans. In effect, whereas “White” and “American” are tightly bound for White Americans (to be discussed below), we conjecture that Black Americans may be better able to shift between their American and Black identities. Although Devos and Banaji (2005) found that, for Black Americans, “Black” equates to “American” to the same extent that “White” does, other research contends that given the inherent power structure within United States society, Blacks may still consider “White” (versus “Black”) to be more representative of “American.” According to social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), as relations between ethnic groups in the United States are characterized by inequalities in power and social status, White Americans – who have more power and greater social status compared to other social groups – are seen as “owning” the nation. Given this perception, the relationship between ethnic (i.e., racial) and American identities is found to be asymmetrical across ethnic groups (Sidanius et al., 1997), such that the national and racial identities strongly converge for the dominant group in society (i.e., White Americans), but are distinct, even potentially conflicting, for members of other American racial groups. Sidanius et al. (1997) lament that although the average Black family has been in the United States longer than the average White family, and that Blacks should be considered as “American” as Whites (if not more), due to chronic racial inequality, the link between “Black” and “American” will not be as strong for Blacks as the link between “White” and “American.” Additionally, Sidanius et al. partially motivated (i.e., for political reasons, to maintain a power differential), the “American = White” effect should theoretically be qualified by the perceiver’s own race. If the individual wants to be perceived as American, then his racial group should equate to the American identity. Likewise, if the individual wants to keep out a certain group from the American identity or wants his racial group to be dissociated from a negative American identity, then the equation should change accordingly.
(1997) and others (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997) find an inverse relationship between racial and American identification for Black Americans, suggesting perhaps that the two are conceptualized as distinct categories and that identification with one may even preclude identification with the other. Other research amends this point, indicating that although Blacks may perceive themselves to be as American as Whites, they also recognize a lower perception of their Americanness by other groups in society and even a sense of exclusion from the American identity, primarily by White Americans (Barlow, Taylor, & Lambert, 2000). This probable feeling of disconnect between the American and Black identities, paired with Blacks’ strong identification with their racial identity (Crocker et al., 1994), support the prediction that Black Americans should be able to shift between their national and racial identities – not only because of the inherent mobility between the two identities, but also because the Black racial identity appears to provide a quality alternative with which one can strongly identify and from which one can derive plenty of self-esteem (Crocker et al., 1994).

In contrast, given Devos & Banaji’s (2005) pervasive “American = White” finding, we conjecture that because the two identities are apparently cognitively synonymous, White Americans may not be able to shift between their national and racial identities. As such, if a White American is exposed to a currently threatening American identity, the White racial identity may not be able to provide a convenient escape. (An alternative, but consistent, speculation is that Whites may be hesitant to highlight their racial identity as it may be deemed socially inappropriate to cite the White identity as an important aspect of the self; see Frankenberg, 1993; Swain, 2002). Moreover, although we acknowledge the strong association between “White” and “American” for Whites, and that it might be difficult to tear these two apart if one goes under fire, we also realize that even if White Americans were able to break this
link, they might not be able to turn to the White identity for refuge. Important research by Wong and Cho (2005) indicates that White racial identification over the period of 1972 to 2000 has been stable and relatively low. Only half of White respondents in their analyses “felt close to Whites,” whereas a substantial 83% of Black Americans “felt close to Blacks” (Wong & Cho, 2005). Additional analyses revealed that racial identity is also less central for Whites than it is for Blacks; from 1972 to 1992, 34% of Black respondents reported that they felt closest to the “Black” social group, whereas only 4% of Whites reported that they felt closest to the “White” social group (Wong & Cho, 2005).

As more of an aside, but no less relevant to our discussion of a differential shift in social identity for Black and White Americans, we also expect a difference in the racial groups’ ability or willingness to explain away a currently threatening American identity. As will be further explained below in the context of Study 1, Blacks and Whites will each be exposed to a threatening American identity that derives its negative affect from the Iraq War, non-Americans’ perceptions of the United States’ involvement in this war, and the general disapproval of President George W. Bush during this time (data was collected in 2007). Although Black and White Americans should experience this threat to the same degree (after all, both groups are American), we expect differences in how the two racial groups will make attributions for America’s involvement in the War.

That is, because White Americans are perceived as “owning” the nation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and therefore having the most influence over national politics, they should want to “explain away” the War with more external attributions (or, at the very least, they will be less likely, relative to Blacks, to endorse internal attributions). According to CNN.com’s national exit polls for the 2004 Presidential Election, more Whites voted for President Bush (58%) than for
Senator Kerry (41%), whereas the reverse was true for Blacks (only 11% of Blacks voted for President Bush, whereas 88% voted for Senator Kerry) (CNN.com, Nov. 2, 2004). As for the War, according to major polls cited by The Boston Globe’s Derrick Jackson, before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Black support for the invasion was as low as 19%, whereas White support ran between 58% and 73%. In 2007 (the same year in which our data was collected), 85% of Black Americans called the War a mistake, compared to only 53% of White Americans (Jackson, 2007). These paired findings, that Whites put President Bush back in office in 2004 and were more likely (compared to Blacks) to support the War, even after it had arguably proven to be a lost cause, support the contention that Whites may need to make more external attributions for America’s involvement in Iraq; Blacks, in contrast, should have little hesitancy in making internal attributions for the War and blaming the United States for its involvement. These different patterns of attributional reasoning should lend some insight into why Blacks may be able to shift between their national and racial identities (i.e., they find the War particularly shameful because they believe the United States is to blame), and why Whites may not have any need to do so (i.e., the War can be explained away).

Study 1 seeks to address three hypotheses generated from the discussion above. The first and second hypotheses serve to explain and provide context for a social identity shift, whereas the third hypothesis is most primary to our uncovering of a social identity shift.

Hypothesis 1. As just mentioned, one reason why White Americans may not need to shift between their national and racial identities may have to do with their ability to explain away the War; for Black Americans, however, if they consider the United States to be blameworthy, then a shift could be more likely. We therefore hypothesize that, regardless of condition, Black Americans will endorse more internal attributions for the War, compared to White Americans.
Hypothesis 2. Another reason why White Americans may not be able to shift from the American identity to the White identity, and why Black Americans should be able to shift from the American identity to the Black identity, might have to do with the varying levels of identification with the national and racial identities for the two groups. As alluded to in the above discussion, we hypothesize the following, regardless of condition: a) White Americans will more strongly identify with their American identity than with their White identity, as racial identification by a dominant racial group is typically low due to race being less salient (Gurin, 1985) and perhaps considered an inappropriate source of pride (Swain, 2002); and b) Black Americans will more strongly identify with their Black identity than with their American identity, both because the Black identity is salient and central (Crocker et al., 1994) and because the American identity often provides them with a conflicting sense of membership (Barlow et al., 2000).

Hypothesis 3. In line with Mussweiler’s et al. (2000) conceptualization of a social identity shift, defined as a sort of relative emphasis of one identity over another, such that while one social identity is deemphasized and potentially even devalued, a different social identity is simultaneously emphasized and perhaps valued more, we decided to use value-indicative measures to assess which social identity was currently providing the best source of positive self-regard. In effect then, for the purposes of this research, a social identity shift refers to the relative valuation of one social identity over another that is contextually bound and in response to some event. We chose to use two of the subscales of Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale as the medium by which to express this relative valuation.

Collective self-esteem is defined as the overall value placed upon one’s social groups (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).
According to these researchers, each social group to which one belongs has an associated, subjective level of collective self-esteem that can be derived from multiple sources; for the purposes of this paper, we will focus solely on public collective self-esteem, one’s judgments of how other people evaluate one’s social group, and private collective self-esteem, one’s personal judgment as to the value of one’s social group. Following from Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) suggestion that “one type of self-esteem may at times compensate for another” (p. 304), we believe that in an effort to maintain an overall high level of positive social identity, individuals may need to vary the amount of collective self-esteem currently derived from their different social groups (and even the different types within each group). Looking at how much collective self-esteem each social group is currently providing the individual should give us insight into how the individual is sustaining an overall level of positive social identity.

We therefore predict the following patterns of collective self-esteem movement in Study 1: In the face of a threatening American social identity in which the threat is defined as the experience of disapproval from non-Americans, a) public American collective self-esteem for both Black and White Americans should drop, compared to the control condition; b) public racial collective self-esteem should be unaffected for both Black and White Americans compared to the control condition, as how others perceive one’s racial identity is neither directly nor explicitly implicated by a threatening American identity; and c) for Black Americans, the relative valuation of the private racial identity over the private American identity should increase, such that the difference between private American collective self-esteem and private racial collective self-esteem will be greater, compared to the control condition; for White Americans, the relative valuation of the private racial identity over the private American identity should be the same as that in the control condition. This third predicted pattern for Black Americans should be the
result of a social identity shift; that is, whereas White Americans cannot increase the private value derived from the racial identity (over the private value derived from the American identity) in this situation because “American = White” and the two identities are inextricably bound up, Black Americans should be able to momentarily enhance the degree of collective self-esteem derived from the racial identity (over the American identity) and use it as a buffer against the currently failing American identity.

2.4 Differential Shifting of a Racially Ambiguous American Target

Following the logic of self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982, 1984; Turner, et al., 1987; Turner et al., 1994), the social identity of a targeted other should also be contextually bound and motivationally driven. Findings from research on stereotyping help to substantiate this claim. For instance, Sinclair and Kunda (1999) argue that motivation may promote stereotype activation and stereotype inhibition related to social groups and that people who are motivated to form a specific impression of another person may pick and choose among the many stereotypes applicable to that person. In one study, these researchers showed that in response to criticism from a Black doctor, participants inhibited the “competent” doctor stereotype and activated the “incompetent” Black stereotype. In contrast, even those participants high in prejudice who were motivated to esteem the Black doctor (because he had praised them) inhibited the negative Black stereotype in favor of the positive doctor stereotype to characterize the target (Sinclair & Kunda, 1999). Given these findings, it appears that self-protective goals may in fact determine how another person is categorized.

More recent research in line with our general theme concerning the social identities of nationality and race further suggests the malleability of the social membership of a target. Results from a series of studies showed that White Americans were more likely to include Black
Americans in the superordinate American group via an implicit association test (IAT), thereby reducing the “American = White” effect (Devos & Banaji, 2005), after they were subliminally primed with positive stereotypic information about Black Americans (Rydell, Hamilton, & Devos, 2010). Conversely, the American = White effect was actually enhanced (i.e., Blacks were excluded from the American category) when negative stereotypic information about Black Americans was made accessible. Changes in the valence of Black American exemplars also led to changes in the American = White effect, such that when positive Black American exemplars were made salient, the American = White effect was reduced (i.e., Black Americans were included in the American category), relative to when negative Black American exemplars were presented (Rydell et al., 2010).

Apparently, a subgroup is more likely to be included into the category “American” by the dominant group when it is perceived positively, but will be excluded from the same category if it is depicted negatively. These abovementioned findings are aligned with past theory that suggests that people are more willing to include others into self-relevant social categories when they possess positive qualities (Leyens & Yzerbyt, 1992), and are more likely to exclude group members when they possess negative qualities (Eidelman, Silvia, & Biernat, 2006). The reasoning behind both the inclusion of currently positive in-group members and the exclusion of currently negative in-group members is motivational; that is, including or excluding these individuals is a method by which the perceiver can either increase or maintain in-group status (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986), as well as the self-esteem he or she derives from that social category (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Following this logic, we set out to test in Study 2 whether Black and White Americans who share the American identity with a racially ambiguous (i.e., biracial) target will
differentially shift the racial identity of that target in response to the target’s affiliation with a currently threatening American identity. Though shared affiliation in one social group (American) may be inflexible, perhaps mobilizing the target away from one’s other (racial) social group will create the distance necessary to be able to preserve a positive self-image derived from social identity. Specifically, using President Barack Obama as this racially ambiguous target provides the ideal context for analysis of this potential social identity shift. Given that it is an undeniable fact that President Obama is a member of the American social group – he is, after all, the President of the United States – neither Black nor White Americans should be able to shift him out of the American social category. However, because he is biracial, his racial category membership is ambiguous and whether Blacks or Whites deem him as (more or less) “Black” or (more or less) “White” could be a matter of context. The context we provide in Study 2, to be discussed, is not arbitrary. We will expose participants to a currently threatening American identity, but importantly, the threat will be derived from the actions, policies, themes, and general consequences of President Obama’s Administration. In effect then, President Obama is not only American; for the purposes of this study, he is also currently the source of the threatening American identity.

Initially, we might conjecture that in response to a politically threatening American identity of which President Obama is the source, Black and White Americans would each engage in target-shifting of President Obama; that is, Blacks should shift him out of the Black racial social category and make him “Whiter,” whereas Whites should shift him out of the White racial social category and make him “Blacker.” However, due to a somewhat ironic effect related to the principle of hypodescent (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998) and the construct of White American
Centrism (Dach-Grushow, 2006), we believe the two racial groups will not follow similar target-shifting trajectories.

In the United States, perception and treatment of biracial Americans (Black-White individuals in particular) has historically been governed by the rule of hypodescent, otherwise known as the “one-drop” rule, in which individuals of mixed-race ancestry are assigned the status of the minority or socially subordinate group in their lineage (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998). Although the “rule” sounds archaic, recent research by Peery and Bodenhausen (2008) suggests that this perception has yet to meet its end; when under time pressure, the majority of their participants classified racially ambiguous targets as “Black,” even though the targets exhibited biological traits and cultural backgrounds stereotypically consistent with both racial classifications. This research serves to substantiate the idea that social categorization is often driven by what is salient in the environment, and minority features are inherently salient due to when and how people learn to characterize majority and minority categories (for an example, see Nosofsky, 1986).

New research by Ho, Sidanius, Levin, and Banaji (2011) is perhaps the most comprehensive look into the rule of hypodescent and its effects on the categorization of Black-White individuals to date. Surprisingly, even on a explicit question-and-answer survey in which they were presented with the exact specifications of a target’s racial composition, both White and minority group participants categorized half-Black/half-White targets are relatively more minority than White. Using a depiction of the target’s family tree as the prompt, Ho et al. (2011) found further evidence of hypodescent at a more implicit level, using a speeded response task – and to a greater magnitude than what they found from their survey data. Most interestingly, using a face-morphing task, these same researchers found that there was a lower threshold required for
being perceived as “Black” than there was for being perceived as “White.” In other words, the target needed to be a lower percentage Black to be categorized as “Black” than that same target needed to be percentage White to be categorized as “White.”

Even with regards to President Obama specifically, it appears that the rule of hypodescent makes no exceptions. A recent paper published in *Psychological Science* uses the title “Why Barack Obama is Black: A Cognitive Account of Hypodescent” to springboard its discussion of the one-drop rule, implying that due to basic cognitive processes of learning and categorization, not even President Obama is protected against it (Halberstadt, Sherman, & Sherman, 2010). Obama himself, in many contexts, including his first memoir *Dreams From My Father* (1995), an account of his difficult journey of self discovery and a reflection of his own experiences with race and race relations in the United States, has self-identified as African-American. He has professed quite openly, “I identify as African-American – that’s how I’m treated and that’s how I’m viewed. I’m proud of it” (“Obama’s true colors: Black, white … or neither?” Dec. 14, 2008). According to the White House, President Obama did not check multiple boxes on his 2010 U.S. Census form, nor did he choose the option that allowed him to elaborate on his racial heritage – instead, he ticked the box that said “Black, African Am., or Negro” (“It’s official: Obama is black,” Apr. 3, 2010). Interestingly, although others will dispute that Obama is “just Black” and instead prefer to label him as “biracial” (Arana, 2008), we are hard-pressed to find a single piece of media that labels him as “just White.” During various stages of the presidential campaign, some commentators – both Black and White – questioned whether Obama was “too Black” while others claimed that he was “not Black enough” (Obama, 2008; Walters, 2007). No one questioned whether he was “too White,” and no one claimed that he was “not White enough.” For all practical purposes, President Obama views himself and is viewed by the American public
as Black; if the “biracial” label is ever used in place of the “Black” label to refer to him, Americans are aware of its euphemistic quality and that no matter how accurate the “biracial” term may be in defining Obama, his White identity remains the less salient half.

If the general public sees President Obama as “mostly Black” via the rule of hypodescent, then in the event that President Obama flounders or somehow disgraces the American identity, White Americans remain protected. After all, President Obama may share the American identity with White Americans, but because he is Black, he is thereby distinct from them and this racial discrepancy may provide some degree of solace – at least enough to buffer Whites against the threat and allow them to resist making him “Blacker”. In contrast, and by the very same rule, Black Americans ostensibly share both their national and racial identities with the President and in the event that President Obama becomes negatively affiliated with the American identity, Blacks may have to emphasize his biracial identity by making him “Whiter.” In the words of comedian Wanda Sykes at a 2009 dinner of the White House Correspondents’ Association, “The first Black president! I’m proud to be able to say that. That’s unless you screw up. And then it’s going to be, ‘What’s up with the half-White guy?’” (“It’s official: Obama is black,” Apr. 3, 2010).

Importantly, we do not expect these differential patterns to occur without qualification. Returning to our discussion of “American = White” (Devos & Banaji, 2005; henceforth operationalized by the White American Centrism scale; Dach-Grushow, 2006), that the American identity is inextricably bound up with the White identity such that the two become synonymous, we believe that this push to make President Obama “Whiter” for Blacks in a threatening situation should be contingent upon their level of White American Centrism. That is, for those Black Americans who are more apt to endorse White American Centrism (i.e.,
American = White), when President Obama is currently the source of a negative American image, such that American = Barack Obama, then via a sort of transitive property, Barack Obama = White. For these Black Americans who endorse White American Centrism, as long as President Obama’s racial identity is shifted away from their own, toward the White identity, then he merely represents standard White American government that in no way should implicate the Black identity in a threatening situation.

**Hypothesis 4.** Study 2 seeks to address a three-part hypothesis generated from the discussion above. Regarding a shift in President Obama’s racial identity, a) in response to a currently threatening American identity of which President Obama and his Administration serve as the source, Black Americans who endorse White American Centrism should perceive President Obama’s skin color to be physically “Whiter,” compared to Black Americans who do not endorse White American Centrism; b) in response to this same currently threatening American identity, there should be no effect of endorsement of White American Centrism on the perception of President Obama’s skin color for White Americans; and c) in the control condition, neither Blacks nor Whites should differentially categorize President Obama’s skin color depending upon their levels of White American Centrism.

Chapter 3 will address the topic of self-shifting (Study 1) and Hypotheses 1 through 3. Chapter 4 will focus on the topic of target-shifting (Study 2) and Hypothesis 4.
CHAPTER 3: STUDY 1 SELF-SHIFTING

Study 1 set out to test whether Black and White Americans are capable of strategically engaging in a social identity self-shift across the identities of nationality and race. Specifically, we questioned whether, in response to a currently threatening American identity, Black and White Americans would be able to momentarily deemphasize or devalue their American identity and shift toward their racial identity as a way to replace or compensate for the general loss of self-esteem previously derived from the national identity. We expected that this process would be differentially experienced by the two racial groups given the varying degrees of perceived association between the American identity and each of the racial identities, as well as the two groups’ dissimilar levels of identification with both the national and racial identities and their respective degrees of ability to explain away the currently threatening American identity.

Importantly, up until this point, we have not defined what we mean by a “threatening” American social identity. As this data was collected in 2007, during President Bush’s Administration and the height of the U.S. troop surge in Iraq, we decided to capitalize on the current social milieu of general disapproval – both domestically and abroad – of the Iraq War, the United States’ involvement in the War, and the nation’s President. We decided to use the emotion of vicarious shame as the medium by which to carry this message. According to Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, and Ames (2005), the experience of vicarious shame (versus that of vicarious guilt) is characterized by the relevance of the event to a shared social identity with the wrongdoer (for our purposes, the identity is American and the wrongdoer is the Bush Administration), an appraisal of self-image threat, and a motivation to distance from the event. This motive to distance was deemed essential to catalyzing a shift away from the American identity.
3.1 Participants

Fifty-one Black American undergraduates (71% female; average age = 19.80, \(SD = 1.83\); 83% Democrat, 2% Republican) from a public university in the Midwestern United States and 92 White American undergraduates (55% female; average age = 19.08, \(SD = 1.14\); 35% Democrat, 33% Republican) from the same university were recruited to participate in the study. The students participated voluntarily for course credit. All participants self-identified as both American and as a member of their racial group in a prescreening questionnaire and also indicated their birth country and race on a demographics form following completion of the study. During the study, Black participants were solely exposed to a Black experimenter, whereas White participants were exposed to a White experimenter, in an effort to encourage participants to express their feelings and attitudes openly and honestly.

3.2 Vicarious Shame Induction

In the present study, as a means of instilling feeling of vicarious shame, participants were first told that they would be participating in a study designed to examine how students make sense of the experiences of others. All participants read a mock letter home from an American exchange student studying abroad in the Netherlands and were told to imagine themselves in the student’s shoes while reading, to experience the feelings that the student expressed in the letter, and to submerge themselves in the student’s described situation. In the experimental condition, participants read a letter in which the American exchange student describes a heated classroom debate in which the United States and President Bush are severely criticized for the involvement in Iraq and the most recent Iraq War\(^4\). The student ends the letter by admitting, “I just wanted to

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\(^4\) In a short pilot study conducted early in 2007, 30 undergraduates (60% female; average age = 20.56, \(SD = 1.24\)) from the same university were asked to list what they believed Americans find shameful in their culture. The most frequently listed responses concerned the war in Iraq.
hide, conceal my ‘Americanness,’ and I know that the other Americans next to me felt the exact same way. In fact, and I hate to admit this… but that night I went home and pinned a Canadian flag onto my backpack!” In the control condition, the letter describes a classroom debate about the true identity of the sitter for Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*. See Appendix A for each letter used in the experimental and control conditions.

3.3 Measures

3.3.1 Public Collective Self-Esteem

According to Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) in their seminal paper on a collective self-esteem scale by which to measure individuals’ self-evaluations of their social identities, public collective self-esteem concerns one’s judgments of how other people evaluate the social groups to which he or she belongs. Both Black and White Americans responded to two sets of four public collective self-esteem items directly modified from Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) original public collective self-esteem subscale; the first set concerned participants’ American identity and the second set concerned their racial identity. Importantly, we allowed participants to indicate their own racial group membership on the racial collective self-esteem measure to allow for their subjective terminology (e.g., Black versus African American). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), participants indicated their level of agreement with statements such as, “Overall, Americans [Blacks/Whites] are considered good by others” and “In general, others think that Americans [Blacks/Whites] are unworthy” (reverse-scored). Higher scores on the composite four-item measure per type of identity indicated a stronger degree of public collective self-esteem for that identity. Internal reliability of the public collective self-esteem measure for the American identity was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .66$), but was higher for President Bush, and government; over half of respondents included a response indicating that shame was felt most when Americans were physically located outside of the United States.
Whites ($\alpha = .70$). Similarly, internal reliability of the public collective self-esteem measure for the racial identity was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .52$), but strong for Whites ($\alpha = .79$). See Appendix A for the complete version of both the American and racial public collective self-esteem measures.

3.3.2 Private Collective Self-Esteem

Private collective self-esteem refers to one’s personal judgments regarding the worth of his or her social groups (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). As described above, both Black and White Americans responded to two sets of four private collective self-esteem items directly modified from Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) original subscale; the first set concerned participants’ American identity and the second set concerned their racial identity. The private collective self-esteem items for the American identity were intermixed with the public collective self-esteem items for the American identity; likewise, the private and public collective self-esteem items for the racial identity were also presented together, as one ostensible measure. As before, we allowed participants to indicate their own racial group membership on the racial collective self-esteem measure to allow for their self-descriptive terminology. On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), participants indicated their level of agreement with statements such as, “I feel good about being an American [Black/White]” and “I often regret that I am American [Black/White]” (reverse-scored). Higher scores on the composite four-item measure per type of identity indicated a stronger degree of private collective self-esteem for that identity. Internal reliability of the private collective self-esteem measure for the American identity was high for both Blacks ($\alpha = .81$) and Whites ($\alpha = .86$). Similarly, internal reliability of the private collective self-esteem measure for the racial identity was high for both Blacks ($\alpha = .75$) and
Whites ($\alpha = .80$). See Appendix A for the complete version of both the American and racial private collective self-esteem measures.

3.3.3 Identification

Both American and racial identification were assessed for Black and White participants following completion of the American and racial collective self-esteem measures, respectively. On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), participants indicated their level of agreement with the statement, “I strongly identify with the American [Black/White] culture.”

3.3.4 Attributional Reasoning for the War

To examine participants’ understanding of the Iraq War and their opinions on the United States’ involvement in it, we asked four questions regarding their attributional reasoning about the War. Participants in both the experimental and control conditions first read the following: “Frequently, the news and other forms of media highlight criticism about the Iraq War and the United States’ involvement in this war.” Then, on a scale of 1 (absolutely not/not at all) to 6 (absolutely yes/very much), participants indicated their answers to the following four questions: “Is this criticism valid?” “Does America deserve the blame?” “Are other nations being unfair in blaming America?” (reverse-scored), and “To what extent do you think America should be responsible for the criticism?” Higher scores on the composite four-item measure of attributional reasoning indicated stronger endorsement of the United States being blameworthy for its involvement in the War. Internal reliability for the measure was high for both Blacks ($\alpha = .78$) and Whites ($\alpha = .83$).

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5 These items (one for the American identity and one for the racial identity) were substituted for the Identity subscale of Luhtanen & Crocker’s (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale in an effort to be more parsimonious and direct. Additionally, the Identity subscale (used in Mussweiler et al., 2000) has been shown to be correlated highly with the Private subscale, which was included in our measures (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).
3.4 Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control condition. Both groups of participants were told that they would be engaging in a study on perspective-taking and memory and that they would have three minutes to read a letter home from an American exchange student studying abroad in the Netherlands and to sufficiently submerge themselves in the role of this student. Participants were also told that once these three minutes expired, they would work on another package of materials as a filler task and that once they had completed these questionnaires, they would be asked to recall two main points from the letter and then complete a few more tasks. During the “filler task” phase of the experiment, participants completed the public and private collective self-esteem measures as well as the identification measure. All participants were presented with the American questionnaire first, followed by the racial questionnaire\(^6\). Upon completion of these questionnaires, participants then spent a few moments writing down two main points from the letter. After this short “recall task,” participants then responded to the four attribution questions, answered a demographic page (including their political views and affiliations), and were debriefed.

3.5 Results and Discussion

3.5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations of the major variables in this study for both the Black and White samples.

3.5.2 Attributional Reasoning for the War

Recall that we predicted in Hypothesis 1 that Black Americans would be more likely to endorse internal attributions for the United States’ involvement in the Iraq War, relative to White Americans.\(^6\)

\(^6\) The American and racial questionnaires were not counterbalanced. Previous studies conducted in which these same two questionnaires were counterbalanced showed no effect of order.
Americans, and that this effect would be found consistently within both conditions. To test this prediction, we performed a Race (Black vs. White) X Condition (shame vs. control) univariate ANOVA on the attributional reasoning scores. In line with our hypothesis, a significant main effect of Race was found, $F(1, 139) = 4.40, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .03$, such that averaged across both conditions, Black Americans indicated greater endorsement of the attribution items, that the United States is deserving of blame for its involvement in the Iraq War ($M = 4.06, SD = .90$), than did White Americans ($M = 3.72, SD = .98$). There was no interaction or a main effect of Condition, which was in line with our prediction that, regardless of whether participants were shamed, Blacks should be more likely than Whites to attribute the War to some American wrongdoing.

3.5.3 Identification

Recall that we predicted in Hypothesis 2 that, regardless of condition: a) White Americans would more strongly identify with their American identity than with their White identity; and b) Black Americans would more strongly identify with their Black identity than with their American identity. To test these predictions, we performed a Race (Black vs. White) X Condition (shame vs. control) X Identity (American vs. racial) repeated measures ANOVA with Identity as the repeated measure on the participants’ identification scores.

The results revealed a significant Race X Identity interaction, $F(1, 137) = 23.74, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .15$ (see Figure 1). To unpack this interaction, Black Americans more strongly identified with their racial identity ($M = 5.78, SD = 1.40$) than with their American identity ($M = 5.20, SD = 1.34$), $t(50) = -2.25, p < .05$, whereas the reverse was found to be true for White Americans, such that they more strongly identified with their American identity ($M = 5.55, SD = 1.19$) than with their racial identity ($M = 4.54, SD = 1.84$), $t(89) = 5.00, p < .01$, as was predicted.
Additionally, whereas Black and White Americans significantly differed in their racial identification, $t(140) = -4.20, p < .001$, as would be expected due to issues of salience (Gurin, 1985; Crocker et al., 1994) and social desirability (Swain, 2002), Black and White Americans identified equally with their American identity, $t(140) = 1.62, ns$. A main effect of Race was found, $F(1, 137) = 5.29, p < .05, \eta^2_p = 0.04$, driven mainly by Blacks’ high racial identification, and no other interactions or main effects were found to be significant.

3.5.4 Collective Self-Esteem Shift

Recall that we predicted the following patterns in Hypothesis 3: In response to a threatening American social identity, a) public American collective self-esteem for both Black and White Americans should drop, compared to the control condition; b) public racial collective self-esteem should be unaffected for both Black and White Americans, compared to the control condition; and c) for Black Americans, the relative valuation of the private racial identity over the private American identity should increase, such that the difference between private American collective self-esteem and private racial collective self-esteem will be greater, compared to the control condition; for White Americans, the relative valuation of the private racial identity over the private American identity should be the same as that in the control condition.

To test these predictions, we performed a Race (Black vs. White) X Condition (shame vs. control) X Identity (American vs. racial) X Public_private (public vs. private) repeated measures ANOVA with the last two factors as the repeated measures on the participants’ collective self-esteem scores. A significant four-way interaction was found, $F(1, 137) = 4.52, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .03$. To understand this interaction further, we performed a Race X Condition univariate ANOVA on each of the four types of collective self-esteem. Figure 2 graphically presents the results for each of the four types of collective self-esteem.
With regards to public American collective self-esteem, a main effect of Condition was found, $F(1, 138) = 12.19, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, such that both Blacks and Whites indicated significantly more public American collective-esteem in the control condition ($M = 4.38, SD = .82$ for Blacks, and $M = 4.58, SD = .98$ for Whites) than in the shame condition ($M = 3.77, SD = 1.16$ for Blacks, and $M = 3.93, SD = 1.02$ for Whites). This result suggests that our manipulation was effective, such that in response to experiencing vicarious shame in the American identity, public American collective self-esteem was indeed lowered. Neither an interaction nor a main effect of Race was found to be significant.

Concerning public racial collective self-esteem, a main effect of Race was found, $F(1, 138) = 116.79, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .46$, such that averaged across conditions, Whites ($M = 5.25, SD = .97$ in the control condition, and $M = 5.14, SD = .95$ in the shame condition) indicated significantly higher levels of public racial collective self-esteem than did Blacks ($M = 3.58, SD = .83$ in the control condition, and $M = 3.31, SD = .80$ in the shame condition). This finding is consistent with past literature (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), that Whites understand their racial identity to be more highly regarded by others, compared to Blacks. Neither an interaction nor a main effect of Condition was significant.

As for private American collective self-esteem, a main effect of Race was found, $F(1, 138) = 11.82, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, such that averaged across conditions, Whites ($M = 6.02, SD = .82$ in the control condition, and $M = 5.98, SD = .98$ in the shame condition) indicated significantly more private American collective self-esteem than did Blacks ($M = 5.46, SD = 1.13$ in the control condition, and $M = 5.30, SD = 1.23$ in the shame condition). We suggest that this finding may have its roots in the “American = White” effect (Devos & Banaji, 2005), such that Whites can derive more personal value from their American identity, compared to Blacks.
because they are more consistently associated with it. Neither an interaction nor a main effect of Condition was found to be significant.

Regarding private racial collective self-esteem, we found both a main effect of Race, \( F(1, 138) = 7.00, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05 \), and a main effect of Condition, \( F(1, 138) = 4.51, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03 \). The effect of Race indicates that averaged across conditions, Blacks (\( M = 6.08, SD = 1.03 \) in the control condition, and \( M = 6.65, SD = .62 \) in the shame condition) consistently reported greater private racial collective self-esteem than did Whites (\( M = 5.96, SD = .84 \) in the control condition, \( M = 6.00, SD = .77 \) in the shame condition). The effect of Condition suggests that regardless of race, those in the shame condition indicated higher levels of private racial collective self-esteem relative to those in the control condition. However, these two main effects were further qualified by a marginally significant interaction, \( F(1, 138) = 3.42, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .02 \), driven by Blacks’ high levels of private racial collective self-esteem in the shame condition. Pairwise comparisons reveal two important findings: 1) In the shame condition, Blacks have marginally higher private racial collective self-esteem than do Whites, \( t(69) = -3.80, p = .07 \), but this difference between the two groups is absent in the control condition, \( t(69) = -.49, ns \), and 2) More interestingly and relevant to the idea of a social identity shift, whereas Whites in the control and shame conditions do not differ with regards to their levels of private racial collective self-esteem, \( t(89) = -.23, ns \), Blacks in the shame condition have significantly higher private racial collective self-esteem than do Blacks in the control condition, \( t(49) = -2.48, p < .01 \).

Most crucial to the idea of a social identity shift, Hypothesis 3c did not focus on the separate effects of private American collective self-esteem and private racial collective self-esteem (though we considered it necessary to include these analyses to be comprehensive), but rather the relative valuation of one type of private collective self-esteem over the other. In effect,
a true social identity shift implies a devaluation of one identity and a simultaneous enhancement of a different social identity. To determine the presence of such a shift, we calculated the differences between the two types of private collective self-esteem for both racial groups, in both conditions. These differences (private racial collective self-esteem less private American collective self-esteem) are presented graphically for Blacks in Figure 3, and for Whites in Figure 4. For Black Americans, although this difference was significant in both the shame condition, \( t(30) = 6.34, p < .001 \), and the control condition, \( t(19) = 2.74, p < .05 \), the difference between these difference scores was significant, \( t(49) = -2.294, p < .05 \), such that Blacks in the shame condition expressed greater private racial collective self-esteem than private American collective self-esteem, compared to Blacks in the control condition. For White Americans, not only were neither of the individual condition differences between private racial collective self-esteem and private American collective self-esteem significant (\( t(39) = .845, ns \), for the shame condition, and \( t(49) = -.483, ns \), for the control condition), but the difference between these difference scores was also not significant, \( t(88) = -.18, ns \), such that Whites in both conditions expressed similar (near negligible) discrepancies between their private racial collective self-esteem and private American collective self-esteem.

Taking these findings together, we deduce that Black Americans experience a social identity shift across race and nationality (operationalized as a relative valuation of private racial collective self-esteem over private American collective self-esteem) in response to a currently threatening American identity, whereas White Americans do not, partly due to the two groups’ dissimilar levels of identification with the two identities as well as the differences in their attributional reasoning for the Iraq War. That is, because Black Americans are more identified with their Black identity than with their American identity, whereas White Americans are more
identified with their American identity than with their White identity, Black Americans seem to be more able to detach from their American identity and move toward their racial identity as a quality alternative. Further, that White Americans are less likely to endorse internal attributions regarding the Iraq War (that the United States is blameworthy), compared to Black Americans, provides additional support for a differential shift effect. Apparently, although White Americans may not need to shift between their national and racial identities because they can explain away the War, Black Americans, who consider the United States to be more blameworthy, should feel pressure to move away from the American identity. Additionally, the “American = White” phenomenon (Devos & Banaji, 2005) is foundational to our argument, and though we did not explicitly test for the effect in this study, we believe that the social identity shift process may be differentially experienced by the two racial groups because of the varying degrees of perceived association between the American identity and each of the racial identities. In short, if the American identity is more bound to the White racial identity than to other racial identities, then although Whites may be immobile in shifting between the two, Blacks have a convenient escape (to the Black identity) when the American identity is currently faltering.
CHAPTER 4: STUDY 2 TARGET-SHIFTING

Study 2’s primary goal was to extend the presence of a social identity shift across nationality and race to the concept of target-shifting. Using President Obama as our racially ambiguous American in-group member, we set out to test whether Black and White Americans would differentially categorize the President’s race in the context of a threatening American identity of which he was the source. We conjectured that White Americans high and low in White American Centrism (Dach-Grushow, 2006) would not differ in their categorization of President Obama in either the control or threat condition. In contrast, we expected that, in response to threat, Black Americans who endorsed White American Centrism would classify the President as “Whiter,” compared to those Black Americans who did not endorse White American Centrism. We did not, however, expect this differential effect of White American Centrism for Black Americans in the control condition.

Unlike in Study 1, the goal here was not to personally shift the participant away from any particular social identity; for this reason, we decided against using vicarious shame as our medium for threat. Instead, acknowledging the need to materialize some degree of negative affect related to the American identity and President Obama, we used a stimulus (to be described below) that associated President Obama with arguably negative characteristics assigned to his Administration by both the American and international media.

4.1 Pilot Study on White American Centrism

In the spring of 2009, a few months following the election of President Obama, we pilot tested a new measure entitled White American Centrism (WAC) originally conceptualized by Dach-Gruscho (2006). The 13-item measure is intended to be used to test the implicit assumption that “American = White” (Devos & Banaji, 2005), the idea that American national
identity is racially essentialized, having a racial “essence” that is biological, deterministic in its associated traits, and immutable (Haslam, Bastian, Bain, & Kashima, 2006). On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), participants indicated their level of agreement with statements such as, “I usually assume the term Americans refers to White Americans” and “Ethnicity has no bearing on whether one can be called American” (reverse-scored). Higher scores on the composite measure indicated stronger endorsement of White American Centrism.

Fifty-seven White Americans (58% female; average age = 19.40, $SD = 1.18$), unexposed to any manipulation, responded to a battery of questionnaires including our White American Centrism measure ($\alpha = .82$), the 19-item Protestant Work Ethic measure (Mirels & Garrett, 1971) ($\alpha = .76$), the eight-item Lay Theory of Race measure (No, Hong, Liao, Lee, Wood, & Chao, 2008) ($\alpha = .84$), and the eight-item Symbolic Racism 2000 measure (Henry & Sears, 2002) ($\alpha = .86$), among other filler questionnaires. See Appendix A for complete versions of each of these four measures.

Composite White American Centrism scores significantly correlate with each of the three other measures, $r(57) = .31, p < .05$ with Protestant Work Ethic, $r(57) = .41, p < .01$ with Lay Theory of Race, and $r(57) = .32, p < .05$ with Symbolic Racism 2000. (Although Lay Theory of Race and Symbolic Racism 2000 correlate with each other significantly, $r(57) = .27, p < .05$, Protestant Work Ethic does not significantly correlate with either of the other two measures.) Of the 57 respondents, 36 voted in the 2008 Presidential Election (26 voted for President Obama and 10 voted for Senator McCain) and 21 respondents did not vote (some of whom were underage at the time of the election). Predictably, the WAC scores of those who voted for President Obama ($M = 2.38, SD = .63$) were significantly lower than the WAC scores of the respondents who voted for Senator McCain ($M = 3.03, SD = 1.11$), $t(34) = -2.21, p < .05$. There
were no significant differences between those who did not vote ($M = 2.58, SD = .85$) and either
the Obama or McCain voters, $t(45) = -.90$, ns and $t(29) = 1.25$, ns, respectively.

4.2 Main Study: Participants

53 Black American undergraduates from a public university in the Midwestern United
States and 135 White American undergraduates from the same university were recruited to
participate in the study. All outliers (those who scored at either 2.5 standard deviations above or
below the mean of the main measures within this study) were removed; as a result, only 46 Black
Americans (65% female; average age = 19.56, $SD = 1.24$; 85% Democrat, 0% Republican) and
129 White Americans (53% female; average age = 19.31, $SD = 1.02$; 35% Democrat, 28%
Republican) were used in the analyses.

None of these participants had participated in Study 1 or in the pilot study on White
American Centrism. The students participated voluntarily for course credit. All participants self-
identified as both American and as a member of their racial group in a prescreening
questionnaire and also indicated their birth country and race on a demographics form following
completion of the study. As in Study 1, during the study, Black participants were solely exposed
to a Black experimenter, whereas White participants were exposed to a White experimenter, in
an effort to encourage participants to express their feelings and attitudes openly and honestly.

4.3 Threat versus Control Manipulation

While waiting in the hallway for the experiment to begin, participants were greeted by
the experimenter and told that the current session was running behind schedule and that they
could participate in a few fun word searches to pass the time. All participants agreed to
participate in the tasks and were told to spend no more than five to eight minutes on the two
word searches combined. In the threat condition, participants completed two word searches that
each included 10 negative and two neutral words. All of the negative words expressed a “bad
government” theme and each had been used in the media to describe President Obama, his
Administration, and/or the current economic crisis. These words were generated during a pilot
study conducted in the spring of 2010. In the pilot study, 11 undergraduate research assistants
(64% female; average age = 20.03, SD = .94) from the same university were asked to rate a list
of words (a total of 40, collected from various media sources) on the extent to which each word
was associated with President Obama and his Administration (on a scale of 1 [no association at
all] to 5 [extremely strong association]) and its degree of negativity (on a scale of 1 [strongly
negative] to 7 [strongly positive]). The final 20 words selected to be used in the word searches
were those that were scored as being more associated with President Obama and his
Administration and more negative. In the control condition, the two word searches included
strictly neutral words. See Appendix A for each pair of word searches (with answers circled)
used in the experimental and control conditions.

4.4 Measures

4.4.1 “Perception Tasks”

Upon entering the laboratory where the “real study” would be held, participants were told
that they would be participating in a study designed to examine age differences in visual
perception. Specifically, they were told that the experimenter was investigating whether college
students were better able to pick out the “correct” image from a series of eight images, compared
with older adults. The participants were shown three separate collections of eight photographs
each (each photograph was labeled with an arbitrary three-digit number) and were told to
respond to the experimenter’s question for each collection by writing down their answer (i.e., the
three-digit number corresponding to the photograph the participant selected as the “correct”
image) on a sheet of paper. Importantly, the photographs within each collection were placed randomly around a whiteboard.

The first and second collections of photographs were “filler collections.” The first collection featured eight images of a scattering of matchsticks, each showing a different amount. Upon showing the collection to the participants, the experimenter said, “Here is the first collection. Please write down which photograph you think shows 115 matches.” Unbeknownst to the participants, none of the photographs actually displayed 115 matches; instead, four of the photographs displayed amounts less than 115 matches (80, 90, 100, and 110) and the other four photographs displayed amounts greater than 115 matches (120, 130, 140, and 150). The second collection featured eight images of the State of Illinois, each showing a different length of the State. Upon showing the collection to the participants, the experimenter said, “Here is the second collection. Please write down which photograph you think shows the correct State of Illinois.” Again, none of the photographs represented the correct length of Illinois, but rather four successively shorter versions of Illinois and four successively longer versions of Illinois. Lastly, the third collection featured eight images of President Obama, each presenting him with a slightly different skin color. The remaining areas of each of the eight photographs were not altered with regards to color. Once again, upon showing the collection to the participants, the experimenter said, “Here is the third collection. Please write down which photograph you think shows the correct President Obama.” As with the other collections, none of the photographs represented President’s Obama’s actual skin color. Four of the photographs showed a President Obama with successively lighter skin color, and four of the photographs showed a President Obama with successively darker skin color (the “actual” President Obama, although not present in the collection of photographs, could be conceptualized as a midpoint image of 4.5 on this
measure). See Appendix A for the three collections of photographs. For ease of viewing, the photographs are presented in order; the matchsticks are presented in smallest to largest amounts, the state of Illinois is presented shortest to longest, and President Obama is presented lightest to darkest. Importantly, for the purposes of our future analyses of the President Obama skin color perception measure, we recoded participants’ responses, such that higher scores indicated a “Blacker” President Obama.

4.4.2 Public and Private Collective Self-esteem and Identification

Measures of public and private American collective self-esteem, public and private racial collective self-esteem, as well as identification with both the American and racial identities were identical to those used in Study 1. Internal reliability of the public collective self-esteem measure for the American identity was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .62$), but was higher for Whites ($\alpha = .75$). Similarly, internal reliability of the public collective self-esteem measure for the racial identity was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .52$), but stronger for Whites ($\alpha = .72$). Internal reliability of the private collective self-esteem measure for the American identity was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .66$), but strong for Whites ($\alpha = .84$). Likewise, internal reliability of the private collective self-esteem measure for the racial identity was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .63$), but higher for Whites ($\alpha = .75$).

4.4.3 White American Centrism

Participants responded to the 13-item White American Centrism (WAC) measure discussed above. The measure was identical to that used in the pilot study. Internal reliability of WAC was moderate for Blacks ($\alpha = .59$), and high for Whites ($\alpha = .81$).
4.5 Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control condition, and as discussed above, all participants were first given the word searches while waiting in the hallway for the “real study” to begin. The American public and private collective self-esteem measures as well as the American identification item, along with the racial public and private collective self-esteem measures and the racial identification item, were attached to the back of the word search packet and presented in the same arrangement as that used in Study 1. The participants were told to spend no more than five to eight minutes on the two word searches combined and to spend the rest of the time on the rest of the packet (the collective self-esteem and identification measures). Approximately 10 to 15 minutes later, once all of the participants had completed the entire packet, the experimenter came back into the hallway.

Upon entering the laboratory, participants were told that they would be participating in a study on visual perception and were presented with the three photograph collections, one-by-one, as discussed above. Following these “perception tasks,” participants responded to the White American Centrism measure, answered a demographic page (including their political views and affiliations), and were debriefed.

4.6 Results and Discussion

4.6.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations of the major variables in this study for both the Black and White samples with conditions combined. Tables 3 and 4 display this same information for the control and threat conditions, respectively. It is noteworthy that Black and White participants did not differ significantly on White American Centrism (WAC),
4.6.2 Obama Skin Color Shift

Recall that we predicted in Hypothesis 4 that in response to a currently threatening American identity with which President Obama is affiliated, Black Americans who endorse White American Centrism would perceive President Obama’s skin color to be “Whiter,” compared to Black Americans who do not endorse White American Centrism. In contrast, we predicted that there would be no effect of endorsement of White American Centrism on the perception of President Obama’s skin color for White Americans in the threat condition. Additionally, we expected that neither Blacks nor Whites would differentially categorize President Obama’s skin color depending on their levels of White American Centrism in the control condition.

To test these predictions, we performed a Race (Black vs. White) X Condition (threat vs. control) X White American Centrism (standardized) univariate ANOVA on the participants’ ratings of President Obama’s skin color. The results revealed a significant three-way interaction,

\[ F(1, 171) = 1.05, \text{ns}, \text{ nor did participants significantly differ between the two conditions on WAC, } F(1, 171) = .38, \text{ ns. Also, the interaction was not significant for WAC, } F(1, 171) = .06, \text{ ns.} \]
We then split the dataset by condition (threat vs. control) and performed a Race (Black vs. White) X White American Centrism (standardized) univariate ANOVA on the participants’ ratings of President Obama’s skin color for each condition. Results revealed a significant interaction in the threat condition, $F(1, 81) = 4.09, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .05$, but not in the control condition, $F(1, 85) = .93, ns$. No main effects of either Race or White American Centrism were found to be significant in either condition (all $F$s < 1.79, all $p$s > .19).

Regression equations, plotted in Figure 5 (control condition) and Figure 6 (threat condition), are fit at +/- 1 standard deviation above and below the mean of White American Centrism.

Within the threat condition only, a simple slope analysis (Aiken & West, 1991; West, Aiken, & Krull, 1996) was performed to understand the Race X White American Centrism interaction further. As shown in Figure 6, Black Americans high in White American Centrism perceived President Obama to be “Whiter,” compared to those Black Americans low in White American Centrism ($\beta = -1.04, p = .07$), as was predicted. In contrast, no effect of White American Centrism on the perception of President Obama’s skin color was found for White Americans ($\beta = .21, ns$). Although this effect of White American Centrism for Black Americans was only marginal via simple slope analysis, linear regression analyses revealed a significant effect that supports our contention that White American Centrism is negatively related to the perception of President Obama’s skin color for Black Americans (such that as endorsement of White American Centrism increases, President Obama is perceived as “Whiter”), $F(1, 22) = 4.50, p < .05$. Again, no effect was found for White Americans, $F(1, 59) = .67, ns$.

Hypothesis 4 was supported. We suggest that in the absence of threat to the American identity, the degree of endorsement of White American Centrism has no influence over the way quantity of matches, $F(1, 164) = .001, ns$, or the perception of the length of the State of Illinois, $F(1, 166) = .10, ns$. 

\[\Delta\]
in which either Black or White Americans categorize the racial identity of President Obama, and the two groups do not classify him differently in this condition. However, when threatened with an American identity that derives its negativity from the President and his Administration, although White Americans remain unaffected, such that no matter their degree of endorsement of White American Centrism they classify him similarly, Black Americans high in White American Centrism (compared to those low in White American Centrism) perceive President Obama as physically “Whiter” in skin color, perhaps as a mechanism to protect their own racial identity. As discussed above, we believe that White Americans do not feel that their social identity is implicated or threatened when their “Black” (via the rule of hypodescent) President becomes affiliated with a negative American identity; after all, as long as he and the public categorize him as Black, he remains distinct from the general White American public and the threat should be minimized automatically. However, Black Americans, who ostensibly share both their national and racial identities with President Obama, might feel the threat acutely. Fortunately for those high in White American Centrism, who endorse that American = White, there is a convenient way to restore a positive social identity; as long as American = White and President Obama is American, he can be physically shifted into the White identity (compared to those low in White American Centrism who classify him as “Blacker”), thereby removing the threat to (just) the Black identity.
CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Results of the two studies revealed two primary findings. As predicted, in Study 1, in response to vicarious shame related to the American national identity, Black Americans placed more value on their racial identity, relative to their American identity. As the difference between Blacks’ private racial collective self-esteem and private American collective self-esteem was greater in the shame condition than in the control condition, we conclude that exposure to a currently threatening American identity prompts a social identity shift for Black Americans, in which they will momentarily deemphasize the amount of private collective self-esteem they derive from their national identity and, so as to compensate for this loss, will simultaneously enhance the amount of the private collective self-esteem generated by the racial identity. No such effect was found for White Americans.

We suggest that Black and White Americans do not follow similar social identity shifting trajectories due to a variety of factors including: (1) the varying degrees of perceived association between the American identity and each of the racial identities (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Sidanius et al., 1997), (2) the two groups’ dissimilar levels of identification with both the national and racial identities (Crocker et al., 1994), and (3) where the two groups attribute blame for the Iraq War (i.e., external or internal to the United States). We deduce that due to the “American = White” effect (Devos & Banaji, 2005), Whites were unable to dissociate the two identities. Further, our recent finding that White Americans more strongly identified with their American identity than with their racial identity lends support to the idea that even if a dissociation between the national and racial identities was possible for White Americans, the White identity apparently fails to qualify as a comparable alternative to the American identity. Moreover, although we are fairly certain that our White American participants recognized the impact of the shameful
stimulus (their public American collective self-esteem decreased in the shame condition), we believe that because they were able to make fewer internal attributions regarding the United States’ involvement in the Iraq War (relative to Black Americans), the threat to social identity was somewhat assuaged. Black Americans, in contrast, seemingly shift between their national and racial identities due to these very same factors. That is, whereas the national and racial identities strongly converge for the dominant (White) group in American society, these same identities are relatively distinct, and at times conflicting, for Black Americans (Sidanius et al., 1997; Phinney et al., 1997). This assertion, coupled with the finding that Blacks are strongly identified with their racial identity (Crocker et al., 1994), make likely the probability that Black Americans will be able to employ the inherent mobility between their national and racial identities to shift between them; that the Black identity provides a quality alternative from which to derive collective self-esteem is not trivial to this movement away from the American identity.

Lastly, we found that Black Americans were more willing to make internal attributions for the United States’ involvement in the War. This result strengthens the idea that because Blacks might understand this particular American wrongdoing more acutely, they are perhaps more pressured (compared to Whites) to engage in a social identity shift.

Our second major finding of this research extends the idea of a self-shift to the concept of target-shifting. We used the convenience of our current American situation – a faltering economy, criticized policies, sustained wars, and the first “Black” President – to determine whether Black and White Americans would differentially categorize a racially ambiguous American target (President Barack Obama) intimately tied to a threatening American identity. Due to the very much alive-and-well principle of hypodescent (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998; Ho et al., 2011; Peery and Bodenhausen, 2008) and the belief that “American = White” (that we
redefined in terms of White American Centrism, Dach-Grushow, 2006), we found support for our prediction that only Black Americans high in White American Centrism would feel compelled to perceive President Obama’s skin color as physically “Whiter” (compared to Blacks low in White American Centrism) when threatened. Perhaps fearful that their biracial President’s mistakes could be characterized by others as some sort of “Black” incompetence, Black Americans who endorse White American Centrism can protect their racial identity by categorizing President Obama as just another “White American” (within reason). As for White Americans, we predicted and found no presence of target-shifting as a function of their endorsement of White American Centrism. We believe that due to the rule of hypodescent, White Americans are hardly implicated by their President’s errors and, in the event he disparages the American identity, there should be no need to make him “Blacker” – after all, he is already Black (“It’s official: Obama is black,” Apr. 3, 2010).

Taken together, these findings provide additional support for a theory of social identity dynamicism, that social identity is both fluid and context dependent (Turner et al., 1994), and at times, can be very much motivated, such that the choice of one social identity over another becomes strategic (Mussweiler et al., 2000). The present research is unique, in that it supports this theory at the intersection of nationality and race, and shows differential effects for Black and White Americans. Indeed, although social identity appears to be flexible and even adaptive for all social groups, the manifestation of its dynamicism is seemingly contingent upon the relationships between the social identities implicated in the potential shift (Study 1) and the societal norms and constraints that bind certain individuals to certain characterizations (Study 2).
5.1 Limitations and Future Directions

Although we have established these trends with preliminary empirical support, we have at least three remaining areas of unanswered questions that can be addressed by future research.

As for Study 1, we are left wondering as to whether White Americans respond in some other way (with some other social identity) to perhaps make up for the loss of public American collective self-esteem experienced in the shame condition. To review, we found that both Black and White Americans experienced a decrease in their public American collective self-esteem as a result of being shamed in the American identity, and we found that Black Americans were able to restore a positive social identity by reassessing (and consequently enhancing) the value they placed on their private racial identity (i.e., our findings showed that the private racial identity was the source of more self-esteem for Blacks in the shame condition than was the private American identity, and we are certain that had we compared their private racial identity to their public American identity in the shame condition, the same effect would have been found – though its interpretation would have been somewhat discordant). But what happens to White Americans? They, too, experienced a drop in public American collective self-esteem when vicariously shamed in their American identity, and although we determined that they may have been more able to explain away the threat by making fewer internal attributions about the United States’ involvement in the War (compared to Black Americans who ultimately shifted the value they placed on their various social identities), we are skeptical that such attributional reasoning is enough to keep the overall esteem generated by social identity high.

In previous studies (Rosner & Hong, 2007), we used the same manipulation that was used in Study 1 and, in addition to measuring public and private American and racial collective self-esteem, we also measured trait self-esteem in the form of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.
(Rosenberg, 1965). The scale consists of 10 items (e.g., “I take a positive attitude toward myself”) for which responses are given on four-point scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). We had conjectured that instead of moving between their various social identities in response to a shameful American identity, White Americans might just abandon the idea of deriving value from social identity altogether (at least for the moment) and find some new maximum degree of self-esteem in their personal selves (i.e., “My country is currently not very highly regarded by others and I am not so glad to be an American, but I am still satisfied with myself”). Interestingly, this prediction was not supported, and although we found an effect of race, such that Black Americans had generally higher levels of trait self-esteem across conditions compared to White Americans, neither group experienced an increase in trait self-esteem following the vicarious shame manipulation. Although White Americans may be insulated from having to reassess the value placed upon their various social identities when the American identity goes under fire, we suggest that future research should allow them other social identities from which to choose. If the racial social identity does not provide a quality alternative, for reasons described above (i.e., too tightly bound to the American identity, Devos & Banaji, 2005; socially inappropriate, Frankenberg, 1993; Swain, 2002; lack of identification and feelings of closeness to other White group members, Wong & Cho, 2005), perhaps an ethnic (i.e., family heritage, culture), religious, or even occupational social identity can be momentarily given enhanced value in response to a currently shameful American social identity.

We also note a related limitation in Study 2 for both Black and White Americans. Although we found that Black Americans high in White American Centrism and currently under threat perceived President Obama to be physically “Whiter,” compared to the perception of their counterparts low in White American Centrism, we are left curious as to whether either Black or
White Americans may have also been inclined to shift his national identity in response to his affiliation with a currently failing American identity. Specifically, we wonder whether White Americans high in White American Centrism and currently under threat would perceive their President to be less *American*. Although in the current research, participants were not given the opportunity to judge or rate President Obama’s American identity (they were only presented with pictures of him with different shades of skin color), we predict that, if presented with pictures of the President at varying levels of “Americanness” (i.e., perhaps his physical distance to an American flag), there should be differences between Blacks and Whites, and between those high and low in White American Centrism. One hypothesis is that for White Americans under threat, those high in White American Centrism would perceive the President to be less American (because he is “Black” via hypodescent) than would those White Americans low in White American Centrism. In contrast, we might also predict that for Black Americans under threat, those low in White American Centrism would perceive the President to be less American, perhaps as a method by which to sustain their belief system (i.e., “I believe that ‘American’ can mean many things, including ‘Black,’ but because the President is not American, my racial identity is not threatened by him”). Other hypotheses abound, and it would be interesting to include a measure in follow-up studies to assess participants’ perceptions of President Obama’s degree of “Americanness.” Giving participants an option to either shift the President’s racial identity or his national identity (or both, simultaneously) would prove to be particularly revealing.

Lastly, whereas we are fairly certain that Study 1 adequately measured the various types of collective self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) of our participants, thereby allowing us to infer that minimizing the value placed on one identity and simultaneously increasing the value
placed on another identity served as a method by which to maintain a positive self-image, we can only assume the motivation behind the target-shifting present in Study 2. That is, because we did not measure the various types of collective self-esteem after giving the participants the option to select the “correct” President Obama, we do not know whether target-shifting served as a means to sustain some version of collective self-esteem. Therefore, for now, we can only speculate that Black Americans high in White American Centrism and under threat were able to maintain their racial collective self-esteem because they shifted the racial identity of President Obama away from their own. Future work should include conditions in which participants are not given the opportunity to mobilize the racial identity of President Obama following exposure to an American threat of which he is the source. Further, later outcome measures should include public and private American and racial collective self-esteem, such that we might then be able to determine if moving the President’s racial (or national) identity actually serves to maintain (or even increase) one or more of the various types of collective self-esteem.

5.2 Implications of a Post-Racial America

Among the many hopes, opinions, and lay hypotheses professed during President Obama’s campaign was the speculation that Americans might finally be capable of ushering in a “post-racial era” in which the United States finally rids itself of racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice. If this post-racial era is to actually play out, what should be most noticeable for most Americans will not be a dramatic decrease in crude, off-color remarks or deplorable hate crimes, but rather the increase in the non-issue of race. Recent demographic predictions project that non-Hispanic Whites will cease to be the numerical majority group in the United States by 2060 (Wong & Cho, 2005), suggesting that the tightly held link between “American” and “just White” may soon dissolve. According to author Gregory Rodriguez of Mongrels, Bastards,
Orphans, and Vagabonds, much of this demographic change will be due to intermarriage, especially amongst Mexican- and Anglo-Americans, and those are not the only groups intermingling (Rodriguez, 2007). Maria Arana of The Washington Post writes, “The explosion of ‘minorities’ in the United States in the past half-century has guaranteed that ever more interracial mingling is inevitable. According to the 2000 Census, there were 1.5 million Hispanic-white marriages in the United States, half a million Asian-white marriages, and more than a quarter-million black-white marriages. The reality is probably closer to double or triple that number. And growing” (2008, p. B01).

Given these statistics, we are excited to observe how a post-racial society might capitalize on the idea of social identity dynamicism. That is, when “American” no longer equates to “White,” how will the “new” Americans – those bi-racials and tri-racials and “others” – define themselves? Will their self-definition and the value they place on their many social identities still be contingent upon the current status (shameful or otherwise) of the American identity, as it was in Study 1? In the event of a shameful American identity, will White Americans finally get a chance to dissociate from their American identity and find more value in their now distinct racial identity? We further wonder whether the rule of hypodescent will still apply, and if it does not, how will a mixed-race leader be categorized? Will his or her designation still depend on something as archaic as White American Centrism, as it was in Study 2? These questions and others abound, and although the present research sought to address some preliminary answers, we will just have to wait for a post-racial America in order to follow up.
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Greetings from the Netherlands!

1 message

Fri, Sep 14, 2007 at 11:00 PM

Alex Smith <alexsmit@gmail.com>
To: tronanddad@gmail.com

Dear Mom and Dad,

Greetings from the Netherlands! Wow, I have so much to tell you about my study abroad even though it’s only been two weeks here; I feel like I have gotten a lifetime of experience. For starters, I’ve actually picked up on some Dutch! So, guess what this means; “Wie A zegt moet B zeggen.” The literal translation doesn’t make much sense to us Americans, but it is technically the equivalent of your favorite saying, Dad: “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.” It’s really pretty funny because now that I’ve learned the saying, I say it to everyone! The natives laugh and think I’m hilarious with my accent and all, but they probably are really thinking that I’m just a dumb American trying to speak their language and failing miserably at it.

I’m really enjoying my classes for the semester and I think that being here is truly opening my eyes to the international community, which, as a Political Science major, is priceless if I’m ever going to be successful in real-life politics. I have this amazing International Relations professor, Dr. Jansen. He is extremely charismatic and really engages everyone in whatever topic he’s discussing. The first week was all about the causes of war. The emphasis initially was on obtaining the “methodological understanding” of how to explain the outbreaks of war, and we looked really in depth at WWI and WWII. But then, of course, some European kid (I think he was from France or something) brought up the current Iraq War and wanted to know what our professor thought caused that war. And being all Socratic about it, Dr. Jansen didn’t respond directly, but instead asked the class its opinion in order to answer the French kid’s question. So, I’m one of three other Americans, and we all sit together on one side of the classroom. None of us responded to the question regarding what caused the Iraq War, because, well, we didn’t want to give our opinions before the non-Americans gave theirs. You know, we had to feel out the class’ general opinion of Americans first. Anyway, so many of the other students explained how the Iraq War was really just an excuse for the “American President” to take out Saddam Hussein and get more oil for the Americans. They were so persistent in their anger towards the US – I mean the class literally erupted onto a those terrifying negative opinions about the US’ motives abroad, our “ignorant and incompetent” president, and then it got really personal. I mean, they started to say how Americans in general are selfish, materialistic, and have no care for anyone but themselves – which is why, they said, we’re so arrogant and intolerant of other cultures and ways of life. I literally wanted to die. I mean, if a hole in the ground magically appeared right under my chair I would have happily jumped into it. I just wanted to hide, conceal my “American-ness,” and I know that the other Americans need to me felt the exact same way. In fact, and I hate to admit this to you guys, but that night I went home and pinned a Canadian flag onto my backpack! I know it sounds so pathetic, but no one here knows that I’m American yet and I really don’t want them to find out.

Anyway, this email is going long... I should stop rambling and get back to my homework – we have a quiz tomorrow and I want to make sure that I do really well on it.

I miss you both a lot. I hope everything is well at home and that Max is growing into a big dog! Email me pictures of him when you get a chance.

Love you,
Alex
Greetings from the Netherlands!

I'm really enjoying my classes for the semester and I think that being here is truly opening my eyes to Europe's rich culture, which, as an Art History major, is exhilarating. I have this amazing Western Art History professor, Dr. Jansen. He is extremely charismatic and really engages everyone in whatever topic he's discussing. The first week centered on an in-depth look at Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. The emphasis was initially on obtaining an understanding of da Vinci's technique, how the painting is a prototype of the Renaissance era, and how the Mona Lisa, to this day, remains a huge figure in pop culture. My favorite part of the week's discussion dealt with the competing theories regarding the sitter's true identity. Dr. Jansen is really great at letting us arrive at our own conclusions so for this part of the class, he let the students participate in open debate. One student made the argument that the sitter is Madame Lisa Geccondo, the wife of a wealthy Florentine businessman named Francesco del Giocondo. Another student subverted the first student's claim, but added that only da Vinci's biographer said that the portrait was of Madame Giocondo. Before that, the painting had been referred to as "a certain Florentine lady" and later as "a courtesan in a gauze veil" elsewhere. But then the debate became heated when this one French kid made the statement that the Mona Lisa is not even a portrait of one woman, but an artful complicate of many, da Vinci's idealization of all women. The French kid then claimed that he had also heard that the sitter might have been one of da Vinci's young male models in drag! This comment really irriated some students and I have to admit it irriated me, too. Mean, the Mona Lisa is one of the most famous paintings in the world and its mystery should be respected, not ridiculed by some jerk just trying to get attention from his classmates. Needless to say, the debate became frustrating because no one really shows the answer regarding the sitter's true identity and even Dr. Jansen said no one will ever know, perhaps because that was da Vinci's point.

Anyway, this email is getting long... I should stop rambling and get back to my homework. We have a quiz tomorrow and I want to make sure that I do really well on it.

I miss you both a lot. I hope everything is well at home and that Max is growing into a big dog. Email me pictures of him when you get a chance.

Love you,
Alex
### 6.3 Public Collective Self-Esteem Scale – American Identity

We are interested in how you feel about being an American at this moment. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions at this moment. Please read each statement carefully and respond using the following scale from 1 to 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____ 1. Overall, Americans are considered good by others.

_____ 2. Most people consider Americans, on the average, to be more ineffective than other groups.

_____ 3. In general, others respect Americans.

_____ 4. In general, others think that Americans are unworthy.
6.4 Public Collective Self-Esteem Scale – Racial Identity

We are interested in how you feel about being a member of your racial group at this moment (e.g., Asian, Black, White, etc.). Write your racial group right now on the following line:

My racial group: ________________________________________________________________

For the first blank below, fill in the name of your racial group again and mentally place the name of this group onto each of the other blank lines. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions at this moment. Please read each statement carefully and respond using the following scale from 1 to 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____ 1. Overall, _____ are considered good by others.

_____ 2. Most people consider _____, on the average, to be more ineffective than other groups.

_____ 3. In general, others respect _____.

_____ 4. In general, others think that _____ are unworthy.
6.5 Private Collective Self-Esteem Scale – American Identity

We are interested in how you feel about being an American at this moment. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions at this moment. Please read each statement carefully and respond using the following scale from 1 to 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____ 1. I often regret that I am American.

_____ 2. In general, I’m glad to be an American.

_____ 3. Overall, I often feel that being an American is not worthwhile.

_____ 4. I feel good about being an American.
6.6 Private Collective Self-Esteem Scale – Racial Identity

We are interested in how you feel about being a member of your racial group at this moment (e.g., Asian, Black, White, etc.). Write your racial group right now on the following line:

My racial group: ________________________________________________________________

For the first blank below, fill in the name of your racial group again and mentally place the name of this group onto each of the other blank lines. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions at this moment. Please read each statement carefully and respond using the following scale from 1 to 7:

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\text{Strongly} & \text{Disagree} & \text{Disagree} & \text{Neutral} & \text{Somewhat} & \text{Agree} & \text{Strongly} \\
\text{disagree} & \text{disagree} & \text{agree} & \text{agree} \\
\end{array}
\]

_____ 1. I often regret that I am _____.

_____ 2. In general, I’m glad to be _____.

_____ 3. Overall, I often feel that being _____ is not worthwhile.

_____ 4. I feel good about being _____.
6.7 White American Centrism Scale

Please read through the following statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each using the following response scale. Record your response to the left of each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Slightly disagree</td>
<td>Slightly agree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Only certain people can be American.
2. Americans are born, not made.
3. Ethnicity has no bearing on whether one can be called American.
4. Anyone in the U.S. who values the American dream and works hard to benefit this country is an American.
5. National origin has no bearing on whether one can be called American.
6. Anyone who legally immigrates to the U.S. and values American culture is a true American.
7. Anyone can become American.
8. I usually assume the term Americans refers to White Americans.
9. Mainstream American culture is more than just White culture.
10. White Anglo-Saxon values form the core of American values.
11. White Americans form the mainstream of America.
12. Generally the term American refers to White Americans.
13. America is a White country.
6.8 Protestant Work Ethic Scale

Please read through the following statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each using the following response scale. Record your response to the left of each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

1. Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusements.
2. Our society would have fewer problems if people had less leisure time.
3. Money acquired easily (e.g., through gambling or speculation) is usually spent unwisely.
4. There are few satisfactions equal to the realization that one has done his or her best at a job.
5. The most difficult college courses usually turn out to be the most rewarding.
6. Most people who don’t succeed in life are just plain lazy.
7. The self-made man is likely to be more successful if he sacrifices certain pleasures.
8. I often feel I would be more successful if I sacrificed certain pleasures.
9. People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.
10. Any man who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.
11. People who fail at a job have usually not tried hard enough.
12. Life would have very little meaning if we never had to suffer.
13. Hard work offers little guarantee of success.
14. The credit card is a ticket to careless spending.
15. Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time.
16. The man who can approach an unpleasant task with enthusiasm is the man who gets ahead.
17. If one works hard enough he is likely to make a good life for himself.
18. I feel uneasy when there is little work for me to do.
19. A distaste for hard work usually reflects a weakness of character.
6.9 Lay Theory of Race Scale

Please read through the following statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each using the following response scale. Record your response to the left of each item.

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
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<thead>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Slightly disagree</td>
<td>Slightly agree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____ 1. To a larger extent, a person’s race biologically determines his or her abilities and traits.

_____ 2. Although a person can adapt to different cultures, it is hard if not impossible to change the biological dispositions of a person’s race.

_____ 3. How a person is like (e.g., his or her abilities, traits) is deeply ingrained in his or her racial dispositions. It cannot be changed much.

_____ 4. A person’s race is something very basic about them and it can’t be changed much.

_____ 5. Races are just arbitrary categories and can be changed if necessary.

_____ 6. Racial categories are constructed totally for economic, political and social reasons. If the socio-political situation changes, the racial categories will change as well.

_____ 7. Race does not have an inherent static basis, and can be changed.

_____ 8. Racial categories are fluid, malleable constructs.
6.10 Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale

Please read through the following statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each using the following response scales.

1. It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Somewhat agree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

2. Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Somewhat agree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

3. Some say that Black leaders have been trying to push too fast. Others feel that they haven’t pushed fast enough. What do you think?
   1. Trying to push too fast
   2. Going to slowly
   3. Moving at about the right speed

4. How much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today do you think Blacks are responsible for creating?
   1. All of it
   2. Most
   3. Some
   4. Not much at all

5. How much discrimination against Blacks do you feel there is in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead?
   1. A lot
   2. Some
   3. Just a little
   4. None at all

6. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Somewhat agree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

7. Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Somewhat agree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

8. Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Somewhat agree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Strongly disagree
6.11 Word Search – Experimental (Threat) Condition, Study 2

bailout  communism  cronyism
deficit  elitism  furlough
guantanamo  idea  inflation
philosophy  recession  unemployed
activity
dinner
lesson
preview
center
flower
objective
saturday
cloud
identification
philosophy
window
6.13 “Perception Tasks,” Study 2

“Here is the first collection. Please write down which photograph you think shows 115 matches.”
“Here is the second collection. Please write down which photograph you think shows the correct State of Illinois.”
“Here is the third collection. Please write down which photograph you think shows the correct President Obama.”
### APPENDIX B

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among main variables in Study 1 (combining experimental and control conditions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black American participants (N = 51)</th>
<th>White American participants (N = 91)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Public American CSE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Private American CSE</td>
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<td>.46**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. American ID</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Public racial CSE</td>
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<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Private racial CSE</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Racial ID</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Attributions for the War</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * denotes \( p < .05 \); ** denotes \( p < .01 \)
Table 2. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among main variables in Study 2, combined conditions

|                              | Black American participants (N = 46) |               |               |               |               |               |               | White American participants (N = 129) |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|               |
|                              |                                      | 1             | 2             | 3             | 4             | 5             | 6             |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 1. Public American CSE       |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 2. Private American CSE      | .46**                                |               |               |               |               |               |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 3. American ID               | .27                                  | .41**         |               |               |               |               |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 4. Public racial CSE         | .26                                  | .03           | -.14          |               |               |               |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 5. Private racial CSE        | .13                                  | -.003         | .12           | .32*          |               |               |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 6. Racial ID                 | .03                                  | -.24          | -.005         | .04           | .29           |               |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 7. WAC                       | -.07                                 | -.09          | -.03          | -.24          | -.18          | -.10          |               |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| 8. Obama’s skin color perception | -.10                                | -.16          | -.06          | .33*          | .03           | .24           | -.13          |                                      |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Mean                         | 4.22                                 | 5.82          | 4.83          | 3.47          | 6.38          | 5.83          | 2.68          | 4.13                                                |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| SD                           | .90                                  | .78           | 1.45          | .83           | .69           | 1.31          | .59           | 2.12                                                |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |

Note. * denotes p < .05; ** denotes p < .01
Table 3. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among main variables in Study 2, control condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black American participants (N = 22)</th>
<th>White American participants (N = 67)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Public American CSE</td>
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<td>4. Public racial CSE</td>
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<td>.20</td>
</tr>
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<td>5. Private racial CSE</td>
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<td>.03</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Racial ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. WAC</td>
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<td>-.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Obama’s skin color perception</td>
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<td>-.14</td>
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Mean  

SD

Note. * denotes $p < .05$; ** denotes $p < .01$
Table 4. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among main variables in Study 2, threat condition

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Black American participants (N = 24)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Private American CSE</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6. Racial ID</td>
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<td>7. WAC</td>
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<td>-.41*</td>
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</tr>
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Mean: 4.15 5.68 4.71 3.40 6.39 6.04 2.66 3.88  
SD: .89 .80 1.55 .84 .68 1.20 .49 1.87

<table>
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<tr>
<th>White American participants (N = 62)</th>
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Mean: 4.47 5.98 5.39 5.37 5.81 5.60 2.52 3.87  
SD: 1.02 .95 1.19 .82 .87 1.21 .69 2.12

*Note.* * denotes p < .05; ** denotes p < .01
Figure 1. Race X Identity

![Graph showing the relationship between race and identity. The x-axis represents race (Blacks and Whites), and the y-axis represents identification. The graph indicates a downward trend for racial identity and an upward trend for American identity among Whites, while racial identity increases among Blacks.](image-url)

- **Legend:**
  - Racial identity (solid line)
  - American identity (dashed line)
Figure 2. Race (Black vs. White) X Condition (experimental vs. control) X Identity (American vs. racial) X Public_private (public vs. private)
Figure 2 con’t
Figure 3. Difference scores between types of private collective self-esteem for Black American participants
Figure 4. Difference scores between types of private collective self-esteem for White American participants
Figure 5. Race (Black vs. White) X White American Centrism (standardized) in Control Condition
Figure 6. Race (Black vs. White) X White American Centrism (standardized) for Threat Condition