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Perspective Taking, Multicultural Course Completion, and Political Ideology Affiliation Effects on Zero-Sum Belief Endorsement by White Counseling Trainees

Lindsay A. Okonowsky
Western Michigan University, LOkonowsky@bop.gov

PERSPECTIVE TAKING, MULTICULTURAL COURSE COMPLETION, AND
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AFFILIATION EFFECTS ON ZERO-SUM BELIEF
ENDORSEMENT BY WHITE COUNSELING TRAINEES

by

Lindsay A. Okonowsky

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Doctoral Committee:

Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.
Jennifer M. Foster, Ph.D.
C. Dennis Simpson, Ph.D.

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Research suggests many Whites tend to see racism as a zero-sum game, which means they believe gains for one group necessitate losses for another group (Wilkins, Wellman, Babbitt, Toosi, & Schad, 2015). Given the theoretical underpinnings of multicultural competence, and the notion that beliefs drive actions, adherence to zero-sum game-oriented beliefs may interfere with individuals in helping professions' abilities to provide multiculturally competent services to their clients. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the effects of perspective taking and multicultural course completion as interventions with White, master's level, counseling trainees' endorsements of zero-sum beliefs (ZSBs). A secondary purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between ZSBs and political ideology affiliation (degree of liberalism or conservatism).

Participants were 226 White (80.5% women, $n = 182$; 17.7% men, $n = 40$), master's level, student counselor trainees attending a large, predominantly White, public university in the Midwest. The research design was a 2 x 2 between subjects experimental design involving two manipulations. The first manipulation was whether the subject received a perspective taking intervention writing activity or maintained a first

person perspective. The second manipulation was whether the subject had completed a multicultural counseling course. All participants were asked to complete a measure assessing degree of adherence to ZSBs. Participants also completed a measure of political ideology affiliation, with higher scores on the measure reflecting stronger adherence to conservative ideology and lower scores representing more liberalism.

An ANOVA using perspective taking condition and multicultural course completion condition as factors and ZSB outcome measure scores as the dependent variable was conducted. A Spearman correlation between political ideology affiliation measure scores and ZSB measure scores was also completed. There were no significant main effects or an interaction effect of perspective taking and multicultural course completion on participants' endorsements of ZSBs. However, the expected trend was present, with individuals who received a perspective taking intervention and completed a multicultural counseling course having the lowest group mean on the measure of ZSBs. There was also a significant correlation between political ideology affiliation and one's level of endorsement of ZSBs, with more conservative individuals demonstrating high degrees of ZSBs. Implications for future research and practice related to how training programs can enhance trainees' degrees of multicultural competence via multicultural course completion and perspective taking, to meet the needs of a diverse clientele base, are discussed.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In 2009, Supreme Court Justice David Souter retired, and former President Barack Obama was faced with nominating a replacement. During the nomination process, former President Obama emphasized that empathy was an "essential ingredient for arriving at just decisions and outcomes" (Lithwick, 2013). He then nominated Judge Sonia Sotomayor, who was an outspoken proponent of empathy and equality. She was no stranger to criticism and her valuing of empathy was coded by decriers as bias. In 2001, while giving a speech in Berkeley, California, she stated, "Whether born from experience or inherent physiological or cultural difference… our gender and national origins may and will make a difference in our judging" (Sotomayor, 2001). Her reasonable acknowledgement of the ways in which demographic variables influence justice, and citizens' daily lives, was cited as a primary reason for why she should not be nominated (Lithwick, 2013).

On July 13th, 2009, at the opening for Judge Sonia Sotomayor's Supreme Court confirmation hearings, United States Senator Jeff Sessions stated, "Empathy for one party is always prejudice against another" (Lithwick, 2013). Sessions was alluding to now Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor's previous comments on social justice issues related to equality. He channeled the tone of other Sotomayor detractors who believed she was too biased and emotional to accurately impose the rule of law (Lithwick, 2013). Nonetheless, Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor was confirmed by the United States Senate on August 6th, 2009 by a 68-31 vote. Former President Obama commissioned her on the same day and she was sworn in on August 8th, 2009, by the Chief Justice as the first Latina/o and only the third woman Supreme Court justice.

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On March 11th, 2011, Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor stated, "Until we get equality in education, we won't have an equal society" (Passamani, 2014). Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor has also stated she found success with juries because she was able to see her cases through their eyes (Lithwick, 2013; Sotomayor, 2013). Justice Sotomayor, a Latina coming from difficult life circumstances (Sotomayor, 2013), and Senator Sessions, a White male from Selma, Alabama, appear to hold starkly contrasting opinions relative to empathy and how equality is achieved. It would be an oversight to ignore the likelihood that their different socializations and identities did not influence the development of their beliefs, which drive their public actions that have real consequences for United Stated citizens. The current political climate of the United States has led to the perpetuation, and increase, of polarizing beliefs similar to those demonstrated by Sessions and Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor.

With respect to the demographic variable of race, a belief in anti-White bias has gained momentum among the White population in the United States over the last two decades. Importantly, since 1995, Whites have believed anti-White bias is more prevalent than anti-Black bias and that more progress toward racial equality has been made than do Blacks (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2006; Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Norton & Sommers, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2013). Additionally, researchers have found and theorized that Whites believe racial equality progress has been made at the expense of the White population (Cabrera, 2012; Chang, 1996; Norton & Sommers, 2011; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Research suggests Whites tend to see racism as a "zero-sum game," which means gains for one group require losses for another group (Wilkins, Wellman, Babbitt, Toosi, & Schad, 2015). For example, Wilkins et al. (2015) found Whites believe if rights for minority groups increase, rights for White Americans decrease. One who ascribes to zero-sum beliefs (ZSBs) thinks

resources are finite and that there are not enough to go around (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Ward & Masgoret, 2006; Wilkins et al., 2015).

In addition to believing racism is a zero-sum game, another common thought among White Americans is that the United States is a "post-racial society," which means the system of racism has been dismantled and racial equality has been achieved (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011). The frequency of post-racial rhetoric has increased steadily since successes of the Civil Rights era and accelerated sharply subsequent to former President Barack Obama's term in office (Howard & Flennaugh, 2011). The election of a Black president provides evidence to those arguing the social state of the nation is post-racial (Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009; Lum, 2009). However, the highly visible race of the president masks subtler evidence supporting the fact that structural racism continues to have a stronghold over the lives of many racial/ethnic minorities.

Before and during the Civil Rights era, racism was overt and easily identifiable. Different water fountains for Whites and Blacks; segregated schools; and other norms centered on racial stratification were clear indicators of racism. Contemporary racial discrimination, however, has taken on a new, insidious, form often going unnoticed by Whites (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Bonilla-Silva (2015) conceptualized the transformed method of insidious discrimination as "new racism," (p. 5) or "post-racial racism" (p. 14). The form of new or post-racial racism Bonilla-Silva described involves more covert aspects of racism including avoidance of racial terminology, pursuit of a political agenda that excludes racial terminology, the use of subtle mechanisms to uphold racial privilege, and an inauthentic retelling of racial practices of the past (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2015). The prevalence of "new

racism" may reinforce the common belief among Whites that racism is not widespread because it is less blatantly visible than the racism prior and during the Civil Rights era.

Using the term "post-racial" signifies that equality has been achieved and may lead to the idea that work to further an anti-racist agenda can be terminated. For example, after the election of former president Obama, Lum (2009) posited that efforts to discredit affirmative action policies would accelerate and other researchers have supported this notion (Kaiser et al., 2009). Statistics, however, do not indicate equality has been secured for people of color across several life domains (CDC, 2013; Kaiser et al, 2009). Although racial and ethnic minorities have achieved equality in terms of basic human rights, this progress is not matched with advances in job equality, equal access to housing, educational funding/opportunities, and access to healthcare resources (CDC, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Todd, Bodenhausen, & Galinsky, 2012). Educationally, Howard and Flennaugh (2011) noted that young Black males have lower academic outcomes; higher suspension, expulsion, and dropout rates; and declining college admission rates. Further, they assert problems affecting Black males in schools are racialized and require ongoing research attention; they maintain that the United States is not post racial and social ascription to post racial ideology poses risks for all minorities, particularly young Black men (Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013; Norton, 2010).

With respect to job equity, Blacks are twice as likely to be unemployed as Whites and the wages of Blacks and Latinos are lower than those of Whites (CDC, 2013; Lum, 2009; Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Blacks are three times more likely to be poor than Whites, earn about 40 percent less than Whites, and have about an eighth of the net worth that Whites have (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; CDC, 2013). Additionally, researchers studying hiring decisions based

on race have consistently found evidence of racial discrimination, with estimates of employers' preferences for White applicants ranging from 50% to 240% (Bendick et al., 1994; Pager, 2007; Turner et al., 1991). Bonilla-Silva (2017) discussed racial inequality in unemployment, noting by 2014, Black unemployment was 2.3 times higher than White unemployment and in 2015, Black unemployment was higher among all degree levels. Thus, differences in unemployment rates may not simply be the result of educational difference.

Fortunately, as of 2018, the Black unemployment rate, at 5.9%, is the lowest it has been since the government began keeping track of the rate in 1972. However, the overall unemployment rate for Americans is 3.8% and the unemployment rate for White Americans is 3.5%, which are notably lower figures the unemployment rate of Black Americans. Furthermore, for 2018, the unemployment rate for Black teens is 19.8% versus 11.6% for White teens. Finally, the unemployment rate for Black men over the age of 20 is 6.3% compared with 3.2% for White men over the age of 20 years old (La Monica, 2018). These unemployment figures highlight an important area of continued disparity, substantiating the notion that structural racism continues to influence the lives of Black Americans.

With respect to health, the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Health Disparities and Inequalities Report (2013) reported that health disparities defined by race-ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, disability status, and geographic location were all present in 2005 and 2009 census data. Additionally, there was no evidence of a decrease in racial/ethnic related health disparities over time (CDC, 2013). Finally, socioeconomic and disability related health disparities increased from 2005 to 2009 (CDC, 2013). The increase in socioeconomic and disability disparities demonstrates the insidious nature of the influences race/ethnicity have on health disparities, which are directly related to health care policy influenced by voters. The

statistics presented above provide support that inequality across several realms is prevalent, which challenges the notion that the United States is in the midst of a post-racial era.

Whites' belief that the United States is a post-racial social system, despite racial disparity statistics demonstrating otherwise, may interfere with continued efforts to work toward equality across various domains. More specifically, Whites' tendency to ascribe to post-racial ideology may also lead them to feel confused about, or even threatened by, the continued efforts of groups like Black Lives Matter, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Association for Affirmative Action (AAAA), and others (Chang, 1995). Furthermore, beliefs in post-racialism may influence voting practices and the subsequent passing of initiatives that may influence racial equality across many social domains. Ascription to ZSBs may lead people to be less motivated to allocate resources to address social inequality and may preserve group disparities (Chang, 1996; Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Wilkins et al., 2015).

The methods behind White Americans' ascription to the belief that their group will lose resources if another group is granted resources, despite statistics showing otherwise, should be explored. Additionally, and practically, how ZSBs held by White Americans can potentially be modified also warrants urgent exploration. In combination, the beliefs that (a) the United States is a post-racial society, (b) as rights for one group increase, rights for another group decrease, and (c) anti-White bias is now more prevalent than anti-Black bias may lead Whites to work to uphold the interests of their own racial/ethnic group, especially if they feel their resources are being threatened. Broadly, social justice progress may be hindered if Whites' tendency to adopt ZSBs is not further explored and subsequently challenged. Given Whites comprise 70 percent of the voting pool (How Groups Voted 2016,

2016) and tend to hold beliefs that may impede racial equality progress, it is important to also explore the ways in which political ideology affiliation may be related to ZSBs.

Purpose of the Study

The provision of therapy is an action with numerous implications for clients. Because beliefs drive actions, it is important to attempt to more comprehensively understand how counselor trainees' adoptions of ZSBs may influence their abilities to provide services to clients coming from diverse backgrounds. The purpose of the current study is to examine possible effects multicultural course completion and perspective taking, as interventions, may have on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs. Given social justice initiatives and resource allocation are often influenced by voting practices (another belief driven action with consequences for clients), the link between political ideology affiliation and ZSBs is also explored.

This study extends existing research by examining the direct relationships between ZSBs, perspective taking, political ideology affiliation, and multicultural course completion in White counseling trainees. Researchers previously examined these same constructs, but not collectively, and not in the context of counselor training. More specifically, while multicultural course completion has been shown to be effective in fostering multicultural competency development, ZSBs have not been used as an outcome measure to evaluate the efficacy of multicultural course completion. Additionally, the interaction effect of multicultural course completion and perspective taking, generally, and on the endorsement of ZSBs, has not been evaluated. Furthermore, data for this study was obtained while the country was in the midst of a volatile political climate. Due to the activated state of political

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affairs in the United States, politics and policies may have been particularly salient in the minds of participants.

Findings could be applied to help identify new ways in which to foster multicultural competency development in counselor trainees. This experiment is considered a preliminary step toward an applied approach to addressing ZSBs held by White counselor trainees, which may lead to improved multiculturally competent administration of counseling services. Subsequently, the findings may also have practical implications for those in positions of power in K-12 education, academia, and other fields that serve diverse populations.

Research Questions

The following research questions, which are rooted in existing literature, guided this stud

1. Does perspective taking influence White counselor trainees' levels of endorsement of ZSBs?

2. Does the completion of a multicultural course have an effect on White counselor trainees' levels of endorsement of ZSBs?

3. Do perspective taking and multicultural course completion have a cumulative influence on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs?

4. Is there a relationship between White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs and White counselor trainees' political ideology affiliations?

Hypotheses

The research questions above led to the formulation of the following hypotheses, which will be tested in the current study:

Hypothesis 1: White counselor trainees belonging to a group receiving a perspective taking intervention will demonstrate statistically significantly lower ZSB outcome

measure scores than White counselor trainees belonging to a group not receiving a perspective taking intervention.

Hypothesis 2: White counselor trainees belonging to a group that has completed a multicultural counseling course will demonstrate statistically significantly lower ZSB outcome measure scores than White counselor trainees belonging to a group that has not completed a multicultural counseling course.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a statistically significant interaction effect between perspective taking and multicultural course completion on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs, with students belonging to both the perspective taking intervention and multicultural course completion groups demonstrating the lowest levels of ZSB endorsement.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant correlation between White counselor trainees' ZSB outcome measure scores and their scores on a measure of political ideology affiliation.

Definition of Terms

This section provides definitions for specific terns used throughout this paper. The terms are defined throughout the paper and are clearly outlined in this section. Terms commonly used throughout the study include zero sum beliefs, perspective taking, counselor/counseling trainees, multicultural course completion, political ideology affiliation, White, and Black.

- **Zero sum beliefs** involve the notion that gains for one group necessarily involve losses for another group (Wilkins et al, 2015).

- **Perspective taking** is defined as actively contemplating another's psychological experience (Todd, Bodenhausen, Richeson, & Galinsky, 2011).

- **Counselor trainee** refers to a student who is enrolled in a Master's level program with a concentration in clinical mental health counseling; counseling psychology; college counseling; marriage, couple, and family counseling; rehabilitation counseling, or school counseling.

- **Multicultural course completion** refers to whether or not a Master's level counseling trainee has completed a Master's level course centered on multicultural issues and multicultural counseling competency development.

- **Political ideology** is defined as a "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (Erikson & Tedin, 2003, p. 64). For the current study, **political ideology affiliation** will refer to the attachment one has to a particular political ideology.

- For this study, **White** will be used to describe anyone who identifies as Caucasian or of European-American ancestry.

- For this study, **Black** and **African American** will be used interchangeably to describe anyone of African ancestry.

Summary

This chapter, the introduction, started with a historical background for this research and subsequently included the purpose of this study, a description of the study, specific questions to be answered, and a definition of commonly used terms. The remained of this dissertation is organized in the following manner. Chapter Two presents pertinent literature related to the study. Chapter Three describes the methodological procedures used to conduct

the study and presents descriptive information about the participants. Chapter Four presents

the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter Five includes a summary of the study, findings,

limitations, implications for practice, and areas of future research.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The primary purpose of this study is to examine whether perspective taking and multicultural counseling course completion would decrease White counseling trainees' levels of ZSB endorsement. Presently, perspective taking and multicultural course completion have not been topics of focus in ZSB research. This review of related literature includes: (a) a presentation of existing literature on ZSBs, (b) multicultural counseling education, (c) perspective taking research, and (d) political ideology affiliation. The review of related literature ends with the rationale for the current study.

Zero-Sum Beliefs

The constructs of ZSBs, zero-sum game, and zero-sum competition are often used interchangeably in standing research (Norton & Sommers, 2011; Różycka-Tran, Boski, & Wojciszke, 2015; Wilkins et al., 2015). For this study, the specific concept of ZSBs will be used and explored. ZSB is the construct of interest because beliefs drive important behaviors like voting practices, hiring processes, and involvement in social movements. Wilkins et al. (2015) defined ZSBs as, "…the perception that gains for one group necessarily involve losses for other groups and vice versa" (p. 1). Those who endorse ZSBs assume resources are limited, a belief that perpetuates intergroup competition. Adherence to ZSBs incites a competitive approach to intergroup relations and theoretically leads to a desire to improve the ingroup's ability to compete in society and to a desire to decrease the outgroup's ability to succeed (Wilkins et al., 2015).

Wilkins et al. (2015), across multiple studies, found that high-status groups, like Whites, endorsed ZSBs about discrimination more than low status groups, like Blacks, and

that ZSB endorsement moderated perceptions of changing bias experienced by men and women over time. White men have demonstrated the highest level of ZSB endorsement (Wilkins et al., 2015). Wilkins et al. also reported that ZSBs were associated with Whites' decreased support for affirmative action policies that benefitted racial minorities and were positively associated with support for policies that addressed perceived anti-White bias. Additionally, Wilkins et al. found that ZSBs increased only when high status groups contemplated increasing bias against their own group and not when they perceived decreasing bias against a potentially competitive outgroup. Given the power those in the helping profession have to connect clients with community resources, the potential behavioral correlates of ZSBs may have detrimental effects on clients participating in cross-racial therapeutic relationships with White counselor trainees, if those trainees hold high degrees of ZSBs.

  Zero-sum beliefs and social dominance orientation. In addition to most frequently endorsing ZSBs, high status groups also most frequently adhere to a social dominance orientation (SDO). SDO as a construct is not explicitly addressed in the current study, but knowledge about SDO allows for a more comprehensive understanding of ZSBs. Individuals with a SDO have strong degrees of preference for inequality among social groups (Pratto et al., 1994). SDO has been shown to be strongly related to ZSBs (Wilkins et al., 2015); Esses et al. (2001) found that individuals high in SDO were especially likely to endorse ZSBs. Individuals who score high on SDO measures, "may believe that group hierarchies are inevitable and desirable and may thus see the world as involving competition between groups for resources" (Esses et al., 2001, p. 398). SDO themes relate strongly to tenets of intergroup hostility models, particularly stratification beliefs models (Esses et al., 2001).

Taking existing research into consideration, the conclusion can be drawn that those high in SDO and those who endorse ZSBs are not as likely to be motivated to support initiatives aimed at increasing various forms of equality, given the concepts are rooted in self-preservation and advancement. ZSBs are related to self-interests and SDOs lead Whites to uphold the status quo, perpetuating their positions of power and proximity to resources. Theoretically, the mechanisms of ZSBs and SDO are highly centered on the self. Individuals' SDOs and endorsement of ZSBs may be influenced by individuals' states of perspective (self or other oriented). Perhaps encouraging individuals to take on the perspective of another, to the best of their abilities, may interrupt or challenge individuals' endorsements of ZSBs. Exploring whether perspective taking effects levels of ZSB endorsement, in combination with multicultural course completion, is the premise of the current study.

Perspective Taking

In the current study, perspective taking is used as a manipulated intervention to potentially address ZSB endorsement. Todd, Bodenhausen, Richeson, and Galinsky (2011) defined perspective taking as actively contemplating others' psychological experiences. Important to the field of counseling psychology, perspective taking has been linked to cognitive empathy (Decety, 2005). Decety proposed a model of empathy involving the idea that the capacity to adopt the perspective of another is a key aspect of human empathy. Decety emphasized that one's own perspective (first-person) is the default mode through which the individual relates to others, however, for empathic understanding to take place, individuals must be able to suppress their resting modes of relating. Essentially, without the ability to take another's perspective, one cannot elicit empathy in oneself; empathy and perspective taking are interdependent and conceptually linked.

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Davis (1996) highlighted the mental complexities involved in perspective taking. Davis indicated that adopting another's perspective involves imagination in addition to simply focusing attention on the other. Furthermore, a successful perspective taker should imagine how the other is affected by a particular situation without confusing their own feelings with the feelings of the other person. Additionally, Voyager and Ross (1999) posited that mistakes in assessing a third party's perspective can be traced back to a perspective taker's failure to suppress one's self. The necessary suppression of self, an inhibitory process, utilizes different parts of the brain than if empathy solely involved mirroring the feelings of others or putting oneself in the position of another. An understanding of the neurological processes that facilitate inhibition of self clarifies the complexities involved in the perspective taking process.

Neurology of perspective taking. The complex neurological processes involved in empathy and perspective taking have been examined in multiple studies using neuroimaging technology. The presence of neural bases for empathy and perspective taking demonstrates that evolutionary and automatic processes maintain these cognitions, which have behavioral correlates. Neurological research findings suggest that one's resting state of perspective is that of first person (Decety, 2005). As individuals navigate their day-to-day lives, they are not typically actively taking the perspective of another. Neurological research findings indicate that taking the perspective of another is considered an active process in which different areas of the brain are used than during times of resting, first person perspective (Decety, 2005).

Knowing the neuropsychological underpinnings of humans' passive, first person, resting states of perspective is important when conceptualizing how to address cognitive

patterns like ZSBs. In cognitive neuroscience, the model of self-perspective as the default model of mental functioning may account for the phenomenon that similar brain areas and computational processes are involved during the execution of action, mental representation of one's own action, and observation of another's action (Grèzes & Decety, 2001; Ruby & Decety, 2004). More succinctly, perception and action are facilitated by common cognitive neural codes, but there are mechanisms in place that ensure individuals are able to distinguish their own experiences from the experiences of others. In a sample of 12 women, Botvinick et al. (2004) investigated neural responses to expressions of pain in third parties using fMRI as participants viewed short video sequences of faces expressing either moderate pain or no pain. Botvinick et al. reported that viewing facial expressions of pain were found to engage the same cortical areas of the brain that were engaged by first-hand experiences of pain, including the anterior cingulate cortex and insula. These findings support the theory that common neural substrates are involved in representing one's own and others' affective states. The finding that viewing another in physical pain can elicit the same feelings associated with first-hand experiencing of pain is important in the context of perspective taking and ZSB research. If viewing others in physical pain activates neural empathetic processes, it may also be that contemplating others experiencing discrimination or financial hardship (types of emotional pain or struggle) may also activate cognitive empathy.

Decety (2005) has also linked the prefrontal cortex to the cognitive process of perspective taking. Empathy researchers commonly emphasize that merging or confusing one's own feelings with the feelings of another is not the goal of empathy. Engagement in accurate empathy or perspective taking requires individuals to effectively differentiate their own perspectives or affective states from the perspectives and affects of others. The

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differentiation process uses the skills of inhibition and intentionality, commonly known to be facilitated by the prefrontal cortex (Ruby & Decety, 2004).

Ruby and Decety (2004) also found that participants asked to take a third person perspective demonstrated increased activity in the medial part of the superior frontal gyrus, the left superior temporal sulcus, the left temporal pole, the posterior cingulate gyrus, and the right inferior parietal lobe. These brain areas all play crucial roles in executive functioning tasks including impulse control, emotional control, flexible thinking, self-monitoring, and planning (Carlson, 2012).

In sum, findings from various neurological studies of perspective taking suggest the following statements: (a) perspective taking and empathy are neurologically complex; (b) perspective taking is an active process with behavioral correlates; (c) one's resting state of perspective is that of first person; (d) different parts of the brain are active depending on one's state of perspective (i.e., first versus third person); (e) common brain areas are involved in experiencing pain first hand and in witnessing the pain of others; and (f) successful perspective taking and empathy require inhibitory and other executive functions facilitated by areas in the prefrontal cortex. The current study will involve the administration of a perspective taking prime requiring some participants to think and write about a day in the life of an individual belonging to a different racial/ethnic group. Using the research presented above as a framework, the prime should serve to activate the prefrontal cortex and other brain areas associated with executive functioning; facilitate participants' inhibition of self; and, ideally, foster perspective taking. With respect to counselor training, a White trainee's ability to take perspective of a client of color may enhance empathy and their provision of multiculturally competent services. The outcome could subsequently be decreased client

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attrition and increased client improvement in mental health functioning or navigation of difficult life situations.

   Perspective taking and health. The ability to empathize and take the perspective of another has been shown to directly influence one's effectiveness in obtaining and maintaining healthy intimate, friendly, and working relationships (Schonert-Reichl, 1993). This idea is supported in the lay population as well as in interpersonal relationship literature within the field of psychology (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000). Franzoi, Davis, and Young (1985) found perspective taking to be positively related to intimate relationship satisfaction.

   Additionally, and more closely aligned with the field of public health, empathy and perspective taking are often thematically linked to the effectiveness of health professionals. Health professionals' abilities to empathize and perspective take enable them to provide better services to their clientele, which of course has subsequent implications on patient health outcomes (Hojat et al., 2002; Hojat et al., 2011). Exploring the relationship between physicians' empathy, which has been tied to perspective taking, and clinical outcomes for diabetic patients, Hojat et al. (2011) found patients of physicians who demonstrated high levels of empathy were significantly more likely to have good control over their diabetic symptoms than patients of physicians who demonstrated lower levels of empathy. Hojat et al.'s finding may generalize to counselors and their clients, although this has not been formally studied. Given Hojat et al.'s findings, perhaps White counselor trainees who are able to perspective take could find increased mental health outcomes for their clients of color.

   Perspective taking and politics. In addition to influencing health on an individual level, perspective taking has also been shown to be related to various types of negotiations, having effects on macro-level systems. Negotiating is a common practice among policy

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makers and other government officials who have the power to incite change. In a study of the role of perspective taking ability in negotiating and arbitration, Neale and Bazerman (1983) found that perspective taking ability of negotiators had a positive effect on successful negotiation outcomes. This finding is particularly important given today's sociopolitical climate, wherein negotiations related to difficult policies appear to be happening frequently.

The use of a two-party political system in the United States demonstrates just how sharply many Americans draw the line between perspectives. Such distinctly defined perspectives may lead parties to have trouble coming to consensuses or resolving conflict. Successful conflict resolution requires involved parties to understand each other's perspectives before effective solutions designed to meet the needs of each party can be reached (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Moore, 1986). If government officials are not able to take the perspectives of their constituents coming from different backgrounds, they may not understand the magnitude of influence particular policies could have over individuals' lives. For example, a government official operating from first-person perspective who is negotiating immigration policy may fail to realize the dire circumstances leading an individual to make a decision to immigrate to the United States without documentation. A lack of perspective taking in governmental negotiations and decision making may lead to the perpetuation of policies that maintain inequality for people belonging to marginalized groups.

Social psychological research on perspective taking. Extensive literature exists in the field of social psychology regarding perspective taking. Several studies have been conducted exploring the ways in which perspective taking influences individuals' thought processes about members of an outgroup (Aberson & Hagg, 2007; Davis, 1981; Galinsky et al., 2005; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Richardson et al., 1994; Vescio et al., 2003).

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Richardson et al. (1994) found an association between lower levels of interpersonal aggression and perspective taking. Davis (1981) found individuals with high perspective taking abilities were more accurate in judging the intentions of others than individuals with lower levels of perspective taking abilities. Galinsky et al. (2005) found perspective taking instills a sense of psychological connectedness, which may be an important process to elicit when attempting to reduce ZSBs and facilitate productive therapeutic working relationships with clients.

Todd, Galinsky, and Bodenhausen (2012) established that perspective taking can be an effective strategy for undermining stereotype maintenance, which also may influence one's adherence to ZSBs. Todd et al. found perspective takers to exhibit better recall of stereotype-inconsistent behaviors and to spontaneously generate core dispositional explanations for those behaviors. Todd et al. also reported perspective taking enabled individuals to provide more support for affirmative action policies (which have been tied to ZSBs in the literature (Wilkins et al., 2015)) and combated the denial of intergroup discrimination. Todd, Bodenhausen, and Galinsky (2011) suggested that adopting an outgroup member's perspective shifts the majority group member's perception of discrimination to align with that of the targeted group. Vescio, Sechrist, and Paolucci (2003) suggested that perspective taking inspires empathy arousal that might provide a direct path to improved intergroup attitudes.

Collectively, Todd et al.'s (2011, 2012) findings indicated that perspective taking could be an effective strategy for undermining stereotype maintenance, primarily via its influence on the processing of stereotype-inconsistent information. White counselor trainees are not immune from operating using stereotypes, given their socialization in U.S. society. Thus, it is important for them to be aware of their beliefs and work to challenge them to

enhance their provision of services. Perspective taking may play a key role in assisting students to undermine their beliefs rooted in stereotypes. Theoretically, ZSBs are related to social appraisal, social knowledge, and connection, all processes that are compromised by adherence to stereotypes. Taken together, the evidence provided above suggests that a perspective taking prime may influence one's belief in stereotypes, subsequently modifying the individual's endorsement of ZSBs, leading to an increased ability to provide multiculturally competent counseling.

Multiculturalism and Multicultural Course Completion

The American Counseling Association defines multicultural competence as, "Counselors' cultural and diversity awareness and knowledge about self and others, and how this awareness and knowledge are applied effectively in practice with clients and client groups" (ACA, 2014, p. 20). The American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* emphasizes:

> Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status, and consider these factors when working with members of such groups. Psychologists try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based on such prejudices. (p. 4)

Thus, ethical counselors are charged with the responsibility to demonstrate multicultural competence in their work (ACA, 2014; APA, 2017).

One way in which the field of counseling has attempted to increase multicultural competence among therapists is to provide training in multiculturalism. Multicultural course completion has been found to influence the development of multicultural competence in counseling trainees (Arredondo et al., 1996; Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Constantine, 2001; Malott, 2010; Neville et al., 1996; Priester et al., 2008). Since the early 1970s, there has been an increase in the presence of discourse and training centering on multicultural awareness, knowledge, skills in counseling psychology literature and within counseling programs (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). For example, in a survey conducted in 1977, fewer than 1% of graduate education program respondents reported requiring the completion of curriculum on racial and ethnic minority groups (McFadden & Wilson, 1977; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Results from a study completed in 1992 indicated 89% of APA accredited counseling psychology programs were offering a multiculturally focused course (Hills & Strozier, 1992; Sue, et al., 1992). Presently, master's level counseling students in Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited programs are required to complete courses centering on multiculturalism, generally, and with respect to multiculturally sensitive psychotherapeutic treatment.

The importance of multicultural competence in counselors has been emphasized by academics for several reasons, but primarily to reduce client attrition and increase use of therapeutic services by an increasingly diverse body of clientele (Malott, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2008). Multicultural competency aids counselors in effectively delivering multicultural counseling, which is, "Counseling that recognizes diversity and embraces approaches that

support the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of individuals within their historical, cultural, economic, political, and psychosocial contexts" (ACA, 2014, p. 20).

In a seminal article written in 1992, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis described the "culturally competent counselor" (p. 481) as possessing three groups of characteristics. First, they argued, "…a culturally skilled counselor is one who is actively in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations, and so forth" (p. 481). They insisted counselors should be aware of their own worldviews and how they are products of cultural conditioning. Second, Sue et al. advocated, "…a culturally skilled counselor is one who actively attempts to understand the worldview of his or her culturally different client without negative judgments" (p. 481); culturally competent therapists should be knowledgeable about multiple worldviews. Finally, Sue et al. contended multiculturally competent counselors are, "…in the process of actively developing and practicing appropriate, relevant, and sensitive intervention strategies and skills in working with his or her culturally different clients" (p. 481). In sum, Sue et al. propose that multicultural competence is composed of multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills. The ACA has adopted Sue et al.'s framework, even including the trinity of awareness, knowledge, and skills into the ACA Code of Ethics. Code F.11.c of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) states, "Counselor educators actively infuse multicultural/diversity competency in their training and supervision practices. They actively train students to gain awareness, knowledge, and skills in the competencies of multicultural practice" (p. 15).

While most of the scholarly attention has focused on the development of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, in this study, the importance of increasing counselor trainees' degrees of sociopolitical awareness is amplified. In their study on sociopolitical

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awareness development in undergraduates, Harper, Sax, and Wolf (2012) noted that

sociopolitical awareness is comprised of students' awareness of (a) their racial/ethnic

identities; (b) social problems facing the nation; (c) social problems facing the world; (d)

social class and economic differences; (e) racial and ethnic differences and issues; (f) gender

and sexual orientation differences and issues; and (g) awareness of where they fit into various

sociopolitical problems. Other researchers have highlighted that sociopolitical awareness is

comprised of knowledge related to how politics influence social phenomena including

rhetoric, identity development, interpersonal interactions, oppression, and life circumstances

(Crethar, Torres-Rivera, & Nash, 2008; Gutierrez, 1995; Phan, Torres-Rivera, & Roberts-

Wilbur, 2005). Particularly pertinent to this study, researchers have also discussed the

positive relationship between increased sociopolitical awareness and multicultural counseling

competency (Crethar et al., 2008).

The following contemporary example highlights the importance of those in helping

professions demonstrating sociopolitical awareness. During the recent political campaign,

one of the candidates' hallmark rally themes involved building a wall between the United

States and Mexico to prevent what was perceived as a large number of Mexican citizens from

entering the United States. The proclamation, "Build that wall!", became popular among

many Americans and subsequently influenced daily life of Latino K-12 students across the

country. Students of Mexican heritage were taunted by their White counterparts because of

political rhetoric that became commonplace during the presidential race (Holley, 2016;

Holloway, 2017; Samaha, 2017). Sociopolitical awareness involves the knowledge of the

connection between politics and real-life consequences for constituents. A counselor lacking

sociopolitical awareness/competence may fail to realize the totality of the struggles a young

Latino client may be facing in sociopolitically charged climates. The client may feel misunderstood, unheard, and isolated if the counselor is unable to provide supportive services through a sociopolitically informed lens. Completion of a multicultural counseling course may help to foster the development of sociopolitical awareness, subsequently increasing the counselor trainee's ability to provide informed, comprehensive, and competent multicultural services to the young student.

As emphasized above, multicultural courses are taught with the intention of assisting students in developing multicultural competency. However, completing a multicultural course does not signify the presence of multicultural awareness or competence; simply passing a multicultural course does not signal multicultural competence has been achieved. Nonetheless, because multicultural courses are intended to increase competence, a premise of this study is that those who have successfully passed a multicultural course may demonstrate more competency than those students who have not. Multicultural course completion is easily operationalized and measured, as opposed to multicultural competency, thus, multicultural course completion will be used as a variable in the current study, which examines the effect of multicultural course completion on White counseling trainees' endorsements of ZSBs.

Multicultural competence and zero-sum beliefs. The aforementioned characteristics of a culturally competent counselor do not inherently align with an adherence to ZSBs because, as previously stated, ZSBs reflect a reliance on inaccurate assumptions, biases, and difficulty placing value on the worldviews of others. If the goal of multicultural courses is to increase multicultural competency within students and if multicultural competency does not correspond with adherence to ZSBs, the conclusion that the completion of a multicultural course may serve as an effective intervention for ZSBs can be drawn.

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Multicultural competence and White counseling trainees. As members of White American culture, White counseling trainees are not immune to the influence of systemic racism in the United States. They may have well developed beliefs about the prevalence of anti-White bias, may hold SDOs, and may endorse ZSBs. An adherence to ZSBs by White counselor trainees may interfere with students' progress toward multicultural competency, leading to negative effects on therapeutic relationships and treatment efficacy, especially in cross-racial therapeutic relationships. More specifically, an adherence to ZSBs by White counselor trainees may prevent the student from administering multicultural counseling, which is a required skill of all ethical and competent counselors. ZSBs, however, have not been examined as an outcome variable in multicultural training efficacy research. The endorsement of ZSBs could prove to be a solid indicator of a White counseling student's level of multicultural competence. In the current study, the effect of multicultural course completion on ZSBs in White counselor trainees will be examined.

Political Ideology Affiliation

The primary focus of the current study is on the influence of perspective taking and multicultural course completion on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs. Given the political underpinnings of ZSBs, a secondary focus of the study is on the relationship between political ideology affiliation and ZSBs. More specifically, an exploratory goal was to determine the relationship between ZSBs and one's adherence to liberal or conservative ideology.

Political ideology and party affiliation have been theoretically tied to various political attitudes and behaviors in the literature for some time (Campbell et al., 1960; Carsey & Layman, 2006; Kenski & Stroud, 2004; LaMarre et al., 2009). Erikson and Tedin (2003)

defined political ideology as a "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (p. 64). Denzau and North (1994; 2000) emphasized, "ideologies are the shared framework of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of the environment and prescription as to how that environment should be structured" (p. 24). Individuals' adoptions of certain ideologies communicate information about their beliefs, opinions, and values, as well as their memberships to particular groups (LaMarre et al., 2009; Freeden, 2001; Knight, 2006), including party affiliation or where one may fall on a spectrum of liberalism and conservatism, which is important to the current study.

In 2014, Republicans and Democrats were more divided along ideological lines than at any point during the previous 20 years (Pew Research Center, 2014). Jost (2006) found that ideological self-placement on continuums of liberalism-conservatism was a strong predictor of voting intentions in the United States between 1972 and 2004. Other researchers have found that political ideology influences even minimally informed citizens' political attitudes (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Barker & Tinnick, 2006; Erikson & Tedin, 2003; Feldman, 2003; Jacoby, 1991; Jost, 2006; Knutsen, 1005; Layman & Casey, 2002). Political ideology has also been found to predict individuals' value orientations, with liberals demonstrating greater egalitarianism and openness to change than conservatives (Evans et al., 1996; Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Feldman, 1998, 2003; Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2009; Kerlinger, 1984; Peffley & Hurwitz, 1985; Rokeach, 1973; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). Furthermore, ideological self-placement has also been found to influence justice judgments and justification for social stratification, with conservatives emphasizing values of equity, ability, effort, and meritocracy, as well as adopting a more punitive stance and being more likely to make

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internal attributions for others' outcomes in life in comparison with liberals (Altemeyer, 1998; Jost et al., 2009; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Skitka, 1999; Skitka et al., 2002; Sniderman et al., 1991). Conservatives have also been shown to more often incorporate ingroup and authority concerns in coming to moral judgments (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Jost et al., 2009). If counselors fail to acknowledge the sociopolitical influences on clients' lives, they may not be giving weight to the barriers their clients may be facing. For example, a counselor who believes people earn proportionately what they work for may not be considering heath disparities, educational disparities, hiring disparities, and other difficulties clients coming from marginalized populations must overcome to survive. Essentially, their beliefs in meritocracy may be misinformed, potentially leading to failure to refer clients to helpful community services, problems with the messages about society they inadvertently send to their clients, or demonstration of other problematic behaviors tied to the myth if meritocracy (Allen, 2011; Young, 1958). Given political ideology affiliation has been shown to influence several attitudinal and behavioral correlates (Jost et al., 2009), the premise of the current study is that political ideology may also influence one's endorsement of ZSBs, which have behavioral consequences.

In the literature, liberalism has been associated with keywords including progressive, system change, equality, solidarity, protest, opposition, racialism, socialism, and communism. Conservatism has been associated with terms such as system maintenance, capitalism, individualism, and nationalism (Fuchs & Klingermann, 1990; Jost et al., 2009). As discussed above, researchers have linked the concept of ZSBs to political concepts associated with liberalism and conservatism including equality, the social hierarchy, race relations, intergroup competition, bias, and intergroup disparities (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Wilkins et

al., 2015). In sum, liberalism and conservatism are composed of a collection of different

values, foci, and beliefs held by counseling trainees. Counselor trainees' beliefs are directly

tied to behavioral outcomes with influences over the lives of all clients. However, clients who

are marginalized are the most vulnerable to behaviors driven by political ideology and ZSBs,

as their lives are less often insulated from harmful, tangible effects of controversial policy.

Summary

Research on ZSBs, perspective taking, multicultural course completion, and political

ideology affiliation is abundant, but an exhaustive literature review did not reveal any

quantitative studies that examined the possible relationships between ZSBs, perspective

taking, multicultural course completion, and political ideology affiliation using a sample of

White counseling trainees. Evidence suggests members of high status groups most often

endorse ZSBs (Wilkins et al., 2015). Researchers have also found an individual's resting

mode of relating with the world is that of first person (Decety, 2005). Furthermore,

participation in multiculturally focused educational opportunities has been shown to increase

multicultural competence and, subsequently, multiculturally appropriate service delivery

(Arredondo et al., 1996; Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Constantine, 2001; Malott, 2010;

Neville et al., 1996; Priester et al., 2008). Additionally, plentiful research connects political

ideology with behavioral correlates like voting, which directly influences the lives of

counseling clients (Jost et al., 2009). These findings, in combination, provide justification for

comprehensively and simultaneously examining the effects of perspective taking,

multicultural course completion, and political ideology affiliation on White counseling

trainees' endorsements of ZSBs.

CHAPTER III
METHOD

This section will cover the methodology for a study addressing hypotheses 1-3 (Study 1) and another study addressing hypothesis four (Study 2).

Study 1

The purpose of the first study was to determine whether a perspective taking intervention and multicultural course completion influenced White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs.

Research design. The research design of the experiment was a 2 x 2 between subjects posttest-only design, which involved two manipulations and one dependent variable. The first manipulation was an intervention involving exposure to a perspective taking activity or assignment to a control condition. The second manipulation was whether the individual had completed a multicultural counseling course or not. The dependent variable was participants' total scores on a measure of ZSBs (Wilkins et al., 2015) (Appendix A).

Perspective taking intervention. Exposure to a perspective taking prime intervention was the first manipulation. In the perspective taking condition, the participant was shown a picture of a Black target individual and asked to take the perspective of that individual and write about that individual's day (Appendix B for women and Appendix C for men). The target individual in each survey packet was matched on gender with the participant. In the control condition, the individuals were asked to write about their own days rather than being prompted to take the perspective of another (Appendix D). The purpose of the perspective taking manipulation was to determine the degree to which perspective taking influenced participants' endorsements of ZSBs.

Multicultural counseling course condition. The second manipulation involved

whether the participants had completed a multicultural counseling course or not. Whether or

not participants had completed a multicultural counseling course was assessed on the

demographic data sheet (Appendix E), which also included several other distractor items

pertaining to completion of other courses in the counseling program. The purpose of the

multicultural counseling course completion manipulation was to determine whether the

content learned in a multicultural counseling course influenced participants' endorsements of

ZSBs.

Study 2

The purpose of the second study was to determine the presence of a correlational

relationship between White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs and their political

ideology affiliations.

Research design. A quantitative posttest-only control group design was used to

explore the potential correlational relationship between participants' ZSB total scores and

their total scores on a measure of political ideology affiliation (Appendix F). Higher scores

on the measure of political ideology affiliation reflected conservatism and lower scores on the

measure reflected liberalism.

Data Management of the Sample

A total of 310 individuals returned a survey packet. Missing data on outcome

measures was addressed by inserting the mean score of the completed items on the measure (n

$= 10$). Inserting data was only necessary for missing data on the measure of political ideology

affiliation; there were no missing data on the measure of ZSBs. Individuals who were

assigned to the perspective taking prime who did not appear to engage in the activity ($n = 2$)

were removed from the sample. Participants who left multiple sections of the survey blank

were removed from the study ($n = 13$). Packets not including critical demographic data

related to race ($n = 15$) were removed from the sample. Eight participants were removed for

multiple reasons.

The total sample, after participants were removed, consisted of 268 individuals. The

racial makeup of the total sample was as follows: Black or African American ($n = 29$; 10.1%);

Asian or Asian American ($n = 8$; 2.8%); Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin ($n = 4$; 1.4%);

White or European American ($n = 226$; 78.5%); Alaska Native/American Indian ($n = 1$; .3%);

Biracial/Multi-ethnic ($n = 19$; 6.6%); some other race, ethnicity, or origin ($n = 1$; .3%). The

breakdown of the racial/ethnic makeup of respondents is presented in Table 1. Because only

White participants' data were used to analyze the hypotheses, the resulting total sample

consisted of 226 White individuals. A power analysis using G*Power for a 2 x 2 ANOVA

with a Cohen's d medium effect size set at .3, an alpha level of .05, and a power level of .90

indicated a required sample size of 195; the N of 226 exceeded this recommendation.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Makeup of Respondents

Race/Ethnicity	n	*Percentage of Total*
Black or African American	29	10.1
Asian or Asian American	8	2.8
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	4	1.4
White or European American	226	78.5
Alaska Native/American Indian	1	.3
Biracial/Multiethnic	19	6.6
Some other Race, Ethnicity, or Origin	1	.3
Total	288	100

Participants

The final sample size, for use in analyzing the hypotheses, was 226 White, master's

level student counselor trainees attending a public, predominantly White university in the

Midwest region of the United States. Students ranged in age from 21 to 56 years old ($M =$

30.04; $SD =$ 8.01). The participants overwhelmingly identified as women ($n =$ 182; 80.50%).

The sample also consisted of those identifying as men ($n =$ 40; 17.7%), transgender ($n =$ 2;

.9%), gender neutral ($n =$ 1; .4%), and other ($n =$ 1; .4%). Figure 1 displays gender orientation

information for the sample.
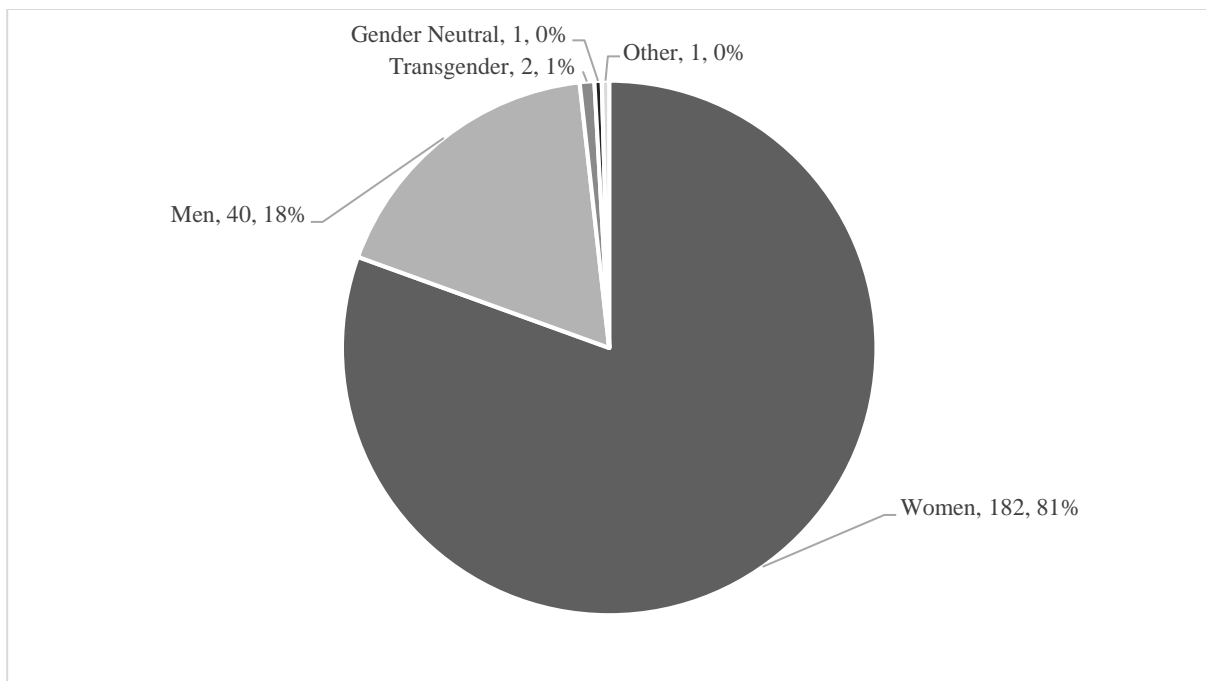
Figure 1

Gender Identity Statistics for the Sample

The sample primarily included individuals who identified as heterosexual ($n =$ 193; 85.4%),

but also consisted of those identifying as lesbian or gay ($n =$ 13; 5.8%), bisexual ($n =$ 17;

7.5%), queer (*n* = 2; .9%), and one individual who preferred not to disclose (.4%). The

breakdown of sexual orientation information for the sample is presented in Figure 2.

The sample included single (*n* = 104; 46.0%); married (*n* = 67; 29.6%); partnered, but not

married (*n* = 41; 18.1%); divorced (*n* = 12; 5.3%); and widowed (*n* = 2; .9%) individuals. A

visual representation of relationship status for the sample is presented in Figure 3.
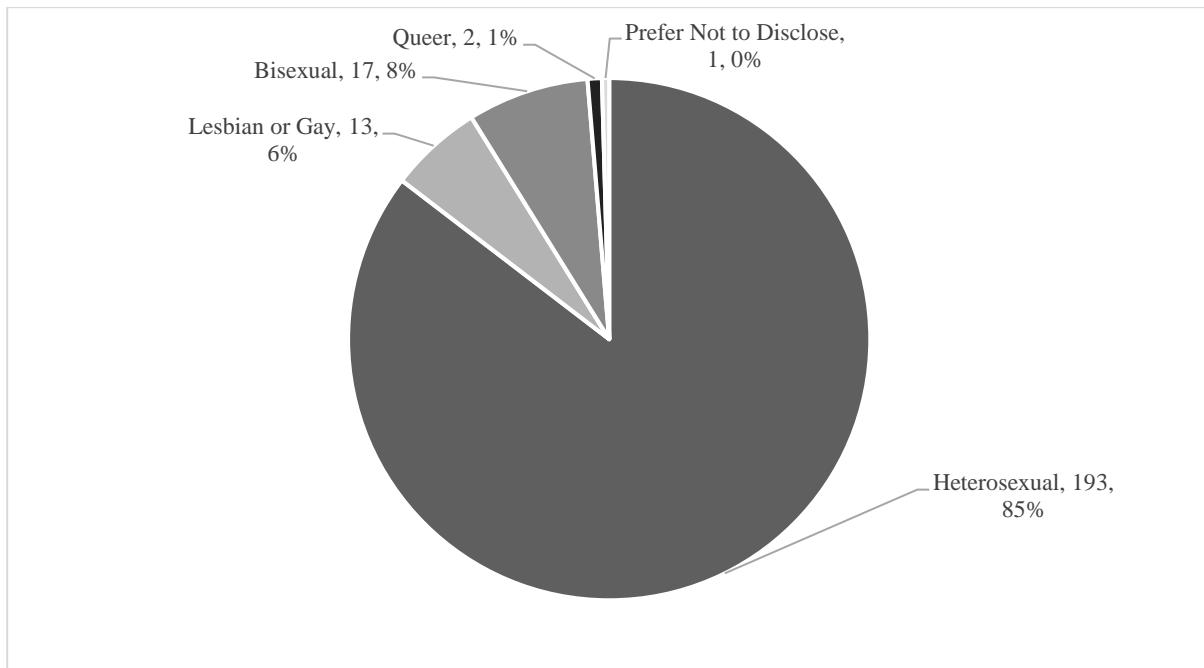
Figure 2

Sexual Orientation Statistics for the Sample

With respect to religion, most of the sample identified as Christian (*n* = 90; 39.8%),

Agnostic (*n* = 39; 17.3%), Catholic (*n* = 38; 16.8%), Atheist (*n* = 16; 7.1%), "Don't know" (*n*

= 20; 8.8%), and "other" (*n* = 18; 8%). Small portions of the sample included those

identifying as Jehovah's Witness (*n* = 1; .4%), Muslim (*n* = 1; .4%), Jewish (*n* = 2; .9%); and

Buddhist (*n* = 1; .4%). A breakdown of the religious identification information for the sample

is presented in Figure 4.
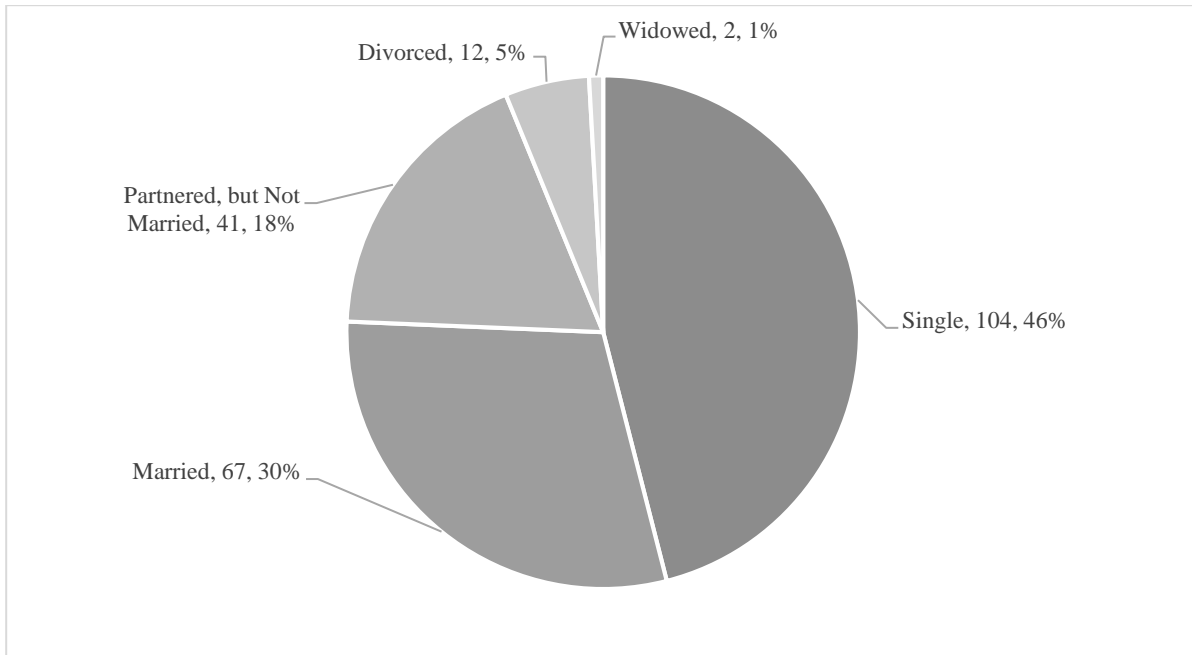
Figure 3

Relationship Status Information for the Sample
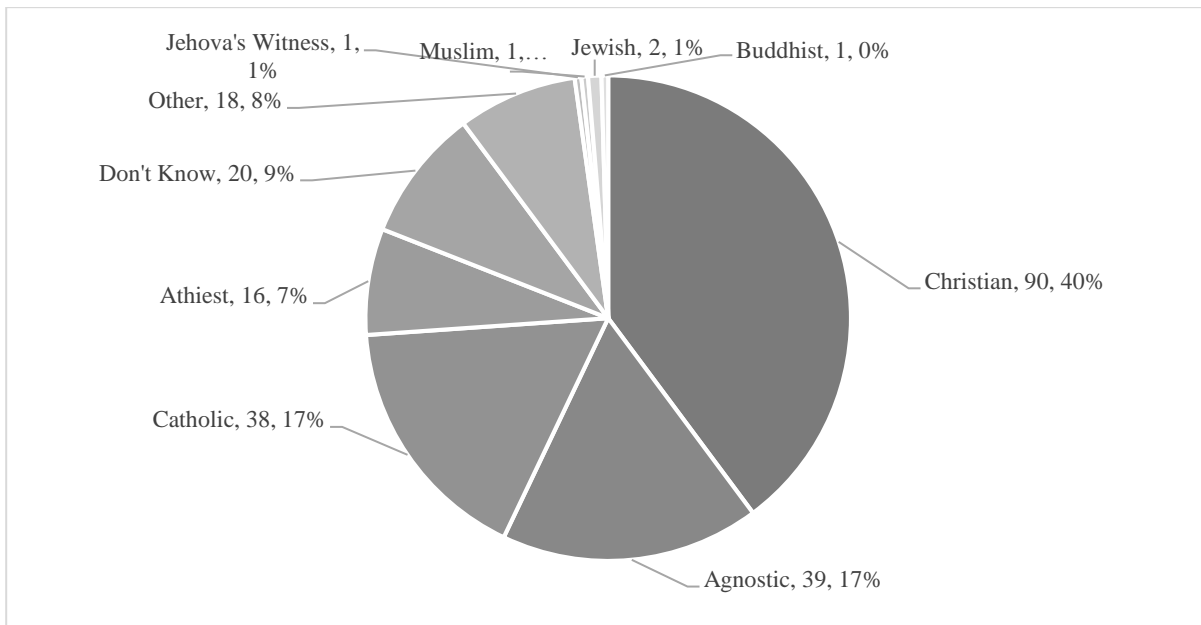
Figure 4

Religious Identification Information for the Sample

Participants were asked to indicate where they believed they ranked on a spectrum of socioeconomic status ranging from 1 (low) to 10 (high). On that measure, participant responses ranged from 1 to 10 ($M = 5.25$; $SD = 1.60$). On a measure of political ideology, participants were asked to rank themselves on a scale of 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative). Participant responses ranged from 1 to 6 ($M = 3.06$; $SD = 1.44$) and the mean score fell between slightly liberal and moderate. On a measure of political views, participants were asked to indicate their degree of alignment with the democratic or republican party. Potential scores ranged from 1 (liberal democrat) to 7 (conservative republican). Participant scores ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 1.54$) and the mean score fell between moderate democrat and independent. Data from these three measures is visually presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Responses on Scales of Socioeconomic Status and Politics

Measure	Scale	Means	*SD*	Comments
Socioeconomic Status	1 (low) to (10) high	5.25	1.60	Mean fell around the midpoint (Middle SES)
Political Ideology	1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative)	3.06	1.44	Mean fell between slightly liberal to moderate
Political Views	1 (liberal democrat) to 7 (conservative republican	3.04	1.54	Mean fell between moderate democrat and independent

Most participants indicated they voted in the last election ($n = 181$; 80.1%). Most participants indicated they voted for Hilary Clinton ($n = 123$; 54.4%). Other participants reported voting for Donald Trump ($n = 28$; 12.4%), Bernie Sanders ($n = 2$; .9%); Jill Stein ($n = 9$; $n = 4.0$%), and Gary Johnson ($n = 7$; 3.1%). A significant portion of the sample declined

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to disclose for who they voted ($n = 57$; 25.2%). A breakdown of for whom the participants

voted is presented in Figure 5.

The counseling psychology and counselor education department at the university has

six distinct program options and all were represented in the sample: Counseling Psychology

($n = 72$; 31.9%); Clinical Mental Health Counseling ($n = 57$; 25.2%); College Counseling ($n = 9$; 4.0%); Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling ($n = 35$; 15.5%); Rehabilitation

Counseling ($n = 3$; 1.3%); and School Counseling ($n = 50$; 22.1%). A visual representation of

in which programs participants were enrolled is presented in Figure 6.
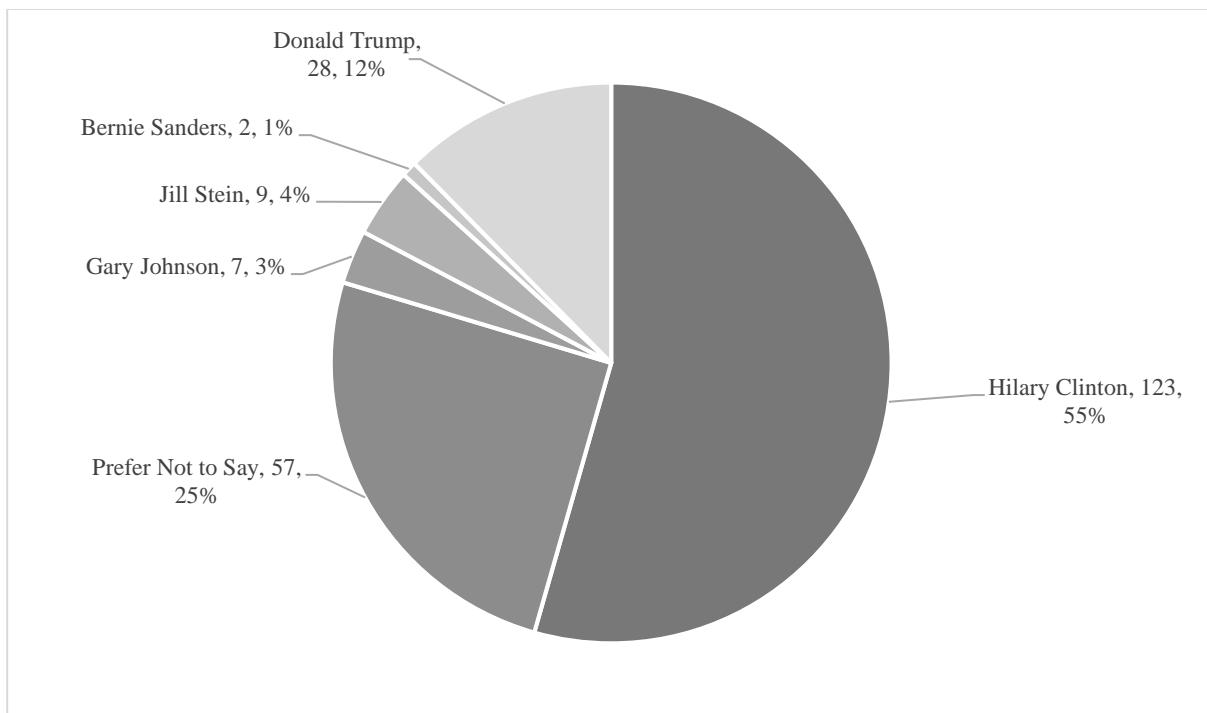
Figure 5

Voting Statistics for the Sample

Students had enrolled in the department programs from 2008 to 2017, with most

students beginning their programs of study in 2014 ($n = 28$; 12.4%), 2015 ($n = 59$; 26.1%),

2016 ($n = 65$; 28.8%), and 2017 ($n = 49$; 21.7%). Just over half of the sample had completed

the multicultural counseling course ($n = 126$; 55.8%) and most participants indicated they had not received any previous formal multiculturally focused education outside of the department ($n = 159$; 70.4%).
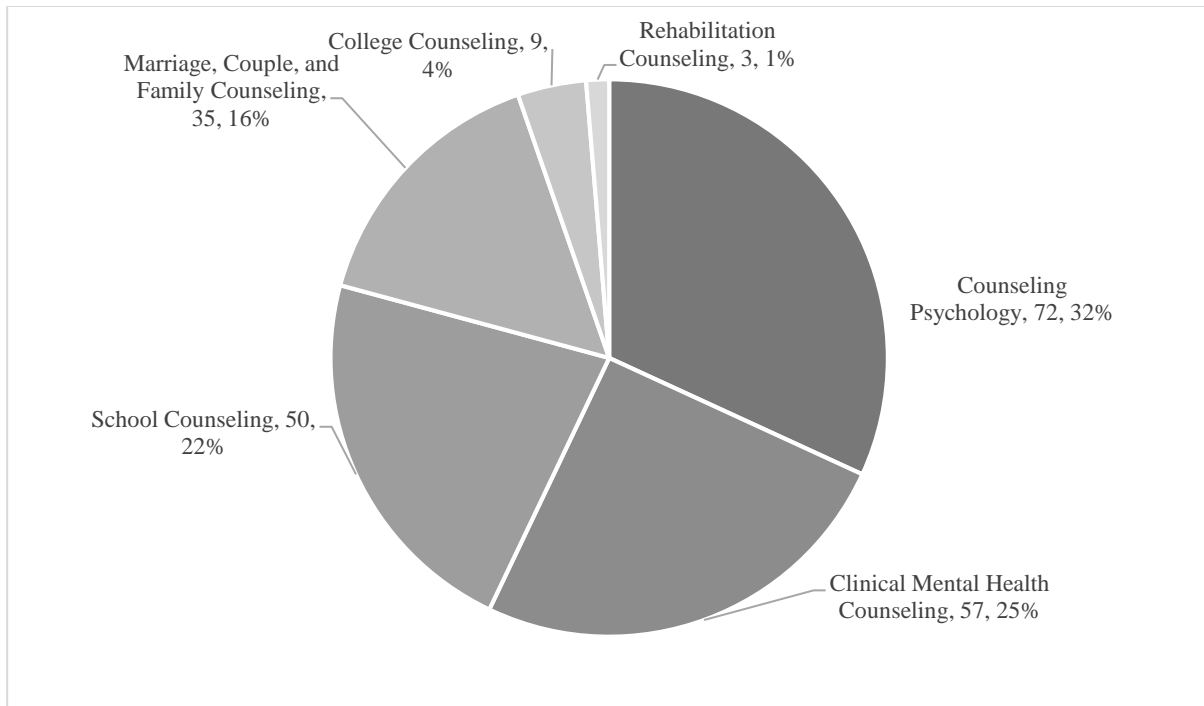
Figure 6

Program Enrollment Information for the Sample

Measures

A survey packet including an informed consent form (Appendix E), a demographic data sheet, questions related to coursework completed, items about political affiliation/voting history, the perspective taking activity, the outcome measure, and a measure of political ideology affiliation was created and administered.

Composition of the survey. Due to the nature of the design, a specific sequence of item and task presentation was used. Consent to participate in the study was assumed if participants decided to complete the survey. With respect to the tasks, first, participants were

presented with a demographic data form (Appendix F). Next, they were presented with items

pertaining to the coursework they had completed thus far in their programs of study. Then,

participants were asked about their political stances and recent voting history. The

perspective taking intervention or control condition followed. Finally, the participants were

presented with the ZSB outcome measure and a measure of political ideology affiliation. The

surveys took between 10-20 minutes to complete.

Multicultural counseling course completion. Multicultural counseling course

completion was assessed by asking participants whether they had completed, or were

currently enrolled in, the master's level multicultural counseling course in the counseling and

counselor education department at the university. If participants indicated they were currently

enrolled in the multicultural counseling course and their data was collected on the first day of

the semester, they were coded as not having completed the course. If participants indicated

they were currently enrolled in the multicultural counseling course and their data was

collected on the last day of classes, they were coded as having completed the course.

Perspective taking. The perspective taking condition was manipulated by requesting

participants in a prime condition to take the perspective of another while participants in the

control condition were asked to engage in an activity that cemented their maintenance of a

first person perspective.

Prime condition. The writing task for the prime group was introduced as a

"perspective taking writing activity."   Participants in the prime condition were presented with

a picture of a Black man or a Black woman, depending on their self-identified genders

(participants who opted to complete the gender neutral packet were automatically assigned to

the control condition). Under the picture of the target individual was instructions to spend

three minutes writing about a day in the target's life with a focus on vividly imagining what the target person might be thinking, feeling, and experiencing throughout the day (Todd, Bodenhausen, & Galinsky, 2012). To ensure participants spent adequate time thoughtfully engaging in perspective taking, they were asked to fill the page with their narrative. The data of participants who failed to fill the page with narratives were excluded from the final analyses. At the bottom of the writing page were instructions to turn the page. On the following page, participants will be thanked for "taking the perspective of another," to cement that they had engaged in perspective taking. Next, participants were given the items related to ZSBs and political ideology affiliation.

Control condition. The writing task for the control group was introduced as a "personal writing activity." Participants were not shown a picture of a target individual and were asked to write about their own days for the length of a page. Participants were then given the items related to ZSBs and political ideology affiliation.

Zero-sum beliefs. ZSBs were assessed directly following the perspective taking intervention using a six-item Likert-type inventory of responses.

Measure of Zero-Sum Beliefs (Wilkins et al., 2015). A ZSB measure was used to gather information about racial ZSBs. Wilkins et al. (2015) defined ZSBs as, "the perception that gains for one group necessarily involve losses for other groups and vice versa" (p. 1). Wilkins et al. constructed a six-item scale using Likert-type response sets for use in a previous study (Wilkins, 2015). Endorsement options on the measure range from 0 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). A sample item is, "When racial minorities get rights, they are taking rights away from Whites." Adding the ratings for all items and dividing by six yields a mean total score, with possible scores ranging from 0 to 6 (in Wilkins et al.'s previous study they

found a *M* = 2.00 and a *SD* = 1.71). Higher scores indicate higher levels of endorsement of ZSBs. Wilkins et al. found a reliability estimate of .96 for the scores during a previous study. No other information relative to reliability estimates using this measure was found. No information about the scores of validity using this measure was found. Dr. Wilkins was contacted to determine whether she had additional psychometric property information about the measure. She indicated that she did not, and stated that she was not aware of another measure of ZSBs (C. Wilkins, personal communication, May 23, 2018). The measure is in Appendix A.

Political ideology affiliation. A measure of political ideology affiliation was the last portion of the survey packet. The Social and Economic Conservatism Scale (SECS) (Everett, 2013) was used to measure political ideology affiliation.

Social and Economic Conservatism Scale (Everett, 2013). The SECS (Appendix G) was designed to objectively measure individuals' support for peripheral correlates of conservatism, rather than actual party affiliation (Everett, 2013). The SECS complements other measures that assess subjectively assessed party affiliation and self-perceived political ideology. SECS instructions for participants are, "Please indicate the extent to which you feel positively or negatively toward each issue. Scores of 0 indicate greater negativity and scores of 100 indicate greater positivity. Scores of 50 indicate that you feel neutral about the issue." Participants were then presented with 12 items including abortion, the family unit; religion; traditional marriage; traditional values; patriotism; military and national security; fiscal responsibility; business; limited government; gun ownership; and welfare benefits. The items pertaining to abortion and welfare benefits are reverse scored. Total scores on the measure

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are calculated by finding the mean of all item scores and dividing by 10, yielding potential scores ranging from 1-10.

Using a feelings thermometer and key words/phrases permits participants to express their positions toward items while not requiring them to have a wealth of political knowledge (Everett, 2013). Additionally, simply using key words prevents the participant from being exposed to any superfluous language that may prime the participant to feel influenced to positively or negatively appraise an item (Everett, 2013).

Using a sample of 291 Americans (126 females; age: M = 37, 248 White participants), Everett (2006) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .88 for the complete 12-item scale. The instrument is divided into two subscales: an economic conservatism subscale and a social conservatism subscale. Everett found an alpha of .70 for the 5-item economic conservatism subscale (fiscal responsibility, business, limited government, gun ownership, welfare benefits) and an alpha .87 for the 7-item social conservatism subscale (abortion; the family unit; religion; traditional marriage; traditional values; patriotism; military and national security). Overall, SECS scores for the sample were around the 5.0 scale midpoint (M = 5.80, SD = 1.94). Construct validity for the SECS is strong; the SECS is significantly correlated (at the p < .05 level) with other measures that examine right wing association (Zakrisson, 2005), social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 2994), dogmatism (Altemeyer, 2002), social system justification beliefs (Kay & Jost, 2003), beliefs about fair market (Jost et al., 2003), and resistance to change (Jost et al., 2007).

Procedures

Sampling procedure. The study was submitted and approved by the university's IRB as an exempt study (Appendix H). The targeted sample consisted of White, mater's level,

students enrolled in a Midwestern university's department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology. Although White students were the intended sample, students of all races who were willing to participate were surveyed, however, their data was not included in the primary analyses. Data acquired from students of color were used in post hoc exploratory analyses. This approach was chosen to (a) avoid priming White students about the nature of the study, therefore limiting socially desirable response patterns and (b) prevent students of color from feeling excluded from the study.

After institutional review board (IRB) and department approval was secured, an email requesting professor participation and outlining the sampling procedure, time involved, and incentives was disseminated (Appendix I). The classes of professors who agreed to participate were visited for in-person data collection. A power analysis using G*Power for a 2 x 2 ANOVA with a Cohen's d medium effect size set at .3, an alpha level of .05, and a power level of .90 yielded a required total sample size of 195 with 48.75 participants in each of the four conditions. Rounding up to the nearest whole number in each cell yielded a total required sample size of 196, with 49 participants in each cell. As of the fall of 2016, there were around 500 master's students in WMU's Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology department. Achieving the sample size of 196 was attainable.

Study procedure. The author visited 28 classes and invited students to participate in the study. Data was collected on either the first meeting day of the class or the last meeting day of the class to ensure participants were not in the middle of completing the multicultural counseling course. The courses that were targeted for recruitment and data collection were core classes required by master's level counseling and counselor education programs. Data collection took place during the spring, summer, and fall semesters of 2017. No identifying

information was collected that could link the findings back to each student and the both the professors and the researcher left the room during participants' completion of the surveys.

Completion of instruments. On the day of data collection, the researcher entered classrooms at a time specified by the instructor of record. The researcher created three different packets, corresponding to (a) a perspective taking prime condition for individuals identifying as women, (b) a perspective taking prime condition for individuals identifying as men, and (c) a control condition which was also used for individuals with gender identities other than male or female. The perspective taking control packets were used for participants who did not identify as male or female because control group individuals were simply asked to write about their own days, thus, gender did not need to be controlled. The researcher randomly assigned entire classes to either the perspective taking intervention or control condition.

For classes assigned to the perspective taking intervention condition, all three different piles of survey packets were placed on a table in the front of the room; one packet for individuals identifying as women, one packet for individuals identifying as men, and one packet for individuals who preferred not to disclose their genders or preferred a gender neutral packet.

Students who were willing to participate were asked to come to the front of the room and choose a packet from the pile associated with the gender with which they identify or from the gender neutral packet. They were then asked to fill out the packets and turn them in, whether they eventually decided to complete the packets or not. For classes assigned to the control condition, only the gender neutral/control packets were placed at the front of the room. Completion of the survey packets took 10-20 minutes, regardless of the condition.

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CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Data was collected from participants' endorsements on the demographic data sheet,

the items pertaining to course completion, the measure of ZSB endorsement, and the SECS.

Descriptive Statistics

The mean, standard deviation, skew, and kurtosis for ZSB total scores and SECS

scores are reported in Table 3. The data were also checked for meeting parametric

assumptions. The assumption of independent observations was met through the research

design. The assumption of normality for the distribution of scores was not met for ZSB

measure (skew = 2.26 and kurtosis = 5.82). The assumption of normality was met for the

distribution of scores for the SECS (skew = -.25 and kurtosis = .039). Research indicates the

ANOVA is considered a robust test against violations of normality (Schmider, Ziegler,

Danay, et al., 2010), thus, the writer chose to move forward with the statistical analysis.

However, the violation of the normality assumption for the ZSB measure total scores could

have affected the results, which is explained in greater detail in the discussion section.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, Skew, and Kurtosis of the Measure of ZSBs and the SECS

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Skew	Kurtosis
ZSB	.394	.671	2.26	5.82
SECS	5.62	1.56	-.248	.039

Analyses for Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3

To examine (a) hypothesis 1, that there will be a statistically significant difference in

ZSB endorsement measure means between the perspective taking and control groups; (b)

hypothesis 2, that there will be a statistically significant difference in ZSB endorsement

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measure means between the group that completed a multicultural course and the group that did not; and (c) hypothesis 3, that there will be an interaction effect of perspective taking and multicultural course completion on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs, a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted. Perspective taking condition (perspective taking prime vs. no prime) and multicultural course completion (completed vs. not completed) were the independent variable factors and ZSB outcome measure score was used as the dependent variable. Main effects and interaction effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable were examined. To examine hypothesis 4, that there will be a significant correlational relationship between scores on the ZSB measure and scores on the measure of political ideology affiliation, a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was conducted.

Hypothesis 1. For hypothesis 1, it was expected that White counselor trainees belonging to the group receiving a perspective taking intervention (prime) would obtain significantly lower ZSB outcome measure scores than White counselor trainees belonging to the group not receiving a perspective taking prime (control). ANOVA results indicated that the main effect of the perspective taking intervention did not have a significant influence on White counselor trainees' scores on the ZSB outcome measure, $F(1, 222) = 1.12$, p $>.01$, *partial eta squared* = .005. The ANOVA results for hypothesis 1 are visually represented in Table 4.

Hypothesis 2. For Hypothesis 2, it was expected that White counselor trainees belonging to the group that had completed a multicultural course would demonstrate statistically significantly lower ZSB outcome measure scores than White counselor trainees belonging to the group not receiving a perspective taking prime. Hypothesis 2 was evaluated using the same 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA that was used to assess Hypothesis 1. ANOVA

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results indicated that the main effect of the multicultural course completion condition did not have a significant influence on White counselor trainees' scores on the ZSB outcome measure, $F(1, 222) = 2.18$, p >.01, *partial eta squared* = .010. The ANOVA results for hypothesis 2 are visually represented in Table 4.

Hypothesis 3. For hypothesis 3, it was expected that White counselor trainees belonging to the group who was assigned the perspective taking intervention and who had completed the multicultural counseling course would have the lowest ZSB outcome measure scores of all four treatment condition groups. Hypothesis 3 was evaluated using the same 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA that was used to assess Hypotheses 2 and 3. ANOVA results indicated that there was no significant interaction effect of the independent variables on White counselor trainees' scores on the ZSB outcome measure, $F(1, 222) = .008$, p >.01, *partial eta squared* = .000. The ANOVA results for hypothesis 3 are visually represented in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of the ANOVA based on Perspective Taking Condition and Multicultural Course Completion (N = 226)

Variables	SS	df	MS	F	p	partial eta squared
Multicultural Course Completion	.982	1	.982	2.18	.141	.010
Perspective Taking Intervention	.504	1	.504	1.120	.291	.005
MCC*PTI	.004	1	.004	.008	.929	.000
Error	99.804	222	.450			
Total	136.444	226				

While the interaction and main effects of the independent variables were not significant, data trended in alignment with the hypotheses. Those in the perspective taking condition who completed multicultural course completion had a mean ZSB measure score of

.290 ($SD = .641$; $n = 65$); those in the first person perspective condition who completed

multicultural course completion had a mean ZSB measure score of .377 ($SD = .611$; $n = 61$);

those in the perspective taking condition who had not completed a multicultural course had a

mean ZSB measure score of .415 ($SD = .601$; $n = 45$); and those in the first person perspective

condition who had not completed the multicultural course had a mean ZSB score of .518 (SD

$= .808$; $n = 55$) (Table 5). Thus, multicultural course completion had a more substantial,

although not statistically significant, influence on ZSB mean scores than the perspective

taking intervention. Furthermore, those in the control condition for both independent

variables had the highest ZSB measure scores and those who received both interventions had

the lowest ZSB measure scores.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Each Treatment Condition

Condition	*M*	*SD*	n
MC Course Completed x PT Intervention	.290	.641	65
MC Course Completed x PT Control	.377	.611	61
MC Course Incomplete x PT Intervention	.415	.601	45
MC Course Incomplete x PT Control	.518	.808	55

Note. MC = Multicultural and PT = Perspective Taking

Analysis for Hypothesis 4

For hypothesis 4, it was expected that there would be a significant correlation between

White counselor trainees' ZSB outcome measure scores and their scores on the SECS. A

separate analysis using Spearman Correlation was used to examine the hypothesis given the

measurement scales underlying the variables were not continuous (Green & Salkind, 2011).

The results of the correlation analysis show that there was a significant correlation between

ZSB outcome measure scores and scores on the SECS ($r_s = .338$, $p < .001$). The result

indicates a small to medium effect size and suggests individuals who scored higher on the

measure of ZSBs also scored higher on the SECS; there is a statistically significant positive

correlation between ZSBs and conservatism.

Post Hoc Analysis

Seven professors were responsible for teaching the multicultural course used as an

intervention for this study. To learn more about whether the quality of course instruction and

content may have influenced results, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Of the 226

participants, 130 (57.5%) did not report which professor taught the multicultural course in

which they participated. Their data was not included table of descriptive statistics (Table 6)

or in the one-way ANOVA (Table 7). There were not any significant differences between

means for professor groups, indicating regardless of what professor students had for the

multicultural course, outcome measure scores were relatively stable $F(1, 89) = 1.120$, $p > .01$.

Table 6

Measure of ZSB Means and Standard Deviations for Each Professor (N = 96)

Professor	*M*	*SD*	n
Professor 1	.25	.585	24
Professor 2	.25	.438	20
Professor 3	.15	.503	11
Professor 4	.52	.976	20
Professor 5	.00	.00	1
Professor 6	.29	.479	4
Professor 7	.35	.611	16
Total	.31	.647	96

Table 7

Summary of the ANOVA Based on Professor Condition (N = 96)

Predictor	SS	df	MS	F	p
Intercept	2.130	1	2.130	4.937	.141
Professor	1.418	6	.236	1.120	.548
Error	38.395	89	.431		
Total	49.083	96			

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the potential effectiveness of perspective taking and multicultural course completion as interventions on White counselor trainee's endorsements of ZSBs. A secondary purpose was to examine the relationship between ZSBs and political ideology affiliation. Four hypotheses were tested and the findings were mixed; the first three hypotheses were not supported and the forth hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 1, which examined the main effect of a perspective taking intervention on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs was not supported; perspective taking did not have a statistically significant main effect on ZSB endorsement. Hypothesis 2, which examined the main effect of multicultural course completion on White counselor trainees' endorsements of ZSBs was not supported; multicultural course completion did not have a statistically significant main effect on ZSB endorsement. Hypothesis 3, which examined the interaction effect of perspective taking and multicultural course completion on ZSBs, was not supported; the interaction effect of perspective taking and multicultural course completion was not statistically significant. Hypothesis 4, which examined the correlation between ZSBs and political ideology affiliation was supported; there was a strong positive correlation, indicating more conservative individuals tended to have higher scores on the outcome measure of ZSBs.

The significant positive correlation between ZSBs and political ideology affiliation has important implications for counselor training programs. Counselors and counselors in training represent a range of political affiliations and ideologies with the potential to influence

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the discharge of their services (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Sue & Sue, 1990, 2008). In 2007, 86% of APA members indicated they conducted therapy in cross racial dyads; most counselors will likely work with clients who differ from them politically, ideologically, and/or demographically at some point throughout their careers (Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Chang & Berk, 2009). Given the prevalence of cross racial therapy scenarios, special implications for therapeutic working relationships characterized by differences among demographic and ideological characteristics between therapists and clients should be discussed in counselor training programs.

Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) highlighted that counselors are often the "transmitters of society's values," suggesting the sociopolitical nature of counseling (p. 479). Additionally, they highlight that both counselor and client are linked to the historical and current experiences of racism and oppression in the United States (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1989; Helms, 1990; Parham, 1989; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Thus, explicit conversations regarding ZSBs; resource allocation; privilege and oppression; racism; and intergroup relations should be held in various courses throughout students' experiences in their training programs (Chao, Wei, Good, & Flores, 2011; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Course facilitators should attempt to raise students' levels of awareness relative to racial/ethnic disparities, gender disparities, class disparities, and other demographic variable related disparities given these phenomena are direct results of voting practices, which are tied to political ideologies influenced by personal experience. While students are undoubtedly entitled to independent opinions related to ZSBs, intergroup dynamics, and other sociopolitical concepts, the deep connection between beliefs and actions should be emphasized given the ethical guidelines of

beneficence and nonmaleficence (ACA, 2014). Furthermore, the relationship between

ideology and the way in which the action of helping is carried out should be explicitly

explored with counselor trainees, who are ethically charged with serving as advocates for

their clients (ACA, 2014). In sum, counselors are not immune from absorbing racial and

cultural biases in their environments, which needs to be addressed in training (Corvin &

Wiggins, 1989; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; White & Parham, 1990).

Although the main effects and interaction effects of the ANOVA for Hypotheses 1, 2,

and 3 were not statistically significant, the four distinct group means trended in the direction

of the hypotheses and the differences were still conceptually meaningful. Specifically, the

group of participants who had completed a multicultural counseling course and had also

received the perspective taking intervention had the lowest group mean score on the ZSB

outcome measure. The group with the second lowest mean outcome measure score was the

one that had completed the multicultural counseling course but had not received the

perspective taking intervention. As expected, the group belonging to both the perspective

taking control condition and the multicultural counseling course control condition had the

highest mean outcome measure score, which aligns with previous research highlighting the

effectiveness of perspective taking and multicultural course completion in addressing various

phenomena (Aberson & Haag, 2007; Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Decety, 2005; Franzoi,

Davis, & Young, 1985; Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Lamm,

Batson, & Decety, 2007; Todd et al., 2011; Todd, Bodenhausen, & Galinsky, 2012; Todd,

Galinsky, & Bodenhausen, 2012; Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003; Wilkins et al., 2015).

In sum, perspective taking was influential, but to a lesser degree than multicultural counseling

course completion. The lack of significant differences between group means can be explained in a few different ways.

Limitations

As is typical of most research, this study faced several limitations. First, a convenience sample was used for the study, which presents some issues with the generalizability of the results. Participants were from the same university, which is embedded in a unique Midwestern subculture in the United States. Thus, the results may not apply to counseling students pursuing degrees in other regions of the United States.

Another limitation involves the reliance on self-report instruments. Self-report measures are susceptible to socially desirable responding and misinterpretation of survey items or activities (Constantine & Ladany, 2000; Tanaka-Matsumi & Kameoka, 1986; Worthington, Mobley, Franks, & Tan, 2000). Attempts were made to control for social desirability, including only providing relevant information on the informed consent, the use of dummy items, and requesting all students, apart from international students, to participate. Importantly, however, the outcome measure included explicit items about racism, a topic laden with stigma, which may have increased the likelihood of socially desirable responding, subsequently influencing the results.

Another limitation is associated with the simplicity of the current study. The experimental design, interventions, and measures used may not have captured the complex natures of the constructs of both ZSBs and perspective taking. Furthermore, the current study did not examine the effects of gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and other demographic traits on the outcome variable. Due to the hierarchical nature of many human

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diversity traits and experiences, there may have been differences in responding depending on the combination of traits or life experiences individuals possess.

The use of Wilkins et al.'s outcome measure of ZSBs presented its own set of limitations. Although past research found statistically significant differences between groups of participants using Wilkins et al.'s (2015) ZSB outcome measure, no differences between groups were found in the current study. One potential reason for a lack of significant results could reflect the lack of sensitivity of the measure using sample for the current study. Potential scores on the measure ranged from 0-6, but 57.1% of the participants in the current study obtained a score on 0 on the measure and 42.9% of participants received a score between 1 and 3.67 on the measure. The mean score using the sample for the current study was .394, which is quite low given possible scores on the measure range from 0 to 6. Importantly, no participants received a score above 3.67, indicating the measure may not have been effective in detecting differences among the population used for the current study. Interestingly, the sample used in Wilkins et al.'s (2015) study received mean score on the measure of 2.00 ($SD = 1.71$).

The sample used for the current study differed from the sample used in Wilkins et al.'s (2015) study in a number of ways, which may account for the significant discrepancy between the mean outcome measure score in Wilkins et al.'s study and the current study. The sample used in Wilkins et al.'s study was 138 White Americans (53.6% female; age: $M = 39.41$, $SD = 14.01$). The sample was recruited from MTurk. No other information about the sample used by Wilkins et al. was presented, but their sample had a mean age of almost 10 years older than the sample for this study. The current sample was relatively young, with a mean age of 30.04 years. Younger individuals tend to be more liberal and have more progressive views. More

specifically, millennials born after 1982 are more progressive on economic issues than any generation since the early 1960's (CIRCLE, 2009; Levine, Flanagan, & Gallay, 2008). Furthermore, millennials are more supportive of government spending on education and healthcare, which is tied to the concept of resource allocation, and by association, ZSBs. Millennials are also shown to be more supportive of volunteerism, civil liberties, and diversity.

In addition to a notable age difference between the current sample and Wilkins et al.'s (2015) sample, Wilkins et al.'s sample consisted of many more men than the current sample (17.7% men were included in this study and 46.4% for the Wilkins et al. sample). Women have been found to less frequently engage in egocentric economic votes, meaning they less frequently base their votes on their own economic well-being (Welch & Hibbing, 1992), which is conceptually tied to ZSBs. Welch and Hibbing (1992) reported that women have traditionally been socialized to value "cooperation, nurturance, sacrifice, harmony, and moralism, while men are socialized to prize rationalism, competition, and objectivity" (p. 202). The sample for the current study consisting of more women than men may have skewed the results and contributed to the difference in outcome measure scores between the current study and Wilkins et al.'s study.

Another important difference between the current sample and Wilkins et al.'s (2015) sample relates to career trajectory. The current sample consisted of individuals pursuing Master's degrees in a helping profession. Mental health professionals tend to be more liberal, especially as they advance academically and encounter science that may conflict with conservative viewpoints (Heflick, 2011). Furthermore, enrollment in a graduate program requires one to have completed an undergraduate degree, which indicates the individual is

highly educated. Highly educated individuals, those who attend graduate or professional school, also tend to be more liberal (Gross, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2016). Over half (54%) of individuals with postgraduate education have either consistently liberal political values or mostly liberal values. Forty-four percent of adults who have completed undergraduate degrees, but who have not attended graduate school, have consistently or mostly liberal political values, while 29% have at least mostly conservative values, whereas only 36% of individuals without a college degree hold consistently liberal or mostly liberal political values. Thus, as level of education increases, so does degree of endorsement for liberalism. An attempt was made to contact Dr. Wilkins to inquire whether she was able to provide additional information about her sample. As of the date of submission for this dissertation, no further information on the sample has been provided. While Wilkins et al. did not present education information for their sample, it can responsibly be assumed that their sample was less highly educated than the sample for the current study, given all participants in the current study held at least undergraduate degrees.

An additional potential, uncontrolled contributing factor to the difference between the results of this study and Wilkins et al.'s (2015) results could relate to the effect of history. Research indicates people tend to change their opinions in response to major events including elections, social movements, and war (CIRCLE, 2009). During the time in which data was collected for the current study, the political climate of the United States was chaotic and divisive. The lines between liberalism and conservatism were sharply, and sometimes inaccurately, drawn. Wilkins et al. collected their data prior to 2015, thus, their sample faced different environmental influences than the sample for the current study. The sample for the current study was recruited soon after Donald Trump became president, and it would be an

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oversight to claim the political climate did not potentially influence participants' approach to their completion of the surveys.

Implications for Practice

Despite the limitations of the study, the findings have implications for future training of master's level counseling students. First, although the results were not statistically significant, it is notable that students who completed the multicultural counseling course had the lowest scores on the outcome measure of ZSBs. This is a meaningful finding and provides evidence to suggest introductory courses on multiculturalism and multicultural counseling may be useful in modifying ZSBs and other problematic actions that drive behaviors. Addressing ZSBs via multicultural education may increase students' multicultural awareness, knowledge, skills, and sociopolitical competence. As a corollary, students' abilities to provide multiculturally competent therapeutic services to their clients may be bolstered.   Perspective taking as an intervention for ZSBs was also effective, but to a lesser degree than multicultural course completion. As explained above, had a different ZSB outcome measure been used, the results may have been statistically significant.

If a more sensitive measure of ZSBs is created, counseling and other department faculty members may consider using the measure to assess baseline beliefs held by new students applying for or entering their training programs. While using the measure independently as a screening tool may not be ethical, the use of the tool in combination with an interview, entrance essays, and other forms of assessment may provide information about a student's current beliefs, areas for growth, and predisposition toward belief modification. Students scoring highly on a measure of ZSBs at the beginning of their programs of study could be monitored by faculty members, paired up with more multiculturally advanced

mentors, encouraged to participate in perspective taking activities, and routinely engaged in dialogues to facilitate insight development. The outcome could potentially be an alteration of the students' beliefs to more closely align with social justice initiatives and the needs of their clients.

Counseling and other programs focused on preparing individuals to serve in helping/teaching professions may also consider using perspective taking activities in practica and multicultural counseling courses to stimulate learning about perspectives and experiences different than one's own. Providing learning opportunities through fostering perspective taking may assist White students in challenging themselves to modify their worldviews to more closely align with a social justice agenda, ultimately helping them to increase their levels of multicultural competence with the outcome of meeting the needs of their clients more effectively. Specifically, some multicultural course facilitators require students to complete activities involving their engagement in multiple detailed interviews with individuals who differ from them on salient demographic variables. Another potential activity for more advanced counseling students may include pairs of students, supervised by a multiculturally informed professor, in cross racial dyads providing feedback to one another on their multicultural counseling styles and reactions from racialized perspectives. Finally, many counseling programs require students to participate in a personal growth group prior to their participation in their first practica experiences. Program faculty members could consider focusing the personal growth groups on racial identity development and facilitating cross-racial dialogue to foster increased racialized discussions, perspective taking, sociopolitical awareness, and insight development.

On a more macro level, because counselors are ethically charged with serving as social justice advocates for their clients, addressing ZSBs through perspective taking may influence students' voting practices, levels of commitment to activism, willingness to work toward modifying their organizations, etc. Activities requiring community involvement, like assigning students to participate in or observe marches or town hall meetings, may expose students to others who differ from them with respect to political ideology or some other construct, and therefore open the doors for increased communication across demographic or ideological lines. Students may also benefit from attending museums and other historical sites that shed light on political issues to which they may not have been previously exposed.

On a wider scale, multiculturally competent and sociopolitically aware counselors and psychologists could assist media outlets in creating news packages to bring viewers outside of their first-person perspectives and into states of third-person perspective, encouraging viewers to think differently about a given topic. More specifically, ZSBs could be challenged on a wide scale through the media's use of perspective taking. Politicians and lobbyists could consult sociopolitically competent leaders in the profession of psychology to create television ads and educational pieces about legislative bills demonstrating constituents' perspectives and subsequent concrete effects of the bill on community members. Given individuals' resting states of perspective are that of first person (Decety, 2005), increased use of perspective taking exercises on individual, group, and social levels could lead to new ways of thinking and, subsequently, acting, for the benefit of counseling clients, and, more generally, marginalized groups of individuals and, ultimately, society.

Future Directions

The findings of this study shed light on the limited utility of the outcome measure of ZSBs (Wilkins et al., 2015) using a sample of White, master's level, counseling trainees in the midwestern United States. Future researchers should consider creating a more sensitive, psychometrically validated measure of ZSBs for use with counseling students and other groups of individuals. Replication of the study with a more effective perspective taking intervention and a more sensitive outcome measure of ZSBs may yield significant results. Replication of the study using a sample of students of color may also yield interesting results.

Researchers should also focus attention on creating a perspective taking intervention that could be useful across multiple environments and situations. Specifically, given the power, importance, and omnipresence of the media in today's current political climate, researchers should work to discover an effective way to induce perspective taking using the television and the internet. Perhaps individuals' increased exposure to varying perspectives across media outlet modalities could affect the ways in which people engage politically.

Researchers could also focus attention on exploring the maximally beneficial methods of including multicultural training in counseling programs. Various programs place different degrees of emphasis on multiculturalism and multicultural competence. Some programs emphasize marriage and family therapy has their hallmark, whereas other programs consider multicultural competency development the most important aspect of training. For example, some programs provide standalone courses on multiculturalism and place little emphasis on integrating multiculturalism into other courses, like counseling techniques or lifespan and human development. Other programs provide a multicultural counseling course while also infusing multicultural education into all other classes. Still other programs integrate

multicultural education into all courses without providing a standalone course on multiculturalism or multicultural counseling. Researchers should consider examining multicultural counseling outcomes across program concentration conditions with the goal of further contributing to the literature base on multicultural training efficacy. A potential offshoot of this research could also involve assessing the ways in which professors choose to facilitate development of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills in their multicultural counseling courses to identify teaching techniques that are most efficacious.

Future researchers could also examine or propose challenging ZSBs via perspective taking and multicultural education using a sample of higher education faculty members or administrators. Professors and administrators hold positions of power, and simply holding those positions does not denote multicultural competence. Professors and administrators are not immune from social conditioning and have followed the same socialization trajectories as those they teach, train, and ultimately graduate into the field of applied work. Given the power those in professorship and administration have over their trainees, and the number of lives their trainees will touch, it is imperative to ensure professors and administrators in helping and teaching professions are sociopolitically and multiculturally competent.

Conclusion

The current study examined the independent and cumulative effects of perspective taking and multicultural course completion on White, master's level, counseling trainees' endorsements of ZSBs through the use of a 2 x 2 ANOVA. Additionally, the relationship between ZSBs and political ideology affiliation was also evaluated using a Spearman's Correlation. Although multicultural course completion and perspective taking were not found to be statistically significant interventions for endorsement of ZSBs, the results loosely

aligned with the hypotheses; mean outcome measure scores for individuals who completed both a multicultural course and a perspective taking activity were the lowest among the four treatment conditions. Additionally, there was a significant correlational relationship between ZSBs and political ideology affiliation, with more conservative individuals also endorsing higher degrees of ZSBs.

The current sociopolitical climate of the United States is polarized, tumultuous, acidic, and chaotic. Fear, perpetuated by the media and social climate, has led individuals to cling to their ideals, perceived rights, and resources as fervently as they have ever before. Those in the helping profession are not immune from fear and a drive to preserve the self. The need to learn more about effective interventions for problematic belief systems that perpetuate intergroup conflict and disparities is urgent. More explicitly related to the field of counseling, the utility of the concept of ZSBs as an outcome measure of multicultural competence warrants further exploration. Those in the helping profession are in hierarchical roles, placing them in close proximity to allocation of resources for clients. Given counselor trainees are not immune from the influences of social conditioning, are considered representatives of social values, are gatekeepers to resources, and may ascribe to ZSBs, it is imperative to provide multiculturally focused education, including perspective taking activities, to counselor trainees.

Because the exploration of ZSBs is limited within the field of counseling psychology, the current study should be used to stimulate more explorative studies on the topic in the future. Additional research will be necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between perspective taking, multicultural course completion, political ideology affiliation, and ZSBs.

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Appendix A

Measure of Zero-Sum Beliefs

Please indicate to what degree you agree with each statement using the scale below.

0 = Strongly Disagree, 1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Slightly Agree,

5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

1. Blacks take jobs away from Whites.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. When racial minorities get rights, they are taking rights away from Whites.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Rights for Blacks mean Whites lose out.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. As Blacks face less racism, Whites end up facing more racism.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. Less discrimination against minorities means more discrimination against Whites.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Efforts to reduce discrimination against minorities have led to increased discrimination against Whites.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please turn the page to complete a short activity about your attitudes toward various issues.

Appendix B

Perspective Taking Intervention for Women

Perspective Taking Writing Activity

Directions: In the space provided below, please write about a day in the life of the woman pictured above. Go through the day as if you were her, looking at the world through her eyes with a focus on what she may be thinking, feeling, and experiencing; please do your best to take her perspective. To be sure you spend adequate time on this exercise, please be sure to fill the lines below and feel free to write on the back of this page, if necessary.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please turn the page.

Appendix C

Perspective Taking Intervention for Men

Perspective Taking Writing Activity

Directions: In the space provided below, please write about a day in the life of the man pictured above. Go through the day as if you were him, looking at the world through his eyes with a focus on what he may be thinking, feeling, and experiencing; please do your best to take his perspective. To be sure you spend adequate time on this exercise, please be sure to fill the lines below and feel free to write on the back of this page, if necessary.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please turn the page.

Appendix D

Perspective Taking Activity for Control Condition and Participants
Not Identifying as Women or Men

Writing Activity

Directions: In the space provided below, please write about your day. Go through the day, remembering your experiences, what you were thinking, and what you were feeling. To be sure you spend adequate time on this exercise, please be sure to fill the lines below and feel free to write on the back of this page, if necessary.

_____
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Please turn the page to complete some survey questions about attitudes and opinions.

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator:	Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.
Student Investigator:	Lindsay A. Okonowsky, M.C.
Title of Study:	Duration-in-Program Effect on Social Attitudes in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Students

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled "*Duration-in-Program Effect on Social Attitudes in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Students.*" This project will serve as Lindsay Okonowsky's dissertation for the requirements of the Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology degree. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, procedures used in the study, and risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of course completion on counselor education and counseling psychology students' social attitudes.

Who can participate in this study?
Master's level students between the ages of 21-65 are welcome to participate in this study. Students who have lived outside of the United States for more than 5 consecutive years should not participate in this study, as their international living experiences may affect their social attitudes.

Where will this study take place?
The study will take place in your classroom or, if you would feel more comfortable, you can arrange to complete the study at a later, confidential time arranged by you and me.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
It should not take you more than 15 minutes to complete the one-time survey packet associated with this study.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will select a survey packet aligning with your gender identity and subsequently fill out the packet. The packet includes a demographic data sheet, a short writing activity, and some questions about social attitudes. Upon completion of the packet, you will be asked to drop off the packet at the front of the room.

90

What information is being measured during the study?

The survey packet will help me to obtain information about your demographic information, course experience, and social attitudes.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. First, you may be asked to select a packet from the front of the room pertaining to your gender identity. By having to select from a specific pile associated with gender, you will be disclosing your gender identity to those in the room. To reduce the effects and discomfort associated with this risk, I want to emphasize that your participation is completely voluntary. Next, you may be asked questions about discrimination and inequality, which can be uncomfortable for some people. If you feel intolerable discomfort at any time during the study, you are welcome to discontinue completing the survey and turn in a partially completed packet. You are also welcome to contact myself (lindsay.a.okonowsky@wmich.edu) or my doctoral committee advisor, Dr. Morris (joseph.morris@wmich.edu).

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

There are no known benefits to students who volunteer to participate in this study. However, your data may help inform the types of programs offered in master's level counseling psychology and counselor education programs.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study, although you will be asked to volunteer about 15 minutes of your time.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

Only my doctoral advisor, Dr. Morris, and I will have access to the information collected for this study. No personal identifying information will be collected for this study. If the results of this study are published or presented at a conference, the general identity of the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology program at WMU will be kept confidential by referring to the program as a "counselor education and counseling psychology department at a Midwest university." All survey data will be shuffled and given a number prior to examination by the researcher.

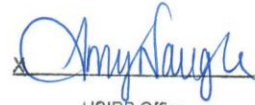### What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any judgment or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Morris, at (269) 387-5112 or joseph.morris@wmich.edu or the student investigator, Lindsay Okonowsky, at (303) 257-5798 or lindsay.a.okonowsky@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

By completing the survey attached to this informed consent letter, you are agreeing to consent to voluntarily participate in this study.

Appendix F

Demographic Data Sheet

Background Information

Age: _____

Gender Identity (circle one):

      Woman

      Man

      Transgender

      Gender Neutral

      Prefer not to Disclose

      Other: _____

Sexual Orientation (circle one):

      Lesbian or Gay

      Bisexual

      Heterosexual

      Queer

      Prefer not to Disclose

      Other: _____

Country of Origin (circle one or write in other):

      United States

      Other: _____

Have you lived outside of the United States for more than 5 consecutive years (circle one)?

      Yes

      No

Race/Ethnicity (circle one or write in other):

        Black or African American

        Asian or Asian American

        Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

        Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin

        White or European American

        Middle Eastern or North African

        Alaska Native/American Indian

        Bi-racial/Multi-ethnic

        Some other race, ethnicity or origin: _____

        Please feel free to disclose any more specific details about your race/ethnicity:

                _____

Socioeconomic Status:

        Please indicate, by circling a number, where you believe you rank on this spectrum of socioeconomic status from "1" (low) to "10" (high) in comparison to the rest of society.

Low										High
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		10

Religion (circle one or write in other):

        Christian   Catholic

        Jehovah's Witness   Jewish

        Muslim   Buddhist

        Hindu   Atheist

        Agnostic   Don't know/prefer not to disclose

        Other: _____

        Please feel free to disclose any more specific details about your religion:

                _____

Marital Status (circle one):

Single

Married

Partnered, but not married

Divorced

Widowed

In which program are you enrolled? (circle one):

Counseling Psychology

Counselor Education—Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Counselor Education—College Counseling

Counselor Education—Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling

Counselor Education—Rehabilitation Counseling

Counselor Education—School Counseling

What year and semester did you enroll in the program?: _____

Have you taken, or are you taking, CECP 6040 (Counseling Techniques)?

Yes

If yes, what semester and year? _____

If yes, who was your professor? _____

No

Have you taken, or are you taking, CECP 6110 (Theories of Counseling)?

Yes

If yes, what semester and year? _____

If yes, who was your professor? _____

No

Have you taken, or are you taking, CECP 6120 (Individual Counseling Practicum)?

    Yes

        If yes, what semester and year? _____

        If yes, who was your professor? _____

    No

Have you taken, or are you taking CECP 6070 (Multicultural Counseling and Psychology)?:

    Yes

        If yes, what semester and year? _____

        If yes, who was your professor? _____

    No

Have you received any other formal multiculturally focused education outside of the CECP department?

    Yes

    No

        If yes, please briefly describe your previous experience below.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Have you completed, or are you in the process of completing, CECP 6130 (Field Practicum)?

    Yes

        If yes, what semester and year? _____

        If yes, who was your professor? _____

    No

How do you identify on the following scale of political ideology? (Please circle one)

Extremely Liberal	Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Moderate	Slightly Conservative	Conservative	Extremely Conservative
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate which of the seven categories you think best matches your political views. (please circle one)

Liberal Democrat	Average Democrat	Moderate Democrat	Independent	Moderate Republican	Average Republican	Conservative Republican
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Did you vote in the last election?:

Yes

      If yes, for whom did you cast your vote? _____

      If yes, under which party designation are you registered to vote?

            _____

No

Appendix G

Social and Economic Conservatism Scale

Please indicate the extent to which you feel positively or negatively towards each issue. Scores of 0 indicate greater negativity, and scores of 100 indicate greater positivity. Scores of 50 indicate that you feel neutral about the issue.

Issue	0-100 Rating
Abortion	
Limited government	
Military and national security	
Religion	
Welfare benefits	
Gun ownership	
Traditional marriage	
Traditional values	
Fiscal responsibility	
Business	
The family unit	
Patriotism	

Appendix H

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: March 31, 2017

To: Joseph Morris, Principal Investigator
Lindsay Okonowsky, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 17-03-20

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "Perspective Taking, Multicultural Counseling Course Completion, and Political Ideology Affiliation Effects on Zero Sum Belief Endorsement in White Counseling Trainees" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., *you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under "Number of subjects you want to complete the study")*." Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: **March 30, 2018**

Appendix I

Email to Professors

Dear Dr.X,

I hope this email finds you doing well. For my dissertation, I am examining the effects of perspective taking, multicultural course completion, and political ideology affiliation on White counseling psychology and counselor education master's level trainees' various social attitudes. My hope is to visit as many classrooms as possible from xxx, 2017 through xxx, 2017. Because one of my variables is multicultural course completion, it is necessary for me to collect data toward the end of the semester. I would like to involve students as close to completing the multicultural course as possible, students who have completed the course in previous semesters, and students who have not yet taken the course.

If you are willing to permit me to invite your students to participate, I will visit your classrooms at times you specify, briefly talk to students about the study, answer any questions they may have, and subsequently invite them to participate. Completion of the survey will take 15 minutes or less. Students' voluntary consent to participate will be their completion of a survey packet. The packet will include a demographic questionnaire, questions about multicultural course completion, a brief perspective taking activity (for those in the prime condition), and some items relating to social attitudes.

There are two risks to participating in the study. First, a primary risk involves the public self-identification of gender identity; by having to select from gender specific piles of survey packets, participants will be disclosing their gender identities to those in the room. Second, there is an additional potential risk of some mild discomfort related to being asked questions about discrimination and equality, which can be a sensitive topic for some individuals. To reduce effects of these risks, I will emphasize that participation is completely voluntary and assert that those who wish to discontinue completion of the survey after they have begun are permitted to do so. No personal identifying information will be requested from students.

Different sets of survey packets will be left at the front of the room and I will request that both you and I leave the room as students either volunteer or decline to participate by picking up and completing a packet or leaving the room without completing a packet. Students will be asked to leave completed or blank packets on a table at the front of the room.

If you have more specific questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact either myself (lindsay.a.okonowsky@wmich.edu) or my doctoral committee chair, Dr. Morris (joseph.morris@wmich.edu). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsay A. Okonowsky, M.C.
(303) 257-5798