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Breaking the Silence: White Privilege Intervention in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

In the Netherlands, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts typically avoid using the term "race", instead adopting a broader "diversity inclusion" framework that shifts focus from racial inequalities to cultural differences. Our project aimed to introduce, test, and apply a framework to reduce color-evasive racial attitudes while fostering empathy among White participants toward racialized individuals. We tested a video intervention designed to reduce color-evasive attitudes and explored whether a self-compassion-based writing exercise could enhance ethnocultural empathy—encompassing awareness, beliefs, and actions toward racialized individuals. Specifically, we examined whether this intervention reduced White fear (anxiety about interacting with racialized individuals) and increased guilt and affective empathy when learning about racism. In an online, within-between-subjects experiment, 301 White Dutch participants completed a writing task. In the experimental condition ($n = 151$), participants reflected on a marginalized identity and practiced self-compassion; in the control condition ($n = 150$), they wrote on a neutral topic. All participants then watched a video of racialized individuals discussing the harms of color-evasive attitudes. A paired-sample *t*-test showed the video intervention reduced color-evasive racial attitudes in all participants. However, general linear model analyses found no direct or indirect effect of the writing intervention on ethnocultural empathy. These findings informed a White privilege awareness and allyship workshop (see Supporting Information).

1 | Introduction

The Netherlands' colonial past, notably in Indonesia, Suriname, and the Caribbean, has shaped its diverse population today. This diversity is also evident in educational settings, where racialized individuals frequently encounter issues such as microaggressions, exclusion, and a sense of being "othered" by their White peers (Esajas 2014; Sijpenhof 2019; Turcatti 2018). At the same time, there is a prevalent reluctance to use the term "race", with a preference for more neutral language such as "cultural differences" when discussing discrimination (Vasta 2014). Mijs et al. (2023) coined the term "racism by omission" to describe how the

country fails to address racism by avoiding the acknowledgment of racial inequalities.

Essed and Trienekens (2008) point out that the Dutch not only resist accepting the existence of racial hierarchies but also refrain from discussing racism altogether. When addressing social differences, they emphasize factors like class and sexuality, asserting that racism is no longer a concern in the Netherlands (Weiner 2014). This approach is called *Color-evasion*,[1] a racial ideology that seeks to obscure the effects of systemic inequalities by advocating the belief that "race should not and does not matter" (Annamma et al. 2016; Neville et al. 2000). However, as Rose (2020) observes

in her study on Dutch racism, color-evasive attitudes do not eliminate the ability to see race but rather obscure the recognition of the effects of race.

Race remains a relatively unexplored concept in the Netherlands, largely due to a cultural tendency to treat Whiteness as the norm (Çankaya and Mepschen 2019; Essed and Trienekens 2008; Kanobana 2021; Özdil 2014). For example, the Dutch word commonly used to describe White people, *blank*, translates to "colorless" or "empty," implying neutrality (Kanobana 2021). This reflects the pervasive normativity of Whiteness in Dutch society, where White individuals are perceived as the default, while everyone else is categorized as the "other" (de Bruijn et al. 2024.

Anti-racism refers to efforts that aim to visibilize systematic oppression, helping individuals recognize their role in racial oppression, and developing strategies to transform the same (Lynch et al. 2017). The term "White privilege", which refers to the unearned advantages enjoyed by White individuals in a racially unequal society (McIntosh 1988), has faced significant criticism in anti-racist education. Critics argue that using the term "White privilege" while doing anti-racist interventions can provoke hostile reactions from those they targets, potentially increasing fear and avoidance of racialized individuals (Pierce 2016; Quarles and Bozarth 2022). However, as Dottolo and Kaschak (2015) highlight, by not addressing Whiteness while talking about racial justice, we once again risk treating Whiteness as the "standard" and everyone else as a deviant. Interventions that guide White people through these uncomfortable emotions can prove crucial to limiting counterproductive reactions.

This study aimed to introduce a video intervention that highlights the experiences of racialized individuals to examine how White people in the Netherlands cognitively and emotionally respond to confronting racism. Additionally, it explored whether identity-based, self-compassion writing exercises could foster greater ethnocultural empathy by reducing fearful emotions and enhancing emotions like empathy and guilt.

1.1 | Addressing Color-Evasion Through a Video Intervention Presenting Counternarratives

In Critical Race Theory (CRT), experiential knowledge of racialized individuals is a crucial and legitimate form of information that provides insight into how race plays a role in society (Solorzano and Yosso 2001). Counter-narratives refer to a storytelling method used to challenge race-neutral discourse by highlighting White privilege and structural power inequalities between races. This involves racialized individuals sharing their first-hand experiences of racism. Though various critical race and pedagogy scholars have highlighted the importance of counter-narratives as a pedagogical tool, evidence of its effectiveness in achieving educational transformation remains sparse and divided (Hunn et al. 2006 ; Miller et al. 2020).

However, though there is not enough research indicating that counter-narratives produce a change in educational practices, evidence suggests that they are effective in changing the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of the dominant groups. For instance, a study by Buchanan and Hilburn (2016) found that watching a documentary presenting immigrants' counter-narratives influenced teachers' perspectives on immigration, immigration policies, and their impact on education ($N = 82$). Through focus group discussions, the study revealed that counter-narratives helped individuals recognize gaps in their understanding of immigration, prompting them to challenge their xenophobic beliefs. Participants also became aware that their preconceived notions about immigration were shaped by their upbringing in specific social environments.

Building on this, the current study presents counter-narratives to participants in video form. Video interventions are commonly used in anti-racist education due to their versatility in addressing various dimensions and contexts of racism (e.g., Case and Rios 2017; Soble et al. 2011; Strayhorn 2023). For instance, across two studies, Mekawi et al. (2021) found that a brief video intervention on the effects of racial microaggressions significantly reduced the endorsement of color-evasive racial attitudes in White students and the tolerance of racial microaggressions ($N = 86$). In study 2, they found that perspective taking abilities helped reduce White students' acceptability attitudes toward microaggressions, power-evasion, and victim-blaming. Similarly, a study by Efimoff and Starzyk (2023) demonstrated that video interventions focusing on historical and contemporary Indigenous issues, individual, and systemic racism in the Canadian context, can positively impact anti-racist attitudes and behavioral intentions ($N = 1099$). However, they also reported that participants in the intervention conditions were no more likely than participants in the control condition to sign up to watch a mini-series in which they could further learn about anti-indigenous racism. The authors postulated that since participants in the intervention condition reported feeling ashamed and upset, this could have hindered them from further engaging with the topic. Thus, the current study also aims to understand if a self-compassion writing intervention can alleviate such feelings paving the way for ethnocultural empathy.

1.2 | Ethnocultural Empathy

Wang et al. (2003) define ethnocultural empathy as a layered construct involving intellectual empathy, emotional empathy, and their communication by individuals during their interactions with individuals from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Intellectual empathy refers to understanding the thoughts and experiences of individuals from different racial or ethnic backgrounds. Empathic emotions involve the ability to emotionally connect with another person's racial or ethnic experiences. The communication of both these components involves expressing intellectual and emotional empathy toward individuals from different ethnic and racial groups than one's own. Raosal et al. (2011) point out that ethnocultural empathy differs from general empathy, that is, the ability to feel the emotions that other people may be experiencing in a given situation, in three important ways. First, ethnocultural empathy involves taking individuals' cultural context into account. Secondly, it requires the individual to keep existing biases and prejudices in check while interacting with individuals from different backgrounds. Lastly, ethnocultural empathy is also conceptualized to constitute not only one's feelings and attitudes, but also one's behaviors toward people from other ethnic and racial backgrounds. This also differentiates

it from White empathy which only encompasses the emotional component of sharing feelings of anger, sadness, and frustration experienced by racialized individuals (Spanierman 2012).

Previous research has shown that ethnocultural empathy is associated with more positive cognitions and emotions toward diversity, increased behavioral intentions to attend diversity programs, and is an important aspect of implicit racial bias reduction training (Brouwer and Boros 2010; Cundiff et al. 2009; Fix and Palmer Sr. 2025). Wang et al. (2003) operationalize ethnocultural empathy as not only a trait but as an ability that can be learned which makes it an interesting outcome to measure in the current study that aims to test an intervention framework.

1.3 | Self-Compassion

Neff (2003) defines self-compassion as a positive emotional state and attitude that helps one counter negative feelings like isolation, self-criticism, depression, and so forth. She describes three main components of self-compassion. The first is *self-kindness* which involves looking at one's pain and mistakes with compassion, empathy, and no self-judgment. The second component, *mindfulness*, involves looking at one's negative experience(s) from a balanced and non-judgmental perspective, and not over-identifying with them. Lastly, *common humanity* involves identifying one's struggle with the larger human experience to prevent feelings of isolation. Self-compassion, as described by Neff (2003), provides a psychological framework that may influence how individuals respond to the discomfort often experienced while learning about racism. The self-compassion framework is conceptually distinct from the previously employed framework of self-affirmation theory which states that perceiving the self as a good, competent, and moral agent is an important psychological goal (Adams et al. 2005). Although self-compassion interventions do include self-affirmation, self-compassion is a broader framework that also encompasses mindfulness and common humanity in addition to self-kindness which involves the process of self-affirmation. We expand upon the role of these components below.

By encouraging individuals to treat themselves with kindness rather than harsh self-judgment, self-compassion reduces anxiety and promotes resilience (Dundas et al. 2017; Ferrari et al. 2019; Han and Kim 2023; Smeets et al. 2014). Moreover, its emphasis on mindfulness allows individuals to observe their reactions to challenging information from a more balanced perspective rather than over-identifying with their emotions. Across two online experiments, Houde (2014) found evidence indicating that mindfulness is positively associated with various measures of intercultural competence including ethnocultural empathy. In study 1 ($N = 751$), he found that the ability to identify one's internal experience to external situations, and being less reactive to the same facilitates the development of ethnocultural empathy. In study 2 ($N = 720$), the results indicated that the ability to regulate one's emotions and shape one's behaviors based on one's values instead of impulses also contributes positively to the development of ethnocultural empathy in participants. Thus, the capacity for emotional regulation and non-reactivity through mindfulness could foster openness that could aid the development of ethnocultural empathy.

Furthermore, self-compassion's focus on acknowledging similarities between oneself and others facilitates ethnocultural empathy (Rasoal et al. 2011). This is also emphasized in Bishop's (2002) *Social Justice Ally Model* which highlights that everyone has the experience of being the oppressor and the oppressed. She emphasizes that all identities have a role in promoting social justice and recognizes the interconnected nature of all oppression. This process involves gaining a deeper understanding of oppression, different kinds of oppression, and the similarities and differences between them. This allows an individual to situate themselves in a system of oppression which helps them understand how they are simultaneously disadvantaged and privileged in society. Thus, our intervention focuses on first, encouraging participants to reflect on their own experiences of oppression and then steering them toward recognizing their role as the oppressor. The focus is to help individuals recognize their own experiences of oppression and use that understanding to draw similarities and empathize with others' oppression. White participants in our study are thus encouraged to draw similarities between their experiences of discrimination with those of racialized individuals under the "common humanity" prompt of our self-compassion writing intervention.

In addition, research has also indicated positive associations between self-compassion and compassion for others (García-Campayo et al. 2023). Importantly, in the context of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work, self-compassion has been found to reduce defensive reactions toward dissonant information, making individuals more receptive to challenging topics and also improving cultural competence (Gottlieb and Shibusawa 2019; Leary et al. 2007; Neff and Pommier 2013).

Research on the relationship between self-compassion and ethnocultural empathy has sometimes yielded complex findings. For instance, Black (2018) found that trait self-compassion moderated the effects of White privilege awareness on ethnocultural empathy by influencing the emotions experienced by White participants ($N = 240$). Surprisingly, higher levels of trait self-compassion correlated with increased White fear of racialized individuals, which in turn was linked to lower ethnocultural empathy. This suggests that trait self-compassion might lead individuals to focus more inwardly on their White identity, potentially heightening defensive emotions rather than fostering engagement with anti-racist work. However, the study did not involve a self-compassion manipulation and instead relied on measuring existing levels of trait self-compassion in participants, only allowing for correlational inferences to be made.

Given that state self-compassion can fluctuate, it may be more effective in reducing the momentary discomfort experienced during anti-racist work. Unlike trait self-compassion, which may reinforce defensive reactions, state self-compassion could serve as a tool for managing difficult emotions such as White fear. It may also foster more constructive emotions like guilt and empathy, which have been linked to increased ethnocultural empathy and anti-racist engagement. Furthermore, state self-compassion interventions are highly flexible and can be adapted to different contexts, making them a promising approach for mitigating the emotional barriers that often arise in discussions about racism.

By integrating self-compassion into our study, we aim to explore its potential to facilitate the development of ethnocultural empathy by helping participants navigate difficult emotions in a way that enhances rather than hinders engagement with anti-racist perspectives. In the following section, we describe the mediating role of White emotions in this process.

1.4 | White Emotions

According to Helm (1995), development of an anti-racist White identity involves six distinct phases, grouped into two overarching statuses. The first status focuses on acknowledging and letting go of White privilege, while the second emphasizes fostering an anti-racist and ally identity. Within the first status, the second stage, that is, disintegration, challenges color-evasive attitudes and beliefs. At this stage, White individuals often encounter resistance as they become aware of the unjust privileges conferred upon them by virtue of their Whiteness. This resistance typically manifests in emotions such as White guilt and fear. Spanierman and Heppner (2004) further explored these emotions through their conceptualization of the psychosocial costs of racism, identifying White guilt, fear, and empathy as key affective responses to racial issues. Spanierman et al. (2009) emphasize that White emotions not only arise as a consequence of racial attitudes but also act as antecedents to both racist and anti-racist behaviors.

Rather than following a linear path as suggested by Helm's (1995) model, individuals experience varying intensities and types of emotions, which can shape their willingness to engage in anti-racist actions differently. Research on White individuals' disposition to racism suggests that there is great individual variability in terms of the emotions experienced by White individuals in response to the disintegration of their color-evasive White identity which can have differing consequences (Carter et al. 2004; D'Andrea and Daniels 2011; Parigoris et al. 2024; Spanierman et al. 2006). In the current study, we explore how a self-compassion intervention affects White guilt, fear, and empathy and their mediating effects on ethnocultural empathy. Each of these emotions and their associated outcomes are discussed below.

White guilt refers to feelings of remorse and responsibility stemming from a White individual's awareness of racism and their potential complicity—either individually or collectively—in perpetuating it (Spanierman 2012). Research suggests that White guilt can lead to increased awareness of structural racism, higher levels of ethnocultural empathy, and greater support for affirmative action, reduce racist attitudes and increase civic engagement (Dull et al. 2021; Estrada and Matthews 2016; Galgay 2018; Iyer et al. 2003; Ozias 2023; Swim and Miller 1999).

In contrast, White empathy involves the ability to emotionally connect with the anger, sadness, and frustration experienced by racialized individuals due to racism (Spanierman 2012). This type of empathy is essential for the transition from racist to anti-racist attitudes, as it fosters deeper racial awareness and engagement. Keum (2021) highlights that White individuals who witness racism online and respond with empathy are more likely to engage in advocacy and adopt anti-racist behaviors

Though guilt and empathy may contribute to increased racial awareness, White fear has been linked to resistance and disen-

gagement. White fear consists of feelings of mistrust, anxiety, and perceived threat in interactions with racialized individuals, as well as fear of appearing racist or offending a racialized person (Spanierman and Heppner 2004). Research has linked White fear to increased racial bias, dehumanization of racialized people, and reduced cultural sensitivity (Black 2018; Galgay 2018; Mekawi et al. 2021; Spanierman et al. 2006). Individuals experiencing White fear are also less likely to support multiculturalism and diversity initiatives, as these interactions may trigger discomfort or defensive reactions.

White guilt, empathy and fear thus play important roles in influencing a variety of anti-racist attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. Given that ethnocultural empathy taps into all three of these components, we wanted to look at how these emotions could mediate the effects of the self-compassion intervention on ethnocultural empathy. Thus, the current study focuses on White guilt, fear, and empathy as separate mediators to understand their differential roles in mediating the effect of self-compassion on ethnocultural empathy. Given prior research demonstrating that each of these emotions influences racial attitudes and behaviors in distinct ways, we hypothesized that each emotion would have a distinct mediation path.

1.5 | Hypotheses

Building on the existing literature about the effectiveness of video interventions in reducing color-evasive attitudes, our study aimed to use a video intervention that presents counter-narratives from racialized individuals to address the color-evasive attitudes of White, Dutch participants. Additionally, drawing from Bishop's Social Justice Ally Development Model (2002), we introduced a self-compassion writing exercise to help participants recognize their roles as both oppressors and the oppressed within larger structural systems. We also expected that the self-compassion exercise would help manage the difficult emotions outlined by Spanierman's taxonomy of White emotions (2012), that arise when individuals become aware of racial inequalities with reduced color-evasive racial attitudes.

Thus, in the current study, we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1. *A video intervention highlighting White privileges decreases color-evasive racial attitudes amongst White Dutch participants.*

Hypothesis 2. *Participants who completed the self-compassion exercise before the video intervention will exhibit more ethnocultural empathy than participants in the control condition.*

Hypothesis 3. *The psychosocial costs of racism to Whites (White fear, White empathy, and White guilt) will mediate the effects of the self-compassion exercise on ethnocultural empathy.*

1.6 | Grounding in the CTS Framework

Many diversity interventions in the Netherlands in the counseling, educational, and healthcare realm do not directly address racism. In terms of national policy, racialized individuals with

a migration background are encouraged to integrate into Dutch culture. Yet, the challenges they face due to their racial and ethnic identities are often left unaddressed (Rose 2020). Given the scarcity of research on racial justice interventions in the Netherlands, our study built upon existing basic research from other contexts that aims to understand the fundamental psychological processes underlying prevalent racial attitudes such as color-evasiveness (Neville et al. 2000). We also aimed to tie qualitative findings from the Dutch context that uncover possible reasons behind such attitudes and work through them using basic research on psychosocial costs of racism, and White identity development (Helms 1995; Spanierman and Heppner 2004).

This study aimed to address the first stage (T1) of the Clinical and Translational Research framework where we formulated and tested the outcomes of a new intervention framework to address color-evasive racial attitudes in the Netherlands. We also aimed to address adverse reactions reported by sociological and anthropological research in the Netherlands in response to interventions that focus on race (e.g., Rose 2020). We believe this stage provides a good starting point as it allows us to assess whether the basic research behind anti-racism interventions (mostly conducted in the US context) could be applicable in the Netherlands. Additionally, it allows us to build on our findings in the T2 stage, where our goal is to develop a workshop curriculum specifically addressing White privilege in the Netherlands.

Thus, we used our findings to inform the development of a workshop curriculum on White privilege awareness, which highlights the unearned advantages enjoyed by White individuals, and allyship, that is, actions taken by those in positions of privilege to challenge inequalities and support marginalized groups in a way that is recognized as genuine by those they aim to help (De Souza and Schmader 2024). This workshop was designed for students and staff at Dutch universities. The workshop includes a video intervention and focuses on helping participants recognize and work through the emotions that White individuals may experience during anti-racist work. Building on previous research on emotional regulation, that is, controlling one's feelings, their timing, and their expression, and cognitive reframing, that is, reinterpreting a situation to change its emotional impact, were incorporated to support this process (DeCuir-Gunby et al. 2020; Ford et al. 2022; Gross 1998). Through this, we aimed to bolster our work from the T1 stage to T2 where we use our findings to inform interventions.

We position our work within the anti-racism framework by aligning with the three key goals outlined by Lynch et al. (2017): (1) identifying or making visible systemic oppression; (2) challenging denial of complicity in such oppression; and (3) ultimately transforming structural inequalities. Our current study primarily addresses the first goal by aiming to make systemic oppression more visible. Additionally, the workshop with White students and staff described above aims to address the second goal by creating space for White individuals in academic spaces to confront and reflect on their complicity in systemic oppression. Finally, as we gather data on the workshop's long-term effectiveness, we hope to contribute toward the third goal by introducing these workshops across Dutch universities and exploring their integration into curricula.

2 | Methods

2.1 | Participants

The inclusion criteria were that participants self-identify as White, were born and raised in the Netherlands, and were fluent in English. We recruited our sample on Prolific which is an online platform commonly used for recruiting participants for research. The option to participate in our study was made available to individuals who self-reported as being born and raised in the Netherlands and being fluent in English while registering on Prolific. An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power version 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al. 2007) to determine the necessary sample size for testing the second hypothesis, which posits that participants who complete the self-compassion writing exercise will exhibit higher levels of ethnocultural empathy compared to those in the control group. We focused our power analysis on Hypothesis 2 because it required the largest sample size to achieve sufficient power, given that between-subjects tests typically demand more participants than within-subjects tests. To detect a small effect size ($f = 0.20$) of condition (self-compassion vs. neutral writing exercise) on ethnocultural empathy in a between-subjects ANOVA with $\alpha = 0.05$ and 80% power, we required a minimum sample size of $N = 416$. However, due to time constraints and higher-than-expected levels of attrition, we stopped data collection after 350 participants.

Four hundred and fifty-seven participants completed the pre-test; however, only 350 completed the second survey. Sixteen participants who indicated that they did not want their data to be used for the study after completing their participation were excluded from the final analysis. In addition, 13 participants were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria for the study (self-identifying as White, born, and raised in the Netherlands). Lastly, 20 participants were removed as they failed three out of four attention checks during the study. Thus, data from 301 participants were included in the final analysis.

Our final sample consisted of 301 White Dutch participants, 18–65 years; M (age) = 30.20, SD (age) = 8.83. The sample had similar numbers of male (159) and female (134) identifying participants with eight identifying as non-binary/other. A post-hoc sensitivity analysis indicated that 301 participants, with 80% power and $\alpha = 0.05$ could allow us to detect a medium to large effect size ($d = 0.50$).

2.2 | Design

We used a mixed experimental design with both within-subject and between-subject components. Participants' color-evasive racial attitudes were measured at two points: 1 week before the main experiment and during the experiment itself. Additionally, there were two between-subjects conditions wherein the experimental group ($n = 151$) completed a self-compassion writing exercise while the control group ($n = 150$) completed a neutral writing exercise. As shown in Figure 1, the condition (self-compassion vs. control) was the independent variable, White fear, guilt, and empathy were three separate mediators and ethnocultural empathy was the dependent variable.
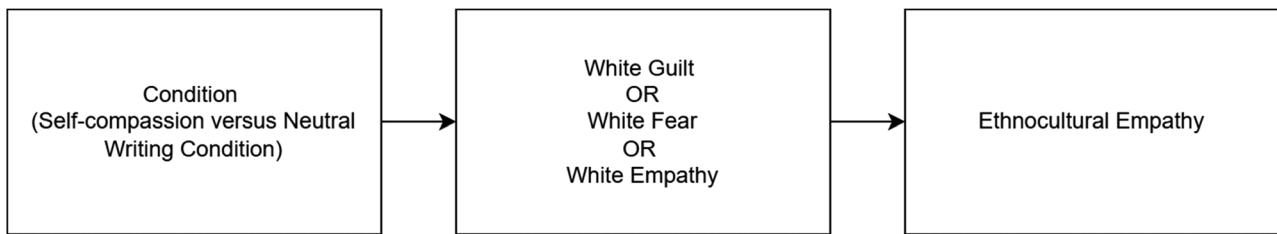
FIGURE 1 | Hypothesized mediation between self-compassion intervention, White emotions, and ethnocultural empathy. The model represents the hypothesized mediations between the condition (self-compassion vs. control writing) on each of the mediators (White empathy, guilt, and fear) and the dependent variable (ethnocultural empathy).

2.3 | Procedure

We used an online platform, Prolific, to recruit participants, and Qualtrics to conduct the experiment, and collect data. All measurements, writing prompts, and video materials were presented to participants in English. Our decision to conduct the study in English was intentionally driven by our aim to introduce discussions about racism into the Dutch context without allowing terminology barriers to hinder these conversations. We further expand on the terminology barriers related to the word "ras", that is, race, in the discussion section.

One week before the main study, participants were requested to read the information letter, sign the informed consent, and fill out a measure of color-evasive racial attitudes. In the main experiment, participants were first requested to complete a writing exercise. Participants assigned to the experimental condition completed the self-compassion prompt while others completed the control writing exercise. Next, participants were presented with a state self-compassion measure to ensure that the manipulation was successful. After this, all participants completed the video intervention.

Following the video, participants completed scales that measured color-evasive attitudes, the psychosocial costs of racism, and ethnocultural empathy. They also answered questions regarding their demographic information, including race, gender, nationality, and age. Lastly, participants were debriefed and redirected to payment checkouts to receive compensation (three euros) for their participation. The study is pre-registered (https://aspredicted.org/W27_J22). It was approved by the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam Ethics Committee (file no. VCWE-2023-183R1).

2.4 | Pre-Test

One week before they participated in the main experiment, participants were invited to read the information letter, sign the consent form, and fill out the measure for color-evasive attitudes described below.

2.4.1 | Colorblind Racial Attitude Scale

Colorblind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al. 2000) is a 14-item scale used to measure cognitive aspects related to color-evasive attitudes concerning race ($\alpha = 0.94$). An example item is "Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they

are, has an equal chance to become rich." The response options ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree)*. The scale shows good convergent validity (Whitley et al. 2022). We adapted the wording of the items to fit the Dutch context by modifying the contextual references. For instance, in the CoBRAS, the item "Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S." was changed to "Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the Netherlands." Additionally, we altered the specific ethnic and racial groups mentioned in the items. For example, in the CoBRAS, the original item "It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American." was adjusted to "It is important that people begin to think of themselves as Dutch and not African-Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch, or Moroccan-Dutch." The adapted measure can be found in the Supporting Information. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated optimal fit of the adapted scale ($\chi^2 = 19.9$, $p = 0.01$, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.06) within our sample.

2.5 | Main Experiment

One week after completing the pre-test, participants were invited to complete the main experiment online. First, participants in the experimental group completed the self-compassion writing intervention while those in the control group completed a neutral writing exercise. Post this, participants completed the self-compassion measure as a manipulation check. Next, all participants watched the video intervention and proceeded to complete the CoBRAS again, followed by the scale measuring White emotions and ethnocultural empathy, respectively. More details on the interventions and measures are provided below.

2.5.1 | Interventions

2.5.1.1 | Self-Compassion Writing Intervention. To induce self-compassion, we used an intervention inspired by Seekis et al. (2017) and Urken and LeCroy (2020). We provided participants in the experimental condition with an identity wheel and asked them to select any aspect of their identity (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, personal politics, etc.) that they believe disadvantages them in their daily lives. They then answered three writing prompts that encouraged them to extend self-compassion toward themselves (writing prompts provided in Appendix). The prompts used were similar to Urken and Lecroy (2020), and Seekis et al. (2017), in that each of the writing prompts touched

upon a specific component of self-compassion, that is, self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. However, though Urken and Lecroy (2020) asked participants to think about any negative event they experienced recently, similar to Seekis et al. (2017), we decided to make the writing exercise specific to the theoretical framework and outcomes of the study. Seekis et al. (2017) focused on improving participants' body image through self-compassion and hence encouraged participants to think about their body image concerns while completing the writing exercise. In line with our theoretical framework, that is, Bishop's Social Justice Ally Model (2002), we encouraged participants to think about any aspect of their identity that leads to experiences of marginalization and discrimination and practice self-compassion through the writing exercise. Participants in the control condition wrote about a neutral topic, that is, a general description of their activities the day before, on the day, and their plans for the day after.

2.5.1.2 | Video Intervention.

Participants watched a 3.5-min video in which four racialized youth have a round-table discussion centering their experiences with racism in the Netherlands and the negative effects of color-evasive attitudes. The video included snippets taken from a talk show at Slim Radio (2020). The video was originally filmed in English, as it features conversations between racialized individuals who were born and raised in the Netherlands and are thus fluent in Dutch, and individuals who are newcomers to the Netherlands and are not fluent in the language.

2.5.2 | Measures

2.5.2.1 | State Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form.

The State Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SSCS-SF; Neff et al. 2020) is a six-item scale that measures the amount of self-compassion an individual is experiencing at a given moment. This scale was used as a manipulation check to test if the self-compassion manipulation was successful. An example item includes "I see my difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through." The response options ranged from 1 (*Not at all true for me*) to 5 (*Very true for me*). The scale has a good Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.86$) and McDonald's composite reliability indicating internal reliability. Neff et al. (2020) also reported that it correlated almost perfectly with the SSCS-Long Form ($r = 0.96$). In addition, they also reported that scores on the scale had a positive relationship with positive affect and a negative relationship with negative affect, providing evidence for its predictive validity. The CFA for the SSCS-SF and all the aforementioned scales can be found in Table S1.

2.5.2.2 | Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites.

The Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites (PCRW; Spanierman and Heppner 2004) measures the (affective) costs of racism for White individuals and contains 16 items in total with three subscales measuring White guilt ($\alpha = 0.79$), White fear ($\alpha = 0.70$), and White empathy ($\alpha = 0.79$), which are the suggested mediators in the current model. Example items include "Being White makes me feel personally responsible for racism". The response options ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). The scale demonstrates good construct validity and convergent validity (Sifford et al. 2009).

2.5.2.3 | The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy.

The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al. 2003) was utilized to measure the dependent variable, that is, empathy toward racialized individuals. It is worth noting that the empathy subscale in PCRW only measures general empathetic reactions of White participants in terms of sharing the feelings of anger and sadness arising out of racial injustices. On the other hand, the SEE measures ethnocultural empathy which is a broader construct inquiring into White participants' awareness of racial struggles, their perspective-taking ability, levels of acceptance toward racialized individuals as well as their intentions to intervene on seeing racial injustices. We used the abridged version created by Purdue University's "Centre for Intercultural Learning, Mentorship, Assessment, and Research" which contains 18 items ($\alpha = 0.84$). An example item is "When I see people who come from a different racial or ethnic background succeed in the public arena, I share their pride." The response options ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). This scale is a valid and reliable measure that has been used by researchers to study student populations (Malay et al. 2023).

2.5.2.4 | Attention Checks.

To ensure the quality of our data, our study incorporated one attention check in the pre-test and three attention checks during the main experiment. Two of these checks in the main experiment required participants to answer multiple-choice questions about the video content they viewed. The other two attention-checks, in both the pre-test and main experiment, were positioned between scales and featured items such as: "This item is to confirm that you are paying attention. Please select '1' to verify". Participants who failed three or more of these attention checks were excluded from the final analysis.

2.5.3 | Analytical Approach

The scores for the CoBRAS, SEE, SSC-S were computed by summing the scores on the individual items. The subscales of the PCRW (White guilt, empathy, and fear) were summed separately as they were used as independent mediators in the model. The two measurements of color-evasive racial attitudes were compared using a repeated measures *t*-test. A general linear model (GLM) was run with condition (experimental vs. control) as the predictor variable and scores on the SEE as the dependent variable. Lastly, three separate general linear mediation models were run with experimental versus control condition as the independent variable, scores on SEE as the dependent variable and the subscales of PCRW as three separate mediators in each of the models. Bootstrap confidence intervals were computed using the percentile method. All analyses were conducted on Jamovi (Version: 2.4.8).

3 | Results

3.1 | Manipulation Check

To check if the self-compassion manipulation was successful, we conducted an independent sample *t*-test with state self-compassion as the dependent variable, and control versus self-compassion condition as the independent variable. The analysis

indicated that there was no significant difference in scores between the self-compassion condition ($M = 19.20$, $SD = 4.79$) and the control condition ($M = 18.80$, $SD = 4.08$), $t(299) = −0.85$, $d = −0.09$, $p = 0.39$. Thus, the self-compassion manipulation was not successful. This is further explored in the discussion section.

Although our manipulation did not have the intended effects, we still examined the impact of the intervention and White emotions on ethnocultural empathy to stay consistent with our pre-registered analysis plan.

3.2 | Hypotheses Testing

3.2.1 | Color-Evasion Scores

A paired-sample t-test indicated a significant reduction in color-evasive racial attitudes following the video intervention. That is, there was a reduction in participants' scores on the CoBRAS from the pre-test ($M = 43.30$, $SD = 12.80$) to the post-test ($M = 41.60$, $SD = 13.60$), and this effect was statistically significant, $t(300) = 5.13$, $d = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$. Thus, as hypothesized, on average, the video intervention successfully reduced color-evasive racial attitudes in participants in both the experimental and control groups (H1). Although we pre-registered a GLM to evaluate the effectiveness of the video intervention, we chose to report a t-test instead to enhance the readability of our results. A t-test is statistically equivalent to a GLM, as both are fitted using ordinary least squares (Laube 2021; Vanhove 2019).

3.2.2 | Ethnocultural Empathy

A GLM with condition (self-compassion writing vs. control writing) as the independent variable and ethnocultural empathy as the dependent variable indicated that the condition had no significant effect on ethnocultural empathy scores, $R^2 = 0.00$, $F(1, 291) = 0.11$, $d = 0.03$, $p = 0.73$, $\eta_p^2 = 0$. That is, participants in the self-compassion ($M = 73.29$, $SE = 1.02$) versus the control condition ($M = 73.79$, $SE = 1.10$) had no significant differences in their scores on ethnocultural empathy. Thus, we did not find evidence for hypothesis 2.

3.2.3 | Mediation Models

3.2.3.1 | White Empathy. A general linear mediation model with condition (self-compassion writing vs. control) as the independent variable, scores on the White empathy subscale of the PCRW as the mediator, and scores on the SEE as the dependent variable, indicated that there was no indirect effect of the condition on ethnocultural empathy through White empathy ($\beta = −0.004$, $z = −0.11$, $d = −0.006$, $p = 0.91$, 95% CI [−0.07, 0.06]).

This is because though the mediator, that is, White empathy did positively predict ethnocultural empathy ($\beta = 0.62$, $z = 13.63$, $d = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.53, 0.70]), the condition did not significantly predict White empathy ($\beta = −0.006$, $z = −0.11$, $d = −0.01$, $p = 0.91$, 95% CI = [−0.11, 0.10]). Thus, contrary to

hypothesis 3, the condition did not have an indirect effect on ethnocultural empathy through White empathy.

3.2.3.2 | White Guilt. A general linear mediation model with condition (self-compassion writing vs. control) as the independent variable, scores on the White guilt subscale of the PCRW as the mediator, and scores on the SEE as the dependent variable, indicated that there was no indirect effect of the condition on ethnocultural empathy through White guilt ($\beta = −0.013$, $z = −0.48$, $d = −0.02$, $p = 0.68$, 95% CI [−0.06, 0.04]).

This is because though the mediator, that is, White guilt did positively predict ethnocultural empathy ($\beta = 0.55$, $z = 11.55$, $d = 0.66$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.45, 0.64]), the condition did not significantly predict White guilt ($\beta = −0.02$, $z = −0.41$, $d = −0.04$, $p = 0.68$, 95% CI = [−0.11, 0.07]). Thus, contrary to hypothesis 3, the condition did not have an indirect effect on ethnocultural empathy through White guilt.

3.2.3.3 | White Fear. A general linear mediation model with condition (self-compassion writing vs. control) as the independent variable, scores on the White fear subscale of the PCRW as the mediator, and scores on the SEE as the dependent variable, indicated no indirect effect of the condition on ethnocultural empathy through White fear ($\beta = −0.002$, $z = −0.94$, $d = −0.05$, $p = 0.34$, 95% CI [−0.006, 0.002]).

This is because though the mediator, that is, White fear did negatively predict ethnocultural empathy ($\beta = −0.52$, $z = −10.56$, $d = −0.60$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [−0.61, −0.42]), the condition did not significantly predict White fear ($\beta = 0.05$, $z = 0.94$, $d = 0.05$, $p = 0.34$, 95% CI [−0.05, 0.15]). Thus, contrary to hypothesis 3, the condition did not have an indirect effect on ethnocultural empathy through White fear.

3.2.4 | Exploratory Analysis

3.2.4.1 | Effects of Color-Evasive Attitudes on Ethnocultural Empathy. Spanierman et al. (2006) conducted a cluster analysis to identify five different groups based on the PCRW subscales, each characterized by a specific constellation of the three emotions, that is, White guilt, empathy, and fear, existing in various degrees. Later on, Spanierman et al. (2009) conducted a set of logistic regressions to identify which factors were associated with White individuals' likelihood to fall in a specific cluster. Participants' scores on the unawareness subscale of the CoBRAS significantly predicted their likelihood to incur a certain set of psychosocial costs. Moreover, across two studies, Spanierman et al. (2009) also found that individuals with a lower level of color-evasive racial attitudes experienced higher White guilt and empathy and lower levels of White fear. In turn, higher White guilt and empathy and lower levels of White fear predicted increased multicultural awareness and knowledge. This was also supported by the study conducted by Black (2018) where increased awareness of structural racism was associated with higher White guilt and empathy and lower levels of White fear. Additionally, higher guilt and empathy predicted higher levels of multicultural attitudes while higher levels of fear predicted lower levels of multicultural attitudes.

Since we found evidence that our video intervention led to an average decrease in color-evasive racial attitudes, we conducted an exploratory analysis to test whether post-intervention color-evasive attitude scores were associated with higher White empathy and guilt and lower White fear and if that in turn was associated with higher levels of ethnocultural empathy.

A GLM was conducted with participants' post-intervention scores on the CoBRAS as the independent variable and their scores on the SEE as the dependent variable. The results showed that color-evasive racial attitudes were significantly and negatively associated with ethnocultural empathy scores, $R^2 = 0.44$, $t(300) = -15.34$, $\beta = -0.66$, $d = -0.88$, $p < 0.001$, $[-0.74, -0.58]$. In other words, participants with lower color-evasive attitudes demonstrated higher levels of ethnocultural empathy.

Additionally, three general mediation analyses indicated that color-evasive racial attitudes were indirectly associated with ethnocultural empathy through each of the three mediators. In that, color-evasive racial attitudes negatively predicted White empathy ($\beta = -0.48$, $z = -9.56$, $p < 0.001$) and White guilt ($\beta = -0.63$, $z = -14.12$, $p < 0.001$). In turn, White empathy ($\beta = 0.39$, $z = 8.81$, $p < 0.001$) and White guilt ($\beta = 0.22$, $z = 4.11$, $p < 0.001$) were positively associated with ethnocultural empathy. Conversely, color-evasive racial attitudes were positively associated with White fear ($\beta = 0.25$, $z = -4.43$, $p < 0.001$), which were negatively associated with ethnocultural empathy ($\beta = -0.38$, $z = -9.81$, $p < 0.001$).

Thus, color-evasive racial attitudes were negatively associated ethnocultural empathy and this was mediated by White empathy ($\beta = -0.19$, $z = -6.48$, $p < 0.001$), White guilt ($\beta = -0.14$, $z = -3.95$, $p < 0.001$), and White fear ($\beta = -0.09$, $z = -4.04$, $p < 0.001$).

To sum up, as elucidated in Figure 2, our results indicated that color-evasive racial attitudes were negatively correlated with ethnocultural empathy exhibited by participants and this was mediated by increased White empathy and guilt, and lower fear. However, since these hypotheses were not pre-registered and since our analyses are correlational, no causal claims can be inferred.

3.2.4.2 | Content Analysis of Writing Responses. Given that the results we obtained when examining the effects of self-compassion did not align with our expectations or prior research, we conducted a content analysis of the responses given to the writing prompts in the self-compassion writing exercise. Specifically, we examined whether participants followed the instructions provided in the prompts.

The first step of the self-compassion exercise required participants to identify an aspect of their identity that made them feel disadvantaged. In the second step, participants were asked to generalize those feelings of disadvantage to others, a concept referred to as "common humanity" (see the section on self-compassion). This idea, as proposed by Neff (2003), is a key component of self-compassion, which involves recognizing that others may experience similar feelings of disadvantage.

In a study by Dreisoerner et al. (2020), participants were given self-compassion prompts based on Neff's (2003) three self-

compassion components in separate conditions. Adherence to instructions was lowest in the "common humanity" condition, as participants tended to focus more on their problems, often expressing self-pity and isolation, rather than connecting their experiences to those of others. Therefore, we chose to focus on "common humanity," as it is the component of self-compassion most closely related to our outcome variable, that is, ethnocultural empathy, and because previous research has specifically encountered challenges with the "common humanity" prompt.

To analyze the responses, we imported the written submissions into ATLAS.ti software (Version 9.2.0) [Web Application]. An exploratory content analysis was conducted primarily by an independent external collaborator who was not involved in the research design or authorship, ensuring a degree of objectivity toward the study's aims and procedures.

The analysis followed a theory-driven coding approach, grounded in the self-compassion literature. Specifically, responses were evaluated on whether or not they adhered to the definition of common humanity as laid out by Neff (2003), that is, accepting personal flaws or difficult circumstances as part of a shared human condition.

To establish a consistent coding framework, a subset of participant responses was coded together by the research team and the external collaborator to align on what constitutes adherence to the prompt, in accordance with the definition of common humanity. The independent collaborator subsequently completed the coding for the full dataset. Responses were coded using a binary system: answers that perfectly followed the instructions were coded as 1, while those that did not were coded as 0.

The following response was coded as 1:

> People in similar positions, especially younger individuals, often face challenges gaining credibility.

The following response was coded as 0:

> I do not know other people who are in the same position. I know it is a disability but it mostly affects kids. They can be treated for it and overcome it. But this treatment is only for kids and I am too old for this. I never received treatment for it. Teachers never know of this and there are no exceptions possible, like there are exceptions for something like dyslexia, for example.

After the primary coder completed the initial coding, all three coders reviewed and discussed each written response and its assigned code. In cases of disagreement, discrepancies in interpretation were deliberated until a mutual agreement was reached.

The results showed that 109 participants successfully completed the task and were coded as 1. However, 31 participants did not address the "common humanity" aspect of the task and were coded as 0. Additionally, 11 participants provided irrelevant responses to all or part of the task and were also coded as 0.
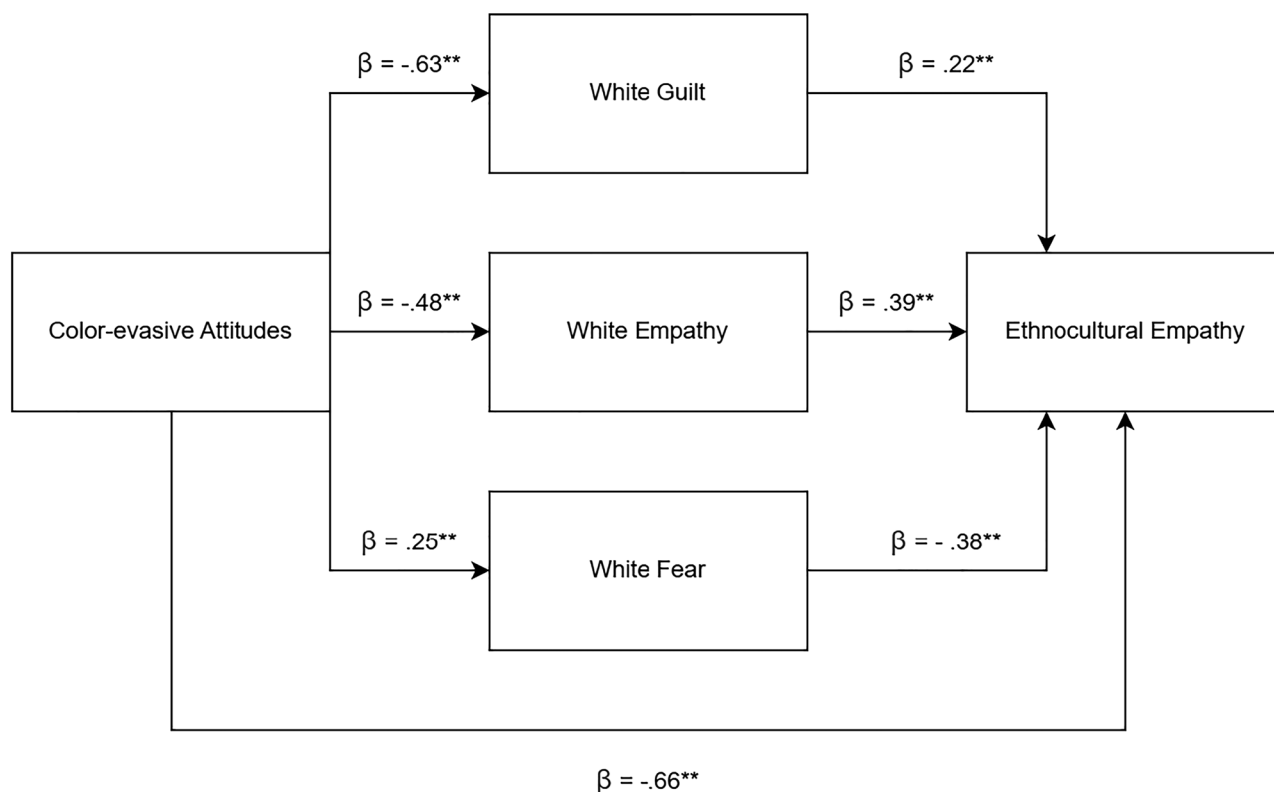
FIGURE 2 | Exploratory direct and indirect effects of color-evasion scores on ethnocultural empathy. The model represents the exploratory associations between color-evasive racial attitudes on each of the mediators (white empathy, guilt, and fear) and the dependent variable (ethnocultural empathy). $**p < 0.001$.

Since a significant number of participants did not complete the task as intended, we re-ran our hypothesized model. Rather than using only the assigned condition (experimental vs. neutral) as the independent variable, we also included whether participants adhered to the "common humanity" prompt. This adjustment resulted in a condition variable with three levels (adhered to prompt, did not adhere to prompt, neutral condition) instead of the original two (experimental vs. control). However, once again, we did not find any significant direct effects of condition on ethnocultural empathy, $F (2, 290) = 0.77$, $p = 0.46$. We also found no indirect effects of condition on ethnocultural empathy through White fear ($\beta = 0.06$, $z = 1.31$, $p = 0.19$), White guilt ($\beta = 0.008$, $z = 1.65$, $p = 0.09$), or White empathy ($\beta = 0.04$, $z = 0.81$, $p = 0.41$). Although the data suggests that including task adherence improves the overall model fit, we lack sufficient power to determine whether adding this adherence condition significantly impacts the results.

4 | Discussion

The current study aimed to explore the effectiveness of a video intervention in reducing color-evasive racial attitudes and a self-compassion writing intervention that aimed at increasing ethnocultural empathy in White, Dutch participants. This was done by presenting participants assigned to the experimental group with a self-compassion writing exercise while others completed a control writing exercise. Next, all participants watched a video in which racialized individuals in the Netherlands

presented counter-narratives about their experiences of racism. Their scores on color-evasive attitudes were measured before and after the video intervention to check if the intervention successfully reduced color-evasive racial attitudes per our hypothesis. We also tested whether the self-compassion writing intervention increased ethnocultural empathy as hypothesized. We also examined if the self-compassion writing intervention indirectly increases ethnocultural empathy by reducing White fear and increasing White guilt and empathy.

Our findings indicated that a video of racialized individuals talking about their experiences of racism in the Netherlands decreases color-evasive attitudes in participants. The effectiveness of the video intervention, where racialized individuals in the Netherlands share counter-narratives, aligns with our hypothesis and previous research on the impact of both video interventions and counter-narratives (Blaisdell et al. 2022; Case & Rios 2012; Milner and Howard 2013; Soble et al. 2011).

However, contrary to expectations, our manipulation check indicated that the self-compassion writing exercise was unsuccessful, as there was no difference in state self-compassion scores between the experimental and control conditions. Subsequently, the current study did not find any direct or indirect effects of control versus experimental writing conditions on ethnocultural empathy or any of the mediators, namely, White empathy, White guilt, and White fear. However, each of the mediators had a significant effect on ethnocultural empathy in the hypothesized direction. That is, higher White empathy and guilt positively

predicted ethnocultural empathy scores while White fear negatively predicted the same.

The role of White emotions in increasing ethnocultural empathy was further supported by our exploratory analysis, which indicated that reduced color-evasive attitudes were associated with a significant increase in White guilt and empathy, and a decrease in White fear which was in turn associated with higher ethnocultural empathy. This aligns with previous research showing that high levels of White guilt and empathy lead to greater racial awareness and cultural sensitivity while White fear negatively predicts these outcomes (Black 2018; Galgay 2018; Spanierman et al. 2006). Our work suggests that White guilt can be a useful emotion, as it is associated with higher ethnocultural empathy among White individuals. In this context, our goal is not to reduce or assuage White guilt but rather to highlight its potential role in fostering anti-racist attitudes and behaviors.

Based on these findings and the results from our manipulation check, it is clear that the writing exercise did not successfully induce state self-compassion in our participants. This likely explains why we did not observe any significant effects of the writing condition on ethnocultural empathy or White guilt, fear, and empathy.

To investigate further, we conducted an exploratory content analysis of the writing responses in the experimental condition to assess adherence to the "common humanity" self-compassion prompt. We found that a significant number of participants ($n = 41$) did not follow the instructions as intended. Reanalyzing the hypothesized models with task adherence factored in, we still observed no significant improvements in ethnocultural empathy scores, likely due to insufficient power. However, in line with a study by Dreisoerner et al. (2020), we found that participants struggled to express common humanity through a self-compassion writing task and instead elaborated more on their problems. Future studies should control for participants' initial perspective-taking abilities, which may explain why some individuals struggled to see themselves as part of a social group or to generalize from this group to others. Additionally, we suggest that the writing prompts be tested in a pilot study before employing them in experiments.

Fratteroli's (2006) meta-analysis on the psychological and health benefits of disclosing personal thoughts and feelings found that expressive writing interventions are more effective when sessions last at least 15 min and consist of at least three sessions. Therefore, another likely reason for our writing intervention's ineffectiveness in inducing self-compassion could be that we only conducted one writing session lasting 5–7 min due to time and feasibility constraints. This aligns with research by McConnell (2015), which reported that verbal instructions to induce self-compassion did not enhance participants' anti-racist engagement. In that study, self-compassion was also not reliably induced, which the author attributed to the session's short length. Therefore, future research on the effects of state self-compassion on anti-racist outcomes should consider the length and frequency of self-compassion sessions.

In summary, though we found evidence supporting hypothesis 1, indicating that the video intervention effectively reduced color-evasive racial attitudes, we did not find significant results for hypotheses 2 and 3. We attribute this to the ineffectiveness of the writing intervention in inducing self-compassion. Our exploratory analysis revealed that participants struggled to view themselves as members of a marginalized social group, focusing instead on their challenges. This may have hindered their ability to relate their experiences to those of other marginalized groups, thereby preventing them from connecting with the "common humanity" aspect of self-compassion. As a result, they did not experience ethnocultural empathy toward racialized individuals.

Overall, these findings suggest that video interventions featuring racialized individuals presenting counter-narratives may be an effective tool for reducing color-evasive racial attitudes and could also be linked to enhanced ethnocultural empathy, as indicated by our exploratory analysis. Additionally, video interventions offer flexibility and can be easily implemented in online settings. Conversely, self-compassion writing interventions require careful consideration, detailed instructions with illustrative examples, and preliminary testing to ensure successful application. Such interventions may also benefit from multiple writing sessions to allow individuals to develop abilities like perspective-taking and reflective writing that would enable them to experience state self-compassion, making them less suitable as one-time interventions.

4.1 | Limitations and Future Directions

The current study had some limitations that we elaborate on in this section. Firstly, our study had a high attrition rate. Though 457 participants completed the pre-test, only 350 completed the main study, resulting in a final sample size that was lower than anticipated based on the a priori power analysis. A sensitivity power analysis indicated that our sample size was adequate to detect only a large to medium effect size, even though we had initially expected to detect a small effect size. Among the 109 participants who did not complete the main experiment, more than 59 started but did not finish. One possible explanation for this could be that the online context was not conducive to the study materials, as some content may have been emotionally distressing to participants, and the writing tasks required considerable concentration.

Another limitation of our study was that it was conducted in English, which may not have been the preferred language for our Dutch participants. Research by Marian and Kaushanskaya (2008) suggests that emotional expression in writing interventions is stronger when conducted in one's preferred language. However, our writing intervention was in English because the scales used to measure key constructs were unavailable in Dutch.

In addition, our video intervention that featured Black individuals in the Netherlands sharing their experiences of racism was also only available in English. The limited selection of available videos for the intervention further restricted our ability to include a comparison video, which could have helped identify the specific aspects of the intervention that contributed to the decline in color-evasive attitudes among participants. We attribute this gap—both in the availability of suitable intervention videos and the development of appropriate measurement scales—to the

ongoing debate over terminology related to racialization in the Netherlands.

Kanobana (2021) highlights how the Dutch word *ras* (race) carries eugenic and Holocaust-related connotations. Instead, racialized individuals are often referred to as *anderstaligen* (other-lingual), that is, those whose mother tongue is not Dutch, or *allochthones* (outsiders/migrants). These labels are also applied to racialized individuals whose families have lived in the Netherlands for three or more generations and thus fail to capture their experiences. As a result, translating the scales and interventions into Dutch is particularly challenging, as finding appropriate terminology that accurately reflects racialization remains complex. Since our study specifically focused on racism, we conducted it in English to prevent conflation of racial attitudes with attitudes toward migration. Even though 87.6% of the Dutch population speaks English as their second language or their mother tongue, we acknowledge that only including individuals fluent in English creates a self-selection bias which may relate to individuals' socioeconomic background (EF English Proficiency Index 2024; Gerhards 2014).

Thus, future research could focus on conducting qualitative research with a grounded theory approach to develop appropriate terminology that can aid the development and/or translation of scales and interventions targeting racial attitudes in the Netherlands.

Lastly, since our study supported previous findings that highlight the significant role of White emotions—such as guilt, empathy, and fear—in shaping anti-racist interventions, future studies should examine other emotional regulation strategies that could help White individuals navigate the emotional challenges that arise when developing anti-racist attitudes. Moreover, our research focused solely on ethnocultural empathy and color-evasive racial attitudes as outcome variables. Expanding the scope to include investigations into racial allyship in the Dutch context would be valuable.

4.2 | Strengths and Implications

Notwithstanding the limitations, our study offers several theoretical and practical contributions. Racial attitudes among White individuals in the Netherlands remain understudied within the quantitative social psychological literature. As explained before, this gap is partly due to the contested nature of the term "race" in Dutch language and culture, where it is often conflated with concepts such as migration background and cultural identity. Moreover, existing research on racism in the Netherlands has predominantly employed qualitative methods to explore the experiences of racialized individuals (De Genova 2017; Esajas 2014; Essed and Trienekens 2008; Rose 2020). This study addresses these limitations by making two key contributions. First, it centers on the racial attitudes and emotional responses of White individuals. Second, it expands the body of quantitative literature on race specifically within the Dutch context, without conflating it with related constructs such as migration background. Lastly, as previously mentioned, it addresses the gap in the literature on counter-narratives by moving beyond using counter-narratives as a research outcome and looking at its effects on creating anti-racist attitudes and behaviors by reducing color-evasive attitudes in White participants.

This study also contributes to the literature on the role of White emotions in fostering ethnocultural empathy, being among the first to test this in a Dutch sample. Furthermore, the findings regarding the impact of video interventions that emphasize counter-narratives and the role of White emotions in developing ethnocultural empathy can inform anti-racist education and pedagogy, areas that are currently underrepresented in DEI initiatives in the Netherlands. For example, we use these insights to create a White Privilege and Allyship workshop for Dutch universities. Drawing from our findings, we developed a new video intervention featuring racialized students sharing their experiences at university. The workshop also aims to help White participants recognize and process the emotions that arise during anti-racist work through emotional regulation exercises. This is further elaborated in the next section.

4.3 | Plans for Future Work in the CTS Framework

Building on our findings about counter-narratives and affective outcomes in anti-racist work, we are designing and testing a White privilege awareness and allyship workshop to be implemented at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Through this, we aim to move our research to address the T2 stage of the CTS framework as we not only convey our findings to stakeholders in the educational realm but also test its effectiveness in field settings. The overview of the workshop contents can be found in the Supporting Information. The workshop curriculum also aims to overcome the limitations we observed in our study, that is, high attrition during the main experiment. Our workshop will be conducted in person, in group settings, and facilitated by qualified facilitators. This approach aims to mitigate emotional distress and mental discomfort, which is a plausible reason for the high attrition observed in the online experiment.

The workshops will incorporate emotional regulation techniques and foster interpersonal dynamics and engagement, providing participants with a supportive environment to navigate potential distress more comfortably. Moreover, one potential reason for the self-compassion intervention's lack of effectiveness was the limited time available for reflection and writing. To address this, our workshop sessions will be extended to 3–4 h, providing participants with sufficient time for deeper, more meaningful reflection, which can facilitate a greater experience of self-compassion.

We will assess the effectiveness of our workshop using a series of tests to measure participants' levels of color-evasive attitudes, ethnocultural empathy, interpersonal allyship, and intergroup anxiety before and after the workshop. Additionally, we will conduct a qualitative analysis of their responses at various stages of the workshop. These results will help us refine our workshop components and propose them to more universities in the Netherlands.

We aim to use our workshop spaces to delve deeper into discussions and perspectives surrounding race in White circles, which are often overlooked. These perspectives can help us

better understand and address challenges related to racial justice, guiding future work in similar contexts, and making it an iterative process. At the same time, more qualitative and quantitative research is needed in various local contexts to generalize our findings. Ultimately, we aim to progress to the T3 stage, where our evidence-based workshop modules will be more broadly implemented, addressing the concerns universities face when introducing conversations about race. Furthermore, observing favorable outcomes in our participants can help us leverage our research to incorporate the workshops into structured curricula offered by Diversity Offices, and Teaching and Learning Centers at Dutch universities. This would involve collaborating with educators, diversity officers, and student unions at various universities. This will advance us to the T4 stage, achieving sustainable impact and improving outcomes for racialized university students across the Netherlands.

4.4 | Policy Implications of the Current Research

We encourage diversity offices at Dutch universities and workplaces to leverage our research findings by implementing more proactive measures aimed at raising awareness about racial privilege in both academic and professional environments. To foster a safer and more welcoming atmosphere for racialized students, promoting awareness and allyship among White students, staff, and educators is of utmost importance. Our study demonstrated that challenging color-evasive beliefs through a video intervention, where racialized individuals share their experiences with racism in the Netherlands, can reduce color-evasive attitudes. Furthermore, our research highlights the importance of addressing emotions such as guilt, fear, and empathy when developing racial justice interventions. For these efforts to be effective, facilitators must be experienced and equipped with emotional regulation techniques.

4.5 | Reflection on Conducting Racial Justice Intervention Research

Racial justice interventions require context sensitivity because racial landscapes and dynamics vary widely across different regions. Conducting research in this field necessitates a nuanced understanding of these differences while building on the work of global scholars. A bottom-up approach is particularly beneficial, utilizing multidisciplinary insights from local researchers and starting from the T1 stage of the CTS. Progressing to the T2–T3 stages involves strategic collaboration and contributions from both academic and non-academic actors.

Initially, our research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing DEI initiatives in addressing anti-racist outcomes among White individuals. However, upon examining the DEI curricula at various Dutch universities, we discovered that racism is not acknowledged in these spaces. Conversations with DEI practitioners revealed that the reluctance to address racism often stems from the general reluctance amongst the Dutch public to acknowledge their colonial past and its lasting effects, in addition to the association of the term "race" with the Holocaust. The Dutch bureaucracy supported the Nazi agenda of systematically persecuting the Jewish community across the country, justified through pseudo-scientific racist ideologies. This produced an ongoing reluctance to even employ the term "race" as it bears associations with the Holocaust which triggers defensive and fearful responses (Siebers 2016).

However, in our conversations with Dutch and international racialized students, it became apparent that the lack of conversations surrounding race invisibilized their struggles and their daily experiences of racism. Additionally, focusing solely on ethnicity ignores the experiences of racialized students without migration backgrounds who identify as Dutch but face discrimination for not fitting the stereotypical White, blonde, blue-eyed Dutch appearance. This realization led us to develop interventions where we consciously employ the term "race" while being cognizant of its triggering associations. Given these associations, we attempted to manage the emotional responses that could be triggered within the experimental design through the self-compassion exercise. Additionally, we provided a list of mental health resources and materials to help them understand the origins of their responses to learning about racism and how to manage them during the debriefing. Thus, being in conversation with DEI practitioners, other researchers and racialized students allowed us to consider several perspectives while designing a study on addressing color-evasive attitudes in a context where conversations surrounding race are considered taboo.

Scholars have also pointed out that colonial migrants and the influx of migrants post-World War II to fill the gaps in the labor markets led to the intertwining of racialization and migration issues (Tazzioli 2021). Thus, in the Netherlands, and Europe more generally, race is a dynamic construction that not only leads to racialization of individuals based on skin color but also religion, culture, ethnicity, and accent amongst other things (Anjorin et al. 2023; Ball et al. 2022; Weiner 2015). This also makes drawing clear boundaries between individuals being categorized as "White" versus "racialized" increasingly difficult, further obscuring the effects of racism in Dutch society. This is why while recruiting participants, we asked individuals to self-identify their race to not impose any strict racial categorizations.

As we transition from the T1 to T2 stage of the CTS, we maintain regular dialogue with DEI practitioners to effectively apply our findings and prepare for any unproductive responses in our workshops. Paying attention to context is crucial when devising racial justice interventions, especially in environments where race is an unaddressed issue. Engaging with DEI practitioners on the ground is essential for developing and implementing effective interventions.

5 | Conclusion

Research on racism validates the theoretical and practical importance of looking at the effects and outcomes of racism in the Netherlands. It also underscores that though conversations around race remain complex due to contested terminologies, the effects of racialization need due consideration. The erasure of the struggles of racialized individuals that are examined in this research can be reduced by developing and employing

interventions that actively focus on addressing Whiteness and the various emotional and cognitive responses that come with it. That being said, we want to emphasize that the aim of this research was not to re-center whiteness or to assuage negative racial emotions of White individuals, but rather, to highlight their role in the development of racist and anti-racist attitudes. The current study highlights the importance of addressing White attitudes and emotions in producing anti-racist outcomes in a country that adopts a color-evasive approach toward racism. Making people aware of their Whiteness can counter the prevalent invisibility that is afforded to racial injustices.

Ethics Statement

This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the VU Amsterdam (file no. VCWE-2023-183R1). All participants provided informed consent.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The study's hypotheses, methods, and analysis plan were pre-registered and are available on AsPredicted (https://aspredicted.org/W27_J22). The materials, data, and code used for the analyses reported in the manuscript are also publicly available on the OSF (https://osf.io/jh7fz/?view_only=e2042d06c2c240669d966d3df69c7af4)

Endnotes

[1] The term color-evasion has also been conceptualized by Neville et al. (2013) as one of the two domains of colorblind racial ideology constituting color-evasion and power-evasion. However, in our study we refer to the term color-evasion as a more expansive construct that involves an intentional denial of racial inequalities rather than a passive reluctance as suggested by the term 'colorblindness' (see Annamma et al. 2016).

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section.

Supplementary Materials: **1.** Workshop Overview **2.** Measures Employed **3.** Informed Consent **4.** Debriefing **5.** Demographic Questionnaire **6.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Appendix

Writing Interventions

In the next three questions, you will be requested to complete a brief writing exercise. Please take your time to reflect and respond to each question in at least 3–4 lines.

Self-Compassion Intervention

Consider the identity wheel given below and pick a social identity that you believe disadvantages you or negatively affects you in your everyday life. This could include how you think that particular identity influences how people perceive you, how it affects your interactions with other people (family, close friends, or colleagues), how it affects you in terms of your study/work performance, employment, hobbies or how you perceive yourself and your self-worth, and so forth. Please note that these negative effects could range from minor every day or occasional inconveniences to larger problems that restrict you from resources, opportunities, or experiences.
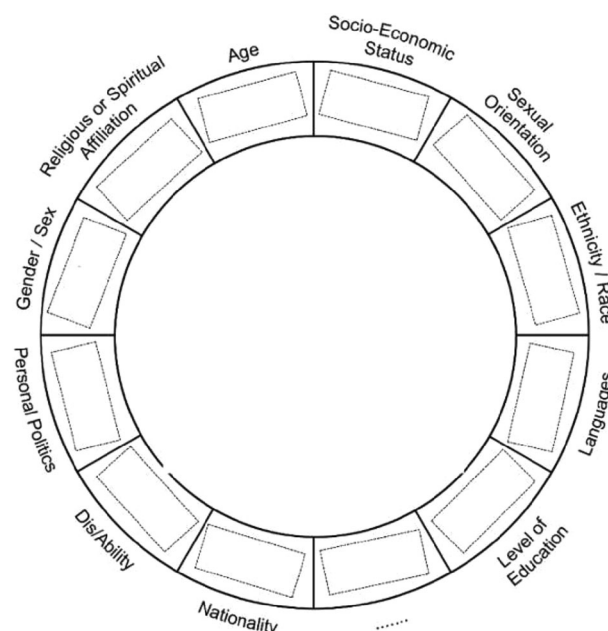
Now keeping that identity in mind, answer the following prompts. Keep in mind that these answers will be confidential and that there are no correct or incorrect responses to the same:

1. Recall a specific instance where you were made aware of this identity and its negative impact on you. Write about this instance, in a balanced and accepting way, without any negative self-judgments.

2. Reflect and write about ways in which you feel people in your position or similar positions might also struggle with the same issues or might have been in similar instances.

3. What do you think a kind, empathetic person who understands your struggle would say to you about this to soothe and comfort you?

Neutral Writing Intervention

1. Please describe how you spent your time today. You can add any details you feel comfortable sharing like what you did, how you felt, who you spent it with, and so forth.

2. We would like to know how your day was yesterday. Once again, feel free to share any details you are comfortable sharing in terms of your activities, mood, any events you experienced, and so forth.

3. Lastly, what are your plans for tomorrow or the next few days? You can mention any chores or work you will be doing, any upcoming events, or things you are looking forward to and so forth.