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Racial equity in social psychological science: A guide for scholars, institutions, and the field

Brittany Torrez[1] 🔗 | **Sa-kiera Tiarra Jolynn Hudson[2]** 🔗 |
Cydney H. Dupree[3] 🔗

[1]School of Management, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

[2]Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California, USA

[3]School of Management, University College London, London, UK

Correspondence
Cydney H. Dupree, University College London, London, UK.
Email: c.dupree@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract

How can social psychologists ensure their scholarship does not maintain racial inequality—or better, is anti-racist? This article serves as a reference for scholars by briefly reviewing the state of racial inequality in psychological science before providing concise yet comprehensive recommendations. Challenges include (a) the field's historic role in inequality-maintenance (especially by reinforcing harmful stereotypes), (b) pervasive objectivity norms that reify Whiteness as the status quo, and (c) the inequitable allocation of resources to White scholars and White-centered scholarship. Recommendations center on (a) methodological practices during the research process (from idea generation to manuscript preparation), (b) empirical transparency from scholars during the publication process, and (c) institutional, resource-focused support from gatekeepers (e.g., editors, senior faculty) to incentivize the diversification of our science.

KEYWORDS
academia, inequality, meta-science, objectivity, race and ethnicity, stereotypes

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In 2020, much of the world was rocked by the brutal killing of Mr. George Floyd. Millions around the world took to the streets in protest. Organizations rushed to release statements affirming their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2020; British Psychological Society, 2020). Institutions changed the names of buildings, awards, and even schools to avoid associations with racist history (Jones, 2020). The field of psychology was not untouched by this social movement. In the months that followed, multiple papers were retracted from highly-ranked scientific journals for perpetuating harmful stereotypes (Bauer, 2020; Johnson et al., 2020).[1] Recent empirical findings (e.g., Roberts et al., 2020) reinforced what is easily revealed by examining the field's major conferences or journals' editorial boards: social psychology is overwhelmingly White, across levels and sub-disciplines. This has implications for the quality and impact of our science—the research questions that are asked, the participants whose views are represented, and the scholarship that is funded, published, and disseminated.

The field has shown some self-awareness (Dupree & Kraus, 2022; Ledgerwood et al., 2022). Tasks forces have been created, reports produced, calls to action written, and awards funded. But progress, along many metrics, has been frustratingly slow. Furthermore, in some cases, the progress has been illusory, a virtue-signal (Kristofferson et al., 2014) by institutions that are uncomfortable with the efforts necessary for true change (Onyeador et al., 2021). For instance, one international funding agency recently conducted an external evaluation of its progress toward meeting anti-racist goals set in 2020, finding that they were, as the CEO put it, "still an institutionally racist organization," having "fall[en] short of [their] commitment to anti-racism, both as a funder and an employer" (Farrar, 2022). In this article, we provide a guide for social psychologists who wish to help move our field toward racial equity, ensuring that our science is representative of the world around us, inclusive of historically-marginalized scholars, and aiding progress toward an equitable society. These concrete, data-driven recommendations are aimed at scholars across levels and rank—from the individual to the field, from graduate student to full professor.

We discuss the importance of methodological practice, empirical transparency, and resource-driven institutional support (particularly from gatekeepers such as journal editors, principal investigators, or senior faculty on hiring and promotion committees). We begin by reviewing critical socio-historical context surrounding racial inequality in social psychology.

1 | FOUNDATIONS OF RACIAL INEQUALITY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

For decades, social psychologists have studied the antecedents and consequences of racism. However, when we look inward, the evidence is clear: social psychology is by no means immune from perpetuating racial inequality. Anecdotally, the field is rife with stories of scholars of color being tokenized, enduring micro-aggressions to explicit bigotry, and ultimately, leaving the field due to chronic racial injustices (see the Twitter hashtags #BlackInTheAcademy and #BlackInPsych for examples). Empirically, recent scholarship illustrates the pervasiveness of racial inequality in our field. Roberts et al. (2020) queried more than 11,500 empirical articles published in two of social psychology's higher-ranked journals (i.e., *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* [JPSP] and *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*), finding that the vast majority did not reference participant race (95%), were edited by White editors (92%), and were written by White scholars (72%). Those edited by White editors were significantly less likely to highlight race, and among those that did highlight race, those authored by White scholars were significantly less likely to report participant race. These stories and findings reinforce the notion that psychological science—a field that was created by and for wealthy, White men—has maintained its exclusivity nearly 150 years after its inception (Jones, 2010). As such, the field that purports to reveal how humans think, feel, and behave is only representative and inclusive of a select few.

1.1 | Historical foundations

Any scholar who seeks to eradicate racial inequality in psychological science must understand the field's historic role in building and maintaining racial inequality. We do not find ourselves here by accident. Historically, psychological

science has long buttressed systems of racial inequality. Since the 1800s, psychology played a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of stereotypes depicting people of color as cognitively, biologically, and socially inferior to White people (Jones, 2010; Saini, 2019). These stereotypes are encapsulated by theories around biological or genetic determinism: the notion that different genetic material corresponds to different levels of intelligence (Saini, 2019). According to this theory, people of color are cognitively inferior due to their genetic inferiority (Jones, 2010). Such theories persisted for centuries, justifying a global slave trade, a eugenics movement that gave rise to World War II, and Jim Crow laws that persisted until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Genetic determinism was taught widely in psychology courses throughout the 1900s, and although Black psychologists have been arguing against these harmful theories for decades (e.g., Boykin, 1983; Guthrie, 1976; Thomas, 1982; Thomas & Sillen, 1972), it is only relatively recently that White scholars and mainstream publications have begun to debunk the essentialist notion that sex- and race-based differences are evolutionary facts (Fine, 2017; Jones, 2010; Saini, 2019).

Even after notions of biological racial inferiority became less acceptable, psychology furthered more implicit notions of people of color's cultural inferiority. For instance, Walter Mischel used evidence from his famous delayed gratification findings—wherein children resist their impulse for one marshmallow to later receive two marshmallows—to argue that Black children lack impulse control compared to White children (Grusec & Mischel, 1966; Pettigrew, 1964; Renner, 1964). These studies contributed to harmful stereotypes depicting Black Americans as lazy and lacking self-regulation. These studies were cited in government reports and proceedings, many of which suggested that it is Black Americans' own "culture of poverty"—rather than slavery, Jim Crow, and persistent racism—that leaves Black Americans disadvantaged (Moynihan, 1965). Decades later, Banks et al. (1983) conducted a review of the literature debunking Mischel's interpretation of the findings—when asked whether they wanted to delay gratification, half of Black children waited and the other half did not; their choice depended on whether they valued the reward in the first place—but the damage was done.

1.2 | Psychological foundations

Racism is a systemic phenomenon, baked into the fabric of our society (see Saini, 2019, for a longer review). As social psychologists, we have studied the contextual and psychological factors that contribute to the maintenance of racial inequality. These same mechanisms contribute to racial bias and inequality within our field.

1.2.1 | Racial ignorance

A wealth of psychological research has established that race plays a crucial role in how people perceive and move through the world (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Despite pervasive evidence of these racialized experiences, many White scholars remain racially ignorant, in large part due to overwhelmingly White social and professional networks (Mills, 2014; Mueller, 2020). People of color, by contrast, are often forced to navigate mostly White workspaces as the token person of color, leaving them subject to subtle and deliberate manifestations of bias that can reduce their sense of belonging (Anderson, 2015). Racial segregation, which has long been the norm in the United States (Massey & Denton, 1993; Rothstein, 2017) means that White psychologists are less likely to have lived experiences that give them a nuanced understanding of racism. Such personal experiences are critical for recognizing and rejecting dominant worldviews that maintain racial inequality (e.g., Dubois, 1903; Hill Collins, 1991). As such, White editors and other gatekeepers are less likely to recognize the validity and importance of research questions related to race and racism.

1.2.2 | The denial of racism

Psychology is rife with examples of the denial of racism, both anecdotal and empirical. Anecdotally, the regular "GRE debate" on social media—in which scholars debate the importance and harm of using GRE scores in the graduate

student admissions process—brings forth several examples of (usually White) scholars denying that the use of the GRE is harmful to anti-racist goals (see Gifty, 2021). Empirically, social psychological research reveals that White people, who benefit from hiding the uncomfortable existence of racial privilege (from which they benefit), tend to deny that such privilege exists (Lowery et al., 2007); they are especially likely to deny White privilege if they see the world as a meritocracy.

It is, however, possible to override the tendency to deny White privilege by affirming other positive personal characteristics, such as social skill or adaptability (Knowles & Lowery, 2012; Phillips & Lowery, 2018). Self-affirmation, "a well-established procedure for protecting individuals from threats to the self" (Phillips & Lowery, 2018, p. 13), reduces White Americans' tendency to claim that they have had hardship (and therefore haven't benefited from White privilege) by reducing their sense of threat. Thus, White Americans, particularly those who see the world as meritocratic, are motivated to deny racial privilege, and this is closely tied to their self-concept.

This dovetails with recent research revealing that individuals have a motivated tendency to underestimate racial inequality in society and their institutions (Boykin et al., 2020; Kraus et al., 2017; Ray, 2019). Indeed, those who do underestimate racial inequality are less likely to hire Black job applicants seeking a high-status job or support policies that reduce inequality (Dupree et al., 2021). This denial of racial inequality—and the hierarchy-enhancing implications of this motivated belief—also influence White scholars' valuation of research on race and racism and motivation to mitigate such inequality in our field.

1.2.3 | Backlash against confronting bias

These psychological foundations of ignorance and denial are likely to manifest in behaviors that contribute to the interrogation and isolation of racially minoritized scholars (for specific instances of interrogation, see Torrez et al., 2022). Due to their racial identities, racially minoritized scholars who seek to bring their lived experiences to their research may be perceived as unable to shed personal biases—leaving them subject to empirical interrogation. In contrast, due to historical power dynamics, White scholars' personal biases and lived experiences are perceived as default, neutral, and more easily adhering to traditional notions of objective science—excusing them from such interrogation.

Such dynamics are made clear when we examine our field's own literature on bias confrontation. Minority groups who confront bias are often met with skepticism (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Indeed, Black people who confront racial bias face more backlash compared to White confronters (Schultz & Maddox, 2013). This is especially concerning considering the tendency for marginalized scholars to study topics related to inequalities relative to other research topics (Hoppe et al., 2019). Scholarship focused on racial justice violates the status quo of psychological science, wherein racial scholarship is severely underrepresented (Roberts et al., 2020). When people of color do confront bias or challenge the status quo, they are more likely to be discredited by others (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008; Kaiser & Miller, 2001).

1.3 | Institutional foundations

1.3.1 | Objectivity norms

Another factor driving racial inequality in psychological science is the implicit norms enforced by institutions and stakeholders in our field. One such norm is objectivity. Objectivity, defined as the "extent to which a researcher's methods are free from prejudice," is a norm typically upheld across the sciences that enforces scientific rigor, personal detachment, and a lack of bias (Armstrong, 1979, p. 423; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). However, applying traditional standards of objectivity to the study of a topic so often cast as subjective (such as racial scholarship) may hold implications for the reproduction of racial inequality in psychological science. For example, as previously mentioned, racially

minoritized scholars who conduct research on racialized topics may be seen as too invested in the conclusions of their research, inviting interrogation over whether they are truly objective. In addition, the approaches and methodologies that are most likely to center the perspectives of racially marginalized people and provide a more critical lens to psychological studies of race are likely to be run counter to predominant norms of objectivity (e.g., Critical Race Psychology; see Salter & Adams, 2013; Salter & Haugen, 2017). Similarly, the difficulties associated with sampling racially minoritized groups members (Okazaki & Sue, 1995) and the use of qualitative methodologies to elevate the marginalized perspectives of these groups (e.g., Bowleg, 2013; Settles, 2006) are likely to invite scrutiny in a field devoted to rigorous, quantitative science in its pursuit of objectivity.

Racially minoritized scholars may take notice of this scrutiny, stifling their innovative and radical racial scholarship by attempting to objectify their work. This process fundamentally shapes racial discourse and racial scholarship in the academy in ways that are anything but objective (Anderson, 2015). For example, deterred by frequent and unconstructive interrogations of their work, underrepresented racial minorities may present their work in ways that align with the status quo—ultimately stalling efforts to encourage radical and novel racial scholarship and instead advancing a psychology of race filtered through the perspective of Whiteness (Andersen, 2003; Jones, 2010). Applying these findings to publication and science communication, strong negative reactions to researchers who challenge the status quo can contribute to racially minoritized scholars' feelings of alienation in academia. Ultimately, increased interrogation and alienation may prompt scholars of color to leave academia, leaving the field bereft of academics with valuable personal and academic experience to lend to research, teaching, and service.

1.3.2 | The prioritization of individualistic approaches

Approaching racism as a systemic issue existing not only within the minds of individuals but also, largely, in the fabric of our society runs counter to the predominant individualistic approach of psychological science. Critical race psychology is an area of scholarship that imposes a critical lens upon hegemonic perspectives in psychology—in large part to transform the psychological study of race from an approach that views racism as embedded within the psychology of individuals to one that views racism as systemic (Salter & Adams, 2013). However, as this approach challenges the status quo, it may prompt a more skeptical review process, whereby ordinary claims require extraordinary evidence (e.g., evidence that racism is systemic). Arguing that individual approaches to racism will not suffice is an upward battle, given the prevailing individualistic approach of our science. These higher standards increase the barriers to publication, particularly in higher-ranked journals, potentially stalling programs of research, promotions, and careers.

2 | IMPLICATIONS OF RACIAL INEQUALITY IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Before turning to recommendations, we briefly note the implications of racial inequality in social psychological science, for they are grave. In short, the field of social psychology is a microcosm of a society that has a long legacy of upholding racial inequality. Individually, racial ignorance derived from segregation, the motivated tendency to deny racial privilege, and the interrogation of racially marginalized scholars who challenge the status quo are keeping White editors and grant reviewers from seeing the importance of race-centered research questions and keeping scholars of color marginalized (Knowles et al., 2014; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Structurally, objectivity norms and an emphasis on individuality maintain the Whiteness of our field, keeping White and racially minoritized psychological scientists from firmly and explicitly centering race in their scholarship.

These barriers contradict every intention set forth by psychological scholars who wish to improve the rigor of our field. For instance, scholars' attempts to objectify their research in order to align themselves with the status quo and seek approval from institutional gatekeepers (e.g., editors and reviewers) fundamentally shape the landscape of

racial scholarship in the academy. A bias-free psychology of race might be envisioned as inclusive of all perspectives, elevating those who have been historically marginalized, and allowing for complexity in its understanding of race and racism. However, objectivity norms create a psychology of race wherein racial scholarship is simultaneously too biased toward dominant (i.e., White) perspectives and lacking necessary nuance to capture the range of mechanisms that drive racism.

The centering of White perspectives has consequences for the quality and impact of our science, and the cost to society is also great. For scientists wishing to elevate psychological science's rigor and stand amongst policymakers, organizational stakeholders, and colleagues in mathematical and physical sciences, decontextualized research proliferating ineffective approaches to diversity across society is antithetical to these goals. For example, colorblind or instrumental approaches to diversity (Apfelbaum, et al., 2008; Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Georgeac & Rattan, 2022) remain a significant part of our field's past and present connection with diversity management strategies in organizations. And yet, our field provides very little evidence of such approaches' utility in attenuating hierarchy and, in fact, such strategies may contribute to inequality reproduction (Georgeac & Rattan, 2022; Starck et al., 2021).

Ultimately, a psychology of race that does not fully incorporate and value the perspectives of racially minoritized people is limited in its imagination and constrained in its implications. Adjacent fields like sociology have not been influenced by the constraint of finding universal truths to the extent psychology has (Cauce, 2011; Cole, 2009), allowing for greater centering of the complexities of race and identities without relegating these dynamics to the periphery of science. It is thus no surprise that insights related to identity often first originate in other social sciences (Cole, 2009) and are subsequently integrated into social psychology. As an example, political scientists Sen and Wasow (2016) argue that "race is a bundle of sticks," better understood as a bundle of related categories (e.g., skin color, social norms, religion, class) that co-occur with the latent factor we call "race." This contrasts with psychology's current understanding of race as an essentialist, single stick, that aggregates across these related but separate dimensions. Similarly, sociologist Monk (2022) argues against race as a category in the first place, arguing that scientists are placing rigid categories (e.g., race) onto inherently fluid concepts. Finally, sociologists Fields and Fields (2022) take these ideas even further and posit that race is neither essentialist nor constructivist but illusory. While social psychologists often operate under the assumption that race produces racism, these sociologists argue that it is the very act of racism that produces the illusion of race.

We do not mean to imply that our field uniquely suffers from oversimplified understandings of race. However, as mentioned above, social psychology is uniquely inhibited from incorporating paradigm-changing insights into theories, methodologies, and analyses. Social psychology must resist the impulse of universality and individuality and lean into more radical and innovative approaches to race. How would psychology change if the above ideas, and more, were incorporated into our science? How much closer could we come to a set of truths that applied to more of humanity by forgoing our insistence on universal truths colored by Whiteness (Guthrie, 1976)? While there is some evidence of change (see Martinez, 2022 for an extension of racecraft in the realm of face perception), this work remains undervalued and deprioritized.

3 | RECOMMENDATIONS

By now, we hope it is clear that social psychology has a problem with race and it is imperative we address it. We now outline ways that individuals, departments, and institutions can take concrete steps to mitigate their contribution to the field's centering of Whiteness and ultimately incorporate explicitly anti-racist methods and practices to their scholarship.

3.1 | Understand the scope of the problem

First and foremost, it is imperative that we know the scope of the problem. While anecdotes can be powerful illustrators of racism's impact, our field is primarily influenced by empirical evidence. Thus, individuals and organizations

must audit themselves to see and quantify the extent to which they are perpetuating racism. For instance, as noted on many psychology departments' Diversity and Anti-Racism statements, several departments fielded surveys in 2020 and 2021 to assess the racial climate felt by graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty and to gather suggestions on how to improve the climate in the future (see University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for one example; Psychology Department Anti-Racism Action Plan, 2020). Anecdotally, scholars have audited the race (and other identities) of those they cite in their manuscripts as an academic "racial Bechdel Test" (Selisker, 2015), revealing just how White-centered is the scholarship in which they engage (Zurn et al., 2020). Moreover, in 2020, several departments hosted implicit bias workshops and anti-racist book clubs to improve understanding of interpersonal and structural racism, which can lead to deep reflection and awareness of White privilege, as also noted on many departments' Diversity and Anti-Racism websites (see St. Olaf College for one such example; Psychology Department Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021). Such data-driven steps—involving both empirical audits and conversations—are crucial; we must fully understand the nature of the problem before we can effectively intervene upon it.

Scholars must also increase their awareness of White-centric practices and norms at all stages of research: from hypothesis generation, operationalization, and analysis, to interpretation of findings, the review process, and ultimately, publishing. One useful tool to assist in this awareness is Elizabeth Cole's model for increasing awareness in psychology of intersectionality, or the interconnected hegemonic nature of social identities (Cole, 2009). She encourages scholars to ask three central questions at each stage of the research process, namely, "who is included within this category" and "what role does inequality play" (as well as "where are the sites of commonalities across differences"). Centering these questions can help underscore when assumptions are being made regarding prototypicality and norms that are rooted within Whiteness as well as offer follow-up questions that will help mitigate it. Scholars should also ask "who is/is not included in my sample?," ideally leading them to increase sample diversity for generalizability, clarify to whom their samples refer (e.g., including racial qualifiers before generic words like "women," "men" and "people" in titles, abstracts, and results), and provide constraints on universal claims (Kraus & Torrez, 2020).

We note that, while addressing racial ignorance is a critical first step (Livingston, 2021), it is just the tip of the iceberg. Many well-meaning interventions aimed at improving racial equity focus solely on awareness without a strategy for implementation, allowing people to feel good for doing something that ultimately changes nothing (e.g., implicit bias workshops; Onyeador et al., 2021). In fact, only engaging in shallow forms of addressing racial disparities can further entrench hierarchy by promoting an illusory sense of progress and fairness (Kaiser et al., 2013; Kraus et al., 2022).

3.2 | Address White-centered practices

While there are many areas in which social psychology can decenter Whiteness, we focus on three here: explicitly decentering Whiteness in research representativeness, decentering Whiteness as a field-level norm, and decentering Whiteness in institutional incentive structures.

3.2.1 | Decentering Whiteness in research representativeness

First, we encourage the field to decenter Whiteness by reconsidering (a) whom we invest in as research assistants, graduate students, and faculty members, (b) whom we request for invited talks and special issue submissions, and (c) whom we research, cite, and elevate. The problem of racial diversity within our field is obvious. At the most senior level, the number of full tenured Black professors within social psychology is scarce, with full tenured Latinx and Native American professors at even more dismal numbers. In 2019, Black professors made up 3% of full tenured professors registered with the *Society of Personality and Social Psychology* (SPSP), Latinx faculty made up 2% of full

professors, and at the time of the survey, no full tenured professors identified as Native American (SPSP, 2019). To remedy this issue, academic institutions must invest in the successful recruitment and retention of faculty of color (see Dupree & Boykin, 2021).

Many programs exist to address pipeline issues, from summer research opportunity programs to community spaces like the *Black Social and Personality Psychologists Retreat* (BLASPR; NSF, 2018; SPSP, 2018) and *Flourish* (SPSP, 2020) which take place after SPSP's annual conference. However, very few programs focus on community-building (BLASPR and Flourish are two exceptions) and the ones that do are rarely institutionalized, with financial, temporal, and cognitive burden of maintaining them falling on the shoulders of racially minoritized scholars. We propose an increase in institutionalized support for programs that increase inclusion and networking opportunities. Examples include the *Emerging Scholars Talk Series* in NYU's psychology department (NYU, 2022), which explicitly brings in diverse scholars to present their work. Rather than passively waiting for scholars to reach out and request to give a talk—requests that require a level of cultural knowledge that not all academics possess—organizers can reach out on social media and organizational listservs to request speakers, providing them with consistent, professional growth and increasing the exposure of their work. If at all possible, organizers should also consider providing an honorarium to speakers and covering travel costs, which can further incentivize a diverse array of scholars to present. Moreover, organizers should endeavor to invite a diverse array of racially minoritized scholars from a range of institutions, not only the most high-profile scholars from the highest-ranked institutions. Investing in scholars of color can go a long way toward diversifying the field, but it will require effort and financial capital.

Similarly, we encourage scholars to think deeply about the representativeness of their research samples, materials, and methods. Many scholars use convenience samples such as psychology students and online databases, which are notoriously non-representative, in part due to the overwhelming pressure to "publish or perish" (Anderson et al., 2019). Research stimuli for race-neutral work often feature White-only faces, names, and relevant scenarios, in an effort to "control for extraneous variance" (Cook & Over, 2021). However, titles, abstracts, and general findings are often described as if the research was done on representative samples using representative materials (Henrich et al., 2010; Rad et al., 2018). To decenter Whiteness in research design, we encourage scholars to be clearly and accurately describe who their research is about and to whom it can generalize—and to increase sample and stimuli diversity to be more inclusive. Scholars must also urge institutions to create better avenues to support finding and adequately compensating samples of racial minorities.

Increasing sample and stimuli diversity is easier said than done, and the field must invest in diversifying both. Online databases charge a premium for access to racially diverse samples; for example, Cloud Research, a popular participant database software, charges a per-participant fee of 0.24 cents to recruit White participants but 0.59 cents to recruit Black participants (Litman et al., 2017). Furthermore, many stimuli databases treat race as an afterthought, often not consistently labeling stimuli with accurate racial information (Scheuerman et al., 2020). A special issue on diversifying standard paradigms in psychology—such as the "mind in the eyes" task, currently assessed using only White faces (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001)—may encourage researchers to create these materials. We also urge departments and institutions to develop innovative ways of increasing access. There are some mechanisms for running representative or community samples at low cost, notably the Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS; http://tessexperiments.org/) initiative and Harvard Digital Laboratory for the Social Sciences (DLABSS; https://dlabss.harvard.edu/). However, these mechanisms are idiosyncratic, and access often depends on institutional prestige or luck. Other mechanisms such as the University of Chicago Survey Lab (https://voices.uchicago.edu/surveylab/) and Project Implicit (https://www.projectimplicit.net/) increase access to hard-to-recruit populations but are prohibitively expensive. These examples suggest that pooling resources can be an effective way to increase access to minoritized populations without drastically increasing costs.

Finally, we encourage scholars to acknowledge and celebrate the value of non-quantitative methods in decentering Whiteness. Qualitative methods—including storytelling and participatory action research—are at the forefront of the research paradigms of critical race theory and liberation psychology (Comas-Díaz & Torres Rivera, 2020). In contrast to quantitative methods (e.g., experiment and survey research), qualitative methods literally give voice to the

lived experiences of marginalized groups. Analyses that use or are informed by these methods have a greater capacity to place racial issues in a broader historical and societal context—bringing issues of race and power into the spaces where they are likely to be best understood (Kraus & Torrez, 2020). The racially marginalized are one of the most important sources of information on race and racism (Adams et al., 2018) and yet, qualitative methodologies centering their perspectives are often devalued and deemed less empirically rigorous in psychological science (Kidd, 2002) and therefore, are underrepresented in psychological research.

3.2.2 | Decentering Whiteness in social psychological norms

Second, we propose decentering Whiteness in social psychological norms. Norms are powerful tools for changing behaviors and altering outcomes; the social psychological research supporting this claim is vast (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Tankard & Paluck, 2016). And yet, our field hasn't fully grappled with the impact of these norms on perpetuating racial inequality.

The role of institutional gatekeepers

The norms proliferated by social psychological gatekeepers—those who are tenured, associate editors at major journals, heads of funding agencies, etc.—can have an outsized effect on increased equity. We can look to the open science movement as a great example of gatekeeper norms reverberating throughout the discipline, as the Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) guidelines put forth by the Center for Open Science (Nosek et al., 2015) are now being used by several journals in the field such as the JPSP (https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/psp/index-?tab=4) and *Cortex* (Chambers, 2018). These norms can go beyond open science, such as the norms at the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, where they espouse not only cutting-edge open science practices but also inclusive language (https://www.elsevier.com/journals/journal-of-experimental-social-psychology/0022-1031/guide-for-authors). Requiring adherence to such guidelines in a higher-ranked journal such as *JPSP* will likely increase scholars' familiarity with open science, making it much more likely that they will follow those guidelines for journals that do not require it. Scholars will become more comfortable with doing anti-racist work if they have the chance to practice, and disciplinary gatekeepers have a fundamental role in creating systems and spaces that make anti-racist behaviors valued and easy to implement.

Increasing the diversity and lived experience of gatekeepers is another way of changing the norms. For instance, individuals who grew up in more racially-diverse spaces are less likely to endorse colorblindness and more likely to be race-conscious in how they view and react to racial dynamics (Meyers et al., 2021). Having people with more diverse cultural experiences at the helm of important social psychological organizations is critical for altering disciplinary norms. A diverse set of gatekeepers will be more cognizant of inequity and marginalization—and have the institutional power to implement solutions to those problems. For example, editors and reviewers who are more race-conscious may be more likely to notice White-centered practices within the publishing process, including racial research receiving greater scrutiny, samples being predominantly-White (but referenced using in race-neutral language), and research focusing exclusively on racial minorities being forced to include White control samples for publication. Having a diverse set of gatekeepers with the power to address these problems—for instance, by changing reviewer guidelines, empowering associate editors to explicitly disregard reviewer advice for White control samples, and requiring precise language in the use of convenience samples—would go a long way toward shifting norms within the field.

The role of open science

Although the open science movement has imparted important lessons around setting and proliferating norms to improve the quality of our science, the particular norms it seeks to advance may inadvertently contribute to racial inequality in the field (Bennett, 2021). In many ways, the open science movement was sparked by the highly publicized replication crisis in psychology—an increasingly occurring phenomenon whereby attempted replications of past

study findings frequently do not reveal the same result (Maxwell et al., 2015). A key aim of the open science movement in our field is to increase the quality of psychological science by making scientific research (e.g., methodological decisions, pre-registered hypotheses, analysis syntax) more accessible and transparent in order to increase replicability (Crüwell et al., 2018). In an effort to increase the legitimacy of psychological science, open science advocates pushed forth more rigorous methodological and analytical standards for hypothesis testing. While these efforts are well-intentioned, without careful attention to the way in which these standards are applied, they may inadvertently contribute to objectivity norms in our field (Bennett, 2021). For example, scholars of color conducting work on race, who are already more likely to receive interrogations to their objectivity in the form of methodological critique (Torrez et al., 2022), may see increased intensity of these interrogations with the elevation of open science. Further, these interrogations, which disproportionately affect scholars of color, may be lauded as part of our field's natural scientific practice of increasing open science, rather than critiqued for their unique burden on scholars of color. Additionally, calls for increased power within the Open Science movement (e.g., increased sample sizes) may be particularly burdensome for scholars who study racially marginalized groups. We encourage open science advocates to consider how this movement can be reimagined to support the perspectives and career success of marginalized scholars, including, but not limited to, the guidance provided to support early career feminists in open science by Pownall et al. (2021).

The role of scholars

Subjectivity is inevitable in scholarship. Rather than attempting to quantify and standardize psychology's path into scientific legitimacy through objectivity and scientific rigor, we must acknowledge bias and subjectivity, deepening our understanding of how our identities shape our science—including the research topics we choose, the people we study, and the outcomes we care about. Unlike the hierarchy-enhancing assumptions of psychological research that currently dominate our field, this stance considers the subjectivity of multiple parties, including White scholars conducting racial scholarship, scholars whose research is not explicitly racialized (but that undoubtedly has racial consequences), and scholars conducting quantitative research. From ideation and research design to analysis, all quantitative scholars, regardless of their racial identity, are inundated with subjective choices influenced by their backgrounds and identities, particularly around the interpretation of data (D'ignazio & Klein, 2020). One solution aimed at raising awareness of subjectivity in scholarship is the implementation of reflexivity statements, which we discuss below.

Typical academic norms would prescribe that scholars keep emotion and personal investment as separate from the research process as possible (Nzinga et al., 2018). However, White and racially minoritized scholars who study racial issues can and should make readers aware of their perspective, position, and (for some) privilege. Additionally, researchers who study topics they perceive to be race-neutral might reflect on how their positionality may nonetheless manifest in their work (Dupree & Kraus, 2022). Reflexivity statements require all scholars to reflect on the experiences and perspectives that they intentionally or unintentionally infuse into the research process, from ideation to interpretation. Several examples of such reflexivity statements exist. For example, Roberts et al. (2020) provide a note in the Acknowledgment section of their recent manuscript: "When the manuscript for this article was drafted, one author self-identified as U.S. Black-White American, and four authors self-identified as U.S. White American" (p. 12). Similarly, the current authors provide a reflexivity statement in the Acknowledgment of this article. For guidance on how to reflect upon one's positionality as well as craft reflexivity statements, see Jamieson et al. (2022) as well as Holmes (2020).

Returning to institutional gatekeepers, journals could require a reflexivity statement prior to submission in all social scientific papers—a practice typically more common in qualitative research. Editors could reflect on their own positionality and require reviewers to provide a reflexivity statement when reviewing racial scholarship. In this way, scholars can reflect on their positionality in a way that invites structural changes by raising awareness of all scholars' subjectivity, rather than interrogating the objectivity of the few scholars of color in our field. These reflexivity statements fit well in the field's focus on increasing the transparency and openness of our science. In the same way that

journals require individuals to disclose their financial conflicts with their research, we should also disclose how our experiences and positions within society impacts our science.

3.2.3 | Decentering Whiteness in incentive structures

Last, but not least, current incentives in the field do not match purported values. If we state that antiracism is a core value, those values should align with what gets rewarded within the field. As an example, publishing as many articles as possible is desired and highly rewarded, with no caveats given for racial dynamics (e.g., sample recruitment) that impact the capacity to publish quickly. Racially minoritized populations can be harder to recruit than White populations for a variety of reasons, ranging from deep distrust of academics due to historical racism (e.g., the Tuskegee experiments; Scharff et al., 2010) to a lack of institutional compensation that aids recruitment. If we want to make social psychology less White, we must also change the expectations that are built on White-centered norms.

Importantly, we would like to see our field incentivize scholarship that not only investigates racial topics but does so from a critical lens that challenges the status quo. This can include, but is not limited to, a series of articles in every issue of higher-ranked social psychological journals (e.g., *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Psychological Science*) focused on critical race psychology or critical qualitative and quantitative methodologies (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2019; Garcia et al., 2018) that are authored by scholars of color. As the status quo currently marginalizes these perspectives and approaches (Hoppe et al., 2019), the relegation of this work to lower-ranked specialty journals or special issues exacerbates racial inequality by contributing to racial disparities in publishing, citations, hiring, and promotions (Hofstra et al., 2020; Roberts et al., 2020) A proactive approach that prioritizes this work across issues in higher-ranked journals would bring those perspectives from the periphery (e.g., special issues and specialty journals) into high-status, mainstream spaces, helping to alleviate racial disparities. Editors and reviewers in these mainstream journals must also be required to become more acquainted with alternative perspectives and approaches in order to better evaluate and promote critical work on racial inequality. Short-term changes might involve adding more expertise in qualitative methods and critical scholarship to editorial boards; long-term changes would involve more methodological training in psychology doctoral programs.

4 | CONCLUSIONS

Social psychology is not immune from racism; racism lives here, too. It is no longer enough for our discipline to be aware of racism—social psychological scholars, gatekeepers, and institutions must be actively anti-racist in the practice of our science. In this article, we aimed to provide social psychologists with the sociohistorical context, psychological foundations, and practical recommendations necessary to accomplish this task. We firmly believe that social psychology is well-positioned to fight against one of society's most troubling ills: racial inequality. However, before we profess our intent to save the world's ills, we must save ourselves. We hope that this article encourages social psychological scholars, gatekeepers, and institutions to take concrete steps toward an anti-racist field and society.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
We have no conflicts of interest to declare.

ORCID

Brittany Torrez https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6167-3677

Sa-kiera Tiarra Jolynn Hudson https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6607-1704

Cydney H. Dupree https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9714-5756

ENDNOTE

[1] We acknowledge there are complex reasons why these papers were retracted, including methodological issues and concerns about misleading interpretations (e.g., providing support for a lack of racial bias in police violence).

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Brittany Torrez is a doctoral student in Organizational Behavior at the Yale School of Management. Her research examines the psychological processes and organizational practices that reproduce racial inequality in the workplace.

Sa-kiera Tiarra Jolynn Hudson is an assistant professor in the micro management and organization group at University of California Berkeley Haas School of Business. Her research focuses on the psychological processes involved in the formation, maintenance, and intersections of interpersonal and intergroup social hierarchies.

Cydney H. Dupree is an associate professor of organizational behavior at University College London's School of Management. She received her PhD in psychology and social policy from Princeton University. Her research focuses on stereotypes, intergroup interactions, and inequality.