

## ABSTRACT

Intersections of Embodiment and Racism:  
The Impact of a Student's Identity on Their Interactions With Others

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Embodiment, the reciprocal influence of the mind and body on a person's identity, can be utilized to understand undergraduates' engagement with the world when it is studied in relation to cross-racial interactions and internal motivation to respond without prejudice. The present research used multiple regression analysis to study the relationship between college students' personal levels of embodiment and the ways in which students think about and interact with racially and ethnically diverse others. The data from this research show that bodily responsiveness has a positive effect on both a student's internal motivation to respond without prejudice and their frequency of cross-racial interactions. The data also show that objectified body consciousness has a negative effect on student's internal motivation to respond without prejudice and their frequency of cross-racial interactions.

Intersections of Embodiment and Racism:  
The Impact of a Student's Identity on Their Interactions With Others

by

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## DEDICATION

To those who do the deep and messy work of unraveling systemic  
injustice for the pursuit of human flourishing.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

In a world that is increasingly economically, socially, and culturally interdependent, racial diversity has become an important part of the socioecological landscape (Nai, Narayanan, Hernandez, & Savani, 2018). Due to the increasing importance of racial diversity, aiding students in positive engagement with diverse others has become a necessary element of higher education (Smith, 2015). There are a number of reasons why this is the case. First, the presence of racial and ethnic diversity can generate empathy for our mutuality as human beings. Second, structural diversity can combat inequities that can occur through homogeneity (Diangelo, 2018; Tatum, 2017). Third, an affirmation of the experiences of people of color, displayed through a pursuit of a diverse institutional culture, can honor human dignity by valuing the presence of all people. Finally, both the presence of, and engagement with, racial and ethnic diversity can aid in the creation of true institutional equity and inclusion (Diangelo, 2018; Smith, 2015).

A lack of diversity, on the other hand, leads to a number of problems. First, it suggests that some perspectives are missing (Diangelo, 2018). This puts the validity of decision-making at risk (Smith, 2015). Second, lack of diversity sends the message that there is a dearth of possibilities, recognition, and appreciation of people from diverse backgrounds (Smith, 2015). Third, a lack of diversity can decrease institutional trust

among students, staff, and faculty of color (Smith, 2015). Finally, a lack of diversity can perpetuate prejudices and misconceptions of others (Diangelo, 2018; Smith, 2015).

Alongside the increasing importance of racial diversity in higher education, there is also an emphasis on educating the whole student (Blimling, 2015). Holistic student development and learning can include psychological, mental, spiritual, and physical dimensions of students (Blimling, 2015; Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). What often gets overlooked, however, is an attention to the integration of these dimensions, specifically the physical dimension. Embodiment theorists (e.g., McBride & Kwee, 2018; Piran, 2016; Teall 2015; & Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a) are proponents of this integration, believing that a person's physical body is an integral part of a student's identity.

Embodiment is the reciprocal influence of the mind and body on the way the body engages in the world (Allan, 2005; Piran & Teall, 2012). Because it is through the body that we experience life (Piran & Teall, 2012), embodiment includes being aware of mental and physical functions of the body and being present in the body (McBride & Kwee, 2018). An embodied self is made up of components that make up the what, why, how, and who a person is in the world. These components include the mind-body relationship (what), a sense of meaning (why), and loving-kindness (how) (McBride & Kwee, 2018).

Embodied people experience their body as an inseparable part of who they are (Kling, Wangqvist, & Frisen, 2018), validating and integrating both positive and negative aspects of their identity (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). Through a qualitative study done by Kling et al. (2018) this inseparable identification with the body was labeled as

“feeling at home in the body.” For example, a student who feels at home in their body may speak positively about their body and will display a high level of comfortability regarding their physical appearance despite messages received from others (Piran, 2016). This is especially salient as messages transmitted through social media have an impact on students’ perceptions of their bodies, which in turn has a significant impact on the way they engage in the world (Cash & Fleming, 2002).

### *Purpose and Significance*

One of the most powerful means for encouraging holistic student development (Bowman, 2013; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004) is cross-racial interactions – the frequency of how often a student interacts with people from a different race or ethnicity (Bowman & Park, 2014) – because these interactions have the ability to trigger educational benefits from diversity (Bowman & Park, 2014; Chang et al., 2004; Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006; Gurin et al., 2002). Cross-racial interactions occur within a student’s environment, which includes relational, institutional, and cultural influences, that aids in a student’s ability to understand both themselves and others (Abes et al., 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Part of understanding the self includes being able to integrate multiple aspects of identity, also known as embodiment (McBride & Kwee, 2018).

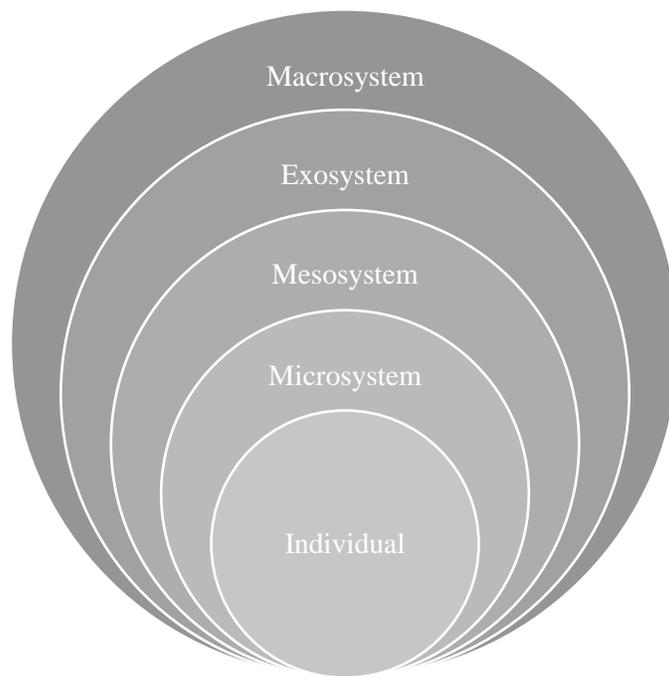
Though the concept of embodiment has innate ties to the understanding of the self in the world exemplified through sociological and psychological frameworks (e.g., Abes et al., 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Chavez et al., 2003), the impact of embodiment has only been studied in relation to the self. This sociological concept has minimal research that shows how levels of embodiment affect human relationships (Cash & Fleming, 2002; Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). The way people think about

themselves affects the way they interact with the world and with others. This is substantiated by theories such as the ecological framework of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity (Abes et al., 2007), and the framework of individual identity development (Chavez, Guido-DiBrito, & Mallory, 2003). The body-self relationship and how the above theories fit together within a certain sociopolitical context, where bodies are sites of both power and oppression, requires further exploration. This current study will examine college students' connection of personal embodiment to their internal motivation to respond without prejudice. This study will also examine the connection between students' personal level of embodiment and their frequency of cross-racial interactions.

### *Conceptual Framework*

The self is affected by four interacting systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). First, microsystems consist of the family, peers, and close institutions that affect an individual's daily experience. The microsystem has the largest influence on a person. Second, there are mesosystems. Mesosystems consist of the interactions between two microsystems. For example, when a person's parents come to visit him or her at their undergraduate institution, the microsystems of college and family interact to make a mesosystem. The third system is the exosystem. Exosystems include institutions such as mass media, local politics, and industry. Although a person's exosystem does not have a direct influence on an individual's identity, it does have an influence on a person's mesosystem and microsystems, which directly affect a person's identity. Finally, the most encompassing and indirect system is a person's macrosystem. This includes the attitudes and ideologies of the culture. These systems have indirect influences on an individual (Bronfenbrenner,

1979). By understanding these interacting systems, labeled by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as an ecological framework and seen in figure 1.1, educators can better understand the center of the model—peoples’ experience in and through their body (McBride & Kwee, 2018). The present study uses this understanding of the four interacting systems to guide the research. The total understanding of the conceptual framework can be seen in figure 1.3.

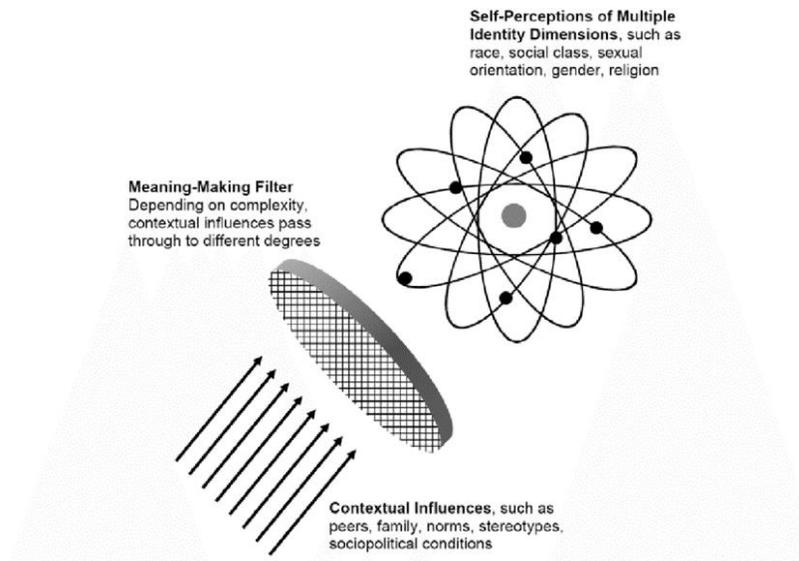


*Figure 1.1* Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1993) Ecological Framework of Human Development

*Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity*

Personal identity, the center of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) framework, includes aspects such as ethnicity, race, gender, religion, social class, and sexual orientation. These aspects overlap and interact with one another through the context of family background, sociocultural conditions, and current experiences (Patton et al., 2016).

People's core sense of self is made up of their personal attributes, personal characteristics, and personal identity. The saliency of aspects of people's identity is variable across contexts. People will use their meaning-making filter to decide which contextual influences, such as norms and stereotypes, will pass through and affect their identities (Abes et al., 2007). This model of identity development, conceptualized by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) and seen in figure 1.2, accounts for the complexity of people's backgrounds and beliefs.



*Figure 1.2* Abes, Jones, and McEwen's (2007) Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Identities

### *Embodiment*

Although the reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity seeks to integrate multiple overlapping influences on students' core sense of self, the concept of embodiment focuses on the integration of a person's core sense of self with body and mind. Using a decidedly critical lens, psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, medicine,

theology, politics, and literature are utilized to understand the lived experience of people's bodies in the world (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Rooted in a long philosophical tradition that conceptualizes the mind and body as one, rather than as distinct and separate parts (Heidegger, 1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012), the construct of embodiment states that the self is an integrated whole (McBride & Kwee, 2018). This is a departure from both traditional Cartesian philosophy, which creates a dualism between mind and body, and ancient Gnostic understandings of people, which postulates that bodies are a problem and do not matter (Jones, 2015; McBride & Kwee, 2018).

With the groundwork of these philosophers and theorists, the developmental theory of embodiment acknowledges the complex relationship between culture and the self situated in culture (McBride & Kwee, 2018). This creates a bridge between sociology and psychology; between the self and the way the self interacts in the world (Winkielman, Niedenthal, Wielgosz, Eelen, & Kavanagh, 2015). This complex relationship is supported by Christian theology, which seeks to ask what it means that people, as body-selves, reflect and interact in the world through our bodies (Nelson, 1998). Our bodies are the key to understanding bodies and places beyond ourselves (Nelson, 1998), with the understanding that all bodies are considered very good (Jones, 2015). A robust understanding of embodiment should compel people to respect the inherent dignity of others, as they seek to work towards holistic human thriving (Allison, 2009).

Because humans live in a social world, it is important to recognize the influence of social and cultural contexts on developing a sense of self (McBride & Kwee, 2018; Piran & Teall, 2012). Context affects how people utilize their meaning making filter

(Abes et al., 2007). Active engagement with the world shapes people's embodiment and blurs the dichotomy between body and culture. A person's level of embodiment can vary from connected to disconnected. For example, if a student speaks about her body, by saying "I've realized *it's* been hungry," this disconnected objectification of the body exemplifies disembodiment. Disembodiment occurs when people view their body as more of a "shell" they live with, rather than part of who they are as an individual (Piran & Teall, 2012). On the other hand, if a student speaks about how she is figuring out how to rework the "me" and "her" narrative to create an *us* narrative, this desire for connection between mind and body exemplifies embodiment.

#### *Framework of Individual Identity Development*

The bridge between the self and the way the self interacts in the world, as explained by embodiment (Winkielman et al., 2015), is substantiated by both the reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity and the framework of individual identity development (Abes et al., 2007; Chavez et al., 2003). People make decisions about who or what they value through cognitive, affective, and behavioral means. When people grow in this process of choosing to value differences in themselves and in others, they work towards a holistic integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Chavez et al., 2003). The process people go through as they learn to value and validate those who are other, as well as the otherness within themselves, is unique and individualized (Chavez et al., 2003).

Though otherness can make people uncomfortable, people can learn to value the blend of identities within themselves, via the framework of individual identity development (Abes et al., 2007), and then move to valuing corresponding identity

dimensions in others (Chavez et al., 2003). This is an important step in learning to navigate our interdependent society (Nai et al., 2018). Due to the segregated nature of our neighborhoods and secondary schools (Bowman & Park, 2015; Gurin et al., 2002; Nai et al., 2018), however, individuals may grow up with varying comfort levels with difference due to a lack of positive engagement with those who may be considered “other.” The meaning-making filter and contextual influences, discussed in the reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity (Abes et al., 2007), can act as either a positive influence or a challenge to the process of diversity development and validation of the “other.”

As people move through this process of learning to value otherness, it often starts on a cognitive level before leaping to the emotional and behavioral components (Chavez et al., 2003). The first stage for most people is a lack of a conscious sense of otherness. This is often caused by a lack of exposure to differences (Chavez et al., 2003). Once people are made aware of the other, they move into the second stage of learning to value otherness (Chavez et al., 2003). In this stage, people tend to create dualism where familiar characteristics are considered good and unfamiliar characteristics are considered bad or unnatural (Chavez et al., 2003). This dualistic stage often occurs due to a lack of in-depth engagement with otherness, where a lack of reflection leads to automatically interpreting behaviors and beliefs as good or natural if they are similar to their own (Chavez et al., 2003). As exposure increases, it is natural for people to begin questioning their identity and the identity of others. Conflicts from this questioning push people to explore and confront the otherness they experience. Although this takes both risk and courage, it can move people toward integration and validation of otherness with

themselves and those within their community (Chavez et al., 2003). This process of moving from unawareness to integration, labeled by Chavez, Guido-DiBrito, and Mallory (2003), is characterized by the framework of individual identity development.

### *Racist Attitudes and Actions*

The process outlined above occurs within the interacting systems of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework. Although the exosystem and the macrosystem have an indirect influence on the developing self, the influence of these systems is important to acknowledge. An institution that falls into the exosystem and macrosystem levels includes established laws and practices that define the social life of a people. Institutions like this can reinforce societal norms and perpetuate the dominant culture's ideologies (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). One salient example of societal norms is institutional, or systemic racism, which is when institutions in the exosystem and macrosystem are innately designed to oppress some and uplift others (Hiraldo, 2010).

An understanding of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework can help clarify why environmental factors, including but not limited to the dominant culture's ideologies, can have such an influence on the developing self. Through our interactions with environmental influences, we learn how to treat ourselves and others. Bandura (1977) called this phenomenon social learning theory. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the ecological framework to explain what aspects of the world influence social learning theory and the developing self. Social learning theory occurs through each person's own cultural lens (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). This is often called positionality, or the understanding that where people stand in society shapes what they see and comprehend (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). People have been socialized to believe that certain things

are true about the world, and those beliefs, whether true or not, have real consequences (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

According to Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017), “our socialization shapes our below-the-surface ideas about groups of people” (p. 102). These below the surface ideas, which can form into stereotypes or prejudices, are typically based on minimal information that cause people to create preconceived judgments and opinions (Tatum, 2017). These preconceived beliefs and ideas are so normalized that we have trouble identifying them and they inform how we view and act toward others (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Often, these below the surface ideas are the results of generalizations about groups of people. Generalizations about identity groups can lead to both stereotypes and prejudice, as they are the result of assuming that knowledge about some of a group is equivalent to knowledge about the whole of the group. It is important to utilize caution when generalizing about groups, especially identity groups, as no people do not have the ability to know every individual who identifies with a group. This is especially important when it comes to ethnic and racial groups. As a white researcher, I have the privilege of being seen as an individual. People of color are often seen as representative of their whole group, and do not have the privilege of being identified individually (DiAngelo, 2018). This can lead to negative generalizations, stereotypes, and prejudices.

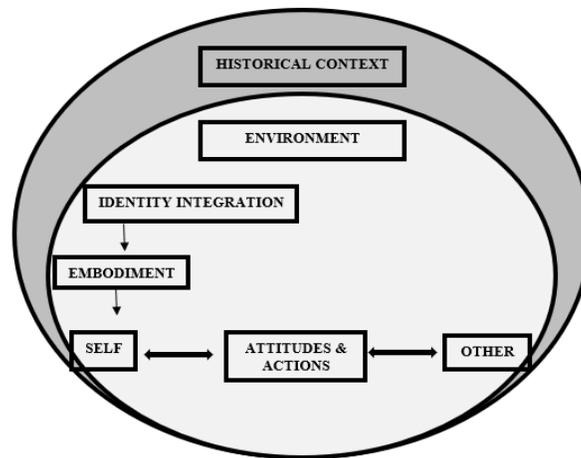
Common beliefs and ideas that we hold about others often concerns race, or the characterization of a group of people based on skin tone or nation of origin. Race, however, is a socially constructed framework that many Americans believe is an “indubitable feature of the natural world” (Coates, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Racism, which is concerned with power relations that are historic and pervasive,

inevitably follows from this socially constructed framework (Coates, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Guided by the belief that society should work towards ideals of equity in areas such as education, history, and sociology, the work of Critical Race Theory recognizes the far-reaching impact of these power differentials and actively seeks to change them (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). By unearthing areas of power and privilege that are taken for granted in American society, Critical Race Theory brings to light the centrality of race and racism in the goings on of American life (Coates, 2015; Patton et al., 2016). Critical Race Theory has five central tenets, two of which are salient to this research. The first is the permanence of racism, which notes that racism influences many realms of American life (Hiraldo, 2010) to the point where it is mostly unrecognizable due to its presence in structural systems (Patton et al., 2016). The second is the critique of liberalism, which assumes that rules and laws are enforced indiscriminately and with colorblindness and allows people to use governmental policies to foster systemic racism and social inequities (Hiraldo, 2010; Patton et al., 2016). Race and racism are such an innate part of the environment that it has become part of the air we breathe. Critical Race Theory, however, advocates for research, laws, policies, education and activism that will help create a more racially just society (Patton et al., 2016).

In collegiate settings, modern racial attitudes are particularly relevant (Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). As students prepare to enter the selective job market, it may intensify a sense of competition and increase negative attitudes toward minorities in an environment where students already show a greater preference for socializing with those of their own race (Smith et al., 2007; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). Although students

have the ability to verbalize that race is “just” a social construct, students lack the ability to articulate the power it has in structures where systemic racism is present (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). When students are able to articulate systemic racism, they are said to have awareness of the inherent systems of discrimination in society (Shin, Ezeofor, Smith, Welch, & Goodrich, 2016). On college campuses, this circumstance uniquely positions student affairs professionals to help students understand the meaning and effects of race through co-curricular efforts that aid in reducing prejudice and raise awareness of systematic racism (Cole & Zhou, 2014; Johnston-Guerrero, 2016; Shin et al., 2016).



*Figure 1.3* Conceptual framework of current study

The grand goals listed above are my attempt to connect this study to broadly important societal issues. My study itself is trying to hit at the ground level to better understand the connection between embodiment theory and racial interactions and internal motivation to respond in college students. The paragraph before the following research questions is my attempt to transition from the grand goals to the specifics of this

study. Thus, in order to examine the relationship between embodiment and relationships with others in college students, this study will use multiple regression quantitative analysis to examine the following questions:

*1) To what extent does the personal level of embodiment of college students influence their internal motivation to respond without prejudice?*

*2) To what extent does the personal level of embodiment of college students influence their cross-racial interactions?*

Important terms related to this study are defined as follows:

- Cross-Racial Interactions – the frequency of how often a student interacts with people from a different race or ethnicity (Bowman & Park, 2014).
- Disembodiment – occurs when people view their body as more of a “shell” they live with, rather than part of who they are as an individual (Piran & Teall, 2012).
- Embodiment – the reciprocal influence of the mind and body on the way the body engages in the world (Allan, 2005; Piran & Teall, 2012).
- Prejudice – a preconceived judgment or opinion, typically based on minimal information (Tatum, 2017)
- Race – the socially constructed identity label that characterizes groups of people based on skin tone or nation of origin.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

This chapter synthesizes the extensive research conducted on racism and prejudice, interactions with different others, and embodiment. Specifically, the present study uses an understanding of student development and sociological theories to understand the interaction between interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. Thus, this chapter summarizes previous research on understandings of racism and prejudice, the role cross-racial interactions play in student development, and the emerging literature on the construct of embodiment.

#### *Internal Motivation to Respond*

A person's core sense of self is made up of their personal attributes, personal characteristics, and personal identity (Abes et al., 2007). One aspect of the self is race, or the socially constructed identity label that characterizes groups of people based on skin tone or nation of origin. Even though *Brown versus Board of Education*, a landmark Supreme Court decision that deemed racial segregation in education unconstitutional, occurred 65 years ago, U.S. higher education is still wrought with overt racial tension (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016; Orfield, Frankenberg, & Lee, 2003).

There is a heightened focus on racial dynamics in higher education and society due to the attention surrounding police encounters with Black lives (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016), such as the shooting of Botham Shem Jean in Dallas, Texas, and mass murders such as the shooting in Charleston, South Carolina. Though there are those that believe

we are living in a post-racial era, where race no longer needs to matter, choosing to ignore the presence of race only serves to perpetuate inequity and racial tension (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016). Higher education in particular must struggle with histories of racial exclusion and discrimination, where students of color were barred from benefiting from higher education until after the Civil War and Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Coates, 2015; Johnston-Guerrero, 2016). As racist incidents continue to occur on college campuses and racial tensions rise, there is an overall negative impact on the social climate that is fueled by higher education's minimization of racial inequity (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016; Smith, Bowman, & Hsu, 2007).

Explicit attitudes are the beliefs and evaluations that people deliberately evaluate and overtly express (Arendt, Northup, & Camaj, 2019). Explicitly racist attitudes have declined over time, as these attitudes are no longer socially acceptable and are considered "politically incorrect" (Plant & Devine, 1998; Warikoo, Sinclair, Fei, & Jacoby-Senghor, 2016). Implicit racial associations, on the other hand, are cognitive beliefs about certain people groups of which people are generally unaware (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Kang, Gray, & Dovidio, 2013; Warikoo et al., 2016). Typically, people are unable to disclose these associations due to the unconscious nature of associations, and thus researchers use reaction times through tests like the Implicit Association Test to measure these feelings (Warikoo et al., 2016). Although research findings show that implicit association tests can measure implicit associations and attitudes, research is not fully conclusive because implicit association tests can potentially be resisted by self-presentation strategies (Gawronski, 2009). Negative implicit racial associations are pervasive, with approximately 68% of respondents having a medium to large bias against

Black individuals (Warikoo et al., 2016). These implicit racial associations affect behavior and contribute to inequity in higher education through policy preferences, hiring choices, and the warmth of professors towards students (Kang et al., 2013; Warikoo et al., 2016).

Despite efforts in higher education to aid in students' transition to the more diverse, collegiate environment and to combat inequity in the higher education system, students continue to express a variety of racist attitudes (Poteat & Spanierman, 2012; Warikoo et al., 2016). This is a result of our society's intolerance problem and a symptom of the discomfort and conflict that comes from interacting with different others (Aosved, Long, & Voller, 2009; Galinsky et al., 2015). Discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice based on personal characteristics, oppress people of color and are generally considered personality traits in which people have negative associations with multiple out-groups (Aosved et al., 2009; Godfrey, Richman, & Withers, 2000).

Today, prejudice carries significant negative ramifications for society through the expression of modern racist attitudes (Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). Modern racist attitudes, a subtler expression of prejudice than in the past, include many dimensions (McConahay, 1986; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). One of these dimensions is social dominance theory, which states that group-based oppression, such as racism, is a result of the tendency to form hierarchies in group membership (Aosved et al., 2009; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). Another dimension is color-blind racial ideology which attempts to deny, distort, and minimize racism and is less direct than modern racist attitudes (Kernahan & Davis, 2007; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012).

Because color-blind racial attitudes are strongly correlated to modern racist attitudes, it is important to address issues such as White privilege —the unearned advantages and benefits experienced by White Americans, who do not have to worry about race and its consequences (Kernahan & Davis, 2007; McIntosh, 1998; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). It is also important to understand the complex influences of both internal and external motivations to respond to others without prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998). Although external motivations, such as the desire to come across as socially likable, may motivate some to respond outwardly without prejudice, others may be internally motivated by personal standards to respond without prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998). Cross-racial interactions, discussed below, can help bring understanding to the the external and internal influences college students experience (Bowman & Park, 2014).

### *Interactions with Diverse Others*

The numerical presence of diverse peers on a college campus, known as structural diversity, is a desired component of a collegiate education (Chang et al., 2006). The simple presence of diverse peers, however, is insufficient to produce the educational outcomes associated with diversity (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011). Studies find it is vital that institutions attract and retain structural diversity in the student body, faculty, and staff in order to provide the appropriate environmental conditions to support the educational potential that comes from cross-racial interactions (Bowman & Park, 2014; Chang et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2006; Gurin et al., 2002). Cross-racial interactions, also known as informal interactional diversity (Gurin et al., 2002), encompass the frequency and quality of interactions, encounters, and relationships with those of a different race (Bowman & Park, 2015). These interactions can be positive, negative, or nonexistent

depending on the campus's level of structural diversity. Positive cross-racial interactions are honest, personal, and meaningful exchanges regarding diversity (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011; Roksa et al., 2017). Negative cross-racial interactions are hostile and tense exchanges regarding diversity, such as experiencing prejudice or discrimination (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011; Roksa et al., 2017). A campus's level of structural diversity is directly correlated to students' opportunities to experience cross-racial interactions (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004).

Though there are various forms of diversity engagement, such as structural diversity and interracial friendships, cross-racial interactions have been found to have the most extensive positive outcomes (Bowman & Park, 2014). Although structural diversity provides the setting for diversity engagement, it does not guarantee that students will engage in ways that cause disequilibrium. On the other hand, though interracial friendships include sustained contact with others, these relationships have not been proven to have as consistent of positive outcomes as cross-racial interactions do (Bowman & Park, 2014). The positive outcomes of cross-racial interactions can be attributed to the amount of disequilibrium the interactions cause. When a student encounters a situation in which he or she does not have a "script" of what to expect, that student experiences disequilibrium (Chang et al., 2004). Because of our increasingly segregated world, interactions with a racially-different other brings into question the stereotypes and "scripts" that people possess (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2006; Engberg & Hurtado, 2011; Roksa et al., 2017). During a student's first year on campus, possibly far from the familiar home environment, cognitive disequilibrium can keep students in a constant state of uncertainty (Gurin et al., 2002;

Piaget, 1971, 1975/1985). This situates higher education in a unique location to aid students in this transition from home environment to the unfamiliarity of the diverse college environment.

The benefits of cross-racial interactions for college students are far-reaching. College sense of belonging (Nunez, 2009; Roksa et al., 2017), retention (Nunez, 2009), graduation rates (Chang et al., 2004) and college satisfaction (Bowman, 2013; Bowman & Park, 2014; Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004) have all been correlated with cross-racial interactions. In addition to this, cross-racial interactions have been found to increase leadership and teamwork skills (Bowman & Park, 2014; Chang et al., 2004), civic interest (Gurin et al., 2002), civic engagement (Roksa et al., 2017), civic development, and social agency (Chang et al., 2004). Academically, cross-racial interactions are correlated to academic skills (Bowman & Park, 2015; Gurin et al., 2002), greater cognitive development and skills (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2006; Gurin et al., 2002; Nai et al., 2018; Roksa et al., 2017), critical thinking (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011; Nai et al., 2018), intellectual self-confidence (Chang et al., 2006; Engberg & Hurtado, 2011), and more positive academic and social self-concept (Chang et al., 2006; Gurin et al., 2002; Nunez, 2009; Roksa et al., 2017). Although both positive and negative cross-racial interactions can encourage these outcomes, negative cross-racial interactions are highly correlated to the need for cognition and critical thinking skills due to the need for a resolution to the resulting disequilibrium (Roksa et al., 2017).

Cross-racial interactions also have significant impacts on college students' social development. Social self-confidence (Chang et al., 2006; Engberg & Hurtado, 2011) and

self-reported growth are consistently significant results of cross-racial interactions (Bowman & Park, 2014). This often leads to reduced social distance between racial groups (Bowman, 2013), comfort with people from other races (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011), decreased prejudice (Bowman & Park, 2014; Roksa et al., 2017), and openness to diversity and challenge (Chang et al., 2006; Engberg & Hurtado, 2011). When a student willingly engages in cross-racial interactions, he or she increases in racial and cultural awareness, understanding, and engagement (Chang et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2006; Gurin et al., 2002). In other words, cross-racial interactions can help students develop a pluralistic orientation that creates the virtues and skills necessary to navigate a diverse society, such as tolerance and the ability to see from another's perspective (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011).

Although the disequilibrium caused by cross-racial interactions sets the stage for a host of benefits for all racial and ethnic groups, White students tend to benefit the most from these interactions (Bowman, 2013; Bowman & Park, 2014; Chang et al., 2004; Roksa et al., 2017). This benefit occurs because White students experience less cross-racial interactions than students of color (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Roksa et al., 2017). Students of color, on the other hand, often report an abundance of negative cross-racial interactions, which can result in students who withdraw and disengage from community due to cognitive paralysis (Engberg & Hurtado, 2011; Roksa et al., 2017). This difference in the benefits of cross-racial interactions could be attributed to the disequilibrium that pushes White students, due to being part of the normative culture, to move through identity stages.

In order to cultivate these benefits for students of all racial and ethnic groups, research suggests that institutions need to devote resources to create environments where students can meaningfully engage with one another outside of the classroom (Chang et al., 2006; Gurin et al., 2002; Bowman & Park, 2015). As student affairs practitioners seek to develop students holistically, this information should also serve as an impetus to optimize diverse learning environments (Bowman, 2013; Engberg & Hurtado, 2011). Examples of potential curricular and cocurricular changes include racially diverse classes, diversity as the subject of a course in the curriculum, diverse roommate pairings, and co-curricular programs centered on diversity (Bowman & Park, 2014; Gurin et al., 2002).

The need to learn and engage cross-racially is further supported by Nai et al.'s (2018) study on racial diversity. The prosocial characteristics of people living in metropolitan areas can be predicted by the racial diversity of the neighborhood (Nai et al., 2018). People who live in racially diverse neighborhoods and countries were more likely to help strangers and exhibit prosocial characteristics than those who do not live in racially diverse neighborhoods (Nai et al., 2018). This is because those living in more diverse neighborhoods are more likely to identify with all of humanity (Nai et al., 2018). Colleges and universities are uniquely placed to aid in the creation of diverse "neighborhoods" through residence halls, classrooms, and co-curricular activities.

Learning about and getting along with those who are different than you are important parts of the college experience and one of the most powerful resources higher education has (Chang et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2006; Roksa et al., 2017). As student development theorists such as Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) and Chavez, Guido-

DiBrito, and Mallory (2003) show, emerging adulthood is a critical time for personal and social identity development (Gurin et al., 2002). Understanding how cross-racial interactions can provide the disequilibrium that is critical for identity construction (Gurin et al., 2002) is necessary for bolstering student growth (Bowman, 2013).

### *Embodiment*

The self is a construct that is characterized by the needs and relational dynamics of inner aspects such as physiological, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, and outer aspects such as microsystems, exosystems, and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cook-Cottone, 2015). Each individual determines how salient the body is to the self's identity (Kling et al., 2018). The ability to feel at home in the body is crucial to both identity development and conveying that development to others (Kling et al., 2018). Embodiment research up to this point has largely been studied in connection to eating disorders, which are a set of complex and serious mental health disorders related to the control of the size, shape, and experience of a person's body (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Cook-Cottone, Talebkhah, Guyker, & Keddie, 2017). Embodiment, however, is also central to the way people shape their self-concept and identity (Cook-Cottone, 2018; Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Tiggeman, Coutts, & Clark, 2014).

### *Body Image*

Body image is a complex, multidimensional construct (Cash, Santos, & Williams, 2004; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). Positive body image is expressing love, acceptance, comfort, respect, and appreciation for the uniqueness and functions of the body, even if people are not fully satisfied with every aspect of their bodies (Cook-

Cottone, 2018; Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016; Tiggeman et al., 2014; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Body appreciation is the practice of gratitude for the function, health, and aspects of the body and includes experiences, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to the body that causes people to reject cultural appearance ideals (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). It includes evaluation and investment in the physical body (Cash & Fleming, 2002). Those with positive body images internalize positive information and reject or reframe negative information (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). It is important to note that positive and negative body image are not opposite ends of the same spectrum, but rather separate constructs. Negative body image is conceptualized as body shame, body dissatisfaction, or poor body esteem, whereas positive body image includes body functionality, body acceptance, inner positivity and beauty conceptualizations, not simply body satisfaction and esteem (Gattario & Frisen, 2019). Because of this, it is possible to present both positive and negative body image characteristics simultaneously (Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016).

Studies tend to show that body appreciation is higher for men than for women (Tiggeman, 2015) and that women tend to think that maintaining positive body image requires constant work (Gattario & Frisen, 2019). The three body image coping strategies, appearance fixing, avoidance, and positive rational acceptance, are all used to a greater extent by women than by men. This can be attributed to the originally Western societal ideals, that have now become nearly international ideals, that are placed more heavily on women (Cash et al., 2004; Tiggeman et al., 2014). Over time, however, women are able combat these societal pressures. Although most people acquire a stable

body image by age 18 to 21, positive body image is both steady and flexible and can change after this time (Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). This results in a positive relationship between age and body appreciation (Tiggeman, 2015).

For people to cultivate positive body image, a supportive social context that encourages belonging and acceptance is necessary (Gattario & Frisen, 2019). Those with a positive body image have a comfort and connection with their body just the way it is (Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016). These people focus on what their body can do, and do not experience the weight of societal pressures to the extent that others do (Tylka & Homan, 2015). It is likely that the intersectionality of identities determines people's experience of body image and can present significant challenges to cultivating positive body image when aspects of different social identities conflict (Tiggeman, 2015).

### *Connection Between Body Image and Embodiment*

There is substantial overlap between the constructs of positive body image and embodiment (Menzel & Levine, 2011). Body image affects how people live and are in action in their body (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Body image comes, in part, from embodiment (Cook-Cottone, 2018). Those who demonstrate high levels of positive body image are also more likely to demonstrate high levels of positive embodiment because positive body image helps people inhabit their bodies in healthy ways (Menzel & Levine, 2011; Tylka & Homan, 2015). Body image, awareness of the body, and embodiment are necessary components for human flourishing (Cook-Cottone, 2015). The actions that increase embodiment, discussed later, will also help people protect against an objectifying orientation to the body (Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016)

Body image focuses on what is seen and cognitively understood, but people's relationship to their body is not restricted to simply these dimensions (Piran, 2016). The body is the center of existence and thus needs a construct that can exemplify the lived experience of the body (McBride & Kwee, 2018). The embodiment construct fills the gap that the body image construct creates by including affective and physiological dimensions (Piran, 2016).

### *Defining Characteristics*

Embodiment is the experience of engaging the body with the world (Cook-Cottone et al., 2017; Piran & Teall, 2012). It is a process of inhabiting and being at home in the body that is inextricably linked to a person's identity (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Kling et al., 2018; Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016; Piran & Teall, 2012). The interaction among various aspects of the self is connected through attunement, "the reciprocal process of mutual influence and co-regulation" (Cook-Cottone, 2015). Correlated aspects of embodiment include dimensions that are emotional, relational, and physical such as embodied agency, self-care, joy, and appreciating the body's functionality (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Cook-Cottone et al., 2017; Kling et al., 2018; Piran & Teall, 2012). This close connection to the body provides an awareness of internal stimuli (Cook-Cottone et al., 2017) that allows people to act effectively in the world by creating space to voice and to respond to bodily needs (Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016; Menzel & Levine, 2011; Tiggeman et al., 2014).

Embodiment focuses on integrating and unifying aspects of people that allow them to be comfortable in their bodies and recognize their bodies as a key aspect of their self-expression, power, and well-being (Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016; Menzel & Levine,

2011; Piran & Teall, 2012). Embodied people have the ability to be in their body in a nonjudgmental way that allows them to experience the freedom required to take up space in public and private spheres, connect with the physical environment, and use their body as a source for interacting in the world (Cook-Cottone et al., 2017; Piran & Teall, 2012). Embodiment implies a sense of ownership, trust, and respect for the body that allows people to express both competence and relatedness (Menzel & Levine, 2011). How people think about their bodies is directly correlated to how they treat their bodies. This subjective inhabiting of the body affects how people think, feel, and experience embodiment (Cook-Cottone, 2018).

The body's active engagement with the world means people both partake in and shape cultural practices (Piran, 2016). Though the body is affected by perceptions in social and cultural contexts (Allan, 2005), embodied people have the awareness and power to choose action and presence rather than choosing to internalize sociocultural norms (Cook-Cottone, 2018). High levels of embodiment allow people to engage in the context of family, community, and culture, while protecting them from disempowering media messages and social norms because people stay attuned to their needs and inner identity (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Cook-Cottone et al., 2017).

Piran's (2016) research on embodiment resulted in a five-dimension experience of embodiment construct. The first dimension is body connection and comfort. People will either feel at home in their bodies and are able to combat adverse social pressures regarding various elements of identities or feel disrupted connection and discomfort with their bodies as a problematic way to engage with the world (Piran, 2016). The second dimension is agency and functionality. People can feel comfortable expressing their

views and utilizing their voices to lead others or will experience a loss of voice that results in restricted agency and restraint. The third dimension is experience and expression of desire. People will either be attuned to their needs and respond to them in caring ways or will lack this attunement and be limited in their ability to engage in the world (Piran, 2016). The fourth dimension is attuned self-care. People will either be aware of needs and practice self-care or be unaware of needs and partake in self-harm, neglect, and disengagement from the world (Piran, 2016).

The fifth dimension is inhabiting the body as a subjective site. People will either be able to create narratives of resistance against societal pressures or will inhabit their body as an objectified site, maintaining the body according to outside perspectives (Piran, 2016). Inhabiting the body as an objectified site is also known as self-objectification, where people have been socialized to view themselves as objects of other's attention (Daubenmier, 2005; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This can lead to a vigilant surveillance of the body, as people internalize feelings of shame and reduce their awareness of internal states (Daubenmier, 2005; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). As people learn to value their body's feedback, tendencies toward self-objectification can be reduced through increased attunement and responsiveness to embodied experiences (Daubenmier, 2005). The social location of those who experience the embodiment construct come before these narratives and help bring context to people's experience (Piran, 2016).

Table 2.1

*Dimensions of the Experience of Embodiment Construct*

Dimensions of Embodiment	Description
Body Connection and Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive – People feel at home in their body and can combat adverse social pressures regarding various elements of identity</li> <li>• Negative – People feel disrupted connection and discomfort with the body as a problematic way to engage with the world</li> </ul>
Agency and Functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive – People feel comfortable expressing their views and utilizing their voice to lead others</li> <li>• Negative – People experience a loss of voice that results in restricted agency and restraint</li> </ul>
Experience and Expression of Desire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive – People are attuned to their needs and responds to them in caring ways</li> <li>• Negative – People lack attunement and is limited in their ability to engage in the world</li> </ul>
Attuned Self-Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive – People are aware of needs and practices self-care</li> <li>• Negative – People are unaware of needs and partakes in self-harm, neglect, and disengagement from the world</li> </ul>
Inhabiting the Body as a Subjective Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive – People are able to create narratives of resistance against societal pressures</li> <li>• Negative – People inhabit their bodies as an objectified site, maintaining their bodies according to outside perspectives</li> </ul>

*Developmental Theory of Embodiment*

The Developmental Theory of Embodiment, conceptualized by Piran and Teall (2015), is the result of studying the construct of embodiment. This theory emphasizes the

importance of social contexts in the development of positive embodiment and body image (Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Piran & Teall, 2012). This feminist theory emphasizes the importance of social structures in how people experience their body (Kling et al., 2018; McBride & Kwee, 2018). This theory says that a person's experience of embodiment is shaped by experiences and freedom in physical, mental, and social domains (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Physical freedom occurs when people experience their body as a site of safety, care, competence, and comfort in physical desires and needs. Hearing positive body talk and having body-positive mentors is critical in developing this sense of freedom (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Mental freedom occurs when people experience the freedom to use their voice, passionately engage in activities, and avoid the objectification of gendered appearance standards. Social power is created when people experience equity, connection to community and social location, and are free from discrimination related to various identity characteristics (McBride & Kwee, 2018).

Three risk factors to these freedoms include the abuse of bodily ownership (physical), the internalization of restricting social identifications (mental), and exposure to prejudicial treatment (social) (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Those who experience more risk factors than freedoms may experience their body as a site of vulnerability, incompetence, and disempowerment. These people partake in behaviors and practices determined by external standards rather than an understanding of their needs and desires (McBride & Kwee, 2018)

### *Disembodiment*

Unlike positive and negative body image, which are two separate constructs, embodiment and disembodiment are two ends of the same spectrum. Disembodied people

experience a sense of disconnection and dissociation from their bodies (McBride & Kwee, 2018; Piran, 2016). Disembodiment, or disruption of embodiment, is more common in women than in men (Kling et al., 2018; Piran, 2016). This is attributed to the societal pressures that reward women who have feminine and docile bodies (Curtin, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2011; Piran, 2016). These pressures are especially salient as females go through adolescence. Emerging adults have lost their “voice,” the ability to communicate their needs and desires, and look at themselves from the outside (Curtin et al., 2011). This disembodied state is encouraged through the thin ideal spread in the media (Tiggeman et al., 2014). This lack of feeling at home in their body has negative consequences such as disordered eating, lower self-esteem, excessive dieting, and increased depression (Tiggeman et al., 2014).

### *Increasing Embodiment*

Being embodied requires practice (Cook-Cottone, 2015, 2018). The practice that embodiment requires can be done through activities that encourage physical empowerment and competence, awareness of and attentiveness to the body, and deep absorption in the activity (Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016). Possible embodying activities include athletics, hiking, rock climbing, martial arts, circus skills, and yoga because these activities encourage people to appreciate their body’s functionality (Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Menzel & Levine, 2011; Tiggeman et al., 2014). The impact these activities have on body image and embodiment, however, relies on the reasons people engage in the activity rather than how much time he or she devotes to the activity (Tylka & Homan, 2015). Homan and Tylka (2014) found that positive body image in college females was positively correlated to exercise frequency. A follow up study found that people are more

likely to experience positive embodiment and increase in body image only if they are motivated to participate in exercise for functional means rather than appearance reasons (Tylka & Homan, 2015). This finding is supported by Tiggeman et al.'s (2014) study of the impact of belly dancing on embodiment which found that those who partake in belly dancing for fun—and can be in the moment while partaking—experience embodiment.

Another distinct pathway to cultivating positive embodiment is mindful self-care (Cook-Cottone, 2015). Mindful self-care includes daily behaviors that take care of the self, such as drinking water and eating regularly, exercising, participating in supportive relationships that recognize shared humanity, and practicing self-compassion (Cook-Cottone, 2018). Because embodiment occurs within the context of relationships, it is important to structure people's environment in a way that promotes happiness and well-being (Cook-Cottone, 2015). Mindful awareness and relaxation allow people to care for themselves from moment to moment in a way that aids in emotional regulation (Cook-Cottone, 2018). The options for embodying activities grow each time researchers conduct new studies. As students choose which activities to partake in, it is important to choose activities that are pleasurable (Mahlo & Tiggeman, 2016). It is also important to give others the choice of which activities to partake in, as finding joy is key to embodiment (Gattario & Frisen, 2019).

### *Embodiment and College Students*

Because embodiment is an emerging topic of research, studies that focus on the effects of embodiment on college students are varied. Many studies in the past only focused on women, but current researchers are expanding their studies to include men (e.g., Tylka & Homan, 2015). Cash and Fleming (2002), who were groundbreaking

researchers on the topic of body image and the effects of body image on a person's quality of life, were some of the first researchers to study college students. Cash and Fleming (2002) found that college women reported positive consequences of body image on domains of life such as interactions with friends and happiness in everyday life. Nearly a decade after Cash and Fleming's (2002) study, Wood-Barcalow, Tylka, and Augustus-Horvath (2010) conducted a qualitative study on positive body image characteristics in female college students. This study found that female college students believe that a person's inner confidence affects their outer appearance and that body acceptance and love comes from filtering information in body-positive ways (Wood-Barcalow, Tylka, & Augustus-Horvath, 2010).

As cultural assumptions about men and women have shifted in recent years, studies have also started to include men in research projects. Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015) focused on the connection between male and female college students' intuitive eating behaviors, which model positive embodiment, and well-being, including self-esteem and proactive coping. The study confirmed other studies which found that college men and women experience and understand positive body image in similar ways but emphasized that college men tend to report higher levels of body appreciation (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). Tylka and Homan's (2015) study also focused on both college men and women. This study focused on the reasons people choose to exercise, finding that those who exercise for functionality over appearance tend to display higher levels of positive embodiment (Tylka & Homan, 2015). Although researchers are beginning to see the need to study both female and male college students' experience of embodiment, there is still room in the field to further study college students.

*Internal Motivation to Respond, Interactions with Diverse Others, and Embodiment*

Both body image and embodiment emerged from disciplines that value and celebrate diversity. These constructs are best understood by the intersection of social identities such as culture, race, gender, and age (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). This intersectionality alters the way each individual experiences the world, though many researchers decontextualize a person's identity for the sake of understanding the construct (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). This is important to note, as disempowerment—tied to the fear of losing or not possessing social status and power—effects the way people understand themselves in relation to another (Piran & Teall, 2012). This is even more salient when considering that those with a minority status are not only exposed to discrimination in society but must also navigate negative stereotypes that may influence their understanding of the body-self (Piran, 2016).

Embodiment is a shared expression of people and their culture (Cook-Cottone, 2018). It is through our body that we know others and know the world, including all its pleasures, feelings, and pains (McBride & Kwee, 2018). How people experience life is mirrored in how they experience their body (Gattario & Frisen, 2019). People's social context influences their lived experience (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Social context includes family, peers, and community, and is shaped by people's gender, social class, and ethnic or cultural group membership (McBride & Kwee, 2018)

Without the body, people do not exist or have the capacity to express the self (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Because the body is the site of both oppression and freedom, the body can become something to control and bring into line with cultural ideals (Cook-Cottone, 2015). Embodiment, however, is “a form of social noncompliance” in which

people use their voice and body to resist silencing and objectification by interacting with the world as their full self (McBride & Kwee, 2018). If people internalize this social objectification, their bodies become separate from them and are reduced to a mere instrument but is still regarded as representing the whole person (Cook-Cottone, 2018). We tend to believe that a person's body is representative of him or her as a whole, and then make judgments based off of this (Cook-Cottone, 2018).

Practices that focus on lovingkindness cultivate warm feelings towards both the self and others by first extending the care you feel for the most important person in your life to yourself and then to others (Kang et al., 2013). Although lovingkindness practices have been more strongly studied in relation to intrapersonal growth, they have also been examined on an intergroup level, specifically with implicit attitudes and prejudice (Kang et al., 2013). Lovingkindness, which has been found to be a correlated element of embodiment (McBride & Kwee, 2018), has been found to create a deep sense of interconnectedness with others that combats implicit biases when practiced long-term (Kang et al., 2013). Lovingkindness is an extension of perspective taking, which allows people to manage diversity by decreasing stereotypes, racial bias, and racial discrimination (Galinsky et al., 2015).

When people are able to live in harmonious body-self integration, they are able to develop relational connections, social competencies, and support their own and other's development of positive embodiment that fosters individual and social change (Cook-Cottone, 2018; Menzel & Levine, 2011). Effective, embodied engagement across ecological domains includes cross-racial interactions discussed previously (Cook-Cottone, 2018). Social comparison, on the other hand, is a strong, negative predictor of

positive body image (Tiggeman, 2015). Social comparison is related to the second stage of the framework of individual identity development, where people consider themselves good and the other bad (Chavez et al., 2003). Embodiment, however, predisposes people towards action and a willingness to take risks (Menzel & Levine, 2011; Piran, 2016). As students move through the framework of individual identity development, stage four emphasizes a willingness to take risks and explore otherness (Chavez et al., 2003).

### *Gaps in the Literature*

The way people experience their feelings and their body is directly related to what they think and vice versa (Cook-Cottone, 2015). People can change how they experience the world by shifting their thoughts and choosing embodied actions that take risks and move them forward through the framework (Chavez et al., 2003; Cook-Cottone, 2015). Our lived body is shaped by social discourse, relationships, and the other (McBride & Kwee, 2018). Although lovingkindness—a practice correlated to reducing implicit racial attitudes and increasing levels of embodiment—has been minimally studied, there is a need to further study the connection of the body-self to the way the self interacts in the world. The current study attempts to fill the gap in the literature, connecting intrapersonal integration with interpersonal integration in order to better understand how college students' beliefs about their body affect the way they interact with diverse others.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

Research has studied both the way people holistically conceptualize their identity and how people engage, or fail to engage, with the world. This is especially salient in our increasingly segregated American society where people value engaging with some and devalue engaging with others. Although past research has gathered data on these intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions separately, minimal data exist on the effect of level of personal embodiment on a person's attitudes and actions with others. The present study seeks to fill that gap by collecting empirical data on students' levels of personal embodiment and correlating attitudes and interactions with diverse others.

The current quantitative research study stems from a post-positive epistemology that actively seeks to construct knowledge about the way students understand themselves and others (Sriram, 2017). This worldview desires objective truth while acknowledging that humans are involved in this construction, which means that the knowledge constructed will never be fully free of error (Sriram, 2017). Potential errors are acknowledged through the limitations of the study. Based on this epistemology, the current study seeks to use empirical data collection and statistical analyses to understand the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. This non-experimental approach to the research study will utilize multiple, multiple regressions in order to understand the relationship between both levels of personal embodiment and

motivation to respond without prejudice and levels of personal embodiment and interactions with diverse others.

In statistical analyses, multiple regressions are utilized in order to understand the relationship among variables. In order to conduct a multiple regression, both the independent variables and the dependent variables need to be measured on a continuum or scale (Sriram, 2017). The variables in this study, expanded upon below, are all considered scale variables. A multiple regression will be utilized because a connection between levels of personal embodiment and attitudes and interactions with others has not yet been studied. The gift of a multiple regression is an equation that allows researchers to utilize the independent variable to predict the value of the dependent variable (Sriram, 2017).

When interpreting the results of the multiple regressions in this study, the effect size, the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable, will be utilized alongside of statistical significance. Although statistical significance is often utilized as a measure of a study's success, statistical significance simply allows researchers to infer results on the study's population (Sriram, 2017). Instead of statistical significance, effect size, measured by both  $R^2$  and beta weights will be used.  $R^2$  is the percentage that the combined independent variables in a study predict the value of the dependent variable. Beta weights gives the effect size in terms of standard deviations, allowing researchers to understand how much the dependent variable increases when the independent variables increase by one standard deviation (Sriram, 2017).

Standards for the effect size ( $R^2$  and beta weight) in this study will be considered using two different thresholds. Mayhew and colleagues (2016) have shown that effect

size thresholds for college students need to be decreased in order to understand the impact of higher education. They argue that effect sizes should be considered small if the beta weight is .06, medium if the effect size is .12 and large if the effect size is .20 or higher. In addition to Mayhew's (2016) recommended thresholds for college students, traditional psychological statistical thresholds will also be used to analyze the data. According to Ferguson (2009), the recommended minimum effect size for corrected estimates that attempt to account for shared variance (i.e.,  $R^2$ ) is .04. The effect size is considered medium if it is .25 and it is considered large if it is .64 or higher (Ferguson, 2009). For beta weights, Ferguson recommends thresholds of .2 for small but notable, .5 for medium effect, and .8 for large effect. Because there is little agreement on what magnitude of effect establishes practical significance, both Mayhew's (2016) and Ferguson's (2009) thresholds will be utilized in analysis.

### *Population, Sample, and Participants*

The population for this research is college students across various college campuses in the United States. The sample for this research consists of students who received and responded to the survey through the distribution methods employed at each college or university. Staff members and students then passed along the surveys to students they supervise, advise, and know through various extra-curricular opportunities. For the purposes of hitting the thresholds for the statistical analyses listed above, a convenience sampling method was utilized. The distribution of the survey and the survey's population was kept intentionally large due to the dearth of research on the intersection of embodiment and racist attitudes and actions. This helped to ensure a broad sample size throughout each of the varying institution and student types by reaching out

to students in a variety of fields and levels of campus engagement. Data were collected using the online software, Qualtrics.

### *Variables and Data Collection Instruments*

This study seeks to understand the relationship between personal levels of embodiment in college students and their attitudes and actions regarding others. In order to study this relationship, four different scales will be utilized. Personal levels of embodiment will be measured using the Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) and the Body Responsiveness Scale (Daubenmier, 2005). The dependent variables of attitudes and actions toward others will be measured using the Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale (Plant & Devine, 1998) and a positive cross-racial interaction measure inspired by Bowman and Denson (2011), respectively.

### *Racist Attitudes*

Attempts to measure racist attitudes and beliefs have taken many forms (e.g., Godfrey et al.'s (2000) GRISMS – Godfrey-Richman ISM Scale; McConahay's (1986) Modern and Old-Fashioned Racism Scale; Neville et al.'s (2009) CoBRAS- Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale). Although these scales provide ways to measure explicit attitudes regarding racist beliefs, individuals may underreport racist views to appear more socially desirable in today's world of increasing diversity awareness and education (Aosved et al., 2009; Kernahan & Davis, 2007; Warikoo et al., 2016). Racist attitudes can also be difficult to measure if an individual is unaware of their own beliefs and the impacts of those beliefs on their behaviors (Aosved et al., 2009). Therefore, researchers tend to rely

on the Implicit Association Test, first introduced by Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998). Implicit association tests rely on reaction times, which are less susceptible to manipulation (Greenwald et al., 1998; Warikoo et al., 2016). Implicit associations tests, however, are also becoming susceptible to manipulation as individuals become increasingly aware of what is considered socially acceptable and can utilize more cognitive control to combat implicit associations (Aosved et al., 2009; Shin et al., 2016).

Because racist attitudes can be difficult to measure, due to the overtly biased implications of items, the Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale, developed by Plant and Devine (1998), will be used to assess an individual's attitude toward those who are racially and ethnically different from them. Prejudice is more widely applicable to all students, both students of color and white students. Prejudice is also more tangibly defined than racism is. Although external motivation reflects a compliance with society's nonprejudiced values, internal motivation is the result of internalized, low-prejudiced beliefs. The Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale is a 5-item self-report measure that disentangles the influences between external pressure from societal values and internalization of nonprejudiced attitudes. Sample items include "I am personally motivated by my beliefs to be nonprejudiced toward people of color" (Plant & Devine, 1998). The total Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .83. The Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale has been proven to have good convergent and discriminant validity (Plant & Devine, 1998). Items are scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with higher total scale scores indicating a higher internal motivation to respond without prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998).

### *Interactions with Diverse Others*

Cross-racial interactions, which have been studied extensively (e.g., Bowman & Park, 2014, 2015; Chang, 2004; Chang, et al., 2006; Roksa et al., 2017), are typically measured in one of two ways. Cross-racial interactions can be measured utilizing questions that ask respondents how easy they perceive it is to engage with those of a different race (e.g., “Where would you rate Whites on a scale, where 1 means tends to be hard to get along with and 7 means tends to be easy to get along with?”) (Bowman & Park, 2015). Cross-racial interactions can also be studied utilizing questions that seek to gauge how often certain social actions occur (e.g., “How often have you had intellectual discussions outside of class with someone of a different race?”) (Nunez, 2009). For the purposes of this study, items like the latter example will be utilized to measure positive cross-racial interactions, or informal interactions outside of classroom settings.

Positive cross-racial interactions, as opposed to overall frequency of cross-racial interactions, will be measured in this study due to the greater role positive cross-racial interactions play in promoting student growth (Bowman & Denson, 2011). The disequilibrium often caused by meaningful interactions with racially and ethnically diverse peers is critical in the development of college students (Bowman & Denson, 2011). Positive cross-racial interactions will be measured utilizing the following items, “How often do you dine with people from a different racial group; How often do you socialize with people from a different racial group; How often do you work with people from a different racial group” (Bowman & Denson, 2011). This scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .73 (Bowman & Denson, 2011). Items will be scored from 1 (never) to 6 (daily) with a higher total scale score indicating more frequent positive interracial interactions.

## *Embodiment*

Embodiment is an emerging construct. Research on embodiment has focused on various dimensions, including body appreciation (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a) and body functionality (Menzel & Levine, 2011). Piran and Teall have done extensive research on the experience of embodiment construct, outlined in the above literature review. Piran and Teall (2017) have created a valid and reliable 34-item Experience of Embodiment Scale. The Experience of Embodiment Scale measures the experience of embodiment construct by asking respondents to rank items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a higher total scale score reflecting positive experiences of embodiment (Teall & Piran, 2019). The total Experience of Embodiment Scale has high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91-.94$ ) and a high test-retest reliability ( $r = .93$ ) (Tylka & Piran, 2019). Piran and Teall (2017) are currently working on publishing the Experience of Embodiment Scale, which would have been utilized as the scale to measure personal levels of embodiment if it had been available at the time of proposal.

Because the Experience of Embodiment Scale is not yet available, the Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) and the Body Responsiveness Scale (Daubenmier, 2005) will be used to measure personal levels of embodiment. Both scales seek to address the fifth dimension of the experience of embodiment construct, inhabiting the body as a subjective site (Piran, 2016). Although the other four dimensions of the experience of embodiment construct have been separately studied, the fifth dimension is relatively understudied and misunderstood. Understanding to what extent people view their body from an objective

lens and to what extent people are aware of their body will help to home in on the extent to which people experience their body as either an objective or subjective site.

The surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) is an 8-item scale rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This subscale is the most widely used measure of self-objectification (Daubenmier, 2005). Sample items include “I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good” (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This subscale seeks to uncover the degree to which people view their body as an outside observer (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The surveillance subscale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .89. Due to correlations with measures similar to this subscale, good construct validity has been established (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Higher scores reflect higher body surveillance, meaning that people watch their body frequently and think of their bodies in terms of how their bodies looks rather than how their bodies feel.

The Body Responsiveness Scale (Daubenmier, 2005) is a 7-item scale rated from 1 (not at all true about me) to 7 (very true about me). Sample items include “I am confident that my body will let me know what is good for me” (Daubenmier, 2005). It seeks to uncover both a person’s awareness of and responsiveness to bodily sensations. This is important to study in conjunction with the surveillance subscale, as findings suggest that self-objectification may prevent people from appropriately responding to bodily sensations (Daubenmier, 2005). The Body Responsiveness Scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .83 and has been validated by other researchers (Tihanyi, Ferentzi, Daubenmier, Drew, & Koteles, 2016). Higher scores reflect greater responsiveness to bodily sensations.

### *Limitations*

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, this study cannot be generalized to all college students, but rather is a small, convenience sample of college students across the United States. Second, this study consists of self-report measures. It is important to recognize that individuals may underreport or misrepresent behaviors that could construe them as less socially desirable. Third, the constructs at hand, motivation to respond without prejudice, cross-racial interactions, and levels of personal embodiment as identified through the fifth dimension of the experience of embodiment construct, are complex and difficult to capture fully. Quantitative methods are only able to capture partially all that these constructs encompass. Fourth, individuals may report information inaccurately due to an unawareness of their own beliefs and behaviors towards both self and others. Finally, it is important to note that this was not an experimental study. Results of the study determine correlation, but not causation. It is possible that unknown confounding variables will affect the results.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

This study focuses on the role personal levels of embodiment play in student thoughts and interactions with those who are racially and ethnically different from them. Four different scales—the Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), the Body Responsiveness Scale (Daubenmier, 2005), the Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale (Plant & Devine, 1998), and a positive cross-racial interaction measure inspired by Bowman and Denson (2011)—were utilized to understand this relationship. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there is a relationship between how a student thinks about themselves and how they interact with others, as seen through embodiment, cross-racial interactions, and internal motivation to respond without prejudice.

#### *Research Questions*

The primary aim of this research study was to measure the extent of the influence of personal levels of embodiment of college students on both their internal motivation to respond without prejudice and their cross-racial interactions with diverse others. To answer these questions, students responded to a survey that asked questions about the frequency of interactions with different racial groups, their motivations toward interactions with people of color, understandings of their own body and appearance, and their own demographics. These variables were then analyzed to determine if a student's

understanding of their body as an objective or subjective site plays a significant role in their labeling of and interactions with racially diverse others.

### *Descriptive Statistics*

First, I cleaned and coded the raw data in Excel, removing any participants that terminated early by not answering embodiment questions or who did not fall into an undergraduate category. A total of 53 respondents were removed. Additionally, responses were coded by gender, with females receiving a “dummy code” of 0 while males were coded as 1. Responses were also coded by race, with White students receiving a “dummy code” of 0 while students who identified as Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian, Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian, other, and multiracial/multiethnic were coded as 1.

### *Sample Demographics*

Out of the 221 respondents with complete responses, 23.1% were first-year students ( $n = 51$ ), 26.7% were sophomores ( $n = 59$ ), 24.9% were juniors ( $n = 55$ ), and 25.3% were seniors ( $n = 56$ ). Respondents who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian made up .5% of the sample ( $n = 1$ ), 8.6% identified as Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islanders/South Asian ( $n = 19$ ), 6.8% identified as Black/African American ( $n = 15$ ), 9% identified as multiracial/ethnic ( $n = 20$ ), and 69.2% of respondents identified as White ( $n = 153$ ). Respondents were also given the option of “other” or “prefer not to answer,” which 5.9% ( $n = 13$ ) of respondents chose. The majority of respondents were female, with 155 women (70.1%) and 63 men (28.5%)

completing the survey, with three respondents who preferred not to answer the response about sex or gender identity. See Table 4.1 for all sample characteristics.

Table 4.1

*Demographic Data*

Variable	N	%	M	SD
Gender				
Female	155	70.1		
Male	63	28.5		
Year in School				
First Year	51	23.1		
Sophomore	59	26.7		
Junior	55	24.9		
Senior	56	25.3		
Race/Ethnicity				
Black/ African American	15	6.8		
American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian	1	0.5		
Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	19	8.6		
White	153	69.2		
Other/Prefer Not to Answer	13	5.9		
Multiracial/ethnic	20	9.0		
Embodiment			3.98	0.81
Body Responsiveness			4.50	0.91
Body Surveillance			3.53	1.20
Cross-Racial Interactions			5.32	0.84
Internal Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice			6.20	1.07

*Embodiment Descriptive Statistics*

The survey items used to measure students’ levels of personal embodiment—defined as a person’s understanding of their body as a subjective site—were averaged in SPSS to create the Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) and the Body Responsiveness Scale (Daubenmier, 2005). The mean response for total level of personal embodiment was 3.98 (SD=.81) with a range of 1.8 to 6.73, with a highest possible score of 7. The Body Responsiveness Scale had mean of 4.50 (SD=.91). Because higher scores on the Body Responsiveness Scale implied a

more embodied person and higher scores on the Surveillance subscale implied a less embodied person, the Surveillance subscale was reverse coded. The Surveillance subscale had a reverse coded mean of 3.53 (SD=1.20) so that higher scores meant a student watches their body less. This data show that students are highly responsive to their bodies, but also highly survey their bodies.

Once reverse coded, the two scales were combined to understand the total level of personal embodiment, with higher scores displaying a student who sees their body as a subjective site, maintaining their body from their own perspective, and is, thus, more embodied (M=3.98, SD=.81). These scores, however, fail to show fully the contradictory effects of body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness. Because of this, all final statistical analyses were run with the scales separated. This allowed a more comprehensive picture of the varied influences of body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness.

#### *Internal Motivation to Respond and Cross-Racial Interactions Descriptive Statistics*

The survey items used to measure students labeling of and interactions with others were averaged in SPSS to create the Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale (Plant & Devine, 1998) and a positive cross-racial interaction measure inspired by Bowman and Denson (2011). The mean response for Internal Motivation to Respond was 6.20 (SD=1.07), with a highest possible score of 7. The mean response for cross-racial interactions was 5.32 (SD=0.84), with a highest possible score of 6 (Table 4.1).

### *Zero-Order Correlations*

Table 4.2 displays the relationship among the four variables, frequency of cross-racial interactions (CRIScale), internal motivation to respond without prejudice (IMScale), body responsiveness (BRScale), and objectified body consciousness (OBScale). The relationship between frequency of cross-racial interactions and internal motivation to respond without prejudice is both positive and significant (.284). This means that as a student's frequency of cross-racial interactions increases, their internal motivation to respond without prejudice also increases. The same can be said of the reverse. The relationship between internal motivation to respond and objectified body consciousness is both significant and negative (-.179). This means that as a student becomes more subjective in their body consciousness, their internal motivation to respond without prejudice decreases. The relationship between body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness is both significant and positive (.137). This means that as body responsiveness increases, subjective body consciousness also increases (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

*Zero-Order Correlations for Variables*

<i>Variable</i>		CRIScale	IMScale	BRScale	OBCScale
CRIScale	Pearson Correlation	1	.284*	.014	-.117
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.839	.083
	N	221	221	221	221
IMScale	Pearson Correlation	.284*	1	.118	-.179*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.080	.008
	N	221	221	221	221
BRScale	Pearson Correlation	.014	.118	1	.137*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.839	.080		.042
	N	221	221	221	221
OBCScale	Pearson Correlation	-.117	-.179*	.137*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.008	.042	
	N	221	221	221	221

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*SPSS Analysis*

After data were screened and non-responders removed in Excel, data were transferred to SPSS to run descriptive statistics and multiple regression tests on overall personal levels of embodiment, which includes body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness. The overall embodiment scale, as well as each embodiment scale individually, served as independent/predictor variables, while internal motivation to respond and frequency of cross-racial interactions both served as separate dependent/outcome variables.

*Validity and Reliability*

A principal components analysis was run to establish construct validity, revealing patterns of how variables fit together (Sriram, 2017). The KMO and Bartlett's tests of

assumptions were both met, meaning that the data was well suited to doing a principal components analysis and that factor analysis is appropriate. This test revealed that there is little to no overlap between the constructs, implying that all four scales are useful in understanding the influence of students' personal levels of embodiment on their thoughts and actions with racially different others. Reliability analyses on each scale were also run. The alpha levels for each scale were within an acceptable range (Body Responsiveness,  $\alpha = .693$ ; Cross-Racial Interactions,  $\alpha = .713$ ; Internal Motivation to Respond,  $\alpha = .863$ ; Objectified Body Consciousness,  $\alpha = .883$ ).

### *Multiple Regression*

Two sets of regression analyses were conducted in this study. The first was to determine the level of effect body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness had on students' internal motivation to respond. The second was to determine the level of effect body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness had on students' frequency of cross-racial interactions. After the proposed regression analyses were conducted, additional hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to understand the influence that variables such as race and gender had on internal motivation to respond and frequency of cross-racial interactions.

### *Internal Motivation to Respond*

The first regression used body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness to predict students' internal motivation to respond without prejudice. Body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness were significant predictors that together accounted for 5.3% of the variance in internal motivation to respond (Table 4.3).

Body responsiveness was a significant predictor of internal motivation to respond ( $\beta=.145, t=2.181, p=.030$ ). According to Mayhew (2016), this is a medium effect size, while Ferguson (2009) would classify this as a small effect size. Objectified body consciousness, however, negatively affected internal motivation to respond ( $\beta=-.199, t=-2.990, p=.003$ ). According to Mayhew (2016), this is a large, negative effect size, while Ferguson (2009) would classify this as a small effect size (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

*Regression for Internal Motivation to Respond*

Predictors	Model 1*		
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Body Responsiveness	.145	2.181	.030
Subjective Body Con.	-.199	-2.990	.003

*Note.*  $\beta$ =standardized beta; \*=model is significant ( $p<.05$ )

*Cross-Racial Interactions*

The second regression used body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness to predict students' frequency of cross-racial interactions. In predicting frequency of cross-racial interactions, body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness were not significant predictors and accounted for only 1.5% of the variance in cross-racial interactions (Table 4.4). Body responsiveness had a non-significant effect on cross-racial interactions ( $\beta= .030, t=.446, p=.656$ ), while objectified body consciousness had a medium, according to Mayhew (2016) and small, according to Ferguson (2009), negative effect on the sample for cross- racial interactions ( $\beta= -.121, t=-1.782, p=.076$ ).

Table 4.4

*Regression for Frequency of Cross-Racial Interactions*

Predictors	Model 1 R <sup>2</sup> =.015		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Body Responsiveness	.030	0.446	.656
Subjective Body Con.	-.121	-1.782	.076

*Note.*  $\beta$ =standardized beta

*Additional Analyses*

After testing for the proposed analyses regarding personal levels of embodiment, two sets of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. These additional analyses allowed for the examination of the influence of the predictor variables (body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness) on the outcome variables (internal motivation to respond or cross-racial interactions), while controlling for the effect of demographic variables such as gender and race. This allowed me to delineate how much of the effect is overlap between the independent variables. When conducting hierarchical multiple regressions, the last independent variables entered into the model will have a smaller effect size. This, however, is a pure effect size that can be attributed to the last independent variables added after removing the influence of the prior independent variables. For this research, the independent variables added last were body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness.

The first hierarchical regression used internal motivation to respond as the dependent/outcome variable and the second used frequency of cross-racial interactions as the dependent/outcome variable. For the independent/predictor variables, Block 1 consisted of the demographic variable of race. Block 2 added the demographic variable

gender. Block 3 added body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness to the model.

*Internal Motivation to Respond*

The first model for internal motivation to respond was not significant ( $R^2=.006$ ,  $p=.265$ ), showing that race had a small but notable effect on the sample, according to both Mayhew (2016) and Ferguson (2009), but this cannot be said of the population ( $\beta=.076$ ,  $t=1.118$ ,  $p=.265$ ). The second model was statistically significant ( $R^2=.142$ ,  $p=.000$ ), indicating that gender had a large effect, according to Mayhew (2016), and medium effect, according to Ferguson (2009), negative effect on internal motivation to respond ( $\beta=-.369$ ,  $t=-5.829$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The third model when testing the sample was also significant ( $R^2=.163$ ,  $p=.000$ ), indicating that body responsiveness has a small but notable positive effect on internal motivation to respond for the sample ( $\beta=.101$ ,  $t=1.577$ ,  $p=.116$ ), while objective body consciousness has a medium effect, according to Mayhew (2016), and small effect, according to Ferguson (2009), negative effect on internal motivation to respond ( $\beta=-.130$ ,  $t=-1.989$ ,  $p=.048$ ) (Table 4.5). The third model explains 16.3% of the variance in internal motivation to respond, with gender and objective body consciousness as statistically significant predictors.

Table 4.5

*Regression for Internal Motivation to Respond*

Predictors	Model 1 $R^2=.006$			Model 2* $R^2=.142$			Model 3* $R^2=.163$		
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Race	.076	1.118	.265	.071	1.125	.262	.067	1.071	.285
Male				-.369	-5.829	.000	-.332	-5.119	.000
Body Respons.							.101	1.577	.116
Subj. Body Cons.							-.130	-1.989	.048

*Note.*  $\beta$ =standardized beta; \*=model is significant ( $p<.05$ )

### *Cross-Racial Interactions*

The first model for the frequency of cross-racial interactions was statistically significant ( $R^2=.094$ ,  $p=.000$ ), showing that race has a large effect, according to Mayhew (2016), and a medium effect, according to Ferguson (2009), on cross-racial interactions ( $\beta=.307$ ,  $t=4.729$ ,  $p=.470$ ). The second model was also significant ( $R^2=.096$ ,  $p=.000$ ), indicating that gender has a non-significant effect on cross-racial interactions for the sample ( $\beta=.038$ ,  $t=.580$ ,  $p=.563$ ). The third model was also significant ( $R^2=.114$ ,  $p=.000$ ), indicating that body responsiveness had a non-significant effect on cross-racial interactions ( $\beta=.046$ ,  $t=.693$ ,  $p=.489$ ), while objective body consciousness had a medium negative effect, according to Mayhew (2016), and a small effect, according to Ferguson (2009) on cross-racial interactions ( $\beta=-.140$ ,  $t=-2.072$ ,  $p=.040$ ) (Table 4.6). It is important to note that the effect of body responsiveness was only found in the sample, while the effect of objective body consciousness can be inferred onto the population. Therefore, the third model explains 11.4% of the variance in cross-racial interactions, with race and objective body consciousness as statistically significant predictors.

Table 4.6

#### *Hierarchical Regression of Cross-Racial Interactions*

Predictors	Model 1*			Model 2*			Model 3*		
	$R^2=.094$			$R^2=.096$			$R^2=.114$		
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Race	.307	4.729	.470	.307	4.728	.000	.304	4.702	.000
Male				.038	0.580	.563	.071	1.068	.287
Body Respons.							.046	0.693	.489
Subj. Body Cons.							-.140	-2.072	.040

*Note.*  $\beta$ =standardized beta; \*=model is significant ( $p<.05$ )

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

In an increasingly interdependent world, racial diversity has become a necessary and valued part of furthering the higher education pursuit of developing the whole student. For a student to validate and integrate the experiences of diverse others, it is necessary for students to do that for themselves first (Abes et al., 2007; Chavez et al., 2007; Piran & Teal, 2012). One way a student can do this for themselves is through pursuing embodying experiences that allow them to respond simultaneously to their body's needs and reduce bodily surveillance (Daubenmier, 2005; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This integration is done within a student's microsystem, mesosystems, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Riddled throughout these systems are underlying assumptions and processes that uniquely disadvantage those who have been labeled as less than, specifically people of color (Hiraldo, 2010; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017).

This system of disadvantage can display itself in explicit attitudes, those that are overtly expressed, and in implicit attitudes, those that are often unconscious in nature (Arendt et al., 2019; Warikoo et al., 2016). Explicit attitudes have declined over time, as politically incorrect behaviors are considered less and less socially acceptable (Plant & Devine, 1998). Both types of attitudes, however, create a campus racial climate that affects the levels of interactions with diverse others, known as cross-racial interactions (Gurin et al., 2002). Increased cross-racial interactions create a host of positive outcomes

for college students, not least of which include higher retention and graduation rates (Chang et al., 2004; Nunez, 2009), increased civic interest and engagement (Gurin et al., 2002; Roksa et al., 2017), and decreased prejudice (Bowman & Park, 2014; Roksa et al., 2017).

The construct of embodiment is made up of five dimensions. The fifth dimension includes inhabiting the body as a subjective site, where students can create narratives of resistance against societal pressures rather than viewing their body from an outside perspective (Piran, 2016). Embodiment, understood as a shared expression of people and their culture, can help combat social objectification where a person's body is made to represent the whole of who they are (Cook-Cottone, 2018). Although much is understood about the constructs of internal motivation to respond without prejudice, cross-racial interactions, and embodiment separately from one another, little is understood about the way a student's embodiment, or mind-body integration, affects their thoughts and actions towards diverse others. The intent of this study was to determine the influence personal level of embodiment has on students' interactions with and thoughts about those who are racially and ethnically different from them.

### *Discussion of the Findings*

Overall, students' personal levels of embodiment, described through body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness, had adverse effects on the dependent variables. Objectified body consciousness was statistically significant in predicting both students' internal motivation to respond without prejudice and frequency of cross-racial interactions, while body responsiveness was non-significant. This demonstrates that the original research questions, to what extent personal levels of embodiment influences

internal motivation to respond and cross-racial interactions, ultimately has a multifaceted answer in this study. Body responsiveness has a marginal, non-significant influence on labeling and interactions, while objectified body consciousness has a medium to large effect, according to Mayhew (2016), negative influence. When variables are tested with demographic variables, however, the influence of the independent variables is reduced, but remains in the small to medium range, according to Mayhew (2016).

Three of the zero-order correlations were significant. Frequency of cross-racial interactions and internal motivation to respond without prejudice had a significant relationship of .284. This means that as internal motivation to respond without prejudice increases, the frequency of cross-racial interactions should also increase. The reverse is also true. This is understandable, as motivation often determines action, and action can shift the mindset for internal motivation. This is substantiated by other research, that shows that developing confidence to advocate regularly against racism is crucial to becoming an ally (Alimo, 2012). As students are learning how to navigate these dialogues, however, their confidence levels may be reduced (Alimo, 2012). At times, action may need to proceed confidence. It is a practitioner's job to help students move to a place where they are willing to take action (Alimo, 2012).

Body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness also had a significant relationship (.137). This means that as students become more attuned to their bodies and their bodies' needs, they will also increasingly inhabit their bodies subjectively instead of from the outside. This is notable, as body responsiveness had a positive correlation to internal motivation to respond without prejudice and frequency of cross-racial interactions, while objectified body consciousness had a negative correlation to the

dependent variables. Future theorists, researchers, and practitioners will need to consider these adverse relationships before making sweeping changes to their work.

The final significant correlation was between internal motivation to respond without prejudice and objectified body consciousness (-.179). This means that as students inhabit their bodies more subjectively, their internal motivation to respond without prejudice will decrease. This is a somewhat alarming result, as embodiment researchers would advocate for subjective inhabiting while critical race theorists would advocate for increased internal motivation to respond without prejudice. The adverse effects of these two variables cannot be determined without additional research. Speculations on why the variables interact in this way is expanded upon below. It may be attributed to one or both scales not measuring the latent variables they are supposed to measure.

#### *Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice*

According to Mayhew (2016), body responsiveness, the awareness people have of their bodies' natural responses, had a medium, positive effect on internal motivation to respond without prejudice ( $\beta=.145$ ,  $t=2.181$ ,  $p=.030$ ). This means that the more attuned a student is to the needs and desires of their body, the greater their internal motivation will be to respond without prejudice to those who are racially and ethnically different than them. Studies have shown that students can increase both bodily awareness and embodiment when they participate in embodying activities, such as hiking and yoga, for functional purposes over appearance reasons (Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Menzel & Levine, 2011; Tiggeman et al., 2014; Tylka & Homan, 2015). The results of this study imply that the more a student participates in embodying activities for functional reasons, the more likely they are to have a higher internal motivation to respond to others without prejudice.

In contrast to body responsiveness, objectified body consciousness—when people have been socialized to view themselves as objects of other’s attention (McKinley & Hyde, 1996)—has a negative effect on internal motivation to respond without prejudice ( $\beta=-.199$ ,  $t=-2.990$ ,  $p=.003$ ). According to Mayhew (2016), this effect size is large, while Ferguson (2009) would classify this effect size as small. This means that the more a student surveys their body, the greater their internal motivation will be to respond without prejudice to those who are racially and ethnically different than them. Although increased body surveillance is not typically considered positive (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), in this study, increased body surveillance increased motivation to respond without prejudice.

The negative effect of objectified body consciousness on internal motivation to respond may be attributed to the intense pressure that today’s students experience to perform for others via social media. Considered iGen or generation z, college students today were born in 1995 or later, grew up with cell phones, and do not remember a time before the internet (Twenge, 2017). In an endless pursuit of likes and positive comments on social media, students today feel the relentless pressure to portray only happiness and positivity on social media (Twenge, 2017). For current college students, nearly all social life is conducted online, where clear messages about what is “in” and “out” are especially salient (Twenge, 2017). This requires students to be strategic about their self-presentation, cultivating socially acceptable personas on social media (Twenge, 2017). This pressure is felt at a near constant, as college students tend to see their smartphones as an extension of their bodies, infiltrating nearly every minute of their lives (Twenge, 2017).

Although race had a non-significant, small effect on internal motivation to respond ( $\beta=.076$ ,  $t=1.118$ ,  $p=.265$ ), gender had a significant, negative effect ( $\beta=-.369$ ,  $t=-5.829$ ,  $p=.000$ ). This implies that males are more likely to have a lower sense of internal motivation to respond without prejudice than females do. After controlling for race and gender, body responsiveness ( $\beta=.101$ ,  $t=1.577$ ,  $p=.116$ ) and objectified body consciousness ( $\beta=-.130$ ,  $t=-1.989$ ,  $p=.048$ ) still had noticeable effects on internal motivation to respond without prejudice. Although body responsiveness was non-significant, objectified body consciousness was a significant negative predictor of internal motivation to respond. As mentioned above, this may be attributed to this generation of students' desire to appear socially acceptable, especially with the prevalence of social media and a belief that people's whole lives are shown on the internet.

This generation of students is also more highly politically active and tend to have an increased understanding of political correctness (Twenge, 2017). Although the Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale (Plant & Devine, 1998) is supposed to curb influence of external motivation and social desirability, it is difficult to remove completely this influence. Today's students may be so highly influenced by their desire to appear positively to others, due to the prevalence of social media in their lives since childhood, that preventing influence of social desirability may be nearly impossible.

This constant connection serves to perpetuate messages of equality for all. For this generation, embracing equality is seen as a necessary requirement (Twenge, 2017). This belief is not without its caveats, however, as students also receive the message that race, sexuality, and other identity markers do not matter. Students who are part of this

generation have been taught not to see color (Twenge, 2017). This may explain why responses to the Internal Motivation to Respond without Prejudice Scale had such high results ( $M=6.20$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ). An avoidance of race, however, is not a viable strategy for the future. To go against this message of equality would, almost certainly, be social destruction.

### *Cross-Racial Interactions*

Given the vast literature on college student's interactions with those who are different from them (e.g., Bowman, Chang, Park, etc.), the mean responses for cross-racial interactions ( $M=5.32$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ) were particularly high. This is especially true for a sample of predominantly White students, who typically experience less cross-racial experiences, and students who attended mostly predominantly White institutions, where students of color are more likely to experience cross-racial interactions than White students (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Roksa et al., 2017). It is possible that cross-racial interaction scores were skewed by social desirability (Bowman & Hill, 2011), but it may also be the result of tapping into students who are particularly engaged and pursuing a diverse range of interactions.

The results for the multiple regression for body responsiveness, objectified body consciousness, and cross-racial interactions were non-significant. This means that the results cannot be inferred on the population. This also implies that body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness effect internal motivation to respond without prejudice, but not necessarily the actions that would typically result from this motivation.

For cross-racial interactions, gender had a non-significant, small effect ( $\beta=.071$ ,  $t=1.068$ ,  $p=.287$ ), while race had a significant, noticeable effect ( $\beta=.304$ ,  $t=4.702$ ,

$p=.000$ ). Although body responsiveness had a marginal, non-significant effect on cross-racial interactions ( $\beta=.046$ ,  $t=.693$ ,  $p=.489$ ), objectified body consciousness had a significant, negative effect on cross-racial interactions ( $\beta=-.140$ ,  $t=-2.072$ ,  $p=.040$ ). As mentioned above, the negative effect of objectified body consciousness may be attributed to the immense pressure that iGen students feel to perform in a socially acceptable way. It may also be attributed to college students' strong desire to come across as socially progressive (Twenge, 2017). College students tend to have an increased interest in what is going on in the world but are less likely to act on those beliefs (Twenge, 2017).

Although the opposing effects of body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness may seem puzzling, it appears as though objectified body consciousness is innately tied to a student's cognitive control and their understanding of what is both politically correct and socially desirable. According to the results of this study, students who watch their bodies less, have less internal motivation to respond without prejudice. A student who watches their body less, and is, thus, more embodied, may have less motivation to prove to others that they are not racist or racially motivated. Because of this, these students would then also have less reason to interact with racially different others.

### *Implications for the Future*

*Theory.* The construct of embodiment and the theories associated with this construct are not currently included in college student development theory. Although theories discuss identity development in part (e.g., Abes et al., 2007; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; racial and ethnic identity development models, etc.), these foundational

theories do not seek to explain mind-body integration. The current study shows, however, that a student's understanding of their body can influence their understanding of and interactions with those who are racially and ethnically different than them. Student affairs professionals should seek to gain understanding about the construct of embodiment as they pursue holistic student development. This will allow practitioners to have a more complete picture of the ways in which students grow and develop over their time in undergraduate studies. Future student development theorists should consider the potential impact of embodiment or disembodiment on their understanding of college students.

*Research.* The results of this study simply show relationship among variables. Future studies can further this research by pursuing causation over correlation. This can be done through conducting intervention studies, where embodiment levels, cross-racial interactions, and internal motivation to respond without prejudice are measured before and after interventions are completed. Possible interventions could include having participants partake in embodying activities such as yoga and meditation or participating in lovingkindness, where a student thinks about those they love most and projects those feelings first to themselves and then to others (Galinsky et al., 2015; Kang et al., 2013; McBride & Kwee, 2018). Additional interventions could target male-identifying students, recognizing that males may struggle more with internal motivation to respond positively to racially and ethnically diverse students.

Studies that focus on interventions, however, should not come before a more in-depth study of students' subjective experience of their body is pursued. Given the nature of the questions on the Objectified Body Consciousness scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996),

it is possible that the scale taps into students' levels of self-monitoring and self-desirability, more so than their subjective experience. Questions on the scale include "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good," "during the day I think about how I look many times," and "I rarely worry about how I look to other people" (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Because objectified body consciousness is a latent construct, it is possible that this scale is actually measuring students' levels of agreeableness. It is also possible that scores on the scale are skewed by students' level of self-awareness. Because of this, future studies can seek to uncover how much overlap exists between the subjective experience of the body and students' desires to monitor themselves for various purposes, as well as seeking to uncover what the Objectified Body Consciousness scale is truly measuring.

Another limitation of this study is the convenience sampling used to recruit students. Although efforts were made to survey a wide range of students, ultimately, the survey was distributed utilizing convenience methods. This makes the data less generalizable to all college students. Future studies in this area should strive to utilize random sampling methods to gather student data. In addition to a limited ability to generalize results, the data may be skewed due to self-report measures. As is seen in the data collected on iGen, individuals may underreport or misrepresent behaviors that could construe them as less socially desirable. Students may also inaccurately report data due to an unawareness of their own beliefs and behaviors. Without detailed tracking of behaviors, reports of behavior frequency will still have error associated with the estimation of frequency. Future studies can work against self-report error by utilizing a range of data collection methods, such as qualitative interviews and intervention studies.

In addition to conducting additional studies that account for some of the current study's limitations, other research could be done to understand the potentially adverse influences of body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness. These studies could also pursue a wider understanding of these variables influences together and separately.

Future studies could also investigate the relationship between a student's understanding of race as part of their identity and their personal level of embodiment. If we spoke about embodiment in terms of race, we may help move students through stages of identity development. Current literature has not focused on the sociological understanding of embodiment in relation to race, but given the current study's findings, it may be worth studying.

In addition to a student's understanding of their racial identity, future research could include measurements of social media and cell phone use. Because students today view their smart phones as an extension of their bodies, this may be a confounding factor in the results.

The constructs at hand are complex and difficult to capture fully. Although quantitative methods provide a starting point for literature on the intersection of embodiment and race, they cannot fully capture all that these constructs encompass. Future research can continue to pursue these constructs, while adding to an understanding of student identity formation tied to the way they think about and interact with those who are racially and ethnically different from them.

*Healthy Objectification.* The results of this study show that higher levels of body surveillance and objectified body consciousness are correlated to higher levels of internal motivation to respond without prejudice. Because of this, it appears as though some level of objectification is good for students' interactions. It is also possible that there may be aspects of objectification that are considered health. For example, Emory University requires that all first-year students take a Health 100 course that teaches students to have stewardship of their own wellness. This peer-taught program focuses on the mental, physical, and spiritual components of health that encourage students to make wellness part of their lifestyle. In hopes to change the culture on health, Health 1,2,3 encourages students to be proactive in their health and to see the connection between all aspects of wellness (Hunt, 2017).

The stewardship of the body promoted by courses like Emory's Health 100 may lend to students having a more utilitarian, and thus, objectified, view of their body. This objectification, however, can aid students in holistic wellness as they learn how to feed their bodies, keep their bodies strong, and attune to various aspects of wellness. What students need amidst this healthy objectification is an understanding of how their healthy level of objectification affects those in their life. For example, currently there is a worldwide pandemic that is affecting global social health. Although it was first thought that those over 60 years old were the most susceptible, research is now showing that 40% of those hospitalized in the US due to the coronavirus have been young adults (Belluck, 2020). This is worth taking note of, as young adults have been utilizing the free time away from classes to extend their spring break plans. It is possible that if students had a wider understanding of the way their health affects other's health, through courses like

the one at Emory that educate on healthy objectification, college students may be taking social distancing more seriously. Future required courses for undergraduate students could include a focus on holistic wellness that addresses healthy objectification as well as the integration of various components of wellness.

*Practice.* This study showed that students' body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness have varying effects on students' internal motivation to respond without prejudice and frequency of cross-racial interactions. It is important to note that a subjective understanding of the self may be good for individual students, but not for the racially and ethnically different others with whom they interact. Because of this, practitioners should be careful in implementing any suggested practice. There is a dearth of research on the interplay of students' objectification and their internal motivation to respond without prejudice which results in a lack of knowledge on how increasing subjectivity may affect others.

It is important to note that body responsiveness was only significant in the multiple regression analyses without control variables. Because of this, the impact of increasing body responsiveness on students' frequency of cross-racial interactions and internal motivation to respond without prejudice cannot be widely applied. One way to increase students' body responsiveness is to require students to take yoga or other embodying exercise courses, instead of requiring non-embodiment fitness courses (Gattario & Frisen, 2019; Menzel & Levine, 2011; Tiggeman et al., 2014). Practices such as meditation and yoga serve to create spaces of reflection where students can grow in their awareness of their bodily needs. One example of a course that institutions could

implement is a relaxation and fitness course. At my current institution, this course creates space for students to stop three times a week during their hectic class schedules to breathe, stretch, and meditate. Although students are not required to take this course, they are required to take a certain amount of lifetime fitness courses. Future iterations of this requirement could require that one of the lifetime fitness courses is a relaxation course.

Today's students are highly engaged in both social media and the image management that comes with social media use. Student affairs practitioners can implement programs to help students reduce their inclinations to cultivate socially acceptable personas on the internet. Programs aimed at social media use can help students create healthy social media boundaries by teaching students about apps like "Self-Control," that block specific sites for a designated period of time. Students can also consider the amount of time they spend on the social media and consciously choose to spend less time on the internet. Programs can also help students think through aspects of their social media use that may be considered toxic, such as following accounts that do not promote positive body image or positive mental health. Students can then choose to unfollow these accounts and replace them with either less social media use or with accounts that share messages of positivity and body love.

Student affairs practitioners can also help promote embodiment by aiding students in reflection regarding their own body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness. This can include intentional question asking during one on one conversations that guide students to think about their relationship to their bodies. Embodiment can also be promoted by encouraging students to be more mindful and integrating mindfulness practices into programs. For example, mindful eating can be

integrated into programs where there is food. Practitioners can encourage students to eat first and then complete an activity, rather than eating while doing an activity. Paying attention to the way you nourish your body can aid in increasing embodiment (Cook-Cottone, 2018). Mindfulness can also be integrated into various programs by educating students on healthy self-care practices that encourage body awareness, such as meditation that focuses on present-moment awareness and facilitating supportive relationships that encourage body positivity (Cook-Cottone, 2018).

Because institutions of higher education espouse values of diversity and developing the whole student, it is important that students develop multicultural consciousness—learning to value and validate otherness (Dean, 2017). Consciousness, as opposed to competence, implies the ability to understand oneself (intrapersonal) and the ability to interact with others (interpersonal), made possible through an awareness of oneself (Dean, 2017). Students must first have an internal disposition that is willing to interact, an internal motivation to respond without prejudice, before they can develop the skills necessary to interact cross-racially. Multicultural consciousness is about personal knowledge (attitudes) and interactions (actions) that shape the way students engage with the world. This is linked to both the historical context and the environment in which a student finds themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Multicultural consciousness advocates for students to become more embodied, while recognizing that their self-understanding effects the way they think about and interact with racially and ethnically different others (Abes et al., 2007; Chavez, et al., 2003).

Although required coursework on diversity has not been positively correlated to cross-racial interactions (Park & Bowman, 2015), course work can be utilized to help

students grow in their personal knowledge. For students to grow in their ability to interact with others, they must have interactions with others. Examples of this can include intentional residential programming that fosters deeply listening of others' stories and opportunities for service-learning that allow students to see experiences outside of what they have known (Tatum, 2017). It is also important, however, that students are given an opportunity to reflect on these experiences afterwards, so that the learning can be fully understood.

### *Conclusion*

The results of this research show that the way students think about themselves and their bodily reactions influences their internal motivation and diversity of their interactions with others. Being one with your body is a subjective, intimate, and personal experience. Our bodies are the spaces through which our lives are realized and through which we dedicate ourselves to a sense of purpose (McBride & Kwee, 2018). At the same time, we are called to interrupt oppression and create changes toward equity for all people (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). One such way to address both these deeply human callings is through an increased understanding of the relationship between personal levels of embodiment, internal motivation to respond without prejudice, and frequency of cross-racial interactions.

Because embodiment, through the sociological lens, is an emerging topic of research, studies that focus on the effects of embodiment on college students are varied. A comprehensive understanding of the effect of experiencing your body as a subjective site, rather than as simply an objective site, has yet to be established. As this study has shown, however, body responsiveness and objectified body consciousness do impact the

way students think about and interact with those who are racially and ethnically different than them. An increased discussion, and, thus, understanding of college students' levels of personal embodiment may help student affairs practitioners in their pursuit of the development of the holistic student.

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