



Racial/ethnic socialization for White youth: What we know and future directions[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and talking about race and ethnicity with children and adults is especially important in racially diverse societies. This process has been coined racial/ethnic socialization (RES). Despite the importance of RES, we still know very little about how this process unfolds in the lives of White youth. Thus, from a social, cognitive, and developmental perspective, the authors summarize findings from empirical research and theory on RES for White youth across stages of development—early childhood through young adulthood. Since RES is linked with cross-group attitudes (e.g., less bias, prejudice, stereotyping) and behaviors (e.g., inclusion), we highlight future directions for research and discuss applications for existing findings for an increasingly diverse society.

“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

Maya Angelou.

Teaching and learning about race and ethnicity is an important social, cognitive, and developmental experience for people living in racially diverse societies (Spencer, 2006). In the United States, this practice commonly known as racial/ethnic socialization (RES), has a longstanding history that initially developed from needing to understand how families of color (e.g., Asian American, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American) maintain cultural heritage and prepare their children to function safely and effectively in mainstream (White American) society (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012). However, in comparison to people of color, White people typically do not have to navigate racial issues from the same position of how to function in mainstream society.

We posit that investigations of RES have missed an important opportunity to empirically assess when and how RES promotes social inclusion among White youth. According to the American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity (2012), “Implicit bias is highly resistant to change and a preventive approach (early socialization and learning) is more effective than a remedial one (unlearning deeply ingrained prejudice)

in combating prejudice and discrimination” (p. 63). Thus, in this review paper, we outline findings from prior research on RES for White youth across stages of development (early childhood through young adulthood) and in influential social contexts, such as the family and school. We utilize a social-cognitive developmental perspective to discuss the social exposure and interactions that children have and the thought processes or inductive reasoning that occurs across stages of development, which also shape attitudes and behaviors. We start by describing the present social context and define RES. We then explore existing RES research across key periods of development, and conclude with discussing needed directions for future research.

Demographic changes and the changing social context

Although, historically, attending college or entering the work force may be the first place that many individuals encounter racially diverse others (e.g., Frankenberg & Lee, 2002; Gaither & Sommers, 2013; Mouw & Entwisle, 2006; Richeson & Shelton, 2007), population projections predict notable demographic changes within the United States across the next 50 years. Currently, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, and mixed-race populations represent the fastest growing racial/ethnic subgroups (Census, 2011), resulting in more non-White births than White births for the first time in U.S. history. Additionally, enrollment of students of color and students who identify with two or more races within the U.S.

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K-12 education system is projected to increase substantially (Hussar & Bailey, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Likewise, increased globalization and access to technology has also created more opportunities for virtual contact and learning about diverse groups around the world (Jensen, 2003; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011).

These social transitions will likely impact how White individuals discuss racial/ethnic issues and situate themselves in various social settings (e.g., school and work). For instance, in the current political climate, researchers have observed that some Whites who think about becoming a numerical minority feel angrier toward people of color, exhibit increased racial biases, and demonstrate more sympathy for their White ingroup (e.g., Craig & Richeson, 2014). The events that transpired (and are ongoing) in Charlottesville, Virginia were one indication of this phenomenon. Marchers from White supremacist groups chanted statements such as “Whose streets? Our Streets!” and “White lives matter! You will not replace us!” in addition to other denigrating racial epithets (Posner, 2017). Moreover, discussions surrounding Black Lives Matter, White identity politics, and increased political tensions permeate society (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Sawyer & Gampa, 2018). For example, college campuses are now home for approximately 78% of advertising by White nationalist groups, and there has been a surge in hate crimes toward individuals from underrepresented racial/ethnic and sexual minority groups (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Such incidences have sparked needed discussion regarding how we should and should not be talking about race in the context of changing demographics.

Fortunately, efforts to teach White children about race, racism and racial bias in formal learning environments are not new. They have existed since Jane Elliot's eye color experiments in the 1960's and have persisted through present day (e.g., Banks, 2015; Battiste, 2016; Bigler & Wright, 2014). However, additional pathways leading toward views of inclusion rather than exclusion need to be specifically identified. We assert that positive forms of RES focusing on social inclusion and authentically valuing diversity are one approach that can stimulate more balanced discussions about the changes our society is currently facing while also promoting perspectives of inclusion.

Racial/ethnic socialization

We consider socialization a social, cognitive, and developmental process through which individuals transmit, negotiate, and acquire beliefs, values, social norms, and behaviors to engage appropriately with society (Rogoff, 2003). Essentially, we socialize people to become competent, engaged, and productive citizens (Smith, 1968); but people also choose to accept or behave in line with broader social norms and values. In addition, we view socialization as a constructive process that occurs between what the social environment provides and how individuals interpret the information (Leont'ev, 1981; Roth & Lee, 2007).

Socialization regarding race and ethnicity is especially important and inevitable in racially diverse societies (Lewis, 2003; Quintana, 1998; Spencer, 2006), as people make meaning of their encounters with members of other racial and ethnic groups. In line with these definitions of socialization, we conceptualize racial and ethnic socialization as a dynamic and multifaceted social, cognitive, and developmental process through which ideas, beliefs, values, social norms, and behaviors regarding race and ethnicity are transmitted, interpreted, negotiated, and adopted. Because individual's understanding of race and ethnicity may be indistinguishable and interrelated (or inseparable; e.g., Schwartz et al., 2014), researchers have now coined the compounded term racial/ethnic socialization (RES) to capture the complex process through which messages about race and ethnicity as interrelated concepts are transmitted, received and interpreted (Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Much of what we currently know about RES stems from the family literature involving U.S. populations and has focused on the critically important protective and promotional value it serves for groups that

have been historically marginalized, including Asian American, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native Americans (e.g., Neblett et al., 2012). From this extensive body of literature, we know that RES in the family context involves variations in process and content (Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Neblett et al., 2012). The process might include parent's direct/explicit (e.g., conversations with children) and indirect/implicit (e.g., displaying of cultural artifacts, parent's social network) practices through which ideas about race and ethnicity are communicated. Similarly, Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, and Bámaca-Gómez (2004) also assessed RES as direct/overt (talking and teaching about heritage) and indirect/covert (displaying cultural artifacts in the home, diversity of parent's friends and social network) activities designed to teach youth about cultural heritage and facilitate ethnic/racial pride. The content of messages might focus on cultural socialization (e.g., messages to promote values, traditions, heritage, and history of one's cultural origin), preparation for bias (e.g., strategies for encountering prejudice and discrimination), egalitarianism (e.g., all people are equal), mainstream socialization (e.g., strategies to succeed in mainstream American or the dominant culture), and less frequently, promotion of mistrust (e.g., avoid contact with other groups), as means of communicating knowledge about racial or ethnic issues (Hughes et al., 2006, 2008; Lesane-Brown, 2006).

To date, the majority of the field conceptualizes RES based on findings involving the family context. Others suggest that parent's socialization is perhaps only one avenue through which children learn about race since peer influence and broader social contexts (e.g., media and cultural values) also play a role in shaping children's racial attitudes (Harris, 1995b; Quintana, 1998; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Therefore, we adopt a broader conceptualization of RES. We consider practices and experiences involving race and ethnicity that occur in other proximal social contexts, such as schools and communities (e.g., Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Lewis, 2004; Loyd & Williams, 2017), and those more distal to the individual, such as cultural values and expectations communicated through the media and society, to be sources of RES. Moreover, RES also includes messages about racial inequities and racial privilege (e.g., Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Therefore, we review past work that reflects both definitions in this article.

Notably, much of prior RES literature assumed a color-conscious perspective, rather than a colorblind one. Limited evidence indicates that colorblind ideology and approaches (e.g., color-mute, denial and avoidance) are associated with the presence of racial bias and likely do not promote socially inclusive views (Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013). Other research suggests that colorblind perspectives may be closely aligned with egalitarian values (Hughes et al., 2006; Priest et al., 2014). We believe that colorblind socialization could be viewed as either an active (direct) or passive (indirect) practice since some parents may intentionally avoid talking about race (or correct/shame the child for noticing differences), while other parents may simply not notice it (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). However, without additional empirical evidence, we cannot make any specific claims about whether colorblind socialization is an indirect or direct practice, merely the lack of RES, whether it is a product stemming from other societal beliefs (e.g., egalitarianism), or a combination of these unknowns.

Racial/ethnic socialization for Whites

Given the historical status of Whites, we argue that RES is qualitatively different for White youth and families. This potential group difference exists because Whiteness has been viewed as the cultural norm for much of U.S. history (Bonilla-Silva, 2012; Harris, 1995a). Researchers documented the process through which European immigrants became a seemingly homogenous racial group in the United States (e.g., Alba, 1990; Waters, 1990). The first census recorded in U.S. history in 1790 called for an account of free White males (separated by age), free

Leaflet in 1790. of 1st Census
1790.
at p. 51 (Kentucky)

Names of the Counties and Towns within the district aforesaid.

	Free white males of 16 years and upwards, including heads of families.	Free white males under 16 years.	Free white females, including heads of families.	All other free persons.	Slaves.	Total.
Fayette County	3241	3878	6738	30	3689	17576
Nelson	2456	2746	4644	34	1219	11099
Woodford	1767	1929	3267	27	2220	9210
Bourbon	1645	2035	3249		908	7837
Mercer	1411	1515	2691	7	1317	6941
Lincoln	1375	1441	2630	8	1094	6548
Jefferson	1008	997	1680	4	876	4565
Madison	1231	1421	2383		737	5772
Mason	431	676	952		208	2267
Lexington, in Fayette County	276	203	290	2	63	834
Washington, in Mason County	163	95	183		21	462
Beards Town, in Nelson County	52	49	85	1	29	216
Louisville, in Jefferson County	49	44	79	1	27	200
Danville, in Mercer County	49	28	51		22	150
<i>The whole amount,</i>	15154	17057	28922	114	12430	73677

SAMUEL M'DOWELL, Jun.
Marshal for the Kentucky District.

Fig. 1. Leaflet from the 1790 Kentucky Census. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Printed Ephemera Collection. Digital Id: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.02100100>.

White females, other free persons, and slaves (see Fig. 1). Although later iterations of the census (e.g., 1930) inquired about characteristics often attributed to ethnicity (e.g., country of origin and native language), each census solicited information about color (as it was termed in earlier censuses, i.e., White, Black) or race.

Subsequently, laws were written to protect the social position of those who held political and economic power (historically, White individuals). For example, laws around enslavement in the American colonies dictated the difference between indentured servitude generally afforded to European immigrants (a labor system where an individual would pay for their freedom through a specified amount of work) and slavery for people of African descent (a system through which individuals were bought and sold and they could never purchase their freedom). Relatedly, the rule of hypodescent (one-drop rule) further defined Whiteness to officially only grant access to privileged opportunities to individuals who were deemed fully White (e.g., property ownership, housing choices, voting rights, employment; Harris, 1995a, 1995b). Furthermore, Jim Crow segregation laws specifically divided public spaces by racial categories (Gotanda, 1995). In most cases, these policies and practices were designed to protect the political and

economic interests and privileges of White individuals (James, 2014). As a result, White as a racial group has represented the dominant mainstream culture in the United States (Aboud, 1988; Blumer, 1958; Spencer, 2006).

Yet, there is, in fact, no scientific evidence supporting racial distinctions as it relates to general racial group differences (Mahiri, 2017). Rather, race and ethnicity are both social and sociopolitical constructs used to describe individuals and groups of people who share commonality around physical appearance, historical treatment, heritage, beliefs, and traditions (Omi & Winant, 1994). However, as a society, the U.S. has created and accepted what it means to be a member of specific racial and ethnic groups and those notions have real-world consequences for people's lives.

Consequently, McIntosh (1997) described social factors that point to the notion of racial privilege for White individuals that accompanies dominant group status, including seeing your group widely represented in laws, media, and educational materials. Researchers have found that White individuals are less likely to think of themselves in terms of race (e.g., Hamm, 2001; Herman, 2004; Jackson & Heckman, 2002; Lewis, 2004), often view themselves as the "norm" to which all other groups

Table 1
Selected empirical studies involving direct and indirect forms of racial/ethnic socialization for White youth organized by developmental stage.

Developmental stage	Type of socialization	Context	Data source	Author(s)
Early childhood	Direct: frequency of conversations with the child about the child's race or ethnicity	Family	Parent report	Brown et al., 2007
Early childhood	Indirect: implicit and explicit parental racial attitudes	Family	Parent report	Castelli, Zogmaister and Tomelleri (2009)
Early childhood	Direct: educational curricula (learning about social exclusion, increase willingness to be inclusive)	School	Teacher & child report	Connolly and Hosken (2006)
Early childhood	Indirect: parental racial attitudes; racial diversity in child's social environment	Family	Parent report and observation	Katz (2002) (unpublished)
Early childhood	Direct: frequency of conversations with the child about race	Family	Parent report	Kofkin, Katz and Downey (1995)
Early childhood	Direct: frequency of conversations with the child about the child's race or ethnicity	Family	Parent report	Lesane-Brown et al. (2010)
Early childhood	Direct: frequency of conversations with the child about race (colorblind approaches)	Family	Parent report and observation	Pahlke et al. (2012)
Early childhood	Indirect: child's actual and perceived parental racial attitudes; parent's actual and perceived child racial attitudes	Family	Parent report	Vittrup (2018)
Early childhood	Direct: frequency and content of conversations with the child about race, and explanations about RES messages (or lack thereof)	Family	Parent report	Hughes et al. (2007)
Middle childhood	Direct: educational curricula (learning about racism)	School	Child report	Hunter et al. (2012)
Middle childhood	Direct: frequency and content of conversations with the child about race/ethnicity	Family	Parent report	Katz (1973)
Middle childhood	Direct: bias reduction intervention	Laboratory	Child report	Tyler et al. (2008)
Middle childhood	Direct: frequency and content of conversations about the child about culture	Family	Parent report	Hamm (2001)
Middle childhood to adolescence	Direct: frequency of conversations with the child or adolescent about race/ethnicity and content of messages	Family	Parent report	Edmonds and Killen (2009)
Adolescence	Indirect: choosing a diverse school for cross-group contact	Family and School	Parent and adolescent report	Hagerman (2014)
Adolescence	Direct: statements about cross-race friends and interracial dating	Family	Parent and adolescent report; observation	Hughes et al. (2009)
Adolescence	Indirect: child's perceptions of parental racial attitudes and actual parental racial attitudes; frequency of cross-race contact (school, neighborhood, outside of school)	Family	Adolescent report	Mounts et al. (2013)
Adolescence	Direct: frequency of conversations with the adolescent and content of messages about race/ethnicity	Family	Parent and adolescent report	Rivas-Drake et al. (2009)
Adolescence	Direct: frequency of conversations with the adolescent about culture and preparation for experiencing bias	Family	Adolescent report	Case (2012)
Adolescence	Indirect: frequency and content of RES messages, parental racial attitudes and goals regarding cross-ethnic friendships	Family	Parent and adolescent report	Devine et al. (2012)
Adolescence	Direct: frequency of conversations with the adolescent about culture and preparation for experiencing bias	Family	Adolescent report	Juang and Syed (2010)
Young adulthood	Direct: participation in an anti-racist reading and discussion group	School	Young adult report; observation	Lawrence (1997, 1998)
Young adulthood	Direct: bias-habit reduction intervention	Laboratory	Young adult report	Tatum (1994)
Young adulthood	Direct: frequency of family conversations about culture	Family	Young adult report	
Young adulthood	Direct: multicultural curricula, discussions about privilege and social injustice	School	Young adult report	
Young adulthood	Direct: educational curricula (learning about racism)	School	Young adult report	

should be compared (Perry, 2001), and tend to place less importance on race compared to individuals from other racial groups (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Todd, Spanierman, & Poteat, 2011). This perspective also appears to be reinforced early in White children's development with parents of young children often exhibiting colorblind approaches when discussing race (e.g., avoiding the topic or denying the existence of racial inequities; e.g., Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Pahlke et al., 2012).

Comparative studies show that RES occurs less frequently in White families compared to families of color (e.g., Brown, Tanner-Smith, Lesane-Brown, & Ezell, 2007; Hughes et al., 2006; Juang & Syed, 2010; Lesane-Brown, Brown, Tanner-Smith, & Bruce, 2010; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009; Tyler et al., 2008); however, within group studies demonstrate more nuanced findings when it does occur for White youth. In the following sections, we review existing RES findings regarding White youth in critical developmental stages – early childhood through young adulthood. Selected empirical studies are presented in Table 1.

Early childhood (ages 3 to 8)

Family and the media typically represent the first places people learn about race and ethnicity (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Thus, parents represent one prominent source of information through which children learn about race and ethnicity in early childhood (Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, & Lohrfink, 2006). Unfortunately, studies involving young children find that many White parents do not view race as an important topic to discuss with their child (Katz, 2003). A nationally representative study of kindergarten-aged youth found that 60% of White parents reported never talking with their child about race and ethnicity (Lesane-Brown, Spatzier, & Tobin, 2010). Similarly, Vittrup (2018) found that nearly 70% of White mothers reported using a colorblind approach to RES (e.g., race is not important, everyone is the same, the child does not see race), despite acknowledging that discussions about race are important to reduce racial discrimination and bias. Pahlke et al. (2012) reported that nearly all White mothers of preschool-aged youth in their study applied colorblind approaches to race (e.g., avoiding prompted opportunities to discuss race or changing the subject), and that children of mothers who engaged in colorblind socialization were more likely to endorse positive attitudes about Whites and showed more bias toward African Americans. This finding was despite mothers' self-reported progressive attitudes (e.g., mothers reported aspiring to be personally non-biased). Explanations for not talking with young children about race is that some parents believe talking about race will simply make children more prejudiced or the child is too young (Vittrup, 2018). However, research actually suggests RES practices (teaching children about intergroup bias) can increase the detection of racial bias and reduce stereotyping (Bigler & Wright, 2014; Brown & Bigler, 2005; Johnson, Rush, & Feagin, 2000).

Research on young children's cognitive development shows that children are not simply passive recipients of social modeling. Children use broad categories as an inductive base when approaching novel situations in their world (Waxman, 2010). For example, young children actively use gender categories to define themselves and others even without explicit instruction from parents (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Studies show that children exhibit awareness of ethnic differences around ages 2–3 (Nesdale, 2013). Some children also show racial bias as early as age 4 (Bigler & Liben, 2007) by exhibiting preference for dominant groups (Dunham, Baron, & Banaji, 2008). However, work by Katz (1973); Katz and Zalk (1978) demonstrated that it is possible to modify young children's racial biases, at least in the short term, by helping them to differentiate other group faces. Recent research also suggests that young children around age 5 generally reject racial essentialist beliefs (e.g., race is distinct and biologically determined), and the variability observed in these beliefs may be based on exposure to diversity and the child's own social attitudes (Mandalaywala, Ranger-Murdock, Amodio, & Rhodes, 2018).

Literature on intergroup contact hypothesized that people would develop positive outgroup attitudes simply by interacting with other groups (Allport, 1954). Researchers hypothesized that if we teach children young enough, they would not develop racial bias (Aboud, 2013). Much of prior literature involving early childhood suggests that young children are making sense of their environment but parents are not discussing it. Thus, this lack of discussion and avoidance surrounding race for young White children needs to be addressed. By investigating the types of discussions White families do have in early childhood and reasons for not engaging in RES (e.g., beliefs that the child is too young or does not see race/ethnicity), researchers and educators could begin to pinpoint if there are specific ages or developmental contexts that may significantly influence how young children develop a sense of self and how their group fits in with other social groups around them. Moreover, although the importance of peer influence begins in early childhood and extends through other developmental stages (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011), discussed in later sections, no studies we reviewed examined peers as a source of RES in early childhood.

Middle childhood (ages 9 to 11)

In middle childhood, the family still plays an important role in a child's social environment. As well, the emergence of differentiated self-concepts and social comparisons is clearly prominent in middle childhood (Frey & Ruble, 1985; Harter, 1999), and potentially has implications for intergroup interactions across racial group lines (e.g., Asher & Allen, 1969). Unfortunately, similar to early childhood, Hunter, Friend, Williams-Wheeler, and Fletcher (2012) observed that most parents of elementary-aged White youth also expressed colorblind ideology by exhibiting reluctance to mention how racism, stereotypes, and prejudice might impact their children's lack of interracial friendships. Instead, they pointed to differences in social class and their children's interests to explain primarily same-race friendships. Hamm (2001) also found that White parents of elementary- (and high school) aged youth pointed to differences regarding social class between their own youth and African American youth as a barrier to positive cross-group interactions. Although parents valued cross-ethnic contact (they saw it as beneficial to their child), they still reported a perceived lack of cross-cultural understanding, and that their own social circles were not diverse. As one parent stated, "We've never had a regular set of Black friends, individual, couple, whatever, who show up at our house" (p. 82). Rather, the parents in this study reported relying on the school context to teach their children about race and to provide opportunities for children to develop interracial friendships through potential intergroup contact at school.

Social interactions in schools also represent another resource through which children learn about race and ethnicity (Quintana, 1998). Specifically, relationships with peers and teachers within school settings continue to play a stronger and more prominent role in children's lives during middle childhood (Wang & Eccles, 2012; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Lewis (2001) stated, "Not only are many lessons learned and taught in the actual curriculum, but schools (and school personnel) also serve as a source of racial information, a location (and means) for interracial interaction, and/or a means of both affirmation of and challenge to previous racial attitudes and understanding" (p. 783). We find that research in school contexts highlights opportunities for some indirect (e.g., opportunities for diversity contact) and direct (e.g., curriculum and lessons) RES practices to occur for White youth in middle childhood.

For example, Hagerman (2014) found that some White parents choose to send their children to racially diverse schools, which we believe represents an indirect form of RES. In some cases, contact with diversity in school settings has been shown to positively influence student's abilities to appropriately navigate other racially diverse social environments (Hurtado, 2005; Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, & Gurin, 2003;

Pike & Kuh, 2006). For instance, some White children in ethnically diverse schools more readily chose hyphenated self-identification labels (i.e., Irish-American, Italian-White) than those in racially homogenous schools (Brown et al., 2010). These researchers also observed that the adoption of hyphenated ethnic labels were associated with positive intergroup attitudes. We hypothesize that this identification decision may indicate a deeper and more complex understanding of race and ethnicity or, alternatively, a more advanced form of White racial identity development as it relates to other racial/ethnic group members. However, other research suggests that the presence of diversity alone (i.e., contact) is not always enough to positively impact children's interracial beliefs (e.g., Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987; Quintana, 1998; Schofield, 1982). Some children may extend a negative interaction with one outgroup member to that group as a whole in the future, and then show transfer effects in their future interracial perceptions and interactions (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Amato, 2001; Quintana, 1998). Therefore, explicit conversations with adults (parents and teachers) can play a critical role in helping children think about and make meaning of their intergroup experiences in middle childhood.

A second line of RES work involving children in middle childhood has focused more specifically on children's cognitive and learning processes (e.g., the emergence of stereotypes and prejudice) and the content of educational materials (multicultural curricula, teaching about racism; e.g., Nagda, 2006). Across middle childhood, we see advances in cognitive development and cognitive processes; mainly, children become more aware of the external environment, apply inductive reasoning to problem solving, and are better able to understand that others have thoughts, values and beliefs that are independent of their own (Piaget, 1952). In comparison to early childhood, by age 8 or 9, children can also give moderated responses to prompts about race, and exhibit notable abilities in role-taking and reconciling differences, which reflect a level of perspective-taking and more complex thinking compared to early childhood (Aboud, 1981). For example, Hughes et al. (2007) observed that White children (ages 6–11) who received lessons about racism showed less bias and more positive attitudes toward African Americans. Other research also shows that exposure to multicultural curricula is effective for promoting positive cross-group attitudes (e.g., Banks, 2006, 2015), especially in racially homogenous schools where meaningful opportunities for contact with racial/ethnic diversity are limited.

During middle childhood, researchers should investigate the way cross-group friendships are discussed and formed (or lack thereof) to shine light on how children make sense of both cross-race interactions and direct and indirect RES messages from parents and schools. Such research can help us more clearly distinguish the role that the home and the school context play in shaping these initial intergroup interactions and the development of White children's racial attitudes. It may be that youth interpret competing and/or conflicting messages from home, school, and broader society (e.g., neighborhood and media) differently. These contextual differences in exposure to RES in different social contexts need to be empirically assessed because the school context is certainly not the only place children learn about race.

Given the limited research on RES for White children in middle childhood, it is unclear how and why some White children respond positively to racial diversity and others do not. However, these studies point to some explanations for why White parents of elementary-aged children may not talk to their children about race. It is possible that some White parents lack competence and/or confidence around engaging in discussions about race with their children simply due to their own lack of experience and diversity exposure (e.g., Hamm, 2001). Some may fear saying the wrong thing. However, with the changing demographics, we anticipate that White parents will develop a different outlook based on their future social experiences with race which may either increase their motivation to discuss race, or at a minimum increase the opportunities White parents have to discuss race.

Additionally, White parents may also gain new perspectives from their children being in racially diverse schools. These new perspectives could potentially alter parenting strategies and parental and children's desires to talk about race more frequently. In this case, parents need tools to help them initiate balanced and constructive conversations about race/ethnicity (see Additional Resources). As stated by Tatum (1994), "The restoration of hope is an essential part of the learning process. Otherwise, students, both white and of color, become immobilized by their own despair (p. 473)."

Adolescence (ages 12 to 18)

Adolescence bridges childhood and young adulthood, and is marked by enhanced cognitive abilities (Kuhn, 2009; Steinberg, 2005), rapid physical growth and the onset of puberty (Susman & Dorn, 2009), increased expectations from family, school, and society (e.g., Brown & Larson, 2009; Eccles, Brown, & Templeton, 2008; Laursen & Collins, 2009), and more opportunities to assert one's independence (e.g., Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009; McElhaney & Allen, 2001; Staff, Messersmith, & Schulenberg, 2009). Additionally, adolescents also begin to show heightened sensitivity to peer influence related to structural and functional changes in the brain (e.g., Steinberg, 2008). Although measuring the specific influences stemming from one's social environment is important to consider across all of child development, during adolescence is when we particularly see an emerging sense of agency.

Additionally, although person-environment fit is important for healthy development in all developmental stages, it may become more evident in adolescence as young people begin to express independent thought, autonomy, and spend more time outside of the home (e.g., Eccles et al., 1993). During this stage, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate whether social environment (e.g., peer and parental influence) and/or cognition (e.g., individual values, thoughts and motivations) drive adolescent's racial attitudes and behaviors. Like other stages of development, research indicates that parents of White adolescents tend to report that race/ethnicity is not important to them, and that values of egalitarianism may correspond with racial ambivalence (e.g., Mounts, Karre, & Kim, 2013). Similar to findings from middle childhood studies, Edmonds and Killen (2009) found that parents of White adolescents were more likely to express concerns about cross-race friendships (e.g., naming a specific friend who happens to be Black), rather than make explicit comments about racial groups.

In comparison to early and middle childhood, advances in adolescent's cognitive development allow them to begin to form their own opinions and sometimes individuate from their parent's beliefs (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Here, youth draw meaning from their various social interactions, and accordingly become active agents in the learning process (Leont'ev, 1981; Quintana, 1998; Roth & Lee, 2007). In fact, adolescents can create meaning from their lived experiences as it relates to their own identity (Spencer, Swanson, & Harpalani, 2015). For example, some research suggests that White teens express racial attitudes independent of their parent's racial attitudes (Hagerman, 2014), while other studies found that White teen's perceptions of their parent's racial attitudes can influence their lack of cross-group friendships (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Other work indicates that parent's discussions surrounding preparation for bias is associated with lower self-esteem and decreased ethnic affirmation among White adolescents compared to Black adolescents (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). The researchers hypothesized that it is possible for White youth to develop self-blaming attributes when they interpret such messages (e.g., people will treat you badly for being a member of a particular racial/ethnic group). Alternatively, parent's preparation for bias among youth in this study may also have been in response to a discriminatory event that the adolescent had already experienced, but these explanations have not yet been empirically tested. Since this study was among the first to assess preparation for bias using survey methods

in White adolescents, additional phenomenological research is still needed to understand how preparation for bias is specifically linked to White youth's racial attitudes, identity, and psychosocial development.

Based on findings from RES research involving White adolescents, future research should focus on the interaction of social environment and how White youth cognitively process their experiences. For example, some research involving Mexican American youth and their families has investigated RES from an adolescent-driven vs. adult-driven perspective (Umaña-Taylor, Zeiders, & Updegraff, 2013). In this case, Umaña-Taylor and colleagues found evidence that adolescent's interests (e.g., ethnic identity exploration) may precede and perhaps initiate family RES, which is contrary to prior research on family RES (e.g., Hughes et al., 2008), which suggested parents' motivations to pass on knowledge and help their adolescents precedes adolescent's interest. Only a handful of self-report studies have examined White adolescent's perceptions of parent's RES or adolescent's motivations to talk about race. Thus, of all the age groups covered in this review, we believe that adolescence might reflect the most understudied developmental stage as it relates to RES for White youth. Because adolescence is a critical period for the development of one's sense of self, it is important for researchers to consider this age group.

Young adulthood (ages 18 to 25)

In young adulthood, we see expanding social networks, further deindividuation from family beliefs, and the school and work context take on an even more influential role in development (e.g., Arnett, 2000). Not only are young people introduced to potentially more diverse curriculum than they may have experienced in K-12 education, their social environment may also shift substantially – such as living with diverse roommates. One study which followed cross-race first-year college roommates showed that living with an other-race roommate not only positively impacted White student's racial identification, but it also showed positive social and behavioral effects that helped reduce White college student's anxiety in future interracial interactions (Gaither & Sommers, 2013). Residential colleges also often mark the first-time students have access to freely explore various aspects of their own identities (e.g., race, sexuality, gender) through academic courses, student groups and other social interactions on campus (e.g., Mouw & Entwistle, 2006; Stearns, Buchmann, & Bonneau, 2009). Thus, young adulthood represents another important developmental period for RES since it may mark the first time a person lives away from home and their family.

Studies show brain development continues into young adulthood (Giedd et al., 1999; Paus, Keshavan, & Giedd, 2008), allowing individuals to think more deeply about the self and social issues. Since college also marks a time when youth might be reassessing their own identity in relation to others, it is not surprising that researchers have also marked this development stage an important period in the life span for increased racial identity development, even among White young adults (e.g., Cicetti-Turro, 2007; Helms, 1995; Lawrence, 1997; Tatum, 1994). For example, several studies by Helms (1990, 1995, 2003) documented how the college environment can directly (e.g., lessons and dialogue) and indirectly (through contact or exposure) trigger racial identity exploration among White young adults. Helms accordingly developed the stages of White racial identity development and proposed that White young adults progress through five stages, beginning with contact (status 1), characterized by obliviousness to racial inequities, and concluding with autonomy (status 6), defined as expressing intentional efforts to relinquish racial privilege. Although this literature described stages through which White young adults might develop racial beliefs and attitudes, there remains nuance surrounding the role social contexts may play in White young adults' cognitive and social development. Likewise, not all White young adults progress through the stages neatly or in the order outlined here. Therefore, more empirical tests of this theory may be necessary.

Some promising research with college-aged youth also demonstrated that it is possible to raise White student's awareness of racial privilege and challenge student's racial prejudices through focused curriculum and activities (e.g., Laughter, 2011; McCormack, 2013), and through group-specific dialogue (Case, 2012). Regarding curricula exposure, Tatum (1994) found that teaching White college students about racism in the university context not only raised their awareness of racial inequities and privilege, but she asserted that RES for White students would promote a more equitable and inclusive society in the long run. Other research supports that participating in anti-racist professional development programs (a direct form of RES) can reduce racial bias, and promote prosocial development and social justice among White student teachers (Lawrence, 1998; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997).

Based on this literature, it appears that RES for young adults in university settings occurs primarily through providing opportunities for positive contact with diverse others, focused and intentional curriculum, and opportunities for dialogue which can facilitate awareness of racial inequities, healthy racial identity development, and more positive cross-group behaviors. Theories emphasizing the importance of group identification, such as social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), posit that individuals maintain a positive identity through their levels of acceptance and group membership. Often, developing a positive group identity can be protective for an individual's sense of self by reinforcing one's sense of belonging (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, as stated earlier, White individuals are less likely to think of themselves in terms of race (Hamm, 2001; Herman, 2004; Jackson & Heckman, 2002; Lewis, 2004) or associate learning about race/ethnicity with negative outcomes (Bigler & Wright, 2014), making the notion of positive racial/ethnic identity complex for White youth.

Pettigrew's (1997, 1998) deprovincialization theory suggests that intergroup contact and discussions not only change attitudes toward outgroup members, but can also cause individuals to reappraise their own ingroup, particularly among majority group members who learn to demonstrate less "ingroup centrism." Yet, the lack of longitudinal studies make it difficult to know how long-lasting these attitude and behavioral changes may be for White young adults and what specific mechanisms and RES practices change beliefs and behaviors. Therefore, we suggest future work not only examine what specific types of curricula, content, discussions and social experiences may shift White college student's attitudes and behaviors, and how White college students construct their identities in the contexts of these messages, but also how much of those respective types of RES messages are needed to see long-lasting changes.

Directions for future research

It is clear that the existing but limited findings surrounding RES for White youth highlight several directions for future research. Although it occurs less frequently for White youth in comparison to youth of color, to casually accept that it never happens would be a fallacy. Rather, there has been little consideration for the content of RES messages when they do occur for White youth (e.g., what are White parents doing), and how those messages are interpreted by the recipient. In addition, there has been little focus on within-group variation (e.g., differences in social class, gender, and geographic region). Furthermore, the field maintains a limited understanding regarding the transitions within and across the stages of ontogenetic development (early childhood through young adulthood) and how developmentally appropriate RES messages can be delivered across different developmental stages (especially with regard to adolescence). These findings will hold important implications for guiding future research and practice regarding intergroup relations. Importantly, the expansion of this line of research to White youth will also afford the field an opportunity to identify specific differences that exist in RES approaches for both White families and families of color.

In line with this call for future research, we predict more complex

RES practices and strategies will occur more frequently among future generations of White parents compared to previous generations because of the changing population demographics, socio-political climate, and increased contact with the global community. Future research should investigate if different strategies and constructs (e.g., acknowledgement of racial privileges, intentional cross-group exposure through language immersion schools) exist than those identified in prior literature. Furthermore, researchers should identify factors that motivate some White parents to initiate discussions about race and whether those discussions are reactionary to the changing demographics or a current event or whether parents more willingly discuss race purely for socialization, for educational purposes, or to promote equity and inclusion (e.g., Brown et al., 2007; Hagerman, 2014; Pahlke et al., 2012). Even less research has focused on the effects stemming from more macro- and external forms of RES, such as exposure to and engagement with media and technology. Although it can be difficult to conduct empirical research surrounding these questions, the impact of media on racial attitudes for White youth (e.g., Vittrup & Holden, 2011) — a topic not covered in the present review—needs to be considered in our increasingly digital age.

We also know that older children, adolescents, and young adults are better able to understand abstract concepts such as race, ethnicity, equity, inclusion and social justice (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; Steinberg, 2005). Yet, we have less knowledge of how and when young children understand these concepts. Previous findings identified important implications for young children's development and inter-group relations more broadly (Aboud, 2013; Banaji & Gelman, 2013; Bigler, 2013), highlighting the need for additional research particularly for young White children. Young children's cross-group perceptions and accurate measurement of those perceptions are likely constrained by their cognitive and reasoning abilities (Aboud, 1988; Dunham et al., 2008). In fact, some developmental studies have suggested that prejudice and bias may naturally decline as a function of age (see Aboud, 2013; Raabe & Beelmann, 2011), but this does not occur for all youth, marking longitudinal design as essential in assessing how pathways to bias reduction may change over time.

New research should also focus on children's intrapsychological processing of RES messages as it relates to social development. For example, conversations about race, racism, and racial bias initiate a range of reactions, responses and emotions, including anger, confusion, denial, sadness, and guilt (Bigler & Wright, 2014; Helms, 1995; Hughes et al., 2007). Thus, researchers should examine how learned awareness of one's group status or privilege may prompt some White youth to become more concerned about the social condition of others (e.g., Bigler & Wright, 2014), while it may prompt other White youth to experience increased levels of threat as seen in some adult research (e.g., Craig & Richeson, 2014). Being able to identify what types of RES White children experience that predict either a more inclusive view of social groups versus a more negative response is key to understanding how perceptions of status may impact White children's treatments of others. With additional data, we can begin to understand what RES practices promote positive (e.g., cultural competence, engagement in social justice) versus negative (e.g., increased perceptions of anti-White bias and guilt) attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (e.g., social exclusion and discrimination). Identifying which types of socialization specifically lead to more inclusion rather than exclusion could promote more prosocial development across racial/ethnic group boundaries, leading us toward a more inclusive society.

As noted above, we acknowledge that not all forms of RES lead to positive outcomes. It is possible that some White parents may be resistant to engaging in healthy forms of RES because they intend to maintain existing racial divides. Fear of perceived loss of power is sometimes associated with perceived scarcity of resources, which in turn can threaten one's sense of livelihood, and can increase racial bias (Krosch & Amodio, 2014). For individuals who endorse those beliefs, we might expect to see more insidious forms of socialization (e.g.,

explicitly limiting cross-race contact, increased validations surrounding group status differences).

Challenges to measurement

Because talking about race and ethnicity tends to make people uncomfortable and defensive, studies on RES are riddled with measurement challenges. No one wants to be viewed as racist or prejudiced. It appears that much of the RES literature involving White youth has relied on self-report measures or assessed direct forms of RES (e.g., frequency of discussions about race or ethnicity), which research has shown can be negatively impacted by social desirability and concerns about not appearing to be politically correct. It is possible that bias in self-report measurements of social attitudes will continue to blur the distinctions between self and parental socialization outcomes, suggesting we may need more implicit and observational ways of measuring social attitudes and behaviors. For example, the diversity of a parent's friend network (an implicit strategy) has been shown to be predictive of a child's racial attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2012). Additionally, implicit association tests have been shown to be particularly effective in measuring parent and children's levels of bias (Castelli et al., 2009; Dunham et al., 2008), but there are not many other methods to implicitly measure RES strategies or the effects stemming from RES approaches. Thus, researchers may need to create and implement more implicit ways of measuring racial attitudes and behaviors to advance our understandings surrounding what is and is not learned from parents, and how White youth process RES messages and encounters with racially diverse others.

The potential for bias interventions

Interestingly, some bias-reduction intervention studies have shown positive effects in reducing racial prejudice and facilitating positive outgroup attitudes among White youth in the short-term (Aboud et al., 2012; Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012). For example, intervention efforts utilizing media and instructive forms of delivery show promise in reducing negative outgroup attitudes (e.g., Castelli, De Dea, & Nesdale, 2008; Connolly & Hosken, 2006; Gutierrez et al., 2014; Peck, Seinfeld, Aglioti, & Slater, 2013). Unfortunately, at the time we wrote this paper, a racially biased incident against two African American males prompted Starbucks to close more than 8000 stores in the United States to initiate anti-bias training with its employees (Stevens, 2018). This modern-day example highlights the need for preventative interventions to aid in improving cross-group dialogue particularly for public spaces, but the mechanisms behind these types of interventions are not yet well-understood (Aboud, 2013). While controlled experimental work can help in pinpointing specific pathways and the causal relationships needed for positive cross-group attitudes in controlled laboratory environments, we need more information about how these processes unfold in naturally-existing diverse and non-diverse settings over time.

Conclusions

In summary, children who identify as White are navigating increasingly diverse social spaces that will likely shape their understanding of race and ethnicity. Here, we show: 1) talking directly about racial/ethnic issues may be lacking within most White family home environments and in many school contexts, a trend that we expect will soon change; 2) children form beliefs and attitudes about racial/ethnic differences regardless of whether adults choose to engage in discussions about them; 3) social interactions can positively and negatively affect how White children perceive race and ethnicity, which also affects how they view themselves (e.g., social position); and importantly, 4) RES should play a more prominent role in White children's development with regard to social norms and intergroup behaviors. Thus, this paper

serves as a call for more research to understand how RES processes affect White children's attitudes and behaviors related to race and ethnicity in a time when diverse interactions are increasing globally.

Researchers should continue to explore how socialization processes (e.g., racial/ethnic socialization) affect White youth's intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Without exploring how White youth are socialized about race and ethnicity and how that socialization influences how they approach cross-group interactions and form racial/ethnic attitudes, our current understandings surrounding race relations will remain unbalanced. We also believe that research on RES among White youth should not replace RES research involving families of color—this is not, and should not be, a zero-sum research approach. Rather, this line of research should be viewed as an essential extension and consideration for socialization research. These findings will hold important implications for guiding cross-group relations, help with creating more effective interventions and socialization strategies for educating White youth about the complexities of race, and we contend, will promote more socially considerate citizens in the future.

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