**Is Culture More Important for Racial/Ethnic Minorities than for Whites? An Experiment
and Survey on the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias Among College Students in the United
States**

José M. Causadías¹, Woonchan Kwon^{1, 2}, Christina Pedram², & Kevin M. Korous¹

Author Note

¹ School of Social and Family Dynamics, Arizona State University.

² Department of Psychology, Arizona State University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to José M. Causadías, School of Social and Family Dynamics, Arizona State University, Cowden Family Resources Building, 850 South Cady Mall, Tempe, AZ 85281. E-mail: jose.causadias@asu.edu This study was conducted following best research practices. The protocol was approved by ASU's Institutional Review Board. We pre-registered the protocol on OSF before data collection was completed and analyses were conducted (<https://osf.io/qangt>). The protocol was also uploaded in PsyArXiv before completing data collection and conducting analyses (<https://psyarxiv.com/rb68d/>). All materials, including the experiment, survey, protocol, deidentified data, and syntax are available at: https://osf.io/n6x93/?view_only=84aad77269fb4a119eba04021bc639e3

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. We declare no conflict of interest. This document includes the complete manuscript submitted for publication on February 15, 2020, as well as the editor's decision and reviews received on April 29, 2020. Posted with permission of the authors and editor. Manuscript word count: 5,977 words.

1

2

3

41

5

6

72

8

93

10

114

12

13

145

15

16

176

18

197

20

218

22

23

249

25

2610

27

28

2911

30

3112

32

33

3413

35

3614

37

3815

39

40

4116

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

Word count: 5,977 words.

Abstract

- **Objectives:** The aim of this study is to determine the degree to which college students in the United States endorse the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias, the belief that culture matters more for racial/ethnic minorities than for Whites. We hypothesized that students will rate more favorably a sample of minorities for a homework assignment on culture (Hypothesis 1), more favorably a sample of Whites for an assignment on psychology (Hypothesis 2), will indicate that psychological processes are more influential in shaping the behavior of Whites (Hypothesis 3), that cultural processes are more influential in the behavior of minorities (Hypothesis 4), and will believe that other college students endorse these views (Hypothesis 5). We expected none of these effects to be moderated by participant's race/ethnicity.
- **Methods:** Convenience sample of college students ($N = 798$), 48% racial/ethnic minority, 66% female, $M_{age} = 19.02$. We conducted an experiment and survey with the same sample.
- **Results:** We found support for Hypothesis 1, no support for Hypothesis 2, partial support for Hypothesis 3, support for Hypothesis 4, and partial support for Hypothesis 5.
- **Conclusions:** These findings provide clear support to the "minorities are more cultural" dimension of this bias, but less support for the "Whites are more psychological" dimension. These findings have important implications, as they document that a sample of college students endorse this bias in ways that are both consistent and different to older, more educated, and less diverse faculty.

Keywords: bias; culture; ethnicity; race; cultural (mis)attribution bias

Public Significance Statement

Some people in the United States believe culture is more important for racial/ethnic minorities than for Whites, but this is false because culture is important for all human beings. We documented this bias in a sample of college students, showing that they think that culture, ethnicity, and race are more influential in the behavior of minorities than Whites.

Is Culture More Important for Racial/Ethnic Minorities than for Whites? An Experiment and Survey on the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias Among College Students in the United States

The unfair treatment of racial/ethnic minorities compared to Whites is an enduring problem in the United States, a country that proclaimed that all men are created equal in its declaration of independence, while maintaining an unrelenting commitment to White supremacy throughout its history (Kendi, 2017). To reconcile this tension, American society relies on an arsenal of ideas that serve two functions: they adapt to anti-racist demands for equity and social justice by appearing benign and neutral, and at the same time, they sustain the racist notion that Whites are superior to racial/ethnic minorities (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

These contradictions between American ideals and reality are echoed in American psychology. While presenting accurate representation of human behavior as its central aim, American psychology has been consistent in presenting some groups as normal and others as deviant: framing women as deviations from men (Bailey, LaFrance, & Dovidio, 2018), queer people as deviation of heterosexuals (Ansara & Hegarty, 2012), and racial/ethnic minorities as deviations of White people (García Coll, Akerman, Cicchetti, 2000). Despite some notable exceptions (Guthrie, 2004), mainstream American psychology has legitimized these ideas through theory and research (Adams & Salter, 2019; Hegarty & Bruckmüller, 2013).

This is the case of the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias, the notion that racial/ethnic minorities are essentially cultural beings and carbon-copies of their group, but every White person is a unique human being driven by agency and personality (Causadias, Vitriol, & Atkin, 2018a; 2018a). Two studies examined a decade of published research in psychology and developmental psychology in the United States to show that studies focused on culture

oversampled minorities, and experiments and surveys with psychology and developmental psychology faculty documented a tendency to assume that ethnic/racial minorities are largely influenced by culture, but White people are largely influenced by individual psychological processes (Causadias et al., 2018a; 2018a).

While these studies were conducted in the United States with samples of psychology faculty and developmental psychology faculty, less is known about the degree to which college students taking introductory courses in psychology endorse this bias. This is important to investigate to determine how widespread this bias is: if it is restricted to older, more educated, and less diverse psychology faculty, or if it is also prevalent among students who are younger, early career, more diverse, and more liberal (Pew Research Center, 2018). In this study, we conducted an experiment and a survey with a sample of college students to address these issues.

Culture as Concept, Culture as Alibi

Agreeing on a definition of culture is a perennial challenge to social scientists (Durham, 1991), and psychology (Cooper & Denner, 1998). However, there is an emerging consensus that culture is a constantly changing system of behaviors, symbols, and ideas that are created and shared by a community of people (Cohen, 2009). Culture is important for all human beings because all are influenced by culture through exposure to, and participation in, cultural practices and institutions (Adams & Markus, 2004). The same is true for ethnicity and race, concepts that are distinct (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997), but interconnected to the concept of culture (for discussions, see APA, 2019; Betancourt & López, 1993). The way human beings think about their social roles, language, developmental goals, and the world around them are all shaped by cultural, ethnic, and racial socialization and learning (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Rogoff, 2003).

For these reasons, both racial/ethnic minorities and Whites are influenced by culture, ethnicity, and race. The term racial/ethnic minorities (henceforth, minorities) has at least two interrelated meanings in the United States. First, the numerical meaning refers to non-White demographic minorities, including Asian Americans, African American, Indigenous, Latin, Middle Eastern and North African, and bi- or multiracial people (APA, 2019). Second, the sociological meaning refers to groups that have less power due to structural racism, experiences of marginalization and oppression, and have been minoritized to emphasize their otherness and justify their subordination (Wirth, 1945). Whites refers to people of European descent who are dominant in the racial hierarchy of the United States, experience privilege, and benefit from structural racism: the cultural system of ideas, practices, and institutions that depicts Whites as superior and minorities as inferior (Kendi, 2017).

Arguments that support this system are constantly changing, adapting to social challenges (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). In psychology, racist ideas supported by biological arguments have been largely replaced by attempts to justify deviancy by appealing to “cultural differences” (García Coll et al., 1996). Culture has been presented as the essence that explains the behavior of people who are not White (Said, 1978). For instance, explaining higher educational achievement by children of Chinese immigrants in the United States with references to Confucianism or Asian culture, when it results from the fact that Chinese immigrants are twice more likely to have a graduate or professional degree compared to the overall immigrant and native population (Echeverria-Estrada & Batalova, 2020; Lee & Zhou, 2015).

The Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias in American Psychology

The Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias is the tendency to assume that minorities are largely influenced by culture, and the belief that White people are largely influenced by individual

psychological processes (Causadias et al., 2018a; 2018a). Evidence suggests the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias is made of two dimensions. The “minorities are more cultural” dimension represents the notion that culture, ethnicity, and race, as well as group membership and social identity, are more influential in the behavior of minorities than Whites. Minorities are often considered representatives of their culture and are often expected to know it and engage in it, while Whites are typically not (Mignolo, 2009). The “minorities are more cultural” dimension has been supported with archival, experimental, and survey data from two previous studies (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b).

Archival analyses of studies that included culture, ethnicity, and race in their titles, abstracts, and/or keywords published in top psychological and developmental journals had a considerably larger proportion of minorities than randomly selected studies without these terms in their titles, abstracts, and/or keywords. Compared to the percentage of minorities in the US population in 2010, minorities were overrepresented in studies on culture, ethnicity, and race. Faculty in two experiments rated a study on culture as more appropriate when the sample was made of minorities compared to Whites, after controlling for participants’ racial/ethnic self-identification (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b).

The “Whites are more psychological” dimension represents the notion that personality and cognitive factors are more important for Whites than for minorities. The role of culture among Whites is neglected while their individuality is often accentuated (Betancourt & López, 1993). The “Whites are more psychological” dimension has also received support from archival, experimental, and survey data from two previous studies, although in less consistent ways than the “minorities are more cultural” dimension (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b).

Archival analyses showed that Whites were not overrepresented in randomly selected studies not focused on culture, ethnicity, and race published in top psychological and developmental journals compared to the percentage of Whites in the US population in 2010. Faculty in two experiments rated a study on psychology as more appropriate when the sample was made of Whites compared to minorities, after controlling for participants' racial/ethnic self-identification. Third, survey studies showed that that psychologists and developmental psychologists believed that personality is more influential for the behavior of Whites than minorities, after controlling for participants' racial/ethnic self-identification. However, neither group considered cognitive factors as more important for Whites than for minorities (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b).

While preliminary evidence consistently supports the “minorities are more cultural” dimension, and less consistently supports the “Whites are more psychological” dimension among faculty, less is known about the degree to which college students endorse these views. Examining this among college students in the United States is important to determine how widespread this bias is among a different segment of the population. College students tend to have positions about culture, race, and ethnicity that can differ from older faculty. For instance, college students surveyed at four American universities preferred admitting applicants with strong academic credentials from lower socioeconomic status, and recruiting students and hiring faculty of every race and ethnicity over Whites (Carey, Clayton, & Horiuchi, 2019). Notably, both minority and White students favored minority applicants over Whites (Carey et al., 2019).

The Present Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias among college students in the United States. The protocol for this study was pre-registered before data was

analyzed (blind for review). All materials, including the experiment, survey, protocol, deidentified data, and syntax are available at:

https://osf.io/n6x93/?view_only=84aad77269fb4a119eba04021bc639e3

Our first research question is: To what extent do college students in the US value a sample composed of minorities as more appropriate for an assignment on culture? Hypothesis 1: College students will rate more favorably a sample composed of minorities (vs. Whites) for an assignment on culture, and this effect will not be moderated by racial/ethnic self-identification (henceforth, race/ethnicity) of college students (White versus minority).

Our second question is: To what degree do college students value a sample composed of Whites as more appropriate for an assignment on psychology? Hypothesis 2: College students will rate more favorably a sample composed of White (vs. minorities) for an assignment on psychology, and this effect will not be moderated by students' race/ethnicity.

Our third research question is: To what extent do college students support the idea that psychological processes (i.e., personality, cognitive factors) are more influential than cultural processes (i.e., group membership and social identity; culture, ethnicity, and race) in shaping the behavior of Whites than minorities? Hypothesis 3: College students will indicate that psychological processes are more influential in shaping the behavior of Whites than minorities, and this effect will not be moderated by students' race/ethnicity (White versus minority).

Our fourth research question was: To what extent do college students support the idea that culture, ethnicity, and race are more influential in shaping the behavior of minorities than Whites? Hypothesis 4: College students will indicate that cultural processes are more influential than psychological processes in shaping the behavior of minorities than Whites, and that this effect will not be moderated by college students' race/ethnicity.

Our fifth research question is: How do college students perceive other college students' assumptions about the influence of culture for minorities and Whites? Hypothesis 5: College students will indicate that other college students believe psychological processes are more important for Whites, while cultural processes are more important for minorities, and this effect will not be moderated by students' race/ethnicity.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of undergraduate students from a major research university in the Southwest. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board. All participants were 18 years of age or older. We aimed at recruiting 800 participants for this study, with at least 400 White participants, and 400 minority participants in order to have enough power to detect effects reported in previous studies (Causadias et al, 2018a).

Participants were recruited from a pool of introductory psychology students through a Sona recruitment system, that launches studies online and make participation more accessible and convenient. Evidence suggest that in-person performance on measures of prejudice is similar to assessment in Sona Systems in terms of associations and reliability (Gamblin, Winslow, Lindsay, Newsom, & Kehn, 2016). The study was uploaded to the Sona database where potential participants could choose between different studies to fulfill the course research requirement. Recruitment material included the working title, "30 Minute Online Survey on Attitudes About Homework (0.5 credit)", and a short description of the study. Sona studies provide a very short, basic ad descriptions. There were no recruitment emails sent to participants.

Measures

The study was conducted fully online using Qualtrics survey software. The entire experiment and survey were scheduled to take approximately 30 minutes. There was no follow up, interventions, sessions, or lab procedures. We asked participants for general demographic information, including race/ethnicity, age, sex/gender, and college major. The consent and study was only conducted in English. The consent process took place at the beginning of the study. Before potential participants took part in the study, they were presented with an online consent form. Participants provided affirmative consent by clicking "yes" to participate.

Procedure and Measures - Experiment

At the start of the experiment, participants were asked to evaluate a “homework for a psychology college class.” Each assignment was presented separately and includes a brief description of the purpose of the homework, sample size and composition, and questions. Students will be provided with instructions to “Please respond to the questions below as honestly as you can.”

Homework 1 (i.e., Cultural Homework) was described as focused on “how culture, ethnicity, and race influence behavior and cognition. In particular, the homework is designed to help students examine how values, beliefs, and norms among members of particular communities influence how individuals perceive others and behave in social situations.” Homework 2 (i.e., Non-Cultural Homework), in contrast, was described as focused on “how personality influences emotion regulation. In particular, the homework is designed to help students examine how personality characteristics influence emotion regulation.”

Participants completed responses to both homeworks in random order and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions within each study: an all-White or all minority sample. The information contained within the Cultural and Non-Cultural homeworks will only vary as a

function of our manipulation of the sample composition. Analyses were conducted to determine within-assignment differences on the judgments of the appropriateness of the sample (Whites versus minorities).

Next, participants were asked to answer questions about its proposed design and sample composition. We focused on their response to the question: “The ethnicity and race of the students selected for this homework is appropriate”. Responses were given on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly agree.” Variables were recoded to run from 0-1 to ease interpretation and comparison of effect sizes.

Procedure and Measures - Survey

After college students completed the experimental task, they were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to measure the extent to which they believe that two psychological processes (personality and cognitive factors), and two cultural processes (group membership and social identity, and culture, ethnicity, and race) each influence the behavior of Whites or minorities (e.g., “How much does personality influence the behavior of European Americans/White people?”). Items were blocked by reference group and presented in random order to minimize social desirability or spillover effects in responding. Participants were then asked to report the extent to which other college students believe each of these factors influence the behavior of Whites or minorities. Responses were also administered on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly agree.” Variables were recoded to run from 0-1 to ease interpretation and comparison of effect sizes.

Results

Participants

Figure 1 describes the flow of participants through each stage of the study. We planned to recruit 800 participants, 855 participants consented to participate in the study, and 833 completed at least one experimental condition. Most participants ($n = 831$) evaluated both homeworks. There were no differences between experimental conditions on age (Cultural: $F(1, 731) = 1.93, p = .165$; Non-Cultural: $F(1, 731) = 1.23, p = .269$), sex/gender (Cultural: $\chi(2) = 0.02, p = .989$; Non-Cultural: $\chi(1) = 3.12, p = .210$), or race/ethnicity (Cultural: $\chi(1) = 0.70, p = .404$; Non-Cultural: $\chi(1) = 0.17, p = .677$).

We conducted a one-way ANOVA to examine differences between participants who completed the experiment and survey within 30 minutes ($n = 801$), those who took more than 30 minutes but less than 3 hours ($n = 25$), and those who took more than 3 hours ($n = 29$). We did not find significant differences between these groups. We included an item in the survey to measure whether or not participants were paying attention as they completed the survey that asked them to mark a particular response (“5 = Very Much”). We tested to what degree responses differed between participants who answered that question correctly and those who did not. Of the 855 who participated, 35 failed the attention check item. Our analyses revealed differences of small magnitude ($ds = 0.07 - 0.19$) between those who completed the attention check item correctly and those who did not. We decided to exclude those participants. In addition, 22 participants did not complete the attention check item or any of the experiments. We also excluded these participants. We retained a total of 798 participants. All analyses were conducted in SPSS (version 26.0).

Table 1 presents participants’ general demographic information, including race/ethnicity, age, sex/gender, and college major. Following previous studies (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b), college students who identify as non-Hispanic White were classified as White, and all other

participants who identify as members of other subgroups were classified as minorities. Of the 789 participants who provided information about race/ethnicity, 379 (48%) self-identified as minority and 410 (52%) self-identified as White. The mean age (M) was 19.02 with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.62.

Experiment

For all analyses, we examined if responses were moderated by the self-reported race/ethnicity of the participants (i.e., White or minority) to establish if both groups perceived minorities as more cultural –which would support the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias - or if each group perceived the out-group as more cultural –which would support a general intergroup bias in which members of the in-group are perceived more favorably than out-group members (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). For the experiment, we employed a single independent variable design in which sample composition was manipulated between-subjects separately for two different homeworks: one focusing on cultural processes, and the other focusing on psychological processes.

To test Hypotheses 1 and 2, we used ordinary least squares (OLS) to regress the dependent variable (i.e., appropriateness of the assignment sample) onto (a) dummy variable for condition of the homework (0 = sample composed of minorities, 1 = sample composed of Whites) and, for subsequent analyses, its interaction with (b) race/ethnicity of the college student. Analyses were conducted separately for the Cultural ($M = .47$, $SD = .30$, $n = 794$) and the Non-Cultural homework ($M = .41$, $SD = .29$, $n = 798$). We report means and standard deviations for both, as well as coefficients, 95% confidence intervals, p -values, and effect sizes (Cohen's d).

First, we evaluated whether the sample composition differentially influenced judgments of the appropriateness of a sample of Whites or minorities in Cultural and Non-Cultural homeworks without constraints. Surprisingly, we found that participants believed that minorities were more appropriate for both the Cultural homework ($b = -.21$, 95% CI $[-.25, -.17]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.74$), and the Non-Cultural homework ($b = -.13$, 95% CI $[-.17, -.09]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.46$).

Second, we tested the extent to which the effect of sample composition was moderated by participants' race/ethnicity (White vs. minority). This model included the main effect of race/ethnicity, the main effect of sample composition, and the interaction term between race/ethnicity and sample composition. The main effect of race/ethnicity was not significant for any model (Cultural homework: $b = -.02$, 95% CI $[-.07, .04]$, $p = .551$; Non-Cultural homework: $b = -.03$, 95% CI $[-.08, .03]$, $p = .373$). The main effect of sample composition was significant for both the Cultural homework ($b = -.22$, 95% CI $[-.28, -.17]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.55$) and Non-Cultural homework ($b = -.13$, 95% CI $[-.19, -.08]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.32$), even after controlling for self-identification. The interaction term was not significant for any of the models (Cultural homework: $b = .03$, 95% CI $[-.05, .11]$, $p = .441$; Non-Cultural homework: $b = -.002$, 95% CI $[-.08, .08]$, $p = .970$). **Figure 2** provides a graphical representation of the main effect of condition, collapsed across White and minority participants.

Next, we examined responses to the question "The homework sounds interesting", to determine if there were differences within the value of assignment as a function of the sample composition and the interaction term between participants' race/ethnicity and sample composition. If the sample composition is not significantly related to differences in the value of specific homework, then we can conclude that the sample selected for each assignment affected the perceived appropriateness rather than its perceived value. Surprisingly, we found that

participants believed that the Cultural homework was more interesting with a minority sample ($b = -.08$, 95% CI $[-.12, -.04]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.28$), but the main effect of sample composition was not significant when the main effect of participants' race/ethnicity and its interaction with sample composition was included ($p = .115$). There were no differences for the Non-Cultural homework ($b = -.04$, 95% CI $[-.07, .003]$, $p = .071$, $d = -0.13$), and no interaction.

Survey

To evaluate hypotheses 3-5, we conducted separate repeated measures ANOVA for four dependent variables. The judgments of the influence of each psychological and cultural processes were separate dependent variables, and the question reference group (Whites vs. minorities) was the within-subject factor. In additional models, participants' race/ethnicity was included as a between-subject factor.

To test Hypothesis 3, we first examined if participants indicated that psychological processes (personality and cognitive factors) were more influential in shaping the behavior of Whites, compared to minorities, without any covariates in the model (**Figure 3**). These analyses revealed that participants believe that personality, ($F(1, 789) = 5.59$, $p < .018$, $d = 0.08$), is more influential for the behavior of Whites (vs. minorities), but not cognitive factors, ($F(1, 789) = 3.75$, $p = .053$, $d = 0.07$).

To test Hypothesis 4, we examined if participants indicated that cultural processes are more influential in shaping the behavior of minorities than Whites. Participants reported that culture, ethnicity, and race ($F(1, 789) = 236.62$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.55$), and group membership and social identity ($F(1, 789) = 17.89$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.15$), are more influential on the behavior of minorities (vs. Whites).

Next, we tested the model while controlling for the main effect of participants' race/ethnicity. For this analysis, within-subject differences indicated that participants believed that personality ($F(1, 787) = 5.43, p = .020, d = 0.08$), is more influential for the behavior of Whites (vs. minorities). Surprisingly, participants believed cognitive factors, ($F(1, 787) = 4.32, p = .038, d = 0.07$), are more influential for the behavior of minorities (vs. Whites) when we control for the main effect of race/ethnicity. After controlling for race/ethnicity, White and minority participants reported that culture, ethnicity, and race ($F(1, 787) = 235.20, p < .001, d = 0.55$), and group membership and social identity ($F(1, 787) = 17.70, p < .001, d = 0.15$), are more influential on the behavior of minorities (vs. Whites).

There were no differences in the paired dependent variables as a function of participants' race/ethnicity for personality ($F(1, 787) = 0.36, p = .547, d = 0.02$), cognition ($F(1, 787) = 1.49, p = .222, d = 0.04$), and group membership and social identity ($F(1, 787) = 1.84, p = .175, d = 0.05$). Compared to White participants, minority participants reported that culture, ethnicity, and race are important for both minorities and Whites ($F(1, 787) = 9.70, p = .002, d = 0.11$).

Finally, to test Hypothesis 5, we examined if college students report that *other* college students believe psychological processes (i.e., personality, cognition) are more important predictors of behavior for Whites, while cultural processes (i.e., group membership and social identity; culture, ethnicity, and race) are more important determinants of behavior for minorities, with and without including race/ethnicity as a covariate (**Figure 4**).

Participants did not believe other college students think that personality ($F(1, 789) = 0.49, p = .486, d = 0.02$), and cognition ($F(1, 789) = 1.64, p = .201, d = 0.05$) are more important for Whites (vs. minorities). However, they believe other college students think culture, ethnicity,

and race ($F(1, 789) = 145.58, p < .001, d = 0.43$), and group membership and social identity ($F(1, 789) = 13.62, p < .001, d = 0.13$), are more influential for minorities (vs. Whites).

We tested the model with race/ethnicity as a covariate. For this analysis, within-subject differences indicate that participants reported that other college students do not believe that personality ($F(1, 787) = 0.35, p = .552, d = 0.02$), and cognition ($F(1, 787) = 1.71, p = .192, d = 0.05$) are more influential for Whites (vs. minorities). In contrast, they reported that culture, race, and ethnicity ($F(1, 787) = 143.88, p < .001, d = 0.43$), and group membership and social identity ($F(1, 787) = 13.26, p < .001, d = 0.13$) are more influential for minorities (vs. Whites). Race/ethnicity did not account for this within-subject effect for personality ($F(1, 787) = 0.69, p = .408, d = 0.03$), cognitive factors ($F(1, 787) = 3.32, p = .069, d = 0.06$), culture, ethnicity, and race ($F(1, 787) = 2.59, p = .108, d = 0.06$), or group membership and social identity ($F(1, 787) = 1.85, p = .174, d = 0.05$).

Discussion

In this study, we examined to what degree a sample of college students in the United States endorsed the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias with an experiment and survey to test five different hypotheses that have received support in two previous studies with independent samples of psychology and developmental psychology faculty in the United States (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b). This bias is articulated by the “minorities are more cultural” dimension, a form of ethnic gloss, the oversimplification of minority groups that denies their heterogeneity, reinforces stereotypes, and promotes flawed science (Trimble & Dickson, 2005), and the “Whites are more psychological” dimension, the exaggeration of individuality, and the minimization of the fact that White people are White and are also cultural beings (Hegarty, 2017).

We found support for Hypothesis 1, as the college students participating in this study rated more favorably a sample composed of minorities for an assignment examining cultural processes, even after controlling for their race/ethnicity. As expected, this effect was not moderated by race/ethnicity of participants, suggesting that this was not simply out-group bias. They also reported that a cultural assignment was more interesting with minorities than Whites, but there were no differences for the non-cultural homework. These findings provide evidence that the “minorities are more cultural” dimension of this bias is also endorsed by younger, early career, and more diverse sample of college students in the United States.

However, we found no support for Hypothesis 2, as participants did not value a sample composed of Whites as more appropriate for an assignment on psychology. Contrary to our expectations, participants rated as more appropriate a sample composed of minorities for an assignment on psychology and this was not moderated by their race/ethnicity. Unlike two previous studies (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b), college students taking introductory psychology courses do not believe Whites are more appropriate than minorities for an assignment on psychology, lending less support for the “Whites are more psychological” dimension of this bias.

We found partial support for Hypothesis 3. First, participants endorsed the idea that personality was more influential in shaping the behavior of Whites than minorities after controlling for race/ethnicity. Second, participants did not report cognitive factors are more influential for the behavior of Whites when we controlled for the main effect of race/ethnicity. To our surprise, this effect was in the opposite direction as expected. Participants reported that cognitive factors are *more* influential in the behavior of minorities, although this effect was not significant when we controlled for race/ethnicity.

We found clear support for Hypothesis 4, as participants indicated that cultural processes were more important for minorities. First, participants supported the idea that culture, ethnicity, and race are more influential in shaping the behavior of minorities than Whites after controlling for race/ethnicity. Second, participants reported that group membership and social identity were more influential on the behavior of minorities (vs. Whites), after controlling for race/ethnicity. This finding is consistent with two previous studies (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b). Importantly, only minority participants displayed awareness of the importance of culture, ethnicity, and race for everyone.

We found partial support for Hypothesis 5. Participants did not support the notion that other college students think psychological processes are more important for Whites. After controlling for racial/ethnic self-identification, participants did not believe other college students think that personality and cognitive factors are more important for Whites than minorities. However, participants believe other college students think culture, ethnicity, and race, and group membership and social identity, are more influential for minorities than Whites. Respondents did not vary on these beliefs about what college students think based on their self-identification.

Overall, these findings provide clear support to the “minorities are more cultural” dimension of this bias, but less consistent support for the “Whites are more psychological” dimension. Unlike two previous studies, participants reported more favorable attitudes towards minorities by considering them more appropriate for both assignments and endorsing the idea that cognition matters more for them. This can be explained, in part, by evidence that younger cohorts tend to hold more liberal views than older cohorts. Compared to older adults, Americans from ages 18 to 29 are less likely to say too much attention is paid to race in America, more likely to say people are not seeing racial discrimination where it really exist (Pew Research

Center, 2019), and to view racial discrimination as the main reason why many African Americans cannot get ahead in this country (Pew Research Center, 2018). Younger generations are also more diverse. Millennials (born between 1981 to 1996) and Generation Z (born 1997 or later) have larger proportions of minorities than older generations (Pew Research Center, 2018).

There are several limitations to this study. First, we did not measure socioeconomic status, political orientation, attitudes about race, and implicit social cognition. We did not examine other indicators of socioeconomic status which could inform the interpretation of these findings, such as income, social class, and occupation (Diemer, Mistry, Wadsworth, Lopez, & Reimers, 2013). Future studies on the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias should examine its association with several indicators of socioeconomic status, as well as processes that may drive some of these effects, such as political orientation, attitudes about race, and implicit social cognition (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

Second, we only conducted an experiment and survey with a convenience sample of college students in a major research university in the Southwest region of the United States. Compared to two previous studies on this bias (Causadias et al., 2018a, 2018b), the sample for this study included more minority participants (48% compared to 19% and 30%, respectively) and almost doubled in size (798 compared to 361 and 432 participants, respectively). However, the characteristics of this sample impose clear constraints on generality (Simons, Shoda, & Lindsay, 2017). Conclusions from this study should not be extended to the general population and future studies should test to what degree these findings replicate with other populations.

Third, this study grouped together as minorities all the participants who identified as Asian Americans, Black, Indigenous, Latin, Middle Eastern and North African, and bi- or multiracial. Although people from these groups share common experiences of marginalization,

they also vary substantially based on national ancestry, skin color, education, income, occupation, generation, cultural resources, and region (McLoyd, 2004; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2001). For these reasons, some studies have documented that differences between (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans) and within-minorities (e.g., Chinese Americans, Korean Americans) are as large or larger than differences between minorities and Whites (Causadias, Korous, & Cahill, 2018). We did not conduct analyses focusing on minority subgroups because this was not part of our pre-established hypotheses and we lack power to detect effects based on the small number of participants from several minority groups. Future studies should conduct in-depth analysis focusing on the experiences of individuals from a single minority group, or use alternative models of racial classification (Bonilla-Silva, 2004).

Despite these limitations, we believe this study adds valuable knowledge to our understanding of the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias, a distorted perception of the importance of culture. The problem with this bias is not the belief that culture is important to minorities. It is. Among minorities, engaging in community practices promotes health and wellbeing (Fuller & García Coll, 2010). The effect of racial stress can be mitigated by cultural coping strategies, such as racial socialization (Anderson, Jones, Anyiwo, McKenny, & Gaylord-Harden, 2019) and cultural pride (Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). Positive ethnic-racial identity development is linked to health and adaptation (Umaña-Taylor, 2018), and even diurnal cortisol slopes (Zeiders, Causadias, & White, 2018). Cultural spaces, strategies, and traditions can be instrumental in cultivating hope, resistance, and action in the face of racial trauma (Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, Perez-Chavez, & Salas, 2019).

The problem with this bias is the notion that culture is *more* important for minorities than for Whites, when in reality, culture is central for Whites too. Ethnic-racial identity is also salient

for Whites, follow similar developmental pathways as minorities, and is also related to positive adaptation (Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019). Racial socialization in the family is also important for Whites, although it is often colorblind rather than racial-conscious (Hagerman, 2014; Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). White culture is so important that it can have dramatic effects on health. Cultural manifestations of racial resentment and anxiety towards minorities, as well as embracing right-wing policies that restrict welfare programs, have detrimental effects on the life expectancy of many Whites in America (Metzl, 2019).

It is critical for theory, research, training, measurement, and interventions in psychology to acknowledge this bias. Its assumptions can be used to justify the language gap between Whites and minorities (Kuchirko & Nayfeld, 2020), interventions aimed at making African American families embrace White middle-class values (Sroufe, 1970), and models of mental illness that emphasize the deviancy of minorities and justify the normativeness of Whites (García Coll et al., 1996). The seductive appeal of this bias is that it conforms, in appearance, with multiculturalism, the ideology that pursues equity and justice through the recognition and celebration of the unique culture of minorities (Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013). But this bias dehumanizes minorities by denying their individuality, while exonerating Whites from recognizing that they are also cultural beings conditioned to group dynamics. This is a distortion of the ideals of multiculturalism that ultimately perpetuates the notion that Whites are superior to minorities (Kendi, 2017). We can do better.

References

- Adams, G., & Markus, H. R. (2004). Toward a conception of culture suitable for a social psychology of culture. In M. Schaller & C. S. Crandall (Eds.), *Psychological foundations of culture* (pp. 335–360). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Adams, G., & Salter, P. S. (2019). *They (color)blinded me with science: Counteracting coloniality of knowledge in hegemonic psychology*. In K. W. Crenshaw, L. C. Harris, D. M. HoSang, & G. Lipsitz (Eds.). *Seeing race again: Countering colorblindness across the disciplines* (pp. 271-292). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- American Psychological Association, APA Task Force on Race and Ethnicity Guidelines in Psychology. (2019). *Race and Ethnicity Guidelines in Psychology: Promoting Responsiveness and Equity*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/race-and-ethnicity-in-psychology.pdf>
- Anderson, R. E., & Stevenson, H. C. (2019). RECASTing racial stress and trauma: Theorizing the healing potential of racial socialization in families. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), 63-75.
- Anderson, R. E., Jones, S., Anyiwo, N., McKenny, M., & Gaylord-Harden, N. (2019). What's Race Got to Do With It? Racial Socialization's Contribution to Black Adolescent Coping. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 29(4), 822-831.
- Ansara, Y. G., & Hegarty, P. (2012). Cisgenderism in psychology: Pathologising and misgendering children from 1999 to 2008. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 3(2), 137-160.
- Bailey, A. H., LaFrance, M., & Dovidio, J. F. (2018). Is man the measure of all things? A social cognitive account of androcentrism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 23(4), 307-331. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1088868318782848>

- Betancourt, H., & López, S. R. (1993). The study of culture, ethnicity, and race in American psychology. *American Psychologist*, 48(6), 629-637. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.48.6.629>
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2004). From bi-racial to tri-racial: Towards a new system of racial stratification in the USA. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(6), 931-950.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Carey, J. M., Clayton, K., & Horiuchi, Y. (2019). *Campus diversity: The hidden consensus*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Causadias, J. M., Korous, K. M., & Cahill, K. M. (2018). Are Whites and minorities more similar than different? Testing the cultural similarities hypothesis on psychopathology with a second order meta-analysis. *Development and Psychopathology*, 30(5), 2009-2027. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579418000895>
- Causadias, J. M., Vitriol, J. A., & Atkin, A. L. (2018a). Do we overemphasize the role of culture in the behavior of racial/ethnic minorities? Evidence of a cultural (mis)attribution bias in American Psychology. *American Psychologist*, 73(3), 243-255. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000099>
- Causadias, J. M., Vitriol, J. A., & Atkin, A. L. (2018b). The cultural (mis)attribution bias in developmental psychology in the United States. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 59, 65-74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2018.01.003>
- Chavez-Dueñas, N. Y., Adames, H. Y., Perez-Chavez, J. G., & Salas, S. P. (2019). Healing ethno-racial trauma in Latinx immigrant communities: Cultivating hope, resistance, and action. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), 49.

- 545 Cohen, A. B. (2009). Many forms of culture. *American Psychologist*, 64, 194–204.
546 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015308>
- 547 Cooper, C. R., & Denner, J. (1998). Theories linking culture and psychology: Universal and
548 community-specific processes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49(1), 559-584.
- 549 Diemer, M., Mistry, R., Wadsworth, M., Lopez, I., & Reimers, F. (2013). Best practices in
550 conceptualizing and measuring social class in psychological research. *Analyses of Social*
551 *Issues and Public Policy*, 13, 77-113. doi:10.1111/asap.12001.
- 552 Durham, W. H. (1991). *Coevolution: Genes, culture, and human diversity*. Stanford, CA:
553 Stanford University Press.
- 554 Echeverria-Estrada, C., & Batalova, J. (2020). *Chinese immigrants in the United*
555 *States*. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from
556 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states>
- 557 Fuller, B., & García Coll, C. (2010). Learning from Latinos: Contexts, families, and child
558 development in motion. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 559–565.
- 559 Gamblin, B. W., Winslow, M. P., Lindsay, B., Newsom, A. W., & Kehn, A. (2016). Comparing
560 in-person, Soma, and Mechanical Turk measurements of three prejudice-relevant
561 constructs. *Current Psychology*, 36(2), 217–224. doi: 10.1007/s12144-015-9403-1
- 562 García Coll, C. G., Akerman, A., & Cicchetti, D. (2000). Cultural influences on developmental
563 processes and outcomes: Implications for the study of development and
564 psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology*, 12(3), 333-356.
- 565 García Coll, C., Lamberty, G., Jenkins, R., McAdoo, H. P., Crnic, K., Wasik, B., & García, H. V.
566 (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority
567 children. *Child Development*, 67, 1891–1914.

- Gaylord-Harden, N. K., Burrow, A. L., & Cunningham, J. A. (2012). A cultural-asset framework for investigating successful adaptation to stress in African American youth. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6, 264–271. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2012.00236.x
- Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (1995). Implicit social cognition: attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes. *Psychological Review*, 102(1), 4-27.
- Guthrie, R. V. (2004). *Even the rat was white: A historical view of psychology* (2nd Edition). Pearson Education.
- Hagerman, M. A. (2014). White families and race: Colour-blind and colour-conscious approaches to white racial socialization. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(14), 2598-2614.
- Hegarty, P. (2017). On the failure to notice that White people are White: Generating and testing hypotheses in the celebrity guessing game. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 146(1), 41-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/xge0000243>
- Hegarty, P., & Bruckmüller, S. (2013). Asymmetric explanations of group differences: Experimental evidence of Foucault's disciplinary power. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 7(3), 176-186.
- Helms, J. E., & Talleyrand, R. M. (1997). Race is not ethnicity. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1246–1247. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.11.1246>
- Hewstone, M., Rubin, M., & Willis, H. (2002). Intergroup bias. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 575– 604. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135109>
- Kendi, I. X. (2017). *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America*. New York: Random House.

- Kitayama, S., & Uskul, A. K. (2011). Culture, mind, and the brain: Current evidence and future directions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 62, 419–449.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120709-145357>
- Kuchirko, Y., & Nayfeld, I. (2020). *Language gap: Cultural assumptions and ideologies*. In C. Huertas-Abril, & M. Gómez-Parra (Eds.), *International Approaches to Bridging the Language Gap* (pp. 32-53). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-1219-7.ch003
- Lee, J., & Zhou, M. (2015). *The Asian American Achievement Paradox*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- McLoyd, V. C. (2004). Linking race and ethnicity to culture: Steps along the road from inference to hypothesis testing. *Human Development*, 47(3), 185-191. doi:10.1159/000077990
- Metzl, J. M. (2019). *Dying of whiteness: How the politics of racial resentment is killing America's heartland*. New York: Hachette.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought, and decolonial freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26, 159–181. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275>
- Neville, H. A., Awad, G. H., Brooks, J. E., Flores, M. P., & Bluemel, J. (2013). Color-blind racial ideology: Theory, training, and measurement implications in psychology. *American Psychologist*, 68(6), 455-466. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033282>
- Pahlke, E., Bigler, R. S., & Suizzo, M. A. (2012). Relations between colorblind socialization and children's racial bias: Evidence from European American mothers and their preschool children. *Child Development*, 83(4), 1164-1179.
- Pew Research Center (2018). *The generation gap in American politics*. Retrieved from <https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/01/the-generation-gap-in-american-politics/>

- Pew Research Center (2019). *Race in America 2019: Public has negative views of the country's racial progress; more than half say Trump has made race relations worse*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/>
- Rivas-Drake, D., & Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2019). *Below the surface: Talking with teens about race, ethnicity, and identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Sauermann, H., & Roach, M. (2013). Increasing web survey response rates in innovation research: An experimental study of static and dynamic contact design features. *Research Policy*, 42(1), 273-286. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2012.05.003>
- Simons, D. J., Shoda, Y., & Lindsay, D. S. (2017). Constraints on generality (COG): A proposed addition to all empirical papers. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(6), 1123-1128.
- Sroufe, L. A. (1970). A methodological and philosophical critique of intervention-oriented research. *Developmental Psychology*, 2(1), 140-145. doi:10.1037/h0028598
- Tomasello, M. (1999). *The cultural origins of human cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Trimble, J. E., & Dickson, R. A. (2005). Ethnic floss. In C. B. Fisher and R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Applied Developmental Science*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2018). Intervening in cultural development: The case of ethnic-racial identity. *Development and psychopathology*, 30(5), 1907-1922.

- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., & Fine, M. A. (2001). Methodological implications of grouping Latino adolescents into one collective ethnic group. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 23(4), 347-362. doi:10.1177/0739986301234001
- Wirth, L. (1945). *The problem of minority groups* (pp. 347–372). Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Zeiders, K. H., Causadias, J. M., & White, R. M. (2018). The health correlates of culture: Examining the association between ethnic-racial identity and diurnal cortisol slopes. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 62(3), 349-351.

Table 1

Summary of demographic characteristics of participants

	<i>n</i>	%	
Sex/Gender			
Female	518	66	
Male	264	33	
Other	6	1	
Age			
18-19	553	79	
20-21	101	14	
22-23	27	4	
24-25	7	1	
26 or older	13	2	
Race/Ethnicity			
African American or Black	23	3	
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1	
Asian American or Asian	105	13	
European American or White	410	52	
Hispanic or Latino	135	17	
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	6	1	
Other Race	19	2	
Mixed/Multiracial	89	11	
Academic Year			
Freshman	492	62	
Sophomore	202	25	
Junior	68	9	
Senior	21	3	
Other	6	1	
Major			
Psychology	128	16	
Economy	5	1	
Family and Human Development	4	1	
Sociology	3	1	
Biology	65	8	
Business	283	36	
Other	301	37

Figure 1. Flow of participants through each stage of the study

Figure 2

Figure 2. Student's evaluation of the suitability of the sample composition depending on the topic of the homework assignment. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 3

Figure 3. Mean difference (Whites vs. racial/ethnic minorities) in college students' self-reported belief regarding the role of different processes on behavior. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. 0.0 represents no difference in judgements; high values represent high values for Whites vs. minorities

Figure 4

Figure 4. Mean difference (Whites vs. racial/ethnic minorities) in college students' perceptions of other college students' belief regarding the role of different processes on behavior. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. 0.0 represents no difference in judgements; high values represent high values for Whites vs. minorities

[Click here to access/download](#)

Open Practices Disclosure form

CMAB open-practices-disclosure-form.pdf

Your Submission CDP-2020-0456 - [EMID:dbfd12138b4f2236]

em.cdp.0.6af3f0.ea877aaf@editorialmanager.com
 <em.cdp.0.6af3f0.ea877aaf@editorialmanager.com>

on behalf of

Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology <em@editorialmanager.com>

Wed 4/29/2020 7:34 PM

To: Jose Causadias <Jose.Causadias@asu.edu>

CC: sykim@prc.utexas.edu

CDP-2020-0456

Is Culture More Important for Racial/Ethnic Minorities than for Whites? An Experiment and Survey on the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias Among College Students in the United States
Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology

Dear Dr. Causadias,

Please accept my apologies for the delay in processing your manuscript. As you can imagine, priorities necessarily shifted over the past month, and I am still working on recovering from this setback in my editorial work. Nonetheless, I had hoped to process this manuscript sooner.

As you will see below, I was able to secure reviews from three outstanding scholars who gave your manuscript a level of attention and feedback that suggests great interest in your work. Indeed, these reviewers are well-known and well-established within the psychological literature related to culture and intergroup dynamics, and I am grateful for their feedback. Prior to considering their comments and recommendations, I read and evaluated the manuscript independently and then integrated our assessments into this decision letter.

I will cut right to the chase: I'm sorry but your manuscript will not be considered for publication in *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. All four of us agree that your examination of the cultural misattribution bias needs greater clarity in nearly all aspects of the research process: stronger theoretical foundations, cleaner methodological distinctions, stronger empirical support, and clearer writing. In hope that the review process will be constructive as you move forward, I have summarized some of the major factors that contributed to this rejection decision below. In addition, I encourage you to consider the detailed feedback of each of the reviewers. Although I'm sure this is a disappointing decision, the reviewers have provided helpful ways to improve your work.

1. We all felt that stronger arguments were needed to distinguish both the definition as well as importance of the cultural misattribution bias. For example, Reviewer 1 questions your dichotomization of "cultural" vs. "psychological." I also shared Reviewer 3's questions regarding the possible implications of this bias. As is often the case within this literature, demonstrating differences between groups is less interesting than the meaning behind those differences. Unfortunately, the latter was not clearly established in this work.
2. Ultimately your findings are rather inconsistent (with each other and with your hypotheses), which when coupled with some of the methodological issues raised by the

reviewers (to which I would add the problem of a single item DV), undermines a full understanding and appreciation of the potential contribution of this work.

- a. For example, the experimental aspect of your study demonstrated that the minority sample was more appropriate than the white sample for both homework assignments.
- b. Within the survey part of your study, although Personality was rated as more influential for Whites than minorities, the other "psychological" variable Cognition was nearly rated as more influential for minorities than Whites (the p value is .053 and the effect size is nearly identical to the Personality effect).

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to consider your submission.

Sincerely,

Alex Czopp
Associate Editor
Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1: Manuscript CDP-2020-0456 aims to explore how college students in the United States interact with the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias based on evaluations of homework assignment vignettes. This is a simple research design with straightforward analyses.

Major concerns

Overall, the manuscript needs to be edited for clarity and conciseness. For example, the Title "Is Culture More Important for Racial/Ethnic Minorities than for Whites? An Experiment and Survey on the Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias Among College Students in the United States" has unnecessary words and could be shortened to "Cultural (Mis)Attribution Bias Among College Students in the United States." I do not think this study answers the question "Is Culture More Important for Racial/Ethnic Minorities than for Whites?"

The most substantial edits are needed to the Method section. It currently lacks clarity of the procedure and variables and has unneeded details in other areas. See comments below for details.

The dichotomization of "cultural" vs. "psychological" is problematic as these two things should not be mutually exclusive. My takeaway after reading the manuscript is that the authors do not conceptualize culture as part of the psychological processes. In some places you refer to the conditions as "Cultural" or "Psychological" and in other places, as "cultural" and "non-cultural". After deciding how you want to refer to this, keep it consistent throughout the paper. This comes up again in the discussion, as "psychological" is being conflated with "individuality" (p. 18 - even though you are stating this is a bias).

Abstract

The abstract is a place in which each word needs to actively contribute to your overall message. The first sentence in the objectives is great and that may be all you need. Then you can concisely describe the study/experiment in the method. In the results, you need to explicitly say what the overall results were. You do not need to state the hypothesis and findings for each of the five research questions but give an overall summary.

Method

Everything needs to be in past tense in describing the method and procedures for the study, (e.g. p. 11, line 216 "includes a brief"; p. 11, line 218 "Students will be provided", p. 11. Line 229 "homeworks will only vary."

There is an unneeded level of detail in some places, such as about the Sona system (p. 10), and "There was no follow up, interventions, sessions, or lab procedures" (p. 11) can be deleted.

p. 10: You talk about the sample size, are you oversampling? You bring this up in the introduction as a bias of researchers in studies examining culture, but they may have also been doing it for statistical power.

p. 11, line 217: The explanation of the experiment task needs clarification. You state "sample size and composition" without any further explanation of what this means. I went and looked over the materials posted in OSF (Thank you!) and figured it out, but you want to make this very clear to the reader as this is the crux of this manuscript. Later you refer to "sample composition" and which made me pause every time as you were referring to the homework assignment and not your sample for this study. As the homework assignment isn't described to the participants as a "study", I think you should use alternate language, such interviewees.

P. 11: Why behavior and cognition for one and emotion regulation for the other?

p. 11, line 228: Why are the interviewee options only all White or all minority?

p. 12: "its proposed design" could say "the homework structure and racial/ethnic backgrounds of the interviewees"

Results

Be sure to restate or summarize the research questions/hypotheses instead of just giving the number as the reader has not memorized all of the RQs.

p. 13: The differences between experimental conditions should be run after you were done excluding cases, unless these analyses helped you exclude more (which does not seem to be the case here).

p. 13: The two sentences starting on line 259 can be deleted. The rest of this paragraph can be shortened.

P. 14, lines 282-284: "or if each group perceived the out-group as more cultural -which would support a general intergroup bias in which members of the in-group are perceived more favorably than out-group members" How does perceiving a group as "more cultural" equate to being perceived as "less favorable"? This seems like a big jump, logically, from the types of questions you asked participants.

P. 14, lines 294-296: This sentence should be deleted.

p. 15: "This model included the main effect of race/ethnicity" - add "participant" between of and race/ethnicity.

p. 18: You state that Whites "are also cultural beings" - this needs to be emphasized more. This shows there could be benefit in educating "Whites" about their culture, that they often do not see due to the "White standard"/"White-centered perspective."

p. 19, lines 389-390: "this effect was not be moderated by" - delete "be"

P. 19, hypotheses 1 & 2: "3 racial/ethnic minority undergraduate students" may just seem more representative and diverse as it does not state that all are from the same racial and or ethnic group.

p. 19, lines 405-409: What are cognitive factors? Did you define this term for students or is it assumed they will know what this means? Only 16% of participants were psychology majors and even students in intro psych may not have a good definition of "cognitive factors". College students may think of IQ tests, and there is a variety of bias associated with the tests themselves, but also how they have been used. Students may hold some of those biases.

P. 20, line 423: "Respondents did not vary on these beliefs about what college students think based on their self-identification" needs clarified.

p. 21, lines 433-444: There is not enough foundation to suddenly discuss the importance of SES, nor how SES might influence results. Consider deleting this paragraph. Same with lines 453-465. There is not enough of a foundation for the reader to infer how this might shift results.

p. 22, lines 466-476: This is a great discussion paragraph.

Reviewer #2: The authors sought to extend previous research focused on the extent that the psychological literature reflected the cultural misattribution bias by examining whether a similar phenomenon would occur among college students. While I do think that this is an extremely important research area, the current study has a number of limitations that preclude my support for acceptance for publication. There are generally major problematic issues in all phases of the document. Given the importance of the topic, I would encourage the authors to consider my concerns/recommendations in their future efforts to examine this very timely issue.

Public Significance Statement

1) This statement seemed to be a bit convoluted and does not seem to reflect the actual significance of the work. Why does this research matter? The answer to that particular question needs to be addressed in this statement.

Introduction

- 1) The statement "while maintaining an unrelenting commitment to White supremacy throughout its history" seems to be inflammatory and a very broad generalization (page 4).
- 2) This citation is problematic (Causadias et al., 2018a; 2018a)—(see page 4)
- 3) It was very, very difficult to follow the logic and flow in the first section (pages 4 and 5)
- 4) The label "Culture as Concept, Culture as Alibi" should be revised. What does "culture as an alibi" mean exactly? The entire section should be rewritten to increase clarity and focus
- 5) I fully agree that the generalizability of the cultural misattribution phenomena is an important issue for empirical examination
- 6) There is a statement that "College students tend to have positions about culture, race, and ethnicity that can differ from older faculty". However, the authors do not provide any corroborating evidence for this particular assertion. (see page 8)
- 7) The research question "To what degree do college students value a sample composed of Whites as more appropriate for an assignment on psychology" is not clear at all. Please clarify "an assignment on psychology". (see page 9). I would consider dropping this question as it seems vague and four research questions seem sufficient.
- 8) Please specify why, for all of the research questions, there would not be an impact of participant race or ethnicity. One could certainly make an argument that highly racially identified White participants would be more likely to exhibit this cultural misattribution bias than any other group.

Method

- 1) There were issues with tense. For example, "Each assignment was presented separately and includes a brief description of the purpose of the homework, sample size and composition, and questions" and "Students will be provided with instructions to". I am assuming that the authors use the preregistration methods information. (see page 11)
- 2) What was the rationale given to participants for having an "all White" or an "all minority" sample. I would imagine that this would be a bit suspicious and contrived to the average participant. (see page 11). That term White or minority "sample" is problematic because it is conflated with the term "participants". It may have been better to be more direct and just use the term "class".
- 3) The term "minority" is extremely ambiguous. One would expect that there was wide variations in the assumptions regarding the exact type of minorities (e.g., Blacks, Asians, disabled, homosexuals, etc.) that were in the class. This variability could have impact on the findings. Indeed, it may account for the null findings. The authors should consider being more

clear regarding the exact nature of the minority groups.

4) There was a serious flaw in the homework manipulation. In addition to variation on the culture-related dimension, the cultural homework involved social situations while the non-cultural homework involved emotion regulation. To eliminate this confound, the central focus should have been identical in both conditions (e.g., social situations).

5) It would have been helpful to have a clear statement of the actual experimental design. It seems like it was a 2(class type-Minority class, White class) x homework type (cultural, non-cultural) with the latter as a within-group variable. The design given was a bit confusing.

6) The actual wording of the central questions could be construed as offensive by some participants (especially minorities). "The ethnicity and race of the students selected for this homework is appropriate". This implies that some ethnic/races just "could not handle" the homework assignment. In addition, the opposite would most likely occur. Specifically, an instructor would be more likely to select an assignment based on the student performance. A more subtle/nuanced and appropriate question might be "What is the likelihood that most students in the class will perform well on the assignment?" (see page 12)

7) The authors state that they assess perceptions of "two cultural processes" but then list "group membership and social identity, and culture, ethnicity, and race". (see page 12)

8) In general, the authors should be much clearer in delineating the exact measures that were utilized in the study. In it's current form, it is struggle to understand the exact nature and purpose of the relevant measures in this section.

Results

1) This section was especially confusing and difficult to follow. For example, the authors state that "The main effect of sample composition was significant for both the Cultural homework ($b = -.22$, 95% CI $[-.28, -.17]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.55$ and Non-cultural homework ($b = -.13$, 95% CI $[-.19, -.08]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.32$)". What was the exact effect? (see page 15)

2) "Surprisingly, we found that participants believed that the Cultural homework was more interesting with a minority sample ($b = -.08$, 95% CI $[-.12, -.04]$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.28$), but the main effect of sample composition was not significant when the main effect of participants' race/ethnicity and its interaction with sample". Does this mean that there was a significant interaction? (see page 15-16).

3) "These analyses revealed that participants believe that personality, ($F(1, 789) = 5.59$, $p < .018$, $d = 0.08$), is more influential for the behavior of Whites (vs. minorities), but not cognitive factors, ($F(1, 789) = 3.35$, $p = .053$, $d = 0.07$)". Again, these findings suggest that there was an interaction such that there was sample difference on the personality factors but not the cognitive factors. Is this true?

4) Again, I simply could not follow the results relative to the research questions or the hypotheses. This entire section requires significant revision for clarity.

Reviewer #3: This paper examines whether college students are more like to attribute culture to minority group members relative to Whites, and cognition to Whites relative to minority group members (i.e., the cultural misattribution bias). I found this topic very interesting and can see the societal importance of this bias, but overall the current single study felt preliminary to me

and did not present much clear theoretical advancement beyond Causadias et al., 2018.

1. The paper convincingly demonstrates that students perceive racial/ethnic/cultural processes to be more influential for minority group members relative to Whites. However, as I read, I wondered about explanations for why this is the case. Is this another example of how White = the default, while racial minority status is marked? (These data don't seem to entirely support the notion of White = default - see #2.) Are students tuning into some kind of actual group difference - maybe that racial minorities tend exhibit a stronger sense of racial identification relative to Whites? Or that racial minorities tend to endorse a more interdependent self-construal (and thus may see their social identities and groups as more important to the self)? If the paper could shed greater light as to why this cultural misattribution bias occurs, that would help make a stronger case for novelty.

Relatedly, a plausible alternative explanation for students' preference for a minority sample for a cultural homework is that students believe an assignment related to culture should interview a more diverse group of people than only Whites. That is, rather than perceiving culture to be more influential for minorities than Whites, students may be considering the need for minority representation when discussing race & culture.

2. The paper finds considerably less evidence that students perceive psychological processes to be more influential for Whites relative to minority group members. In fact students seem to prefer minority group members for both the cultural and the psychological assignment, and to perceive both cultural and psychological processes to be more influential for minority group members compared to Whites (after controlling for participant race). Given that, I wondered whether students are actually rating minorities as "more cultural" to a greater extent than they're rating minorities as "more psychological", or if students are exhibiting an overall minority preference. The authors could directly test for a race (White, minority) x dimension (cultural, psychological) interaction to answer this question.

3. I felt the paper could also be strengthened by exploring the effects of this cultural misattribution bias. The paper argues that this cultural misattribution bias has very harmful effects ("dehumanizes minorities by denying their individuality, while exonerating Whites from recognizing that they are also cultural beings conditioned to group dynamics"), but I think at this stage this argument may go beyond the data. A study/studies empirically demonstrating these negative consequences would help to enhance the contribution of this work. Does the cultural misattribution bias predict greater deindividuation or dehumanization of minorities? Does this bias lead to stronger racial stereotypes, or endorsement of a cultural deficit model?

APA asks that authors please take a moment to give us your feedback on the peer review process as you experienced it, by completing a short survey, available at <http://goo.gl/forms/qzKP6Zkqx9>

In compliance with data protection regulations, you may request that we remove your personal registration details at any time. [\(Remove my information/details\)](#). Please contact the publication office if you have any questions.