

Observing racial socialization: How do White parent-child dyads talk about race?

By  
© 2019

Jenna Kelley Zucker  
PhD, University of Kansas, 2019  
M.S.Ed, University of Kansas, 2016  
B.A., University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2013

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Educational Psychology and Research and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

---

Chair: Dr. Meagan Patterson

---

Dr. Bruce Frey

---

Dr. David Hansen

---

Dr. Vicki Peyton

---

Dr. Jennifer Ng

Date Defended: 17 May 2019

The dissertation committee for Jenna Kelley Zucker certifies that this is  
the approved version of the following dissertation:

Observing racial socialization: How do White parent-child dyads talk about race?

---

Chair: Dr. Meagan Patterson

Date Approved: 10 June 2019

## Abstract

This paper explores the relationship among White parents' racial socialization behaviors, their perceived socialization practices, and their children's perceptions of those behaviors. In contrast with previous studies which have relied primarily on parental self-reports of socialization, I presented the parent-child dyad with two race-relevant news clips (i.e. NFL kneeling controversy and Confederate statue removal) and asked them to watch and discuss the clips. I then separated parent and child for independent interviews during which I asked what they had discussed, if they had talked about these or other issues before, and how the subject of race may be approached in their household. Participants were White parent-child dyads (N = 10) in Midwestern US college towns. Children were between the ages of 10-12. In addition to the observation and interviews, parents and children were also given racial socialization and racial bias measures. Results indicate that although parents express an interest and sense of comfort surrounding race-related conversations with their children, parents employed a combination of colorblind and color-conscious messages when discussing current events with their children. Other related themes also emerged in parent-child conversations about race, such as the role of the media, the current political climate, and race as a contemporary versus historical issue. This study uses a novel, mixed-methods approach to study how White parents discuss race, the messages they think they are sending, and ways in which their children perceive those messages. Little research has been done to look at the congruency between messages parents send and those the child perceives, especially with children in this age range.

*Keywords:* Whiteness, parental socialization, egalitarian, colorblind

## Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my steadfast advisor Dr. Meagan Patterson at the University of Kansas. Her role in the creation, implementation, and documentation of this dissertation was unparalleled. She guided and encouraged me throughout the process, reining me in when necessary but allowed this work to be my own. She is an invaluable resource for whom I have the utmost respect and gratitude and without whom I would not have made it this far. Thank you, Meagan.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Bruce Frey, Dr. David Hansen, Dr. Jennifer Ng, and Dr. Vicki Peyton at the University of Kansas for serving on my dissertation committee. I am gratefully indebted for each of their very valuable comments on this document and for their investment of time and resources in me over the years.

I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents and siblings for supporting me throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this dissertation. You raised me to believe I could do anything and gave me the tools to turn my ambitions into successes. Thank you for teaching me the importance of a strong work ethic and not taking yourself too seriously.

Finally, to my incredibly patient, loving husband Aaron for providing me with unwavering support and continuous encouragement. I would not have been able to do this without you. Thank you for keeping me watered. This is the bloom.

Author

Jenna K. Zucker

## Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Chapter II: Literature Review .....	4
Racial Attitudes.....	4
Racial Socialization .....	17
The Current Study.....	34
Chapter III: Methods.....	36
Overview.....	36
Participants.....	37
Sites.....	39
Procedure .....	40
Data analysis .....	48
Chapter IV: Results.....	50
How do White Parents Talk with Their Children about Race? .....	51
How are White Parents’ Racial Socialization Actions Similar to and Different From their Stated Socialization Goals or Strategies? .....	62
Are White Parents’ Perceptions of their Racial Socialization Messages Similar to Children’s Perceptions of Received Messages? .....	64
Chapter V: Discussion .....	74
How do Parents Talk to their Children about Race and Racism?.....	75
How do children perceive race and racism? .....	81
Do parental socialization messages align with children’s perceptions of those same messages? .....	83
Implications.....	84
Limitations .....	87
Future Research Directions.....	90
Conclusion .....	90

“Colorblindness allows people to not shoulder any responsibility for the role they play in a society that is inherently racist and unequal.” –Anne Theriault, Washington Post

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

In his essay entitled “Seven Myths of Race and the Young Child”, Lawrence Hirschfield reveals various “common sense” truths about children’s racial attitudes as spurious. Three myths in particular are of interest when studying the ways in which White parents discuss race with their children:

“Children may come to notice race on their own, but have to be taught prejudice.”

“If a child acts colorblind, he is.”

“Reducing prejudice is best achieved by affirming that deep down, everyone is the same and differences should be celebrated”

(Hirschfield, 2012, p. 24, 26, 33).

Far-reaching in their impact, myths such as these permeate children’s interactions with teachers, parents, and other adults and help to shape the ways in which adults address race in the presence of children. In his discussion of these myths, Hirschfield emphasizes that children are curious beings, making sense of the world around them through observing others’ actions and reactions. Beliefs about race develop early in childhood (Aboud, 1988) and tend to be relatively stable throughout the lifespan (Baron & Banaji, 2006). Children build upon their curiosity and perceptions of differences by looking at how their parents, peers, and other authority figures react to these differences (Bigler & Liben, 2006).

Whereas parents of color use the early development of racial understanding to prepare their children for their role in a racially biased society by imparting wisdom about how to get along with White people, information about their cultural heritage, and strategies to deal with discrimination (Priest et al., 2014), White parents often propagate messages suggesting that race should not matter or choose not to address it at all (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Vittrup, 2016).

White racial socialization messages tend to work to maintain the White identity. Previous research suggests that this identity comes from a place of privilege and largely perpetuates that system of privilege (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Overall, White families are largely understudied when it comes to the ways in which they discuss race with their children, particularly within developmental psychology. When they are included, an over-reliance on parental self-report allows parents to cast themselves in the best possible light.

Bartoli et al. (2016) assert that White parents are hungry for the right answer in how to address race with their children. With the realities of racial inequality splattering the headlines and spewing from elected officials' mouths, parents—especially White parents for whom inequality is not a daily burden—are struggling to explain these concepts to their children. Hagerman (2017) denotes an overwhelming lack of empirical resources for parents, who instead have to turn to blogs, op-eds, and their (often White) peers for “best practice” in socialization. The aim of this research was to explore parents' race-based conversations, their perceptions of the messages they are sending, and the messages their elementary-school-aged children are receiving. The findings contribute to a growing body of scholarship in order to inform effective socialization practices.

The current study examines racial socialization in White American families, focusing on an *in situ* examination of racial socialization practices, both parent and child perceptions of the socialization messages, and potential discrepancies between the messages parents report and the actions when asked to discuss race-related current events. Guided by the lack of research on this particular group, as well as the need for an emphasis on socialization actions rather than solely socialization beliefs, this study uses a grounded theory methodology to examine the following questions:

1. How do White parents talk with their children about race and racism?
2. Are White parents' perceptions of their racial socialization messages similar to children's' perceptions of received messages?
3. How do White parents' observed racial socialization practices parallel or differ from their self-reported racial socialization practices and goals?



## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information and context relevant to the present study. First, I discuss racial attitudes and racial bias within the scope of child development. Then I discuss parents' role in shaping their child's social attitudes as a means of providing a framework for parental racial socialization. I define racial socialization and provide detailed examples of various socialization strategies, then focus on the ways in which socialization may differ by race. This structure invites an extensive discussion of colorblindness, White fragility, and White privilege, framed as concepts that strongly relate to White parental racial socialization. I will then look at environmental factors--particularly schools and social networks--as socialization agents for White children. The research questions are directly informed by the extant literature in these areas and are discussed.

### **Racial Attitudes**

In order to understand the ways in which parents shape children's understanding and beliefs in regard to race, it is important to first understand the way in which children conceptualize race. Racial attitudes are characterized as thoughts, beliefs, and actions toward another individual or group of individuals based on their racial or ethnic background (Doyle & Aboud, 1995). Much of the racial attitudes research focuses on negative racial attitudes, or racial bias. The term racial bias reflects a generalization in which a negative evaluation applies to most members of a particular racial outgroup, despite individual differences (Raabe & Beelman, 2011). Following the lead of the field's commonly used operational definitions, this literature

review will focus predominantly on racial bias in three areas: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. As defined by Doyle and Aboud's (1995) work, stereotypes are considered the negative cognitive associations with racial group membership. For example, common stereotypes would include "Hispanic people do not value education" or "Black fathers are rarely around" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Prejudice is the negative affective or emotional response to a certain racial group or group member, usually as a result of the process of internalizing stereotypes. Discrimination would then be categorized as the negative actions taken toward an individual or group based on racial group membership. For the purposes of this review, we will adopt the terminology of the field and use the terms "racial bias" and "racial attitudes" interchangeably. However, it is important to note that the term "racial attitudes" focuses on the internal processes, which in this case would include prejudice and stereotypes.

Racial attitudes are generally described in two ways: implicit or explicit. Bigler and Liben (2006) describe them as:

"The first is an automatic process, referred to as *implicit attitudes*, which involves unconscious stereotyping and prejudice toward groups. The second is a controlled process, referred to as *explicit attitudes*, which concerns conscious stereotyping and prejudice toward groups" (p 42).

In their assessment of bias, Greenwald and Kriegler (2006) suggest that explicit attitudes are those that are consciously endorsed, and often result in corresponding action. Implicit attitudes tend to be difficult to study and discuss because their very nature requires them to be unconscious. Often, implicit attitudes are studied as a discrepancy between one's professed or explicit attitude and one's actions, such as claiming you have no bias, but rating a political candidate less favorably because they have an ethnically ambiguous name (Greenwald &

Kriegler, 2006). Due to the internal nature of both stereotyping and prejudice, when parents address race with their children, they tend to focus on the more external component of racial bias, or discrimination, as the area to monitor and control (Raabe & Beelman, 2011).

**Colorblind racial attitudes and White privilege.** One of the difficult aspects of studying racial bias is the lack of a shared definition of “racism.” Bonilla-Silva (2003) notes that whereas White individuals often conceptualize racism as individual acts of prejudice, people of color tend to understand racism as underlying systemic or institutional discrimination that maintains the status quo for White individuals. When confronted with a definition of racism that includes both individual and systemic factors, White individuals often become defensive and apprehensive about discussions of race and diversity (McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001).

Racial ideology is “the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (White people) or challenge (people of color) the status quo” (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 9). Using this language and theoretical framework, we seek to understand the ways in which colorblind attitudes—that is, claiming not to see race or that race does not matter—form a racial ideology commonly adopted by White individuals (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Colorblindness allows White individuals to explain racial inequality without explicitly acknowledging their higher social status and the benefits this status incurs (Gallagher, 2003). This relieves White individuals of guilt regarding their role in racial inequality and the lower social status of other racial groups.

Bonilla-Silva (2003) suggests that there are four different ways that colorblind racism exists for White individuals: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Although all four have distinctive features, they are often combined in order to fully justify situations of inequality or discrimination.

*Abstract liberalism* uses politically and economically liberal ideas to abstractly explain racial inequality. For example, this frame would suggest that White individuals are disproportionately in positions of power (i.e. CEOs, company presidents, and high government offices such as Senate) because they have worked harder than individuals of color. It simplifies racial inequality to instances of meritocracy, contextualizing the struggles of individuals of color and the relative successes of White individuals as functions of hard work. This frame suggests that racial equality is the same as racial equity, failing to acknowledge the systematic and institutional forces that limit the success of individuals of color, even if they are given the same opportunities as White individuals.

*Naturalization* is an argument predicated on the assumption that racial inequality is the result of natural processes. For example, this frame would suggest that housing segregation is the result of individuals wanting to be around people like themselves, using the developmental understanding that individuals are drawn to those who are like them, and generally avoid those who are not like them.

*Cultural racism* uses cultural stereotypes to explain the societal standing of minorities. For example, this frame would capitalize on stereotypes such as “Mexicans don’t value education” or “Black fathers are never around” to explain racial inequalities. The underlying message in this framework is that of “Other racial groups do not have their lives together the way White people do.”

Finally, *minimization of racism* implies that discrimination is no longer a relevant factor in the way people of color live their lives. For example, this frame takes the stance that because opportunities are perceived to be better than they were, racism no longer exists. This frame can be seen in phrases such as “post-racial America” after Barack Obama was elected president. It

insinuates that racial discrimination is now an individual problem, no longer systemic, and thus White individuals can distance themselves from the racial reality of America by saying “Racism is over. That individual may be racist, but that is an individual problem and not one for me to deal with.”

**Why is colorblindness so pervasive?** One suggestion is that White people think colorblindness will make them more likeable, especially with people of color. In a study by Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton (2008), White participants played a “Guess Who”-style game, intended to have a partner guess the correct portrait from a large group of portraits. In this method, one individual was the “keeper” of the correct portrait, answering yes or no questions from the guesser. The “guessers” used identifying information (sex, hair color, etc.) to narrow the search for the correct portrait. Participants were significantly more likely to mention race if the confederate, as “guesser”, mentioned it first, setting the norm. In addition, participants were less likely to mention race if the confederate was Black, even if they had set a “mention race” norm.

In addition to demonstrating that White individuals take normative cues about whether or not to mention race from people of color, participants were also independently rated on “friendliness” and those who engaged in colorblind behaviors were largely rated as less friendly. These individuals also demonstrated diminished cognitive capacity, as measured by the Stroop task. Taken together, these results note that in an effort to appear less biased, White individuals adopt colorblindness, resulting in diminished cognitive capacity and lower levels of perceived friendliness among other White individuals (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). In White individuals’ attempts to appear unbiased, they are often plagued with tension and cognitive dissonance. These issues, which may manifest as reduced eye contact or closed off body

language, can emit a stronger signal than their colorblind words can reach, often resulting in being perceived as less friendly by people of color with whom they interact (Norton et al, 2006).

However, choosing colorblind attitudes in an effort to appear less biased may actually work in some superficial contexts. In a classification task, White individuals were less likely to mention race when in an interracial context (Norton et al., 2006). In this context, colorblindness is seen as an effort to make interracial interactions run smoothly, which in turn is related to higher warmth ratings from people of color. Qualitative interviews suggest that relationships with people of color are superficial and sparse, but White individuals tend to inflate the importance or value of these relationships to maintain self-image as one of a progressive or colorblind (Bonilla-Silva, Goar, & Embrick 2006). Instead of acknowledging the necessity for interactions of more depth with persons of color and the cognitive work that would take, White individuals may choose to self-segregate instead, choosing only superficial relationships and a base level colorblindness to maintain those relationships.

**White privilege and White fragility.** One of the factors that may lead strongly to White individuals adopting colorblind racial attitudes is the concept of white fragility. DiAngelo (2011) describes white fragility as “an insulated environment of racial privilege that builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress” (p. 54). DiAngelo contends that white fragility is the state in which even minimal amounts of racial stress becomes intolerable to White individuals because they have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills that could allow for constructive racial engagement. Thus, colorblindness is seen as a way to ease interracial interactions and alleviate any discomfort by avoiding race altogether (Bonilla-Silva, Goar, & Embrick, 2006).

DiAngelo (2011) lays out multiple systems or ideologies that perpetuate White fragility. The first is segregation. Though White people may live in close proximity to people of color (diverse schools, churches, and neighborhoods), their lives are largely segregated. Furthermore, this segregation is seen largely as a positive attribute: predominantly White neighborhoods are considered “safe” and predominantly White schools are the “good schools”.

Another prominent concept that perpetuates White fragility is the contradicting views that White experiences are both universal and individual. DiAngelo (2011) argues that White people see their life experience as largely objective and representative of reality. In fact, because many White people see themselves as raceless (Bartoli et al., 2016; Hagerman, 2014), they see their experience as representative above and beyond the concept of race. At the same time that White individuals may declare that race does not or should not matter (i.e. “we are all members of one race: the human race”), they are working to individualize themselves from those who do pay attention to race. The actions of one individual are not representative of all White people, especially when those actions are negative. We see this duality in Bonilla-Silva’s (2008) “minimization of racism” colorblind ideology; the assertion that racism does not exist anymore because I do not see it while at the same time acknowledging that if it does exist, it is the result of racist individuals, not a systemic problem in which I may play a role.

A pervasive ideology that promotes White fragility, particularly within the era of the internet, racial arrogance is the dismissal of those who insist on the complexity of race and racism. Because there likely has not been a need for White individuals to think about the complexities and nuances of race and racism, and because they believe that their experience is largely universal, they tend to be quick to dismiss those with different experiences or perspectives. Tied to racial arrogance is the psychic freedom that White individuals are

privileged to experience; they are not only free from the burden of understanding the large role that race plays in their lives, but they are penalized by their ingroup for engaging in conversations about race and its impact (DiAngelo, 2011).

The aforementioned concepts serve to nourish White fragility. White individuals tend to react with hostility to a conversation about racial privilege, as it negates their claims to individuality and calls into question their own achievements. Although this defensiveness prevents an honest conversation about privilege, it also serves to maintain a power dynamic between White people and people of color. By choosing to play the victim when an examination of one's privilege is suggested, resources such as time and attention are diverted from the challenger (who is often a person of color) and directed back toward the White individual (DiAngelo, 2011).

One of the biggest struggles with colorblindness is that White individuals fail to acknowledge their racial identity or Whiteness, instead asserting that race belongs to others (Lewis, 2004). Bonilla-Silva (2001) noted that race is a systematic oppression of racial minority groups and to live within that system means that one has been racialized. Yet the concept that race belongs to others permeates White identity and affects the ways in which White individuals interact with the world. Those with colorblind racial ideology demonstrate higher levels of racial bias than those with a more multicultural ideology (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). Similarly, as noted in the section below, color-conscious parental messages about race are more closely related to positive racial attitudes than colorblind parental messages. When taken together, the research on colorblindness suggests that although it is a prominent racial ideology among White individuals, the primary benefit of alleviated cognitive dissonance comes at the cost of ignorance



toward racial reality and promotion of negative racial attitudes, both for the self and for one's children (Lewis, 2004; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Vittrup, 2016).

**Colorblindness in parental racial socialization.** The concern is often that by engaging in conversations about race with their children, white parents feel they may be encouraging and perpetuating racial inequality (Hagerman, 2014; Pauker et al., 2015), even going so far as to assume that any acknowledgement of racial difference was considered racist (Bartoli, et al., 2016). However, research indicates that by failing to explicitly discuss race, parents may be teaching their child that discussions of race are not considered appropriate, resulting in a reluctance among children to talk about race (Pauker et al., 2015). Developmental Intergroup Theory suggests that although children are aware of racial differences, they have a very rudimentary understanding of what these differences may mean (Bigler & Liben, 2007). Without explicit instruction, children tend to construct their own definitions of what the racial differences may mean, overwhelmingly constructed to favor their own group (Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997).

For example, in her book *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, Tatum offers an illustrative example of this concept. Tatum's son, a young Black child, was told by a White peer that his brown skin was the result of him drinking too much chocolate milk. Tatum noted that this anecdote led to a conversation with her son about melanin and the role it plays in making some people's skin darker than others. She also made the assumption that the parents of the little White boy, Eddie, have probably never had a similar conversation with their son (Tatum, 1997, p. 33). She shares a sentiment earlier in the book, saying "Sometimes the assumptions we make about others come not from what we've been told...but rather from what we had not been told" (p. 4). Tatum is suggesting that prejudice may be, in part, the result of

exposure to misinformation. We are inundated with these biased messages, and without some understanding of historical context or institutional racism, children will create a narrative that fosters higher levels of outgroup bias (Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997; Pauker et al., 2015). From previous developmental research, we see that white children actually report lower levels of racial bias in classrooms and households where racial bias is explicitly addressed (Aboud, 2008; Bigler & Liben, 2006; Degner & Dalege, 2013).

**Development of racial bias.** For White children, explicit bias tends to increase in early childhood, peak in the early elementary school years, and then decline in middle and late childhood as the child learns that it is increasingly socially unacceptable to display explicit negative feelings toward an outgroup member (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Rutland, Cameron, Milne & McGeorge, 2005). As a child understands the social acceptability of their biases, their explicit bias tends to diminish, while their implicit bias remains stable across development (Baron & Banaji, 2006).

Aboud's work on children's racial attitude development remains one of the most comprehensive theories in the field, employing a socio-cognitive approach to child development. Utilizing her definition of prejudice and her desire for an explanation of prejudice inclusive of both adults and children, she proposed that prejudice is the result of two overlapping developmental sequences. The first sequence represents how a child may experience a situation: from affect to perception to cognition. Early decisions (prior to age four) are often guided by affective or emotional processes. Next, children use perceptual processes, such as social comparison and attending to observable social cues, to guide decision-making. These processes seem to be most prevalent between ages four and seven, which coincides with the child's high prejudice levels. At some point around age seven, children adopt a more cognitive approach to

decision making, including skills such as the ability to understand abstract and internal qualities about individuals and begin to understand and process differing points of view (Aboud, 2008). This tends to also be when there is a plateau or decline in explicit racial bias (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Rutland, Cameron, Milne & McGeorge, 2005) as well as the point at which children should be most responsive to prejudice reduction interventions (Nesdale, 1999). Part of the reduction in explicit racial bias, particularly, may be due to children taking cues from their parents that race should not be discussed (Pahlke et al., 2012; Pauker, Apfelbaum, & Spitzer, 2015).

The second sequence in Aboud's theory concerns the child's outward focus: from self to group to individuals. In line with Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Aboud proposes that children under the age of seven are largely egocentric; they tend to be self-based and assume others' thoughts and attitudes reflect their own. If an "other's" experiences or perceptions differ from what that child has experienced, the child assumes that the other is wrong. As they grow out of this egocentric stage, children become group-focused. At this point, they are preoccupied with group membership and categorization. Aboud mentions that group categorization may initially be exaggerated for the sake of clarification, and that this may translate to exaggerated pro-ingroup, anti-outgroup attitudes. However, as they cognitively mature, this exaggeration becomes less prominent due to the flexibility of mental categories. The last stage of Aboud's second sequence shifts the focus of others from group-level categorizations to focusing on individual attributes. It is in this stage that children begin to see past the color of another's skin or their gender, and focus on the other's unique characteristics (Nesdale, 1999). However, if that information is unavailable or difficult to access, Aboud suggests that it is easiest for the child to revert to stereotypes.

**Parental influence on racial attitudes.** Parents play an important role in shaping the attitudes of their children. Research on attitude transmission is far reaching, encompassing traditional values such as political views (Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 1999) and religious beliefs (Milevsky, Szuchman, & Milevsky, 2008), as well as more controversial beliefs, such as attitudes toward obesity (O'Bryan, Fishbein, & Ritchey, 2004), attitudes toward immigrants (Gniewosz & Noack, 2015), and even attitudes toward legal authority and the criminal justice system (Wolfe, McLean, & Pratt, 2017).

Although parents are influential in children's overall attitude development, there is mixed evidence suggesting that they influence children's implicit and explicit racial attitudes. In a recent meta-analysis of 129 studies about racial attitudes in parents and children, Degner and Dalege (2013) examined the relations between parents' and children's explicit racial attitudes. This analysis found an effect of age, finding that the attitudes of young children (ages 7 and below) have no relationship to parental racial attitudes, but that after age 8, children and adolescents' attitudes tend to have a small to moderate relationship to parental attitudes. In addition, this meta-analysis found an effect of racial or ethnic status, finding that majority status (e.g., White) children are more likely to report having similar attitudes to their parents perceived racial attitudes than minority status children. Degner and Delage noted that most of these studies focused on children's perceptions of their parents' attitudes and concluded that this finding may be as the result of White parents failing to discuss race or racial attitudes with their children (Degner & Delage, 2013). By not explicitly discussing race with their children, majority status parents are sending a subconscious message about their beliefs, and their children are picking up on it. This finding is particularly relevant in this study, as it concludes that there is a difference in

the way majority and minority parents talk to their children about race, and thus that there is a difference in how these groups of children think about race.

Allport (1954) suggested that parental prejudice is mirrored by children, due to both the influence that parents have over their children, but also the environment they have created for their children. In Allport's view, children are receptacles for parental influence. If this was wholly responsible for children's attitudes, there should be a strong correlation between parent and child on racial attitudes measures. However, as discussed above, this is often not the case, particularly for young children (Degner & Dalege, 2013).

Parke et al.'s (1994) Tripartite approach to socialization extends Allport's theory, noting that socialization goes beyond a unilateral transaction and occurs through three pathways. The traditional nurturing interaction from parent to child accounts for one pathway, but parents also influence their children through an explicit mentorship or educator role. This pathway aligns more closely with how current research views the role of socialization. Lastly, the Tripartite approach suggests that parents work as gatekeepers to a child's social life, or as providers of opportunity. All three of these pathways interact to account for the development of an individual's social attitudes (Parke et al., 1994). For example, Bigler and Liben's (2006) Developmental Intergroup Theory works to build on the Tripartite theory by focusing specifically on prejudicial attitudes, suggesting that although children may learn prejudice from parents, these attitudes are often as a result of interactions in the environment that the parents created, rather than learning attitudes from their parents via direct teaching. For example, group labels that parents explicitly identify and attend to within the environment they have curated often become the target of stereotypes more often than groups unmentioned by adults (Bigler & Liben, 2006). In this case, the explicit messages of parents are shaping their children's beliefs

and attitudes more strongly than implicit messages, such as actions or decisions regarding a child's environment.

### **Racial Socialization**

Racial/ethnic socialization refers to the process by which families teach children about the social meaning and consequences of race and ethnicity (Brown, Tanner-Smith, Lesane-Brown, & Ezell, 2007). Whereas the term “racial socialization” has been predominantly used in research regarding Black Americans, “ethnic socialization” refers to a similar construct, but includes multiple ethnicities. Although there are acknowledged differences between one's ethnicity and race, research tends to combine the two concepts when it comes to discussing socialization practices in order to create a more inclusive construct. Following the lead of Umana-Taylor et al. (2014), this study will combine racial and ethnic socialization and use “racial socialization” to refer to the meta-construct.

In the current literature, racial socialization is broadly used to describe how parents convey information regarding race and ethnicity to their children (Brubaker, 2009; Priest et al., 2014). Researchers contend that the racial socialization process occurs, to an extent, in all families (Brown, et al., 2007; Hughes, et al., 2006). This information may include exposing individuals to cultural artifacts, instilling pride within their cultural identity, discussing discrimination and coping, and offering strategies for succeeding in and assimilating to mainstream society (Hughes et al., 2006). More specifically, this concept is focused on the explicit transmission of this racial information (Hughes and Chen, 1997), although parents may also impact children's attitudes through nonverbal behaviors (Castelli, De Dea, & Nesdale, 2008).

Although racial socialization occurs in varying degrees in all families, much of the early research focused on how Black parents share race-related information with their children as a way of preparing them for American society. Socialization was broken up into four categories: cultural socialization, egalitarianism, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust (Hughes, et al., 2006). *Cultural socialization* refers to parental practices in teaching their child about his or her racial or ethnic history, as well as cultural customs and traditions. *Egalitarianism* refers to messages that emphasize the importance of each individual's unique qualities over their racial group membership. Often this type of socialization suggests colorblind and more meritocratic attitudes for children, valuing hard work and individuality as the basis children should use to judge each other, rather than skin color or ethnic background. *Preparation for bias* strongly differs from the egalitarianism approach, suggesting instead a parental effort in making their children aware of discrimination and helping them to develop coping mechanisms for that discrimination. Finally, *promotion of mistrust* refers to parental messages of wariness of other racial groups and the general discouragement of interracial interactions. Because the nature of this research focuses primarily on self-reported practices, egalitarianism and cultural socialization tend to be the socialization practices most frequently reported, with preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust rarely being explicitly reported (Hughes et al., 2006).

There are also cultural and environmental differences regarding socialization practices. For example, preparation for bias is more common in Black families than in any other minority family setting, likely as the result of the history of racial tension in America, where most of these studies are conducted (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). Black families are also likely to engage in moderate levels of cultural socialization in order to promote pride and positive racial identity (Hughes et al., 2009). In addition, Black families in neighborhoods with

higher levels of economic disadvantage were more likely to utilize messages of mistrust and preparation for bias than Black families with greater economic advantage. Hughes and colleagues (2009) found that utilization of the preparation for bias strategy was related to a reduction in self-esteem, negative ethnic affirmation and antisocial behavior. They concluded that this strategy brought more awareness of the vulnerability that goes along with awareness of discrimination against one's group, and thus did not produce the protective effect intended by parents (Hughes et al, 2009). Although cultural socialization is common across groups, it tends to be most prevalent in immigrant families and American Indian families (Hughes et al., 2006; Lasane-Brown, Brown, Tanner-Smith, & Bruce, 2010).

As previously mentioned, racial socialization in families can change as a result of a variety of individual factors. When controlling for race, parents are more likely to engage in discussions about race and racial socialization with their female children than male children (Lasane-Brown et al., 2010). Hughes and colleagues (2006) suggest that this difference results from parents anticipating different experiences associated with the sex of their child. In addition to gender-differentiated practices, parents are also likely to change their socialization practices as their children develop and have more intergroup experiences, using developmentally appropriate practices to engage in race-related conversations with their children (Hughes et al., 2006). Parents with young children are more likely to utilize basic messages of cultural socialization and egalitarianism, whereas they were more likely to discuss preparation for bias with their adolescent children (Hughes & Chen, 1997). In addition, as children develop, they are likely to hear socialization messages from their parents more frequently (Hughes et al., 2006). Finally, parents with higher educational attainment and those who are married are more likely to engage



in multiple socialization strategies (Brown, et al., 2007). These individual differences, however, do not overshadow the primary role that race plays in parental socialization.

**White racial socialization.** Racial socialization is meant to serve as a means of understanding one's race in the context of society, but White individuals tend to see themselves as raceless (Bartoli et al., 2016; Hagerman, 2014) and work to distance themselves from situations of racial inequality (Hagerman, 2016). Although these tactics are meant to psychologically preserve one's sense of self (McFall & Cobb-Roberts, 2001), by failing to acknowledge race, White parents are not properly preparing their children for a functional understanding of race. Bonilla-Silva (2003) argues that this is especially troubling, as White parents are tasked with the job of teaching race to the next generation of systemic power-holders. Instead, White parents are more likely endorse colorblind/colormute socialization messages than parents of color (Hagerman, 2014; Hughes, et al., 2006; Pahlke et al., 2012; Pauker et al., 2015). These messages communicate a parental desire that race *should not* matter but fail to reflect the very real societal context in which race *does* matter (Bartoli et al., 2016).

Although racial socialization within White families is largely understudied, extant studies in this area paint a partial picture of the ways in which parents approach the topic of race with their children. In one of the earliest studies about White parents' racial socialization, Hamm interviewed 18 Black and 11 White families to learn more about perceived barriers to cross-ethnic friendships for their children (Hamm, 2001). In this study, White parents were more likely to endorse passive approaches, such as contact or exposure to members of another racial group, as adequate evidence of their progressive views. These parents did not report expending much effort in cultivating meaningful cross-racial relationships; in fact, Hamm reported that White participants were uncomfortable at the idea that people would intentionally use ethnicity as a

criterion for friendship, whereas Black participants reported encouraging their children to develop meaningful friendships with White children (Hamm, 2001). This study was important for two reasons: it demonstrated that Black and White parents socialize their children with distinctly different goals in mind, and it established the discomfort of White parents when acknowledging race, even in situations where their child would benefit.

A similar study investigated the role of educational television as a catalyst for racial socialization (Vittrup & Holden, 2011). Ninety-three White children and their parents participated. Children were given a racial attitudes pretest and were then randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups: to watch five educational television shows and engage in a discussion about race, to watch the educational television shows without the discussion, or to have the discussions about race without the TV shows. Post-test measures revealed a shift in positive outgroup attitudes for those who watched the video and had a discussion. For the purposes of socialization, this study was interesting in what it was lacking. Even when the White parents were explicitly instructed to engage in in-depth conversations with their children, only 10% of those groups complied. Additionally, 50% indicated though they had "mentioned" the topic of race, it was in passing and did not receive follow-up attention. Two dyads withdrew from the study after being placed in an explicit-discussion group. Taken together, the research indicates the lengths White parents will go to avoid conversations about race, engage in colorblind and colormute practices, and the impact those messages have on their children.

In Pahlke, Bigler, and Suizzo's investigation of White racial socialization, researchers aimed to draw connections between colorblind socialization and their children's racial bias. This study focused on eighty-four White mother-child (ages 4-6) dyads. In a video-recorded lab space, parents were asked to read and discuss two books with their children. The books were

chosen because of their diverse content, either by depicting characters of color or by discussing race relations through analogy. After they were done reading the books, researchers gave them several racial attitude and racial bias measures. Parents in this study were unlikely to discuss race with their children and often ignored or redirected their children's statements concerning intergroup relations. Additionally, although parents in this sample largely endorsed colorblind socialization, this endorsement was not related to their children's racial attitudes. In fact, mothers and their children were unable to accurately predict each other's racial attitudes, further suggesting that explicit socialization messages, not implicit, shape children's racial attitudes.

Hagerman (2014) used an ethnographic approach to the topic of White parental socialization. Utilizing both semi-structured and in-depth interviews, as well as observation and content analysis, Hagerman established herself as part of two different school communities in order to examine White racial socialization. Focusing on children in middle childhood (ages 10-12), Hagerman reported a drastic difference in racial understanding between White children attending a more racially and socioeconomically diverse school and those attending an affluent, relatively homogenous school only a couple of miles away. Parents sending their children to the affluent prep school reported the decision as one based solely on the quality of the education, while also expressing concern that the diverse school was dangerous or unsafe. Hagerman labeled these families as “colorblind”; parents used coded language to discuss race or reported not talking about it at all, while the children gave inconsequential responses to questions about race (Hagerman, 2014). In contrast, parents who purposely chose to send their children to the more diverse school were labeled as “color conscious”; these parents involved their children in social activism and initiated dialogues about race with their children. In turn, when asked about

the prevalence of racism and the role of Whiteness in their lives, children in color conscious families acknowledged and recognized racial inequality, in addition to recognizing their own White privilege and connecting it to other forms of privilege (Hagerman, 2014).

Consistent with Developmental Intergroup Theory and the Tripartite Model of Socialization, this study demonstrates that decisions of racial socialization go beyond parents talking to their children—socialization includes the environmental choices, such as neighborhoods and schools, that parents are asked to make on behalf of their child. Additionally, the results of this study suggest that White privilege and ideology are not necessarily just reproduced, but that parent-child interaction in regard to race can help children develop the tools they need to challenge dominant racial ideology and begin to work toward racial justice.

Similar to Hagerman's research, Bartoli and colleagues (2016) took a sociological approach to understanding socialization. This study examined the implicit messages White youth received and served as one of the first studies to examine racial socialization from the perspective of White parents and their White teenagers. They investigated why White parents racially socialize their children, as well as the messages parents send conveying their attitudes toward race. Based on interviews of 13 families (White parents and teenagers) living on the East Coast of the United States, Bartoli and colleagues (2016) found that parents are intentional about the messages they send to their children and those messages often serve to distance themselves from race. Participants in this qualitative study focused on egalitarian messages, while simultaneously downplaying Whiteness as an identity and contextualizing bias as either a historical event or something that happens to people of color. Bartoli and colleagues concluded that participants knew race was important in today's society, but wished that it was not, and so they acted as if it was not. In turn, their children noted that not only did they think that race did

not matter, but that it was somehow unseemly to notice or talk about it. Messages of colorblindness are cultivated, not occurring as a byproduct of ignorance (Bartoli et al, 2016).

Diverting from a parent sample, Vittrup's 2016 study looked at racial socialization messaging within the classroom, particularly among early childhood teachers. Noting that parents in studies like Hagerman's (2014) and Bartoli's (2016) suggest that they believe that race is something that should be covered in school, Vittrup investigated perceived barriers to anti-racist or anti-bias messaging within the classroom. Interviewing teachers of color as well as White teachers, Vittrup found that these teachers had largely adopted colorblind socialization messages. Additionally, of those who did report color conscious approaches, most skewed toward historical messages of racism instead of acknowledging current events. When pressed as to why they were not more willing to discuss race, the teachers in Vittrup's study echoed previous research: they did not think that students recognized race, did not feel comfortable discussing race, or did not feel prepared to lead race-related conversations. Additionally, the teachers in this sample did not believe it was their job to impart racial socialization messages, with almost three-quarters believing that role should fall to parents (Vittrup, 2016).

Finally, Zucker and Patterson's (2018) study sought to build on all of these previous studies. The researchers examined racial socialization practices among 154 White American parents of children ages 8-12, using both quantitative and qualitative measures, as well as the relations of racial attitudes, racial identity, and racial diversity of the schools that children attend to socialization practices. Looking at both racial bias and White identity as predictors of racial socialization messages, their results indicates that parents with lower racial bias and more advanced racial identity development were more likely to engage in color-conscious racial socialization and to present socialization messages that emphasize egalitarianism, the importance

of learning about the history of other racial groups, and the existence of racial discrimination. However, one of the more interesting findings in this study is that responses on the qualitative socialization measure indicated that White parents were generally unlikely to discuss race or racism with their children in a direct, explicit fashion. A number of parents in this study had indicated that they would discuss race with their child “if it came up”, but then when presented with three different vignettes in which racial bias was clear and salient (e.g., if a hate crime was reported on the news, if a racial slur was used at school, if a Black Lives Matter protest was reported on the news), parents still employed colorblind approaches, choosing not to address race.

**Colorblind messages in White parents’ racial socialization.** Colorblind messages about race are derived from the notion that individuals should not notice race (Hughes et al., 2006). Parents who engage in colorblind socialization often avoid discussions of racism and instead focus on statements such as the importance of treating everyone equally (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012; Bartoli et al., 2016; Hagerman, 2014; Vittrup, 2016). The choice to engage in colorblindness is, in part, based on the erroneous assumption that noticing race predicates racism; thus, by not noticing race, one can reduce or eliminate their racist attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2012). Following suit, colormute socialization connotes that the appropriate way to signify ones’ colorblind attitudes is by not discussing race at all. Whereas colorblind racial attitudes may manifest themselves in the manner of “it’s what is inside that counts”, colormute socialization contends that by not talking about race, parents signal that race is not important (Hughes et al., 2006).

We know from previous research that race is important and choosing to ignore the construct does not change the role it plays in people’s lives. In other words, children’s questions

surrounding race and its role do not go away; instead these questions are often left unanswered (Tatum, 1997). In fact, researchers Banaji and Gelman (2013) point out that biases that may begin small and seemingly innocuous—such as an unanswered question about a group difference—may grow larger as a function of a child’s cognitive development. Particularly in early childhood, children tend to focus on stereotype-consistent information while ignoring stereotype-inconsistent information (Banaji & Gelman, 2013). Although the concern associated with teaching young children about race and seemingly “creating a problem where it does not exist” may keep parents from having important conversations with their children, research indicates that children who are given explicit instruction regarding intergroup biases are more likely to recognize and point out social inequality (Bigler & Wright, 2014). This explicit direction empowers them to overcome the cognitive tendency to focus on stereotype-consistent information (Bigler & Wright, 2014). Additionally, explicit instruction about intergroup bias is related to an increased ability to detect and reject discrimination compared to their peers (Bigler & Wright, 2014).

Interestingly, although one may expect to see these simplistic socialization practices for parents of young children, parents of teenagers also adhere to the colorblind message (Hagerman, 2016). This distinction seems important, as it reflects not a desire for a developmentally appropriate socialization messages, but rather a message that is comfortable for the parent.

In contrast to the oft-perpetuated and endorsed colorblind socialization strategies, some White parents adopt a color-conscious approach to discussing race and racism with their children (Vittrup, 2016). Color-conscious strategies that explicitly acknowledge the existence of racial discrimination can promote awareness of institutional racism (Barr & Neville, 2008), which may

in turn reduce racial bias (Bigler & Wright, 2014; Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007). Parents with an explicitly anti-racist agenda for child rearing may employ a variety of strategies, such as encouraging the development of interracial friendships, cultivating an awareness of privilege, and teaching strategies for confronting racist actions by others (Hagerman, 2017). However, even among White parents who explicitly discuss racism with their children, attempts are often made to deemphasize or discount the continuing existence and influence of racism (for example, focusing on historical, rather than contemporary, instances of racial bias; Hagerman, 2017; Vittrup, 2016). Whereas colorblindness tends to be a passive process (for example, assuming the child will follow their example; Bartoli, et al., 2016), color-conscious socialization requires a relatively active approach, focusing on intentionally discussing privilege, choosing more diverse schools, and engaging in multicultural activities.

It is important to note that the “color-blind versus color-conscious approach” reflects a more recent empirical approach to examining racial socialization complements, rather than conflicting or overlapping with earlier approaches to examining racial socialization. For example, egalitarian socialization messages could be either color-blind or color-conscious, depending on the specific content and framing of the message. An example of an egalitarian colorblind message would be “there is only one race, the human race” or “it’s important to be kind to all people” (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). To contrast, a color-conscious egalitarian response would acknowledge racial differences or racial inequality, such as “people of all races should be treated equally and not judged by the color of their skin” or “you shouldn’t hate people because of the color of their skin” (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). While earlier approaches focused primarily on racial socialization in families of color, the “colorblind versus color-conscious”



dichotomous approach is more inclusive of socialization strategies that White parents may employ.

**White Identity and its relationship to socialization/White privilege.** Racial identity development serves not only to shape how one sees themselves within the world, but the lens through which one sees the world. In the case of White people, it strongly serves to dichotomize individuals one may encounter: those who are in my group and those who are not (Bonilla-Silva, Goar, & Embrick, 2006). To further accentuate this point, Frankenburg (1993) writes “Whiteness does have context in as much as it generates norms, ways of understanding history, ways of thinking about self and other and even ways of thinking about the notion of culture itself” (233). Although many White people may fail to see themselves as having a racial identity, Frankenburg’s assessment connotes a lens through which Whiteness can be fully seen: in push-back to Affirmative Action, in instances of White fragility, and, as demonstrated in Zucker & Patterson (2018), in response to movements such as Black Lives Matter. In other words, Whiteness is typically seen only in contexts in which its power is threatened. It is not a far stretch to posit that reluctance to engage in conversations about race may be related to White individuals’ racial identity development. Whereas socialization within families of color serves, in part, to build a strong racial identity in order to understand and battle prejudice or discrimination, White socialization and identity development are not as closely related.

Helms (1995) proposes that White individuals go through stages of identity development much like any other racial group. However, instead of coping with power differentials as a result of racial minority status, the six statuses in Helms’ White racial identity theory help White individuals to confront individual and systemic factors relating to racial prejudice and discrimination.

The statuses do, in a sense, mirror Bonilla-Silva's (2001) frames of colorblind racism. Helm's first two statuses, contact and disintegration, reflect an overall sense of colorblindness. Individuals working through these statuses either do not believe they have a race or racial identity; ("I've never really thought about race before; I'm just normal"; Hagerman, 2001) or fail to see the significance of their racial identity, especially in comparison to other races ("I'm White, but race shouldn't matter. It's what's on the inside that counts"; Bartoli, et al., 2016). Helms refers to the contact identity status as a stage of satisfaction with the status quo and obliviousness to the role the individual plays in perpetuating racism.

These statuses reflect somewhat passive responses to the racial reality of the United States. However, Helms' third status, reintegration, somewhat regresses in its colorblindness. Instead of being a passive acceptance of norms and privilege, it would be in this status that one would most likely see an adoption of the colorblind frameworks. In reintegration, individuals would display social distance ratings suggesting they are fine with minority individuals from a distance but would not openly welcome a person of color to join their family or play with their child. This status fits well within Bonilla-Silva's colorblind rationalization of racism—suggesting that racism should not exist while simultaneously making excuses to perpetuate it such as relying on meritocracy or culturally based arguments to explain the standings of minorities within society. For example, in Hamm's (2001) study, she noted that although many White parents claimed to value diversity, they cited a lack of understanding of "African American culture" as one of the primary factors keeping both them and their children from pursuing meaningful relationships with people of color (Hamm, 2001).

Helms' fourth status, pseudo-independence, begins to move away from Bonilla-Silva's (2003) framework of colorblind racism. This status, which suggests an intellectual acceptance of

one's own race and the privilege that accompanies that identity, as well as the acceptance and understanding of others' race. Helms would be quick to point out that this understanding may be more of the result of deceptive tolerance of other groups, rather than a truly enlightened view on one's own group. Similarly, Bonilla-Silva would point out that although this may not lie within the colorblind racism framework, it still may have what he calls the "stylistic components of colorblindness." These would include utilizing semantic techniques to save face during an uncomfortable situation, such as "I'm not Black so I don't know [if discrimination happens] [what this would feel like]. Similarly, this status may use stories of racist others to identify racist actions and absolve themselves of racism by proxy. For example, one may bring up a racially insensitive epithet a family member used, note that they corrected or reprimanded that family member, and used that anecdote to emotionally distance themselves from the label of "racist" while intellectually identifying racist behaviors.

Helms' last two statuses, immersion/emersion and autonomy, involve intellectual and affective understanding of racism and the significance of the role that individual plays in its perpetuation and the actively renouncing the benefits of racism, respectively. These do not neatly fit within the context of colorblind racism, but as Helms notes, these statuses of White identity are rarely achieved and maintained. Helms' (1995) achieved identity status, autonomy, would be an individual who understands his role in perpetuating racism, has reduced feelings of White guilt, and no longer shies away from race issues, but embraces them fully and well-informed. I believe this would be the ideal White individual as described by Bonilla-Silva's theory, one who understands and embraces discourse regarding race and actively works toward a more color-conscious White social group.

Development of one's racial/ethnic identity in adolescence is important, as it is more likely to remain relatively crystallized across contexts later in life (a process known as remoooring) if one is fully committed, whereas those early in their identity development may change or regress in different environments (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Strength in identity, considered "achieved identities", allows an individual to seek out environments and groups that validate that identity later in life (Ethier & Deaux, 1994).

**Role of parent-driven socializing agents.** Although the Tripartite theory of parental socialization would suggest that parenting involves actively taking on the role of mentor, teacher, or advisor for social situations, parents may be more willing to take ownership of the role as manager of a child's social experiences. In the role of manager, parents make decisions about a child's neighborhood, peer groups, and schools, as well as the parents' own peer group. Parke & Buriel (1998) would suggest that through the decisions that parents make about their children's social contexts have lasting implications for their peer relationships. Furthermore, these theorists would suggest that these decisions are co-designed by children, stating that parents are making environmental decisions they deem as mutually beneficial to both them and their child (Parke & Buriel, 1998).

***"Not my job: It's the school's job"***. One of the reasons White parents indicate that interracial contact is sufficient in teaching their child about intergroup bias is that they do not necessarily believe it is their job to facilitate these experiences. In one study, when asked about the ways in which they are helping to seek diverse experiences for their children, parents responded that they were intentionally sending their children to public school, or offered suggestions about the ways in which schools could facilitate interracial contact—intramural sports, public discussions about race and race-related topics (Hamm, 2001).

However, when teachers are asked similar questions about how to address race with children and who should do it, several recent studies found that an overwhelming majority of both preservice and practicing teachers believed it was the parents' job to socialize their children. In the case of preservice teachers, they claimed that the discussion of race in the classroom could be "controversial, problematic, uncomfortable, and potentially offensive" (Buchanan, 2015, p. 11). These students, who were not yet in charge of their own classrooms, were worried that by discussing race with their students in an academic setting, they would be responsible for introducing race and racism. One such preservice teacher, in trying to explain the fear of discussing race, acknowledged that through the exclusion of direct racial socialization in either the home or school environment, "we [adults] make it controversial" (Buchanan, 2015, p. 12). Similarly, veteran teachers reported hesitance to discuss race with their students outside of pre-approved "multi-cultural curriculum", such as activities about Black History Month or Martin Luther King Jr. Of these teachers, only about a quarter responded that they thought the parents were doing a good job addressing race and racial issues at home. They cited that parental objections to multi-cultural curriculum, along with a lack of parental involvement both in and out of the classroom, left teachers feeling handcuffed when disseminating anti-bias messages (Vittrup, 2016).

*Neighborhoods/area of town.* Indeed, environmental factors such as schools, neighborhoods, and parents' social networks all play a part in the development of a child's racial attitudes. Previous work has shown that close relationships (such as parents' friends) with non-White individuals predict lower racial bias in White children; however the racial diversity of a neighborhood had no impact on these attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2012). Furthermore, in a meta-analysis done in 2000, studies showed that even in highly diverse schools, students showed a

reduction in bias only when their friendship groups were highly diverse. Attending a diverse school is not enough to reduce bias, as individuals often self-select into same-race peer groups (Joyner & Kao, 2000). Taken together, these findings suggest that it is not necessarily the environment the parent provides that influences racial attitudes, but rather the quality of environmental interactions parents model that may be related.

***Interracial friendships.*** Previous work has shown that close relationships (such as parents' friends) with non-White individuals predict a reduction in racial bias in children, whereas the racial diversity of a neighborhood has no impact on these attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2012). Furthermore, in a meta-analysis done in 2000, studies showed a wide variability in the level of interracial friendship groups in highly diverse schools (Joyner & Kao, 2000). This finding suggests that even though the opportunity for these friendships rose with the increase in school diversity, other factors including meaningful contact and acceptance from their own group were equally as important (Joyner & Kao, 2000). Similarly, I suggest that even in highly racially diverse schools, White students can maintain a level of social distance from non-White students, and thus not have an affect on the way that parents and children talk about race.

## **The Current Study**

White parents often do not engage their children in conversations about race, sometimes claiming that their child is too young to understand (Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Vittrup, 2016). However, research shows that racial attitudes develop at an early age (Aboud, 1988). Given the fact that children reliably notice race by age four, why are White parents failing to engage their children in conversations about race? The preceding literature review has outlined multiple reasons: fear of appearing racist, a lack of understanding race themselves, and the inability or unwillingness to address racism as a systemic problem in which they play a role. Largely though, White parents believe that colorblind socialization is adequate in preparing their child to understand and discuss race. Bartoli et al. (2016) even recognized that parents are pleased when their children report colorblind attitudes.

The current study focuses on racial socialization strategies used by parents from a privileged / majority racial group (i.e., White Americans). Racial socialization in this group has been less extensively studied than among families of color, although the research that does exist suggests that White parents often prefer to avoid explicitly discussing the topic of race (Vittrup & Holden, 2011), choosing to take a colorblind approach instead. The proposed study contributes to the racial socialization literature in multiple ways. First, to date, there has not been a study that investigates children's perceptions of racial socialization. Rather, many studies (e.g., Bartoli et al., 2016; Hagerman et al., 2016) ask adolescents and young adults to retroactively recall their parents' socialization strategies. Second, although previous research has investigated the discrepancy between White parents' beliefs about racial socialization and their actions, actions have either been self-reported by the parents (Zucker & Patterson, 2018) or researched in relation to young (preschool-aged) children (Pahlke et al., 2012; Vittrup & Holden, 2011). This study

will examine the direct link between observational data to self-reported socialization practices and attitudes. Lastly, by using both observation and interview, we will investigate how parents' socialization actions relate to their intended socialization messages and the ways in which their children perceived these messages.

The current study will focus on children between the ages of 10 and 12. Previous research suggests that children in this age range are aware of racial categories and stereotypes (Aboud, 1988, 2008) and have the cognitive capabilities needed to evaluate and accept or reject racial stereotypes (Aboud, 1988; Bigler & Liben, 2006; Raabe & Beelman, 2011). In addition, there tends to be little correspondence between parent's and children's racial attitudes for children younger than eight (Degner & Dalege, 2013), suggesting that the impact of parental racial socialization practices may be limited for younger children due to young children's lack of cognitive capacity to perceive, understand, and internalize parents' attitudes (Aboud, 1988, 2008). Finally, Hamm suggests that it is in this age range that school focus on diversity tends to shift; whereas in elementary school there is often a concerted effort for multicultural programming, that effort diminishes into junior high and high school (Hamm, 2001). Therefore, it is increasingly important to study parent-child racial socialization interactions at this age, as this may be the only diversity instruction children are receiving.

This study examines the following research questions:

1. How do White parents talk to their children about race and racism?
2. How do White parents' observed racial socialization practices parallel or differ from their self-reported racial socialization practices and goals?
3. Are White parents' perceptions of their racial socialization messages similar to children's perceptions of received messages?



## Chapter III: Methods

### Overview

Because of the nature of the research questions, multiple sources of data were collected. I collected data from both parents and children, using observation, interview, and quantitative measures. The use of mixed methods allows for greater hypothesis testing, while the collection from both parent and child allows us to examine relations between variables and compare perceptions of messages. Previous research has relied heavily on parental self-report data. The design of this study is in line with Steckler et al.'s (1992) Model 2 approach: The qualitative data are of primary importance, while the quantitative data are used primarily to elaborate on the qualitative findings.

According to Merriam (1998), qualitative methods should be used as an opportunity to understand the world that individuals have constructed for themselves. Following this reasoning, any sort of detailed understanding of the way in which White parents socialize their children with regards to race would have to come from a qualitative perspective. To fully address the range of processes at work in parent-child communication, it is fitting that this project utilizes a combination of observation, interview, and quantitative measures. Due to the socially desirable nature of the research questions, extant research has demonstrated a discrepancy between parental self-reports on a quantitative measure and their anticipated responses to a qualitative vignette (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Building from this existing literature, the methodology in this study aimed to triangulate the relationships among perceived parental socialization, parental self-report, and an observation of the socialization behaviors in situ.

## Participants

Eleven parent-child dyads participated between the months of March 2018 and March 2019, though there was no data collection between the months of August 2018-February 2019. Parents were predominantly female (Male = 2), though children were predominantly male (Male= 8). Parents ranged in age from 33 years to 51 years (M = 41.00, SD = 6.41). Children ranged in age from 10-12 (M = 11.40, SD = 0.84). In order to be eligible for this study participants were required to meet three criteria: both parent and child identified as White (in recruitment, eligibility included the term “Caucasian” as well), the participating child was between the ages of 10-12, and the dyad lived in the Midwestern United States and was able to travel to one of the three available data collection sites (Lawrence, KS--“Collegeton”, Overland Park, KS—“Metroville”, and Eau Claire, WI—“Clearwater”). One dyad was removed after data collection, because although they met the criteria, they identified themselves as Romani and referred to White individuals as not members of their in-group. For purposes of this study, I determined that “White as outgroup” was an exclusionary criterion, and though this dyad would appear as White to the outside world, differential socialization practices may be at play if they fail to see themselves as White.

Table 1. Participant descriptions

Participant ID	Parent	Child	Location
2	Bill, 37-year-old stepfather	Michael, 10-year-old male	Metroville
3	Amy, 35-year-old mother	Eddie, 12-year-old male	Collegeton
5	Brenda, 33-year-old mother	Calvin, 10-year-old male	Metroville
6	Kris, 49-year-old mother	Becca, 11-year-old female	Metroville

7	Stacy, 41-year-old mother	Adam, 12-year-old male	Clearwater
8	Liz, 48-year-old mother	Jacob, 12-year-old male	Clearwater
9	Beth, 39-year-old mother	Ryan, 12-year-old male	Clearwater
10	Patty, 51-year-old mother	Ashley, 12-year old female	Clearwater
11	Dana, 35-year-old mother	Hannah, 11-year-old female	Clearwater
12	Kevin, 42-year-old father	Tyler, 12-year-old male	Clearwater

Our sample was largely educated, ranging from some college experience to several terminal graduate degrees. In fact, six of our ten parents held a Masters degree or higher. Additionally, our sample averaged an annual household income of around \$100,000. This is unusual for the data collection areas—recent census data suggested that the average household income in Eau Claire, WI was around \$45,000 (2016 Census) and about \$79,000 for Overland Park, KS (2016 Census).

**Researchers**

In line with qualitative methodology, it is important to acknowledge the researcher as a data collection tool. In this case, it is important to disclose that I identify as a White American female. In past studies (Hagerman, 2016), participants have indicated that it is easier to discuss race with a same-race researcher because they are not worried about their comments being misinterpreted or offending anyone. Accordingly, the other researchers who assisted in data collection were White females. However, other colleagues, including people of color, assisted as coders and transcribers for the observation tapes, and transcribers for the audio data in the interviews. Research assistants consisted of my advisor and our undergraduate research assistants. All researchers were HRPP trained.

## **Sites**

Observations and interviews took place in a lab in either a suburb of a Midwestern metropolitan area or in one of two mid-sized college towns in the Midwest. Because of the proximity to the metropolitan area and the diversity of the local university, the researchers believed that participants would have the potential for contact with and exposure to people of color, while still likely maintaining White spaces. This assumption was confirmed through conversations with the parents in the study, asking about their social circles.

## **Procedure**

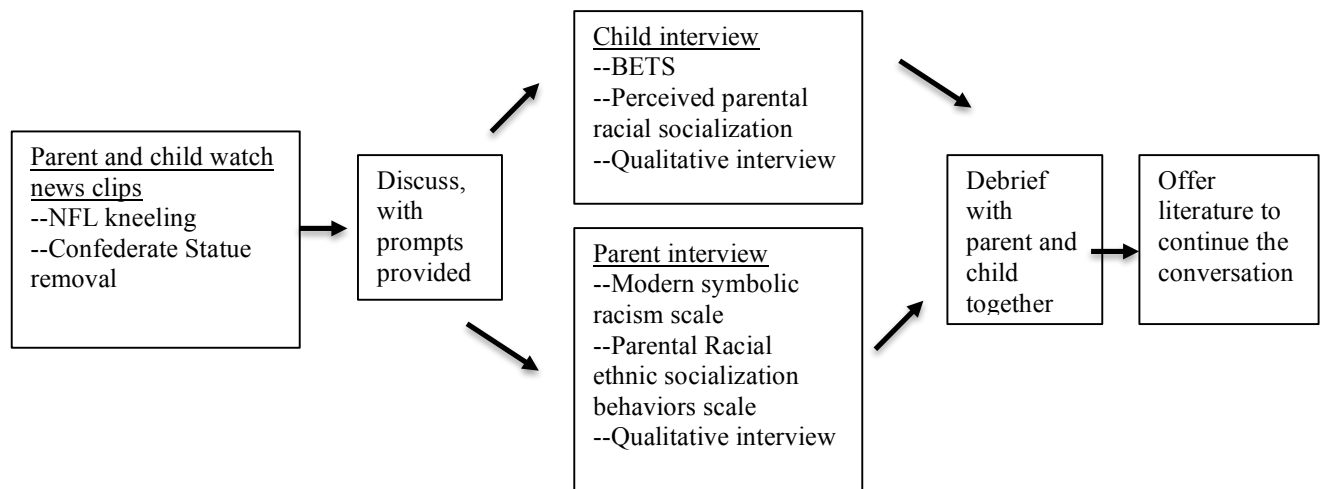
**Recruitment.** Participants were recruited via flyers asking them to participate in a study focused on the ways in which parents talk to their children about diversity, race, and other social issues. Flyers were distributed at area after-school programs, the YMCA, the university's SONA system as well as local meeting spaces such as coffee shops, libraries, parent groups, and local children's sporting events. Additional participants, particularly at the Eau Claire site were recruited with the use of snowball and convenience sampling, asking previous participants if they would be willing to nominate an acquaintance who meets the sampling criteria. Participants were reimbursed in the form of a \$20 gift card for their participation.

Participant recruitment and retention proved difficult. Because of the nature of the study, recruitment materials were left intentionally vague in terms of eligibility for the study, asking interested participants to contact the primary researcher for more information if interested. Several parents of color contacted me, expressing interest. In the email exchanges that ensued, I clarified that in order to be eligible, participants needed to identify as White or Caucasian. This eliminated several interested participants. Additionally, six participants had met eligibility criteria, signed up for a timeslot, and either cancelled the day of their participation or failed to show at the data collection site. This led to an overall reduced sample size and the addition of the aforementioned recruitment strategies.

**Data collection.** An overview of the data collection procedure is provided in Figure 1. Upon arrival at the data collection site, the parent was asked to fill out an informed consent document, while the child gave informed assent. Both parent and child were also asked to give permission for video and audio recording (For full consent / assent documents, see Appendix A). They were then taken to an observation room, equipped with video recording technology.

Figure 1.

Data collection flowchart



Protocol was developed and pilot tested with a mother-son dyad who did not fully meet our inclusion criteria because the child was too young. During the pilot test, we determined that, particularly in the NFL kneeling clip, depictions of the current American president derailed conversation and distracted participants. As a result, we chose a different clip, still depicting the controversy without including the 45<sup>th</sup> president. Additionally, after pilot testing we added several interview questions to both the parent and child interview protocols.

The dyads were asked to watch two news clips. The first clip was a national news report on the NFL kneeling controversy. It depicted quarterback Colin Kaepernick choosing to kneel during the National Anthem prior to National Football League games in 2016. Kaepernick said that he was kneeling to protest social injustices against people of color in America (NFL Network, 2016). Full transcript of the short video can be found in Appendix B. The second clip discussed nation-wide debates regarding statues of Confederate military figures, with a specific

focus on Duke University's decision to remove a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee (NBC News, 2016). The story shows statue removal in cities such as Montgomery, AL and Dallas, TX as well as interviews with individuals supporting both sides of the issue. Full transcript of the short video can be found in Appendix C.

Both videos were chosen because the issues presented were on-going national news stories, suggesting participants may have some familiarity with the topics prior to watching these videos in the lab. The clips were also chosen because although race was salient in the issues presented, parents could also choose to discuss alternative issues: the NFL controversy clip could easily yield a conversation on patriotism and the monument clip could easily yield a conversation on the Civil War or remembering history. I wanted participants to feel comfortable discussing the clips, giving them a clear opportunity to discuss race in an organic way, while recognizing that it would be possible to avoid a conversation about race in both of these situations.

Parents were asked to engage in a discussion with their children and given prompts such as "What do you think is happening here?", "Why do you think the people in this situation acted how they did?", and "Do you think this issue is fairly presented? What may have been left out?". The prompts were intended to aid the conversation, and parents were instructed that they could use all, some, or none of the prompts in their conversation. A full list of prompts is available in Appendix D.

I acknowledge that the lab setting is not a natural setting or situation in which to discuss race. This, coupled with the apparent video recorders, could have led some parents and children to give socially desirable answers, as opposed to sharing their true thoughts and beliefs regarding the videos. To try to account for this, participants were assured that there was no "right" or "wrong" way to discuss the videos and that the researchers were not actively observing their

conversations. A validity check was later performed in the interviews and dyad data was examined holistically to determine whether I believed the dyads were misrepresenting true beliefs or acting in a socially desirable way. I do not believe this was the case.

After the parent and child discussed the news clips, they were taken to separate rooms for individual interviews. Both the parent and child interviews were recorded using audio recorders.

***Parent interview.*** Parents were asked demographic questions (see Appendix E for full measure). They were then asked to complete modified versions of the Parental Racial-Ethnic Socialization Behaviors scale (Hughes & Chen, 1997) and the Modern Symbolic Racism Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002). Administration of these measures was counterbalanced across participants in order to account for any order effects.

Upon completion of the quantitative measures, parent participants were asked to partake in a brief qualitative interview. The interview included questions about the participants' race-based conversations with their child, perceptions of biased statements their child has made, and value assessment regarding the role of diversity in their child's life, as well as questions regarding their role in their child's racial socialization and diversity-related experiences they have had with their child. A full interview script is available in Appendix F.



***Child interview.*** Meanwhile in a separate room, the child participant was interviewed by another researcher. The interviewer administered the Black/White Evaluative Traits Scale (Hughes & Bigler, 2007) verbally, asking the child to indicate their response from the associated options. Participants were then given a definition of race and racism. After the terms “race” and “racism” were explain (See Appendix G for definitions), participants were verbally administered a modified version of the Perceived Parental Ethnic Socialization Scale (van Bergen, et al., 2016). Administration of these measures was counterbalanced across participants in order to account for any order effects; however, the definitions of “race” and “racism” always preceded the Perceived Parental Ethnic Socialization Scale.

After the quantitative measures were completed, child participants were asked to partake in a brief qualitative interview. They were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of their parents’ racial socialization, the role of diversity in their life, and racially biased experiences they may have had or witnessed. A full interview script is available in Appendix G.

***Debriefing.*** After both parent and child interviews had taken place, they were reunited for debriefing. Debriefing involved a conversation about racial equality aimed at the child, as well as additional conversation starters and book recommendations for the parents. For the debriefing statement, see Appendix L and for a complete list of recommendations and conversation starters, see Appendix M.

## **Parent Measures**

**Racial socialization.** Parents in this study completed Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo’s (2012) modification of Hughes & Chen’s (1997) Parental Racial-Ethnic Socialization Behaviors measure as an indicator of racial socialization. The scale asks parents to rate the frequency with which they discuss various messages of race with their child (i.e. “How often do you tell your

child \_\_?") This questionnaire contains four subscales reflected in the socialization literature: egalitarianism (e.g., "people are equal, regardless of their skin color"), history of other groups (e.g., "about important people of other racial/ethnic groups"), discrimination against other groups (e.g., "people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds are still discriminated against based on their racial/ethnic background"), and preparation for bias (e.g., "there is a possibility someone may treat them badly based on their racial or ethnic background"). Response options range from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Previous research suggests internal reliability estimates were high on each of the four sub-scales ( $\alpha$ s = 0.89, 0.79, 0.92, and 0.74, respectively; Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). The full measure can be found in Appendix H.

**Racial attitudes.** Parents in this study also completed a version of Henry & Sears' (2002) Symbolic Racism scale that we modified to include items from the Modern Ethnicity Bias Scale (Purkiss et al., 2006). This scale is designed to measure symbolic racism, which is the predominantly White belief that racial struggles in America are no longer an issue and racial differences now exist as a factor of meritocracy as opposed to social and institutional constructs (Henry & Sears, 2002). Additionally, symbolic racism includes an endorsement of traditional "American" values, such as individualism and the protestant work ethic. Taken together, this measure serves to indicate both racial bias and the colorblind racial attitudes that Bonilla-Silva describes (2003). The Modern Symbolic Racism scale consists of eight items, assessing one's beliefs that racial struggles, particularly for black people, were no longer an issue in America. Additionally, four items from the Modern Ethnicity Bias Scale were included to reflect attitudes toward Hispanic individuals. Statements addressing four different themes (work ethic and responsibility for outcomes, excessive demands, denial of continuing discrimination, and undeserved advantage) were given and participants were asked to respond using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree). Scores are added up to create a composite symbolic racism score. Previous research on this scale has found relatively high reliability coefficients ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ; Henry & Sears, 2002). The full measure can be found in Appendix J.

### **Child Measures**

**Racial socialization.** Children in this study will complete a modified version of the Perceived Parental Ethnic Socialization Scale (van Bergen, et al., 2016). The scale asks children to rate the frequency with which they have discussed various racial messages with their parents (i.e. "How often have your parents \_\_?") This questionnaire contains three subscales: cultural

socialization (e.g. “How often have your parents told you that being White is an important part of who you are?”), egalitarianism (e.g. “How often have your parents said it is important to appreciate people of all racial or ethnic backgrounds?”), and bias/discrimination (e.g. “How often have your parents done or said things to keep you from trusting other kids who are not White?”) Response options range from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Previous research using an adolescent sample, ages 14-18, suggests internal reliability estimates were high on each of the three sub-scales ( $\alpha$ s = 0.77, 0.69, and 0.84, respectively; van Bergen, et al., 2016). We have modified the scale to reflect more developmentally appropriate language for our sample, as well as including some colorblind items. Reliability estimates for the four subscales (Cultural Socialization, egalitarianism, bias/discrimination, and colorblindness) were relatively high, ( $\alpha$ s = 0.77, 0.69, and 0.84, respectively). The full measure can be found in Appendix I.

**Racial attitudes.** Additionally, children in this study will complete a modified version of the *Black/White Evaluative Trait Scale* to measure explicit racial attitudes (*BETS*, Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007). This measure was designed to explicitly measure an individual’s positive and negative attitudes towards Black, White, and Hispanic people. The scales consist of 12 items, including positive, negative, and neutral traits about each racial group. Participants are asked how many people within the group possess the traits, on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Hardly any) to 5 (Almost all). Scores are compiled for each of the six subscales: Positive Black, Positive White, Positive Latino, Negative Black, Negative White, and Negative Latino. Previous research on the subscales has found reliabilities ranging from .56 to .82 (Hughes, et al., 2007). The full measure can be found in Appendix K.

## **Data analysis**

Video recordings of the parent-child interaction and audio recordings from both the parent and child interviews were transcribed in full by the primary researcher and research assistants. Qualitative data were analyzed using the constant comparative method of data analysis. Merriam (1998) suggests that this method is best for developing grounded theory--a series of connections between various categories and groupings. Because this method does just as the name implies (constant comparison), it inductively uses data to find links between participants as well as within a participant's own interview. Through the process of constant comparison, themes tend to emerge from the data, coming together to formulate a theory. My approach was both inductive and deductive, using the literature on White parental racial socialization to guide a search for data consistent with certain themes (e.g., colorblindness), but also using a process of open coding to look for general themes overall.

In addition, member checks were used within the interview process itself to ensure that the interviewee's intended meaning was captured. In any sort of anecdote or response that a researcher found ambiguous, the researcher asked follow-up questions and re-framed the response. This allowed the interviewee to correct potential errors in future interpretation.

**Anticipated themes / codes.** Based on previous research, I anticipated that reported socialization strategies would largely reflect a proclivity toward colorblind attitudes (Bartoli et al., 2016) and would fall under Bonilla-Silva's four Colorblind Racism frameworks: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Additionally, I anticipated finding categories such as "exposure to diversity" and "color consciousness" (Underhill, 2016). "Exposure to diversity", as defined in Underhill's work, is a continuation of Allport's Contact Theory, such that colorblind parents reported that the way they

addressed race was through contact with other racial groups, via cultural events, social gatherings, and school enrollment. This approach to socialization was largely based on passive action, and not explicit instruction or conversation with the child. To contrast, “color consciousness” reflects explicit conversations between parent and child about race, racial bias, and the effects of White privilege (Underhill, 2016). Parents using color conscious strategies prioritized were intentional in choosing diverse schools, neighborhoods, and groups of friends, and in discussing this intentionality with their child. In line with Hagerman’s (2014) work, parents in this category involve their children in social activism and initiated dialogues about race with their children, using the diversity in their environment as a starting point for conversations about race, not in the place of those conversations.

**Validity.** Arguments for the validity of the data rely largely on the data collection methods themselves. The intent of the semi-structured interview method is to yield rich data and rely on the researcher to ask follow-up questions. Maxwell (2011) suggests that rich data also comes as the result of multiple forms of recording--in this case, both note-taking and audio recording.

Furthermore, analysis included triangulation of sources, meaning that categories are created and defined on the basis of multiple participants’ experiences, previous literature, and results from the quantitative portion of the study (Merriam, 1998). In the case of interview data, I triangulated themes using at least three interviewees’ responses. To address several of the research questions, triangulation among a participant dyad’s sources were used (e.g. parent interview, child interview, and observation.) The relationship among the sources provide a strong argument for data validity as well as reliability.

## Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following questions:

1. How do White parents talk with their children about race?
2. How are White parents' racial socialization actions similar to and different from their stated socialization goals or strategies?
3. Are White parents' perceptions of their racial socialization messages similar to children's perceptions of received messages?

In this chapter, I use findings from each data collection point (i.e., observation, parent interviews, and child interviews) to address the research questions listed above. Because of a limited sample size ( $N = 10$ ), I did not conduct inferential statistical tests on the quantitative data but used the responses to the quantitative measures to support the validity of the qualitative statements and triangulate data. Additionally, although I outlined several hypotheses when I proposed this study, the nature of the research and grounded theory propose a more inductive approach, using the data to further investigate the research questions. As such, I have eliminated the previous hypotheses.

Transcriptions of the parent-child interaction and of the parent and child interviews were reviewed for coding purposes. Analysis began with line by line coding to reflect an open coding process. In particular, the observation was coded first using incident by incident coding methods (Charmanz, 2006), then second coded for use of given prompts. Observation codes were then sorted into themes. Although some themes were more video specific (such as "patriotism" in the Kaepernick video), others were present across the context of both videos (such as historical vs contemporary examples of racism).

## How do White Parents Talk with Their Children about Race?

Parents in our sample took several approaches to discussions about race. Self-report data from the Parental Racial Ethnic Socialization Behaviors Scale indicated that parents largely subscribed to an egalitarian racial socialization strategy, (M= 3.10, SD=0.50), while also focusing messages on other group history and discrimination against other groups. A full table of socialization subscores can be found below.

Table 3. Parental Racial Ethnic Socialization Behaviors Subscales' Descriptives

Subscore	Mean	SD
Egalitarian	3.10	0.37
Other group history	3.40	1.14
Discrimination against other groups	3.59	0.85
Preparation for ingroup bias	2.00	1.27
Socialization for outgroup bias	1.87	0.40

However, the majority subscribing to egalitarianism does not fully capture the extent of parental racial conversations.

**Parents generally avoid discussing race.** For several parents in our sample, the answer to “How do you talk about race?” was “I don’t, because it doesn’t come up.” For example:

- “But with the kids we don’t really directly address it unless they happen to be watching a news clip with us and then we say, you know, “What did you think about that? Do you understand what that was about?” So we don’t really try not to have those conversations, it just doesn’t really even come up?” –Brenda



- “Yeah. It’s not a thing for us. I guess that’s my ignorance component or ignoring component if you want to call it ignorance. I don’t know. What’s the right word? Ignoring, I guess, but I don’t want to say ignoring it because I’m not ignoring it. I just don’t make it an issue if it’s not an issue. It’s never a conversation unless it needs to be a conversation.”—Amy
- “I think maybe I just don’t communicate them because I make the assumption that race is not an issue for them. Because it’s not an issue for me.”—Kris
- “You know, we don’t ever talk about it. Like, it’s just never been an issue. It’s never been a thing because we just have always viewed everybody that’s equal. We’ve never you know I guess people have different colored skin or they come from different backgrounds or social you know, different social economic statuses but I mean, we’ve just always taught our kids that everybody is equal, it doesn’t matter who they are, where they come from, who their parents are, and so um, so it’s just never been an issue she has ever brought up at home.”—Dana

If the topic of race does not come up in their households, parental responses in the observations and interviews suggest a possible explanation as to why. Parents serve as gatekeepers in the conversation about race. Some parents use colorblind ideology to discuss race with their children, as noted in these observational excerpts.

“Well in both those clips you get kind of the gist of what was happening. I mean, it’s all about social injustice and making sure everyone is created equal. It doesn’t matter the color of your skin or...” —Amy

Some parents are not actively using colorblind ideology, but passively encouraging colorblind statements their children are making, as with the exchange below between Brenda and Calvin.

Calvin: Uhm, I think that his opinion is correct. I don't care what other people says, black, white, orange... brown.. it doesn't matter, we're all the same.

Brenda (P): (Smiles) I agree.

In the observation, parents often focused on presenting both sides of the debates reported in the news clips but did not detail the racial implications of each side. For example, in this exchange between Liz (P) and her son Jacob, Liz (P) brings up both Kaepernick's right to kneel and the opposition's suggestion that doing so is disrespectful to the military. However, she did not mention why Kaepernick was kneeling or the implications of his protest.

Liz (P): Oh, okay..... Wanna start, What did the people in the clip disagree about?

Jacob: Okay! They disagreed that, like Colin Kaepernick thought that, he-, it was his right to kneel. To stand up for his people. And then, some other people thought it was unconstitutional to kneel because it was the Na- the National Anthem and that he was disrespecting the flag.

Liz (P): Right... I know some of the, um... I don't know if the sa-, I don't think they said this, but I know in some of the, some of the, shots. Do you remember they had like military people? Like the, so military people that had gone to the game?

Jacob: \*Shakes head yes\*

Liz (P): And I don't know they said it in here but I know that people have said that, that it's not just disrespecting the flag but its disrespecting like the, like veterans and military.

And I was reminded of the because they showed military people, I don't know remember if they said that though.

Jacob: Um..

Liz (P): Maybe they also, do you think that they disagreed about anything else?

Um..... Like maybe did they disagree about, I was thinking uh... Like maybe if an athlete should act this way? Should be able to do, like you know maybe you should just be an athlete play football and keep your mouth shut.

Jacob: Yeah well...

Liz (P): Do you know what I mean?

Jacob: Yeah well, but also, he's standing up for his rights as a person.

Liz (P): Mhm.

Later, she tied Kaepernick's kneeling to the Civil Rights Movement, but in vague terms:

Liz (P): But does it remind you of other things like what about in the civil rights?

Jacob: Like, uh, how they didn't actually hurt anyone while they were protesting. Well some, some of them did but some of them didn't. And how, the- in the start everyone was against them and

Liz (P): Oh yeah.

Jacob: everyone thought what they were doing was wrong and attacked them. Then everyone now knows that they were right.

Liz (P): Right. That's non-violent protest.

In this example, Liz does not explicitly discuss race at all. She notes the relationship between Kaepernick's protest and historical social justice protests but fails to highlight the contemporary racial significance of Kaepernick's protest.

**Parent reflections on racial attitudes and racial socialization.** In talking about when and how they opted to discuss race with their children, several parents indicated they had done research on children and racial attitudes previously, which informed parenting decisions. For example, Kris (P) noted “I think I read somewhere recently about liberals like me who think It’s invisible and we don’t want to bring it up because we don’t want to make a big deal of it, but really we should bring it up.” While Kris (P) noted research on colorblindness among White parents, Kevin (P) cited research on the development of racial attitudes in children and the importance of starting racial socialization young:

But I think all the studies I’ve seen and even anecdotally, even with my kid I was aware of him noticing race at two, three years old. So it was always important to immediately start to talk about those perceptions and I think he was two or three and he started to talk about how he liked football better than basketball because football players look more like this (motions to arm) than basketball players. And I was like let’s flush that out, let’s steer into that and talk about what that means.

Taken together, these statements suggest that many parents in this sample are curious about how to discuss race and had sought out information about how to do so, though through the process of self-selection into this study, they may already be more interested or invested than the typical White parent.

**Parents take the lead.** My observational data suggests that parents largely take the lead when discussing race. In this sample, I found that parents were talking, on average, 58.9% of the time, compared to their children talking 41.1% of the time. Parental conversation domination ranged from less than half of the spoken words (44.7% in Dana (P) and Hannah’s conversation) to almost four times as much as their child (78.0% in Bill (P) and Michael’s

conversation). In addition to leading the conversation, parents were more likely to bring up the topic of race after each video, with parents introducing the concept of race twelve times as opposed to the child's eight times.

Several prominent themes emerged from the observation data in relation to the question "How do White parents talk with their children about race?" One of the overarching themes is that White parents do not treat these conversations as conversations at all, but rather teaching moments. Analysis suggested that after the videos, parents were largely sharing their own opinions on the videos, like Amy (P) did.

"Okay, well I'll tell you what I think and you can tell me if you agree or disagree. Do you think that---so I think that the monuments should stay up because they're a reminder to us to not do the same stupid sh—[sic] that we did previously. Right?"

Another example of parents engaging in teaching moments comes from giving context to the video, as seen here with Brenda (P),

Brenda (P): So do you understand why he's kneeling?

Calvin: (Pauses, then shakes head no)

Brenda (P): No? Well they kind of talked about it in there. (Child sits up) About social injustice and he said that he'll stand for the, the, the Anthem when the flag represents everyone equally.

Kris (P) similarly sought to provide context when explaining the protests surrounding Confederate statue removal:

"Okay, well they, those statues that are all over the South, they're there, historically they've been there like decades. (starts to use hand gestures) Some people now want the statues removed because they don't want monuments to the Confederacy or the South.

But other people want the statues to stay because they want them to remain a part of our history. Do you have an opinion, one way or the other?

Liz (P) agreed when her son connected Colin Kaepernick's peaceful protest to the Civil Rights movement. However, she expanded the conversation, saying:

Right. That's non-violent protest. Like Dr. King did, right? Did I ever show you the picture I had on my door for a while, but it was the front of a magazine. Where it was, um, not this January but last January, you know which is Dr. King's birthday, and it was a drawing someone had made of Kaepernick kneeling and it was a drawing of Dr. King kneeling with him. And, you reminded me of that. Like that's exactly what you're saying. I think that that's what Dr. King would've done, and I think that is what Kaepernick is doing. And so they're, they're united in that same, in that same movement.

Some parents gave more than context, recapping complete history lessons for their child, as Kris (P) did for her daughter Becca.

Okay, so Civil War, (using hand gestures) North against South. Those statues are of, uh, soldiers on the Southern side. The Confederate side, that was the side that wanted slavery.

**Historical versus contemporary examples of racism.** When discussing the videos, many parents referred to historical events, such as the Civil Rights Movement. One of the commonly shared opinions regarding the Confederate statues clip was that the statues were a remembrance of history and without those reminders, we may be doomed to repeat that history, as noted in this conversation between Bill (P) and Michael.

Bill (P): So I think the reason they think they should stay up, a lot of people, not because people are racist, but some people probably are, but I think that some people look at it historically.

Michael: Like they--

Bill (P): (using lots of large hand gestures, interrupting) Like I just said these are just, is this is historically what happened. These statues, represent history. And you should always try to remember history, in my opinion.

Michael: Yeah.

Bill (P): Cause otherwise you're, we're gonna repeat the same mistakes.

This concern for forgetting the past was echoed several times in the observations, like in this conversation between Amy (P) and her son, Eddie.

Amy (P): Do you think that---so I think that the monuments should stay up because they're a reminder to us to not do the same stupid shhh-- that we did previously. Right?

Eddie: (looks up) Mmhmm.

Amy (P): Now a lot of those monuments are up, like they just talked about the biggest army base is Fort Bragg is named after him because he was a very good general. He may have been fighting on the wrong side, but he was very good at what he did. Right?

In this example, Amy (P) touched on historical remembrance of race while also glossing over the racial implications of "fighting for the wrong side."

For Dana (P) and Hannah's observation, it was actually Hannah that indicated this sentiment: "And you don't want to remember it but it's still a good part in history where you

should know about, because if history starts repeating itself we're never going to get past now".

Hannah made similar statements in her interview:

And that some people might think that they won't want the statues because then they remember about the horrible time, especially if they have answers [sic] that were slaves, but that people want to keep them up just because it reminds us of history. It reminds us that that should never happen again. Because if we take the statues down, we can't remember anything really and history will pretty much repeat itself over.

These sentiments are interesting, because in their emphasis on depicting and respecting history they dismiss the concerns expressed by people of color in the video and echo the opinion of the White individual depicted. As parents mentioned these views in the observation, children were listening and were likely to bring them up in the interviews, like Eddie: "That..that they [the statues] should be moved to a spot and say, 'Do not do what this man has done.'"

In contrast to the colorblindness exhibited by using these historical justifications to minimize racism, several parents and children noted that by keeping the statues up, they were elevating the wrong parts of history. Ryan put it eloquently when describing the argument depicted in this clip:

I think they were doing that just to sort of forget about the horrible like back story of the United States and how we used to enslave people and force them to do work for us and they just didn't want to remember people in like a good way anymore because they were so they were like the bad people and they were doing bad things.

While most of the participants framed the confederate statue clip as one of historical remembrance, few parents asked or acknowledged why this would be a current news story. Only two parents (Beth and Kevin) acknowledged the confederate statues clip as an issue of here and



now. Beth (P) connected the statues with a rise in the White Nationalist party, stating “I think you like mentioned where it took place was really important too ‘cause they talk I think this clip was right after the Charlottesville rally where are like the white supremacist came to cause trouble and killed someone.”

Instead, most used it as a tool to remember slavery or the civil war or as a foil for other “bad” historical events we want to remember so we are not doomed to repeat them. For example, Bill, Amy, and Stacy drew connections between the Confederate statues and Nazi Germany, and comparing the confederate general depicted, Robert E. Lee, to Adolf Hitler. Although these connections emphasized the representation of undesirable moments in our collective history, the conversations failed to capture the enduring and systematic consequences of the confederacy and slavery in America.

**Messages about media.** In both observations and interviews, the news clips sometimes elicited parents’ general views about portrayals of current events in news media. There was a trend within this sample of controlling their child’s media, noting that media, and the news in particular, was depressing or too biased. When talking about her son’s failure to connect Kaepernick’s protest of racial inequality to a recent gun violence protest at his school, Amy (P) said, “I guess on my end, there’s still a little bit of that ‘I kinda want to protect you from the violence of the media, so at the same time, maybe we don’t talk about those things as much...”” Brenda (P) noted a similar sentiment, stating:

So there is some censoring that goes on. But I mean Calvin actually did surprise me, going back to your earlier question, we were talking about slavery and he said “I saw this video clip once where this little girl was getting whipped and a man jumped in to stop it and he got whipped so bad that his skin got cut.” and I was like Whoa. That’s graphic. So

you know, I don't think they're shielded from the details of our history but we don't really dive into the deep details with them.

This "sheltering" notion was common, with Kris (P) expressing similar sentiments, "Well, I told her I think twice that I suddenly had this revelation that I hadn't been talking to her about these things because they made me sad and angry. Wow I have sheltered my kids from all of this crap that's going on. And part of it's because I hate it so much, I'm so depressed and angry." Dana (P) echoed this sadness, stating "We honestly, we don't watch the news a lot in our home just because it's negative. So, depressing. Um, so we really don't watch a lot of it."

Kris (P)'s case was particularly interesting, as she noted that her child's school was also censoring the media and exposure to current events for her daughter as well as the conversations between classmates. In this example, Kris talked about how her daughter had not heard of nor talked about the NFL kneeling story at school:

She goes to Catholic private school and she explained this a little bit to me but I already knew the background of, like, they have shut down talk about that at the school because there are many liberal Catholics there and many non-liberal Catholics there.

Some parents, such as Bill, did not censor the media to protect their children, but because they believed that media reporting is biased:

A good news channel or a good news should just be info, ...they're not tryna bias, and you know, and that's uh, my opinion on a big issue we're having now in the world, is news is so slanted. Of course, they're trying to get a certain audience to watch them.

While some individuals, like Bill (P), used the role of media to justify a historically colorblind stance, a good portion of our sample expressed color conscious notions, at least in their own lives. For example, Brenda (P) recalls a conversation she had with her son Calvin.

Brenda (P): There have been times where we will be watching a TV show or something and he'll say "Well, that's racist." And we'll go "Well is it though?" Umm because he seems to think that any allusion to a person's race is racism. So we've been having to explain "That's not racist, that's just an observation of their race."

R: How do you navigate that?

Brenda (P): I mean, just like that. That's not racism. Racism is more negative. And judging a person just because of their race and not just an observation of their race.

R: Yeah, I think that's an interesting kind of misconception that kids pick up on. This idea that anything about race is not a good path to take with grownups.

Brenda: Yeah, exactly. And we're trying to tell him, you know, it's okay. People are different. It's only when you judge somebody just for being different that it becomes a problem. So I think he's still working on understanding that.

Other parents, like Kevin (P) use media to foster critical thinking skills with the intention of making their children more engaged citizens.

I think being actively critical of the media as it comes in---I think by nature we're designed to trust and absorb information and I think it's a continual process learning to "Hey wait, no" you have to question everything you hear and really listen closely, so I wanted to emphasize that right off the bat.

### **How are White Parents' Racial Socialization Actions Similar to and Different From their Stated Socialization Goals or Strategies?**

Overall, parent interviews reflected a comfort level in having conversations about the news clips with their children. Multiple parents cited the conversations they had during the observation as "normal", "typical", or "not difficult". Indeed, they seemed comfortable leading

the conversations, though they largely deferred to the prescribed list of questions, which were presented as a starting point for the conversation. In addition, multiple parents noted in interviews that they explicitly talked about race with their children. However, although the observations demonstrated an openness in discussing the clips, in general the conversations did not fully center on race and racism. Instead, as discussed above, parents often chose to take different avenues like talking about the general idea of protesting or historical events like the Civil Rights Movement.

Despite reporting an explicit approach to the topic of race in their households, most parent participants were unable to produce an example of a racial conversation. Instead, when pressed about diversity initiatives in their parenting, parents reported largely implicit racial messages: racially diverse friend groups (either for themselves or for their children), partaking in other cultures' events, and only discussing it in a reactionary setting (e.g. "if it comes up"). For example, Kevin (P) noted a desire for his son Tyler to have a color conscious racial approach, noting that he and his wife go out of their way not just to expose Tyler to people of other races, but to really embrace that exposure.

Well, I think in general you try to take them to places that are diverse and reflective, like we've been to Hmong new years like kajillions of times . We'll go to restaurants where we'll be the only White people at the—we go into spaces and constantly try to— constantly is probably way too strong but consistently try to find spaces to go into to want to expose but just normalize, right? I think, because it's something we've always done, they are comfortable going into non-White spaces.

Although Kevin’s approach described here is relatively color-conscious, it also reflects the common pattern of relying on more subtle or implicit types of socialization practices, rather than explicit conversations about race and racism.

**Are White Parents’ Perceptions of their Racial Socialization Messages Similar to Children’s Perceptions of Received Messages?**

To investigate this question, I compared parents’ perceptions of the race-based conversations to what children were noting. Before discussing this, however, I will present a few general findings regarding children’s racial attitudes.

**Children’s perceptions of race and racial attitudes.** To investigate messages surrounding race, I first examined our sample of children perceived race. Noting the minimal sample size, I compared the means of the Black-White Evaluative Trait Scale subcategories (White Positive, White Negative, Black Positive, Black Negative, Latinx Positive, and Latinx Negative). Means and standard deviations are listed in the table below.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and range of the children’s BETS scores.

Subscale	Mean	SD	Range
White Positive	3.82	0.43	3.20-4.40
White Negative	2.58	0.96	1.00-4.00
Black Positive	3.78	0.37	3.00-4.40
Black Negative	2.80	0.49	1.20-2.80
Latinx Positive	3.82	0.43	3.20-4.60
Latinx Negative	1.74	0.35	1-2.20

As expected, there was no significant difference in the means of positive attributes. However, there was a significant mean difference between White Negative and Latinx Negative trait evaluations, though no significant difference between White and Black Negative traits. When

taken together, these results indicate that children in our sample evaluate their own racial in-group's traits more negatively than racial minority groups' traits.

**Colorblind attitudes.** Overall, children had a largely colorblind approach to discussions of race. The nature of the color blindness was demonstrated in two particular schools of thought for children: that race does not matter to them and that it is normative that race should not matter. For example, Michael stated “Like, we talked about--it doesn't matter if your skin's black, white, or... brown, or just all that matters is inside and how you treat other people.”

Similarly, children noted that their friends do not talk about race. When asked why these conversations do not come up, even in a diverse school or friend group, Michael noted, “Cause I don't think anyone really cares at my school. I think everyone is just nice to everybody.” Adam echoed that point several times, stating “Because we're past that point where we really don't see race anymore. We're just kinda... people” and “It doesn't really matter anymore. To most people at least.”

Becca responded similarly, saying “Cause most of us don't really care. We don't care what race we are. We're all friends.” When prompted about whether she and her mom had ever talked about race or current events, Becca commented “Just that it doesn't matter what race you are.”

Tyler touches on the normative nature of colorblindness, noting that most people in his school do not talk about race. When pressed to explain why he thinks his peers and teachers do not discuss race, Tyler said, “Probably people are encouraged to stay away from it and not really—to make sure that that can't offend anyone.”

Of all the child interviews, Calvin's interview was the most explicitly colorblind. His

mother Brenda had noted this tendency in her interview, stating “He seemed eager to let me know that he knew that you should treat everybody equally. Like, yes, that’s a good point, kid.” But his colorblindness went beyond egalitarianism and settled in a place that was somewhat defensive. In his interview, he stated:

I think that we should all be treated equally and even to celebrate like how I don’t think that-- it doesn’t matter. I even on this game called Roblox because you can change your skin color to brown because you can’t change it all the way to Black and then someone in Roblox went up to me and said I don’t like you because you’re brown and I’m like in real life, I’m White. I just wanted people to see that it doesn’t matter; we’re all the same.

In this particular anecdote, Calvin is trying to demonstrate his sincere belief in equality between different people and different races. However, at the first encounter of any bias or prejudice, he is quick to retreat back to his place of privilege. Another example came up when Calvin was describing the conversations surrounding race that he has with friends at school.

Well, yeah, but they’re usually my Black or Brown or mixed color friends that are trying to. Cause some of them feel like it was the White who made them poor and stuff. Then I tell them no, that wasn’t our fault, it was—well actually I don’t know I just say, I just try to make them feel better and accept who they are. And it doesn’t matter what color you are because you’re still people and it doesn’t matter.

Calvin is not the only one to express this defensive behavior. Eddie, while recalling a time in which his parents were discussing race, said his dad exclaimed “I hate Black people.” Eddie immediately dismissed this overt example of bias, stating “But [he was] with one of his friends. It was one of his Black friends that he was joking about.”

One child noted that there had been instances of bullying at his school in the past. When pushed to examine why the children of color may have bullied the White children, he indicated that historical racism may play a role, without acknowledging current aspects of discrimination.

Michael: Yeah. People...I swear all the Black kids were really mean to all the White kids. Yeah.

R: Why do you think that happened?

Michael: I don't know. Maybe because of like, segregation? Like because their grandparents and stuff had to deal with it so they're mad at White people and stuff.

**Parental messages.** In general, the parents in the sample were not sending explicit colorblind messages. In fact, parents report valuing diversity, citing diverse demographics as factors in their decisions about where to live or where to send their children to school.

- School district-wise here in Collegeton, but we intentionally did not send him to South West because I wanted my White male child to experience a little more diversity at West. So like, intentionally made that decision so that he would have a little bit more diversity and see that there's a little bit—there's other things out there. Yeah. So I consciously made that decision. –Amy (P)
- When we were home shopping we specifically targeted the house that we live in to be at Mann's Elementary which had a fairly high, I don't know if it's the highest but a fairly high minority population and also had something like 55% of students on free and reduced lunch at that point in time to make sure that they interacted with all kinds of different people and got that. --Kevin (P)



Liz demonstrated her commitment to a diverse school for her sons, noting that she spent a significant portion of time interviewing other parents about the inclusion practices at her son's school. She notes a necessity to include all kinds of families in her research, before choosing to alternatively enroll both sons in the town's most racially diverse junior high school.

Before sending him there, I kind of went around and tried to talk to as many parents who there had experienced their kids were there or not and especially, um, parents like families of color, I really tried to talk with because it could have been the thing that 'hey, maybe everybody goes to Clearwater Junior High and maybe everybody likes it because you know like people of color are silenced there or something' and you know, uh and so talking with especially with some colleagues that are here that are very critical um to reach out to them and say 'what was your experience? How did your kids do there?' and I got the feeling before he, when my older son went there too on that same alternative placement but, they said you know, this school does a really good job of like it's like fast response not tolerated and it's not just not swooping in but it's creating a culture where-- it is to create a culture of inclusion.

These parents are demonstrating their value for diversity in the housing and school choices that they make for their children, though Bill (P) expressed that he and his wife had made the decision to move from a more urban school district to a suburban school district because the schools were deemed "better."

And that's all it was, was based on schools. And the neighborhood, even more to prove it, we picked, like three amazing schools that are all walking distance to our house... So it's all about schools and giving him the best advantages and we wanted public schools so that's where we moved... It's really safe, super, I mean now we're worried about

someone going 30 in our 25-mph zone, you know?

In this particular case, “safety” is synonymous with a White space.

**Parental valuing of other types of diversity.** Additionally, though many parents noted a value of diversity, when pressed, they failed to mention racial diversity in the ways they sought diverse perspectives. Instead, they mentioned religion, able-bodiedness, and LGBTQ friends and experiences that they have exposed their children to.

- So even if we want to get into not even just the race-al (SIC) racial component of it, but the sexuality component of it. Like, my best friend is a lesbian. –Amy
- I have been more open about religion. Religious diversity and gender diversity. That’s kind of coming back to me. Again because of the way I was raised and they go to Catholic school. My daughter tells me that she does not identify as Catholic. I talk very often about how there are many paths to God. I call God with a feminine pronoun or a male, neutral pronoun or male, so I’ve really hit that hard, but I’ve neglected to talk about racial diversity. That’s what I’m feeling right now. –Kris
- We have some friends that are Jewish, um, you know, and so I forgot to mention that too, and so you know they don’t celebrate Christmas and so we talk about, you know when they celebrate Hanukkah when we are celebrating Christmas and things like that and so yeah, it just sort of lent itself to some good conversation um, around that. – Stacy

- Because, they will point out something that maybe has to do with sexism let's say or maybe someone was treated differently because of a, some form of a disability or something like that. –Beth

Despite parents' indicating they value diversity, it seems as if they do not tell their children that it is okay to be White. In fact, none of the children in this sample indicated on the socialization measure that their parents had told them that Whiteness was important ( $M= 1.36$ ,  $SD=$ ) nor has their parent given messages that being White is something of which to be proud ( $M=1.09$ ,  $SD=$ ). In fact, children reported cultural socialization as one of the least utilized socialization strategies ( $M= 1.94$ ,  $SD= 0.47$ ). When compared to messages of egalitarianism ( $M= 4.20$ ,  $SD= 0.53$ ), which parents had indicated was a primary socialization strategy, there was a significant mean difference.

Table 3. Reported means for the Perceived Parental Ethnic Racial Socialization subscales

Subscale	Mean	SD
Cultural socialization	1.94	0.47
Egalitarian	4.20	0.53
Bias	1.94	0.63
Colorblind	3.45	0.78
Other groups history/discrimination	3.32	0.93

**Correspondence between parental messages and child attitudes.** At least in the observation portion, the question of what messages children are receiving seems to align largely

with the explicit messages parents are sending. Children are looking to their parents for how to act and what to say. When asked who the child would turn to if they had a question about race or racism, children largely indicated they would turn to their parents because they trust them to give correct answers regarding appropriate behavior, cultural knowledge, and social norms.

- “My mom. Because she’s my family.” –Becca
- “Probably my parents. Because I trust them the most probably.” - \_Adam
- “My parents. Because they’re like the closest people to me and I’m always around them. And they’ll tell me.” --Jacob
- “Probably my parent, well my mom. Because she can give me like the correct answers.” ---Ashley
- “Uhh...either my dad or my mom, one of the two. Because I, because their opin—I value their opinions and I think they are the correct opinions.” -- Tyler

Jacob elaborated on this concept later in the interview, when asked why children at school may do or say something discriminatory toward members of other races:

Because I think it’s because their parents are racist and they’re bringing them up like that and that parents just rub off on them because they’re around those people the most. So they just get their racism from their parents.

Just like our participants had indicated that they would expect their parents to guide them through a diverse social landscape, Jacob noted that those who have biased or even racist views of diverse others were likely socialized to adopt those beliefs.

With several of our participants, when discussing the video, the parent would give an opinion and the child would echo that same sentiment with nearly the same language.

For example, Bill (P) explains his stance on the statues, saying:

Like I just said these are just, is this is historically what happened. These statues, represent history. And you should always try to remember history, in my opinion. Cause otherwise you're, **we're gonna repeat the same mistakes**. So I see both sides of it. I see why some people think 'hey, this should be removed. This is glorifying these people..

Then shortly after, when probing Michael for his own opinion, the child gives several non-committal responses. When pushed further, the child echoes "I think keep em up, yeah, because, uhm, because yeah you don't wanna repeat history or else it'll just keep on happening if you don't know about it. Yeah."

In another example, parents ask leading questions and interpret non-committal responses as agreement, such as this exchange between Dana and Hannah.

Dana (P): Do you think he should get to choose what he does or...

Hannah: Yeah.

Dana (P): Or should he have to stand like everybody was always able to stand?

Hannah: Umm..

Dana (P): Um? Why do you think he should get to choose?

Hannah: Because other people don't get to control other people's lives.

Dana (P): Like they should be able to control their own decisions? Yeah?

Hannah: Mhmm

Dana (P): Freedom of speech?

Hannah: Mhmm

Dana (P): That's kind of what I think too. He should decide what he wants to do and if there's something that he doesn't agree with...

Hannah: Yeah.

In conclusion, children indicated that they looked to their parents as a major source of information about race and racism. In addition, children frequently used similar language or explanations to what their parents had said in the parent-child discussion. However, children appeared to endorse explicitly colorblind attitudes more frequently and strongly than did their parents.

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

The goals of the current study were to examine White parents' racial socialization practices and perceptions of those practices. In addition, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between parental messages and children's perceptions of those messages. Understanding racial socialization practices of White parents is important because, although there is a breadth of research on racial socialization for children of color, little research has been done to understand how White parents talk with their children about race. Of the existent research, no study has looked at the triangulation between parents' perceptions of their socialization, their actual socialization behaviors, and how children are encoding those socialization behaviors. However, based on previous socialization research, we would expect that messages from parents are an important influence on the process of conceptualizing race and racism.

In this study, parent-child dyads watched two news clips that highlighted racially divisive issues. The dyads were asked to discuss the videos and were offered prompts as conversation starters. Upon concluding their conversations, parent and child were separated and given quantitative measures of racial bias and racial socialization. Then, while still separated, parents were asked questions about their conversations surrounding the videos, as well as their own socialization practices. Children were asked about the conversations surrounding the videos, and how race was addressed in their daily lives. This study allows for a unique contribution, as it is the first at this time to compare observed racial socialization to both parent and child perceptions of those socialization behaviors.

## **How do Parents Talk to their Children about Race and Racism?**

Parents in our sample engaged in a variety of socialization strategies when talking to their children. Largely, parents employed a combination of colorblind and color-conscious messages when discussing current events with their children. Other related themes also emerged in parent-child conversations about race, such as the role of the media, the current political climate, and race as a contemporary versus historical issue.

**Colorblind vs. color conscious framework.** As in previous research, participants in this study used both colorblind and color-conscious messages when engaging their children in conversations regarding race. Although previous research suggests that many White parents use a combination of messages, the primary message tends to be largely colorblind (Vitrup, 2016; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). In this sample, parents capitalized on both types of messages in the observation, though interviews recalling past experiences or conversations with their children were largely recalled as colorblind.

**Avoidance of discussions of race and racism.** The first, and most strongly colorblind, finding is that parents generally avoid talking about race and racism with their children. In line with previous research, some parents in our sample used a color-mute approach to racial socialization, stating that they only talked about race with their children if it came up. In addition, in the observation session, parents like Liz focused on history. Even though her son Jacob tried to talk about slavery in relation to the Confederate statues, Liz redirected the conversation to one concerning history several times.

Jacob: ...Some of them thought that they should take the confederate statues down, because confederate statues resemble like slavery and bad stuff.



Liz (P): I think some of the people... Well, I don't know. I agree with what you're saying. I think some of the people would think that its, uh, wouldn't even think that the history is bad.

Jacob: Yeah that's true.

Liz (P): I mean we did see some people, like, flying like a confederate flag or so maybe they're even proud of, proud of that, um, history.

The rest of their conversation centers on how historical events should be remembered, glossing over Jacob's unprovoked mention of slavery completely.

This finding aligns with Vittrup & Holden (2007)'s previous work. In their sample, White parents were explicitly told to include a discussion of race when watching and reacting to videos with their children. Yet, even when asked to explicitly discuss racial themes with their children, a large percentage (nearly 90%) of parents failed to include race in their post-video debriefing (Vittrup & Holden, 2007).

Within the parent interviews, some participants noted that they were not used to having those conversations or the realization that conversations about race in current events were difficult. One parent, Kris, confided that

"Well, I told her I think twice that I suddenly had this revelation that I hadn't been talking to her about these things because they made me sad and angry.. I think I told her that, or I asked her "Do you think I should talk more about this with you?" She said, "I don't care."

Despite potential discomfort, all of the parents in the sample remarked that the conversations they had with their children were interesting and/or important. Even in instances like Kris', where the parent is not discussing race to the degree they believe they should, parents still noted

valuing these conversations. Priest et al. (2014) argued that belief in the importance of racial socialization is a large predictor of whether or not parents are likely to engage in conversations about race, a theory that was confirmed in our sample.

***Reasons for avoidance of race.*** There are a variety of reasons why parents might avoid discussions of race and racism with their children, including a perception that the child is too young (Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Vittrup, 2016), that such conversations are too distressing for children (Pauker et al., 2015), or that racism is no longer an important issue (Pahlke et al., 2012). Parents may also avoid such conversations due to their own discomfort with acknowledging their racial privilege (DiAngelo, 2011). The tendency to avoid discussions of race and racism suggests that raising children to be able to form positive relations with members of minority groups is not likely a parenting priority for many White parents (Hamm, 2001).

**Historical versus contemporary framework.** Parents in the study spoke largely about race in historical terms, as conversations were centered around historical eras (i.e. Civil Rights Movement, Civil War) and figures (i.e. Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, Martin Luther King). Bonilla-Silva suggests that this historical framework allows White individuals to ignore current and enduring inequality, instead focusing on racism as in the past or “solved.” Previous research supports this theoretical framework, suggesting that White individuals use historical examples of racism when talking to their children to downplay contemporary racism and further remove themselves and their own identities from the acts in question (Vittrup, 2016; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). These messages were received clearly by their children, with one child (Adam) noting that “... We’re past the point where we really don’t see race anymore. We’re just kinda...people.”

In one of Bonilla Silva's four central frameworks for colorblindness, minimization of racism, he suggests that this type of colorblindness allows White individuals to accept inequality in the past while simultaneously distancing oneself from the racist acts and their enduring consequences. While some parents maintained a fair amount of distance by using the "they were bad people" narrative, one child, Ryan, used inclusive language when talking about slave owners, noting "I think there were doing that just to sort of forget about the horrible like backstory of the United States and how we used to enslave people and force them to do work for us..." This type of in-group inclusion—slave owners as in-group members—acknowledges Ryan's own positionality in an on-going system of White privilege.

**Explicit vs. implicit/subtle strategies.** Parents can convey messages about race in either explicit or implicit ways. Degner and Dalege (2013) support this sentiment, noting that parents can influence their children's racial attitudes by directly transmitting beliefs through words and actions or creating and maintaining an environment to foster those beliefs.

Parents in our sample largely took the lead in conversations with their children, suggesting that parents view their role in racial socialization as being to teach their own views to their children. However, parents also serve as gatekeepers of their children's opportunities and experiences, which is another theme reflected in the data. These White parents discussed choosing schools and neighborhoods due to their diversity, a theme largely reflected within the White socialization literature. But our parents also censored media exposure, saying that the clips presented were not discussed in the past because the media is too violent or makes them too sad. This well-intentioned censorship makes it easier for White parents to deny the contemporary examples of racism and strengthens a perceived resolve to "see no evil so we speak no

evil.” This mix of direct and indirect approaches to racial socialization is consistent with the Tripartite Socialization Model (Parke et al., 1994).

**Color-conscious parenting.** While colorblind messages seemed largely endorsed within this parent sample, there were also some instances of color-conscious and even anti-racist parenting. These individuals noted an overall interest in social justice issues citing their jobs (as counselor, social worker, and public defender, respectively) as one of the factors that guide their socialization messages, a finding that aligns with previous research (Priest et al., 2014). Although only a small number of parents took a completely color-conscious or anti-racist approach, several parents touched on aspects of color-conscious parenting—particularly in regard to the role of exposure to diversity and the school and neighborhood decisions that parents make for their children. Though messages may not explicitly reflect color-conscious socialization, intergroup contact continues to be cited as one of the strongest predictors of racial bias reduction (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2013) and alleviation of intergroup anxiety (Norton, et. al, 2006).

**The role of intergroup contact.** Many parents’ responses reflected a belief in the impact of inter-racial contact in promoting egalitarian racial attitudes (e.g., discussing the process of selecting a racially diverse school for their child to attend). Hamm (2001) suggests there is a discrepancy between what people think is acceptable (for example, believing on a theoretical level in the importance of contact and integration), but fail to represent in their actions (few close friends who are Black, few past or present romantic partners who are Black). Previous qualitative interviews have suggested that relationships with people of color are often superficial and sparse, but White individuals tend to inflate the importance or value of these relationships to maintain self-image as one of a progressive or colorblind. Our sample largely confirmed this finding,

using others' cultural events or the few children of color that attend their children's school as markers of diversity. Previous research suggests that cultural events increase the likelihood of White parents discussing race with their children (Brown et al., 2007).

Moreover, the parents in our sample were more likely to reference intergroup contact than the children. Only two children in this study referred to friends of color, though several parents reported people of color in their social circles. In line with potentially inflated the role of intergroup contact, parents in this sample were more likely to bring up children's past friends, such as Kevin (P) talking about Tyler's friend from Montessori, "And it is, he is still friends with one of his friends from preschool who was Black and that was just something that we kind of made a priority to kind of make that and make sure to keep extending the invitation every year." Previous research suggests that children's social circles and friendship groups become less diverse and more segregated as they approach adolescence.

**The role of political climate.** Although not an initial research question, an interesting theme emerged from the data—that of the current political climate illustrating the importance of these kinds of conversations, despite the potential discomfort. Parents made multiple mentions of the current presidential administration and its policies as a reason to engage children in more complex conversations about controversial issues. Although they may not spark an explicit message with regard to race, current political discourse within America has led parents like Beth (P) to engage their children:

I try to go off of things that are happening in current events. I think given these past couple of years, I think, given these past couple of years of years and everything that's been going on, um, gives a good opportunity to talk about um you know, just,

cause I know that you know friends and people talk and I'm sure other adults use around you know are, may be all across the board with political beliefs and this and that and language and what not, who knows and so for me, I want to really convey a message to him of you know love and support and like the ways people are treated are not okay and there are certain people that have beliefs that are really hateful

A recent essay by Sonya Horsford argues that it is the duty of educators to “take back” education as a beacon of democracy and social justice (Horsford, 2018). Horsford notes that the current political climate is serving as a “racial moment” in American life, citing examples such as Kaepernick’s protest or the removal of confederate statues, and argues that American children are looking to adults for how to act and react (Horsford, 2018). Much like the educators in Horsford’s essay, parents in this sample found the current policies of American political leadership as a call to action as well as the impetus for including their children in that action.

### **How do children perceive race and racism?**

**Overview of children’s attitudes.** This particular age group (ages 10-12) was of interest in examining this question. Much of the White racial socialization literature that exists focuses on a younger age range (e.g., Vittrup & Holden’s 2010 study examining 4-7 year olds) or adolescents (as in Hagerman, 2016; Underhill, 2014). However, because this study focuses on whether parental messages and children’s interpretations align, I also examined the way in which children talked about race.

**Discomfort with discussing race.** Primarily, I found that children were colorblind in their interpretations and summations of the two news clips, as well as in the way they conveyed conversations about race with parents and peers. These results align with the findings of Apfelbaum et al. (2008) who found that children in a similar age group were more likely than

their younger counterparts to avoid mentions of race. Apfelbaum and colleagues argue that this evasion comes as the result of the internalization of social norms surrounding prejudice and discrimination. Our participants also seemed concerned with the normative nature of their responses, with multiple participants responding to the quantitative measures in the following manner:

R: ....your parents told you that you should ignore race.

Becca: Wait. What way? Like a good way or a bad way?

Ryan: (Race doesn't matter) Like in a negative way, like they don't matter?

R: How often have your parents told you to not pay attention to race or ethnicity?

Ashley: To not pay attention like as in a good way or a bad way?

Although this study does not specifically investigate White identity, I would posit that this sense of searching aligns with Helms' early White identity statuses (Helms, 1990). Helm's second status, disintegration, is characterized by feelings of guilt or shame surrounding their Whiteness or White privilege. In this study, children indicated that their Whiteness was a negative attribute (or at least not a positive attribute). In fact, they rated outgroup (e.g. Latinx) negative traits as significantly lower than ingroup, suggesting that they know that they should not appear racist, but also have negative affect for their own group.

**Possible relations between parental socialization and children's views.** Children in our sample seem to be concerned with how they are perceived and how their racial attitudes and beliefs are received. They are looking to their parents for the "right" answers.

Few parents in this study recognized their own racial identity as White American. When discussing race with either the researcher or their child, race was an “other-people” phenomenon—indicating a belief that people of color have race, but failing to recognize their own race. This meant that discussions about race, particularly in the observation and in the child interviews, centered around non-Whites, a finding that is consistent in research on White Americans (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; DiAngelo, 2011).

### **Do parental socialization messages align with children’s perceptions of those same messages?**

First, as noted above, children in this age group are entrusting their parents with guiding them through the difficult task of understanding and addressing race. When asked who they would go to if they had a question or wanted to talk about race, all but one child indicated they would ask their parents. This aligns with previous research, indicating parents are children’s primary socialization agents regarding race and racism (Hughes et al., 2006; Priest et al., 2014). In this role, parents can have a meaningful impact on their children’s attitudes. For example, research has found that greater openness to and appreciation of diversity in parents corresponds to a greater openness to and appreciation of diversity in their children (Liao, et al., 2017).

Investigating the relationship between parental socialization messages and children’s perceptions proved nuanced. It seemed as though children largely followed parents’ explicit messages, sometimes repeating them word for word. However, parents report using largely implicit socialization techniques to “teach” their children about race. This is consistent with Hamm’s 2001 findings that White parents are more likely to endorse passive or implicit socialization approaches, such as contact or exposure to people of color, than active or explicit socialization approaches, such as seeking out and endorsing cross-racial friendships for



themselves or their child. Although this is not the case for all of this sample, it is important to note the discrepancy between the types of messages parents are using (implicit) and the types of messages children are receiving (explicit).

## **Implications**

When considering the topic of racial socialization in White families, the question arises: How does racial socialization, even if it leads to a reduction in racial bias, help White people? Why should parents engage in an uncomfortable task if it confers no direct benefit to themselves or their children? This is a fair question, the practicality of which is often not addressed in the literature. In her assessment of White socialization, Hamm noted that due to privilege, raising children to form and maintain positive relationships with other racial groups is likely not a priority for most White parents (Hamm, 2001).

Colorblindness may be a way for many White people to manage their own feelings of unease regarding the continued existence of racial oppression. Colorblindness stands as a temporary fix in superficial interactions with people of color. White people adopt colorblind attitudes because they do not have to find a more permanent way to ease their racial discomfort in interracial interactions. They are largely able to self-segregate their lives and are applauded for doing so. But this does not alleviate any intergroup anxiety they may feel in an increasingly diverse America. In contrast, DiAngelo (2008) argues that “[t]he continual retreat from the discomfort of authentic racial engagement in a culture infused with racial disparity limits the ability to form authentic connections across racial lines and results in a perpetual cycle that works to hold racism in place” (p. 66).

However, the process of holding on to colorblind attitudes does not only interfere with the formation of meaningful cross-race relationships. Colorblind attitudes, along with the

commensurate lack of authentic interracial friendships and other relationships, also help to support and maintain anxiety about inter-racial contact. As stated earlier, intergroup anxiety is related to a host of cognitive and affective issues. It can interfere with executive function, through impairment to judgment (Richeson & Shelton, 2003) and in one study, demonstrated similar cognitive impairment to stereotype threat in complex achievement-related tasks (Aronson & McGlone, 2009). Furthermore, intergroup anxiety can result in an individual exhibiting more overt levels of stress, such as closed off body language and leaning away from outgroup members (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). These types of behavior may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy where the White individual fears being labeled as biased, and that anxiety manifests itself in a way that outgroup members perceive as biased. Within the current study, this anxiety was demonstrated by several of the children in our sample, either during the interview “I don’t want to be racist, but...” or afterwards, using a similar sentiment. White people choose to endorse colorblindness because “Noticing race can be perceived as a precursor to racism” (Norton, et al, 2006, p. 949)

However, living in a completely White space in order to avoid the anxiety associated with inter-racial contact is becoming less possible. Whereas the privileges associated with Whiteness are compounded generationally, we see that the ability to segregate oneself is shifting, due to a population shift. Current projections suggest that the U.S. population will be minority White as early as 2045. This shift is due to both an increase in minority and mixed-race children being born in the US today and the projected loss of the baby boomer generation. With a growing population of young people of color, it is in children’s (and their parents’) best interest to find a way to create, establish, and maintain meaningful relationships with people of color.

A more immediate response to the question of color consciousness is that of hireability. In a recent Committee for Economic Development report, employers indicated that one of the most valuable attributes a hire could have is the ability to work seamlessly with a wide variety of different cultural groups and backgrounds (Herk, 2015). Even if strong colorblind attitudes do not affect immediate hireability, racial bias and discomfort can affect the likelihood of retaining employment. Following riots in Ferguson, MO in 2014, a Missouri city official was fired for making a seemingly racist comment on a personal social media account (Worf, 2014). Likewise, a Starbucks coffee shop was under fire for calling the police when two Black men used the restrooms without first ordering an item (Woodyard, 2018). In both of these cases, unexamined feelings regarding race, ranging from discomfort to fear to outrage, resulted in White individuals acting poorly and being reprimanded on a national stage. As the definition of prejudice, discrimination, and racism become more nuanced and subjective, White people can no longer expect that a colorblind, ignorant approach will result in bliss.

Ohito (2016) found that embracing discomfort when it comes to race allowed teachers to be more emotionally vulnerable and supportive of each other. She notes that discomfort is not something to be shied away from in the learning process, and that embracing discomfort allows White preservice and veteran teachers to work toward a more inclusive and understanding classroom environment. If we expect parents to be children's first teachers, should we be asking them to adopt a similar philosophy? Will this allow parents and children to be more emotionally vulnerable and supportive of each other as well?

Lewis (2004) argues that the very nature of Whiteness in American society affords a colorblind racial view. A glaring privilege of being White is the ability to not think about race and not to notice its role in daily life. It is the nature of Whiteness that allows our participants to

claim that race “does not really come up” or “is not really a thing, unless we make it a thing.” Despite this privilege, our social construction of Whiteness means that White individuals cannot remove their racial categorization from its previous and continuing role of domination and conquest, resulting in lasting structural inequality (Lewis, 2004). Lewis ends her theoretical essay by suggesting that “it is important to place whiteness and racial privilege within the purview of social research and under the lens of critical examination. It is important to do so, not because it is hip, not because whites have been left out, but because doing so is a necessary step in confronting the continuing reality of racial inequality” (Lewis, 2004, p. 624).

If this is, indeed, a necessary step for understanding and investigating the White experience in America, should we not be asking parents to include their children in this critical examination? Should parents, as children’s first teachers and fiercest advocates, task them to be more than bystanders in a changing world, choosing rather to contribute to actively fostering an anti-racist generation? The parents in the current study are ready and are seeking the tools to aid them in this pursuit.

### **Limitations**

Although the current study has addressed several gaps in the White socialization literature, particularly within the realm of developmental psychology, there are still several limitations that must be addressed.

First, this study was conducted in two small Midwestern college towns and in the suburbs of a Midwestern metropolitan area. As such, we can only speak to the residents of these areas. Thornton et al. (1990) suggests socialization differences by area, such that Black families in a mixed area such as the Northeastern United States were more likely than their counterparts in the predominantly Black southern United states to engage in socialization. Using similar reasoning,

we would suggest that because our sample lives in these largely White Midwestern cities, they may not be as compelled to engage in racial socialization practices as other White people who interact with people of color more regularly.

It is also important to note that all participants represented in this sample self-selected to take part in the study. Through the recruitment process, they were aware that the interview would include “tough topics” including the topic of race. In the analysis of this data, I am proceeding under the assumption that these parents felt comfortable enough with the way they addressed race with their children that they were willing to discuss their socialization practices with a researcher. Although qualitative results cannot be generalized to a broader population, that is particularly true in this setting. Our sample was highly educated, with above average income levels for their areas. Well educated respondents are particularly susceptible to social desirability effects (Krysan, 1998). I believe that these factors contributed to the likelihood of parents in our sample using more anti-racist socialization strategies than the literature suggests is typical in a White sample. Again, I would like to stress that the experiences of this sample are just meant to illustrate several White parental perspectives, not to generalize to a White parent population.

Moreover, the parents in this sample reported higher levels of “discrimination of other” and “history of others” socialization practices than previous literature (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). I contend that they were likely primed with the two news clips, and were, as a result, more focused on reporting socially desirable responses for these particular subscales. Future research should include counterbalancing in this design, such the quantitative measures and observation are switched for half the sample.

Additionally, the observation portion of this study was curated and may not have been reflective of everyday conversations. In fact, several participants indicated that they had not

previously heard of or talked about the news stories in the two clips. By asking the dyads to discuss a clip they would not normally discuss, it may have led to a false representation of their socialization behaviors.

Moreover, in an effort to not lead participants into a false or uncomfortable conversation regarding race, the discussion prompts were intentionally vague, focusing largely on the arguments presented in each video clip. Because so many of our dyads relied heavily on the prompts to guide their conversations, it may have been more authentic to provide no prompts. Moreover, prompts could have been formatted to more strongly guide a conversation about social justice or racial inequality.

Lastly, several computer malfunctions occurred over the course of the data collection. Some participants had difficulties accessing one or both videos during the observation, resulting in “during observation” interactions with the primary researcher. These disruptions and interactions may have limited or distracted participants in their conversations.

In addition, the video recording device completely malfunctioned in the case of one dyad, leaving researchers without observational data for that particular dyad. Participants noted a strange beeping sound, and as such, researchers were instructed to ask more in-depth questions to both parent and child in order to recount the conversation about the two videos. However, I acknowledge that these perceptions are filtered through the participants’ individual experiences and may be biased. We excluded this dyadic pair from analyses regarding the observation but retained their interview data for analyses.

## **Future Research Directions**

Future research should address the limitations of this sample. Primarily, research will replicate and extend the intended research goal, obtaining a sample large enough to detect effects in the quantitative racial bias and racial socialization measures.

Future research should also seek to include more caregivers in the conversation. This sample focused primarily on the messages mothers were sending to their children, but several of these mothers noted that their child's father may have addressed the topic differently. Future socialization research should seek to include fathers and co-parenting relationships in its analysis of White socialization strategies.

Additionally, future research should work to examine the intersectionality of social class and racial socialization in White families. The economic homogeneity within this limited sample did not allow further investigation, though previous research suggests that low-income White parents may experience heightened levels of stress and lower levels of perceived community support resulting in changes in parenting behaviors (Middlemiss, 2003). It may be that lower income or less educated White individuals engage in lower levels of racial socialization as a result of a shift in parenting priorities brought on by economic insecurity.

## **Conclusion**

The demographic makeup of America is changing, and with it comes an increased need to adjust the way White individuals choose to parent and the kinds of messages their children receive. The current study uses a novel methodology to examine White parental racial socialization from both the parent and child perspectives.

White racial socialization is nuanced. The current study aimed to investigate how White parents discussed race with their children, whether their perceptions of their socialization aligned

with their behaviors, and whether those parental socialization behaviors were reflected in how their children perceived those conversations.

Parents in this sample utilized both colorblind and color-conscious messages when discussing race with their children. Though previous research would predict a largely colorblind approach, this study showed, particularly in the observation, that when parents are tasked with having a conversation regarding race related topics, they do not shy away from race entirely, serving as a departure from previous research (Vittrup & Holden, 2010). Instead, these parents used other forms of distancing themselves (and their children) from the conversation about race, such as presenting historical examples of racism or focusing on other types of diversity. Additionally, when reflecting on how they address race in their day to day lives, parents reported using a mixture of egalitarian and colorblind socialization strategies.

Although it is important that White parents are starting to engage their children in these conversations, it is also necessary to investigate what their children are taking away from these conversations. In this sample, children expressed largely colorblind attitudes as well as a concern or apprehension about being misperceived as “racist” when engaging in these conversations. Previous research would suggest that this apprehension may stem from prior silence about race, teaching children that race is a taboo topic (Pauker et al., 2015).

Parents in this study indicated that they are willing to have these conversations and are realizing the importance of the conversation. Though not yet models of color-conscious or anti-racist parenting, the data suggest that parents are trying to engage in meaningful conversations and want to include their children, especially if the children show interest. Though more work must be done to investigate the intersection of Whiteness/ white fragility and White socialization,



the findings posed in this study add to the conversation surrounding White socialization, giving White parents another piece of the racial socialization puzzle.

## Works Cited

- About, F. E. (1988). *Children and Prejudice*. Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell.
- About, F., Mendelson, M., & Purdy, K. (2003). Cross-race peer relations and friendship quality. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 27*(2), 165-173.
- About, F. E. (2008). A social-cognitive developmental theory of prejudice, In Quintana, S. M., & McKown, C. (Eds.) *Handbook of race, racism, and the developing child*. (pp. 55-71). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons
- Allport, G. A. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Aronson, J., & McGlone, M. (2009). Social identity and stereotype threat. In T. Nelson (Ed.), *The handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination* (pp. 153–178). New York: Psychology Press.
- Banaji, M. R., & Gelman, S. A. (Eds.). (2013). *Navigating the social world: What infants, children, and other species can teach us*. Oxford University Press.
- Baron, A. S. & Banaji, M. R. (2006). The development of implicit attitudes: Evidence of race evaluations from ages 6 and 10 and adulthood. *Psychological Science, 17*(1), 53-58.
- Bartoli, E., Michael, A., Bentley-Edwards, K. L., Stevenson, H. C. Shor, R. E., & McClain, S. E. (2016). Training for colour-blindness: White racial socialization. *Whiteness and Education, 1*(2), 125-136. doi: 10.1080/23793406.2016.1260634
- Bigler, R. S. & Liben, L. S. (1993). A cognitive-developmental approach to racial stereotyping and reconstructive memory in Euro-American children. *Child Development, 64*(5), 1507-1518.

- Bigler, R. S., Jones, L. C., & Lobliner, D. B. (1997). Social categorization and the formation of intergroup attitudes in children. *Child Development, 68*(3), 530-543.
- Bigler, R. S. & Liben, L. S. (2006). A developmental intergroup theory of social stereotypes and prejudice. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior, 34*, 39-89.
- Bigler, R. S., & Wright, Y. F. (2014). Reading, writing, arithmetic, and racism? Risks and benefits to teaching children about intergroup biases. *Child Development Perspectives, 8*(1), 18-23.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2001). *White supremacy and racism in the post-civil rights era*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Bonilla-Silva, E., Goar, C., & Embrick, D. G. (2006). When whites flock together: The social psychology of white habitus. *Critical Sociology, 32*(2-3), 229-253.
- Brown, T. N., Tanner-Smith, E. E., Lesane-Brown, C. L., & Ezell, M. E. (2007). Child, parent, and situational correlates of familial ethnic/race socialization. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*(1), 14-25.
- Brubaker, R. (2009). Ethnicity, race, and nationalism. *Annual Review of Sociology, 35*, 21-42.
- Buchanan, L. B. (2015). "We Make It Controversial": Elementary Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Race. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 42*(1), 3-26.
- Castelli, L., De Dea, C., & Nesdale, D. (2008). Learning social attitudes: Children's sensitivity to the nonverbal behaviors of adult models during interracial interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*, 1504-1513.

- Caughy, M. O., O'Campo, P. J., Nettles, S. M., & Lohrfink, K. F. (2006). Neighborhood matters: Racial socialization of African American children. *Child Development, 77*(5), 1220-1236.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Degner, J. & Dalege, J. (2013). The apple does not fall far from the tree, or does it? A meta-analysis of parent-child similarity in intergroup attitudes. *Psychological Bulletin, 139*(6), 1270-1304.
- Doyle, A. B. & Aboud, F. E. (1995). A longitudinal study of white children's racial prejudice as a social-cognitive development. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 41*(2), 209-228.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993). *The social construction of whiteness: White women, race matters*. Routledge.
- Gallagher, C. A. (2003). Color-blind privilege: The social and political functions of erasing the color line in post race America. *Race, Gender, & Class, 10*(4), 22-37.
- Gniewosz, B., & Noack, P. (2015). Parental influences on adolescents' negative attitudes toward immigrants. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 44*(9), 1787-1802.
- Greenwald, A. G. & Krieger, L. H. (2006). Implicit bias: Scientific foundations. *California Law review, 94*(4), 945-968. doi: /10.15779/Z38GH7F
- Hagerman, M. A. (2014). White families and race: Colour-blind and colour-conscious approaches to white racial socialization. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 37*(14), 2598-2614. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2013.848289
- Hagerman, M. A. (2016). Reproducing and Reworking Colorblind Racial Ideology: Acknowledging Children's Agency in the White Habitus. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 2*(1), 58-71.

- Hagerman, M. A. (2017). White racial socialization: Progressive fathers on raising “antiracist” children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 79, 60-74. Doi: 10.1111/jofm.12325
- Hamm, J. V. (2001). Barriers and bridges to positive cross-ethnic relations: African American and White parent socialization beliefs and practices. *Youth & Society*, 33(1), 62-98.
- Henry, P. J. & Sears, D. O. (2002). The symbolic racism 2000 scale. *Political Psychology*, 23(2), 253-283.
- Herk, M. (2015, June 11). The skills gap and the seven skill sets that employers want: Building the ideal hire. Retrieved from <https://www.ced.org/blog/entry/the-skills-gap-and-the-seven-skill-sets-that-employers-want-building-the-id>
- Hirschfield, L. A. (2012). Seven myths of race and the young child. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 9(1), 17-30. doi: 10.1017/S1742058X12000033
- Holoien, D. S., & Shelton, J. N. (2012). You deplete me: The cognitive costs of colorblindness on ethnic minorities. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(2), 562-565.
- Horsford, S. D. (2018). Making America’s schools great now: reclaiming democracy and activist leadership under Trump. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 50(1), 3-11. DOI: 10.1080/00220620.2017.1403893
- Hughes, D & Chen, L. (1997). When and what parents tell children about race: An examination of race-related socialization among African American families. *Applied Developmental Science*, 1, 200-214.
- Hughes, D. & Johnson, D. (2001). Correlates in children’s experiences of parents’ racial socialization behaviors. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 981-995.

- Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E. P., Johnson, D. J., Stevenson, H. C., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(5), 747-770.
- Hughes, D., Witherspoon, D., Rivas-Drake, D., & West-Bey, N. (2009). Received ethnic-racial socialization messages and youths' academic and behavioral outcomes: Examining the mediating role of ethnic identity and self-esteem. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15*(2), 112-124. doi: 10.1037/a0015509.
- Hughes, J. M., Bigler, R. S., & Levy, S. R. (2007). The consequences of learning about historical racism among European American and African American children. *Child Development, 78* (6), 1689-1705
- Jennings, M. K., Stoker, L., & Bowers, J. (2009). Politics across generations: Family transmission reexamined. *The Journal of Politics, 71*(3), 782-799.
- Joyner, K., & Kao, G. (2000). School racial composition and adolescent racial homophily. *Social Science Quarterly, 81*0-825.
- Katz, P. A., & Kofkin, J. A. (1997). Race, gender, and young children. In Luthar, S. S., Burack, J.A., Cicchetti, D., & Weisz, J. R. (Eds.), *Developmental psychopathology: Perspectives on adjustment, risk, and disorder*, (pp. 51-74). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Krysan, M. (1998). Privacy and the expression of white racial attitudes: A comparison across three contexts. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 50*6-544.
- Lasane-Brown, C. L., Brown, T. N., Tanner-Smith, E. E., & Bruce, M. A. (2010). Negotiating boundaries and bonds: Frequency of young children's socialization to their ethnic/racial heritage. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 41*(3), 457-464.

- Lewis, A. E. (2004). "What group?" Studying Whites and Whiteness in the era of "color-blindness". *Sociological Theory*, 22(4), 623-646.
- Liao, H. Y., Spanierman, L. B., Harlow, A. J., & Neville, H. A. (2017). Do parents matter? Examination of White college students' intergroup experiences and attitudes. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 45(2), 193-212.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage publications.
- McFalls, E. & Cobb-Roberts, D. (2001). Reducing resistance to diversity through cognitive dissonance instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 164-172.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from " Case Study Research in Education."*. Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco, CA.
- Middlemiss, W. (2003). Poverty, stress, and support: Patterns of parenting behaviour among lower income black and lower income white mothers. *Infant and Child Development: An International Journal of Research and Practice*, 12(3), 293-300.
- Milevsky, I. M., Szuchman, L., & Milevsky, A. (2008). Transmission of religious beliefs in college students. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 11(4), 423-434.
- NBC News. (2017, Aug 20). *Duke University is latest to remove confederate statue* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKFETOIJ5sA&t=1s>
- Nesdale, D. (1999). Developmental changes in children's ethnic preferences and social cognitions. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 20(4), 501-519.
- NFL Network. (2016, Oct 6). *The impact of Colin Kaepernick's National Anthem kneel* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddTRuCsYQCA&t=6s>

- Norton, M. I., Sommers, S. R., Apfelbaum, E. P., Pura, N., & Ariely, D. (2006). Color blindness and interracial interaction: Playing the political correctness game. *Psychological Science, 17*(11), 949-953.
- O'Bryan, M., Fishbein, H. D., & Ritchey, P. N. (2004). Intergenerational transmission of prejudice, sex role stereotyping, and intolerance. *Adolescence, 39*(155), 407-426.
- Ohito, E. O. (2016). Making the emperor's new clothes visible in anti-racist teacher education: Enacting a pedagogy of discomfort with white preservice teachers. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 49*(4), 454-467.
- Pahlke, E., Bigler, R. S., & Suizzo, M. A. (2012). Relations between colorblind socialization and children's racial bias: Evidence from European American mothers and their preschool children. *Child Development*. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01770.x
- Parke, R. D., Burks, V. M., Carson, J. L., Neville, B., & Boyum, L. A. (1994). Family-peer relationships: A tripartite model. In R. D. Parke & S. G. Kellam (Eds.), *Family research consortium: Advances in family research. Exploring family relationships with other social contexts* (pp. 115-145). Hillsdale, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Parke, R. D. and Buriel, R. (2007). Socialization in the Family: Ethnic and Ecological Perspectives. In Handbook of Child Psychology (eds W. Damon, R. M. Lerner and N. Eisenberg). doi:10.1002/9780470147658.chpsy0308
- Pauker, K., Apfelbaum, E. P., & Spitzer, B. (2015). When societal norms and social identity collide: The race talk dilemma for racial minority children. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 6*(8), 887-895.



- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2013). Does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Recent meta-analytic findings. In *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 103-124). Psychology Press.
- Phillips, L. T. & Lowery, B. S. (2015). The hard-knock life? Whites claim hardships in response to racial inequity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *61*, 12-18. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2015.06.008
- Priest, N., Walton, J., White, F., Kowal, E., Baker, A., & Paradies, Y. (2014). Understanding the complexities of ethnic-racial socialization processes for both minority and majority groups: A 30-year systematic review. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.08.003
- Purkiss, S. L., Perrewe, P. L., Gillespie, T. L., Mayes, B. T., & Ferris, G. R. (2006). Implicit sources of bias in employment interview judgments and decisions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *101*(2), 152-167. Doi: 10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.06.005
- Raabe, T., & Beelmann, A. (2011). Development of ethnic, racial, and national prejudice in childhood and adolescence: A multinational meta-analysis of age differences. *Child Development*, *82*(6), 1715-1737.
- Richeson, J. A., & Nussbaum, R. J. (2004). The impact of multiculturalism versus color-blindness on racial bias. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *40*(3), 417-423.
- Richeson, J. A., & Shelton, J. N. (2003). When prejudice does not pay: Effects of interracial contact on executive function. *Psychological Science*, *14*(3), 287-290.

- Rutland, A., Cameron, L., Milne, A., & McGeorge, P. (2005). Social norms and self-presentation: Children's implicit and explicit intergroup attitudes. *Child Development*, 76(2), 451-466.
- Steckler, A., McLeroy, K. R., Goodman, R. M., Bird, S. T., & McCormick, L. (1992). Toward Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: An Introduction. *Health Education Quarterly*, 19(1), 1-8. DOI: 10.1177/109019819201900101
- Therriault, A. (2005, September 4). Talking to small children about race. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/09/04/talking-to-small-children-about-race/?utm\\_term=.f2571d7122c7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/09/04/talking-to-small-children-about-race/?utm_term=.f2571d7122c7).
- Thornton, M. C., Chatters, L. M., Taylor, R. J. & Allen, W. R. (1990). Sociodemographic and environmental correlates of racial socialization by Black parents. *Child Development*, 61(2), 401-409.
- Trawalter, S., & Richeson, J. A. (2008). Let's talk about race, baby! When Whites' and Blacks' interracial contact experiences diverge. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44(4), 1214-1217.
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Quintana, S. M., Lee, R. M., Cross, W. E., Rivas-Drake, D., Schwartz, S. J., Syed, M., Yip, T. & Seaton, E. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity during adolescence and into young adulthood: An integrated conceptualization. *Child development*, 85(1), 21-39.
- Underhill, M. (2016). Becoming White: The racial socialization practice of middle-class White parents (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest. (10294695)

- Unzueta, M. M., Everly, B. A., & Gutiérrez, A. S. (2014). Social dominance orientation moderates reactions to Black and White discrimination claimants. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 54*, 81-88.
- Van Ausdale, D & Feagin, J. R. (2001). *The First R: How children learn race and racism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: Lanham, Maryland.
- van Bergen, D. D., Ersanilli, E. F., Pels, T. V. M., & De Ruyter, D. J. (2016). Perceived Parental Ethnic Socialization. Measure [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t50706-000>
- Vittrup, B. & Holden, G. W. (2010). Exploring the impact of educational television and parent-child discussions on children's racial attitudes. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 10*(1), 192-214.
- White-Johnson, R. L., Ford, K. R., & Sellers, R. M. (2010). Parental racial socialization profiles: Association with demographic factors, racial discrimination, childhood socialization, and racial identity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16*(2), 237-247. doi: 10.1037/a0016111.
- Wolfe, S. E., McLean, K. & Pratt, T. C. (2017). I learned it by watching you: Legal socialization and the intergenerational transmission of legitimacy attitudes. *The British Journal of Criminology, 57*(5), 1123-1143. doi:10.1093/bjc/azw038
- Woodyard, C. (2018, April 17). Starbucks' 911 call that led to Philadelphia arrests of two Black men. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <https://usatoday.com>
- Zucker, J. K. & Patterson, M. M. (2018). Racial socialization practices among White American parents: Relations to racial attitudes, racial identity, and school diversity. *Journal of Family Issues*.

Appendix A

Consent, assent, and participant payment forms

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Study:** Parental transmission of social attitudes

**Principal Investigator:** Jenna Zucker, Department of Psychology, University of WI-Eau Claire, 715-836-5033, [zuckerja@uwec.edu](mailto:zuckerja@uwec.edu)

Dear Participant:

I am a PhD student in the educational psychology program at the University of Kansas, and I am inviting you and your child to participate in a study about children's social attitudes and relationships, particularly as they pertain to race. The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which parents talk to their children about current events.

If you choose to participate in this project, I, or one of my colleagues, will meet with you and your child at one of our two labs. Specifically, we will ask you to watch several news clips and discuss them with your child. We will then ask you and your child questions about social attitudes. We will also ask about their perceptions about and understandings of people from different racial or cultural groups. We anticipate the session should take approximately 60 minutes and will be scheduled by your convenience. You may ask to see the questionnaires prior to your child's participation.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. By participating, you and your child will help to advance our understanding of the ways in which parents contribute to children's knowledge and understanding of race. The measures being used are not diagnostic in any way. Instead, they focus on children's *perceptions* of various racial groups. We are happy to compensate you for your time in the form of a \$20 gift card.

To protect privacy and confidentiality, study materials will be labeled with ID numbers rather than participant names. Responses will not be shared with anyone else outside of the research team. If the results of the study are published, data will be reported at the group level. Individual responses will not be published. Your or your child's name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. Following the collection and entry of data, the key connecting your child's name with their study number will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision to allow your child to participate or to withdraw your child from the study will not affect your or your child's present or future relationship with the University of Kansas or University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. If you have any questions at all about the study, please call me—now or at any later time—at (715) 836-5033. If you have any further questions or concerns about your or your child's participation

in this study, you may contact the University of Kansas Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) by phone: (785) 864-7429, ext #1 or email: [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

We hope that you and your child choose to participate. Your signature on the next page indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in the study. You may withdraw your consent to allow participation of you or your child in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose information collected about you and your child, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Jenna Zucker, Department of Psychology, UW-Eau Claire, HHH270, 105 Garfield Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above. You may keep a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Jenna Zucker, M.S.Ed  
PhD candidate  
Department of Psychology  
University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire  
715-836-5033  
[zuckerja@uwec.edu](mailto:zuckerja@uwec.edu)

Dr. Meagan Patterson  
Associate Professor  
Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Kansas  
785-864-9763  
[mmpatter@ku.edu](mailto:mmpatter@ku.edu)

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Parental transmission of social attitudes

INVESTIGATOR: Jenna Zucker, M.S.Ed

I have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and I have received a copy of this form. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions before I sign, and I have been told that I can ask other questions at any time.

I agree to participate and allow my child to take part in this study as research participants. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

No, I do not want to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

I would like to be contacted with the results of this study.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment release**

The following information is required by the University of Kansas for participant payment. Failure to comply with the payment requirements will result in lack of payment for your participation in this study. The information collected will be kept on a secure server and will only be used for the purpose of payment.

Participant (adult) name:

Participant (adult) address:

---

---

---

Participant birthdate: (ex. MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_ \_\_ / \_\_ \_\_ / \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_

Participant Social Security number: \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ - \_\_ \_\_ - \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_

## Child Assent

We are asking you to participate in a study of children's ideas about differences among people as well as the way their parents talk to them about current events. You will be asked to answer questions about your feelings and thoughts about people of different groups as truthfully as possible. This study has been explained to your parent or guardian and they have given permission for you to answer these questions, but you do not have to answer them if you do not want to. If at any time you want to stop the study, you can ask to stop and nothing bad will happen to you. Information about your answers to these questions will not be given to anyone else. Is it ok with you to answer some questions?



## Appendix B

Transcript of NFL kneeling news clip, ESPN Network.

Sports Announcer (well-dressed Black man): Well Rich, just over my shoulder Colin Kaepernick is warming up with his teammates on the field. But a little bit later tonight about 100 feet to my right on the sideline, he is expected to kneel once again to protest what he says are social injustices to African Americans. Just more than a month ago when he started this he sat alone. That is no longer the case.

*The national anthem plays in the background*

SA: The lyrics of the national rang out in Levi Stadium for what we thought was a meaningless preseason game, but what went mostly unnoticed at the time surely is anything but meaningless now. (*zooms in on Kaepernick kneeling on the sidelines, cuts to image of Black Lives Matter protest*)

Kaepernick: It's to bring awareness and make people realize what's really going on in this country. There are a lot of things going on that are unjust, people aren't being held accountable for and that is something that needs to change.

Narrator: In the effort to stand for what he believed in, his action to sit was later lifted to taking a knee. As five weeks have passed, each day offering a new voice, a new form of support, another point of conflict.

Victor Cruz: You gotta respect the flag--it's bigger than just you

Richard Sherman: The reason these guys are kneeling, the reason we are locking arms is to bring people together to make people aware that this is not right

N: Colin Kaepernick's protest to evoke attention to social injustices has spurred reaction and action unlike any we have seen in recent decades. Here we are in the midst of a social movement where a quarterback once known for flexing biceps to celebrate a touchdown now sits as a backup and kneels for what he believes in.

*Clips of individuals (football teams, band members, etc.) kneeling, laying down. Imagery of a Black Lives Matter protest.*

Kaepernick: When there is significant change and I feel like that flag represents what it is supposed to represent, and this country is representing people the way it's supposed to, I'll stand.

N: Kaepernick's gesture and voice have resonated, unlike anything we have witnessed by or from an athlete in years.

Kaepernick: This isn't something I am gonna ask other people to put their necks out for what I'm doing if they agree with me and feel strongly about it, I hope they stand with me. (*image of a woman at a football game with a poster saying "I choose to stand up by sitting down. #IStandWithKAP"*)

N: With Kaepernick pushing down the first domino, we see a potentially prudent dialogue broached between players and political officials in some markets like Seattle

Doug Baldwin, Seattle Seahawks player: "This is called unity now we gonna push the needle"

N: As players coaches, veterans and politicians all have their opinions and are expressing it

Obama: Mr. Kaepernick--he's exercising his constitutional right to make a statement. I think he cares about some real legitimate issues that have to be talked about.

N: We, at some point, are pushed to look at a new household name, not one who was once a super bowl starter with a revolutionary style of play, but instead as a backup on a struggling team with a revolutionary cause.

SA: Alright we've got to keep this real because we have seen that Kaepernick's action has been polarizing and unifying. I mean he's somebody who's jersey is a top seller, but we have a poll that shows he is the most disliked player in the NFL. He's been social media fodder on the daily, but he's been on the cover of Time magazine and when this game kicks off in a few hours though he is slated to be a bench warmer and that is going to be one of the few times in recent weeks where he has merely been a footnote.

## Appendix C

Transcript of statue removal news clip, NBC News.

Reporter: Overnight, Duke University removed this statue of Confederate General Robert. E. Lee from the campus's chapel entrance. It happened on a week where another monument was toppled by protesters in the same college town. Across the country, the debate over the future of the past is raging.

Mayor: I think that the meaning, I think the statues have become touchstones for terrorism.

Reporter: A monumental fight from Charlottesville to Baltimore to Lexington, Kentucky, where cheers broke out after the city council approved the resolution to move two statues. In Birmingham, Alabama, the mayor ordered this obelisk covered by wooden panels, prompting a lawsuit. Tonight, in Dallas, a rally near this Confederate War memorial.

Fullinwider: These monuments celebrate the Confederacy and the preservation of slavery and the Treason Act that led to the Civil War.

Reporter: Nationwide, there are about 700 Confederate monuments in public spaces. According to a new poll this week, just 27% of Americans say Confederate monuments should be removed, while 62% think they should stay.

Richman: I want this to be about remembering our past. I wanna, I want to make sure that we're not throwing away pieces of, of history that we, we don't wanna think about.

Reporter: This debate is about more than just statues, there are ten Army posts throughout the site, South named for Confederate generals, including the nation's largest, Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Tonight, here in Dallas there will be a heavy police presence for tonight's rally, which is about to get underway.

## Appendix D

### Prompts for parent discussion:

Here are some possible things you can talk about with your child. You may use all, some, or none of these to start a conversation with your child about the clip you just watched:

- What do you think is happening here? (ask them to define the story and go from there.)
- Why do you think the people in this situation acted the way that they did?
- What did the people in the clip disagree about?
- Do you agree with one side of the argument? Why?
- Do you think the way the news report talked about this issue was fair? Why or why not?  
Is there anything that was left out?
- Did this clip remind you of anything you have learned about in school?

Appendix E

Parental Demographic Questionnaire

- 1.) What is **your child's** race/ethnicity? (Please circle all that apply.)
  - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b. Asian or Asian American
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Hispanic or Latino
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - f. White
  - g. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2.) What is **your** race/ethnicity? (Please circle all that apply.)
  - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b. Asian or Asian American
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Hispanic or Latino
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - f. White
  - g. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3.) What is your relationship to the child? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4.) Are you a United States citizen?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer
  
- 5.) What is your sex?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Prefer not to answer
  
- 6.) What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 7.) What is **your child's** age? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 8.) What is your annual household income?
  - a. Less than \$20,000
  - b. \$20,000-\$39,999
  - c. \$40,000-\$59,999
  - d. \$60,000-\$79,999
  - e. \$80,000-\$99,999
  - f. \$100,000-\$149,999
  - g. \$150,000-\$200,000

- h. More than \$200,000
  - i. Prefer not to answer
- 9.) What is your highest degree or level of school completed? (If currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest degree received.)
- a. Some high school
  - b. High school diploma or GED
  - c. Some college, no degree
  - d. Associate's degree
  - e. Bachelor's degree
  - f. Some graduate school, no degree
  - g. Master's degree
  - h. Doctoral degree (PhD, JD, MD)

## Appendix F

### Parent interview script

So you just had a conversation with your child about two news clips: the NFL kneeling controversy and the confederate statue removal. How did it feel to have those conversations?

Did anything surprising come up while you were talking to your child?

In what ways do you engage in diverse experiences and seek out diverse perspectives? How do you include your child(ren)?

How diverse is your close community (friends, child's school, community organizations)?

How do you communicate your beliefs about race with your child?

Do you actively encourage/discourage your child from talking about race?

How do you know if it's come up? What does that look like? What do you do if the topic of race comes up?

Please give an example of a recent race-related conversation you had with your child. Who/what initiated the conversation?

Have you ever seen (or heard about) your child discriminating against someone of another race (e.g., not want to share or play with them), or have you heard them make a biased statement about someone of another race?

Appendix G

Child interview script

Before I ask you some questions, I want to talk to you about two words: race and racism. Have you heard these words before? What do you think they mean?

Race is a way to think about different groups of people. People with the same race may look similar in certain ways, such as skin color or hair color. Often race reflects where someone's family came from, like Africa, Asia, or Mexico. Some examples of racial groups would be Black, White, and Latino.

Racism is the belief that one group is better than another group based on their race or the color of their skin. Racism could include having unfair rules, being mean, or excluding people based on their race.

Do you have any questions about what the words race and racism mean?

-----

You just watched two news clips with your mom/dad. Can you tell me a little bit more about what you talked about in the NFL kneeling clip?

What about the statue clip?

Had you heard about these issues before today? What had you heard?

Have you talked with your parent(s) about race or racism before today?

Has your parent ever said it's not nice or polite to talk about race? What was happening when they said that?

If you had a question about race or racism, who would you ask? Why?

Do you and your friends ever talk about race? Do you ever hear kids at school or anyone else talking about race? Why do you think that is?



Appendix H

Parental Racial-Ethnic Socialization Behaviors Scale

Please respond with how often you directly or explicitly tell your child each of the following:

I directly or explicitly tell my child...	How often do you tell your child this?				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. People are equal, regardless of their racial or ethnic background.					
2. About the discrimination people from <i>other</i> racial or ethnic groups have experienced in the past.					
3. About important people in the history of <i>other</i> racial or ethnic groups.					
4. To read books about the history or traditions of different ethnic and racial groups, other than our own.					
5. About the possibility that some people might treat him/her badly or unfairly because of our race or ethnicity.					
6. Other racial or ethnic groups are just as trustworthy as people of our own ethnic or racial group.					
7. People of all races have an equal chance in life.					
8. He/she should try to make friends with people of all races and ethnic backgrounds.					
9. About discrimination or prejudice against <i>our</i> ethnic or racial group.					

10. About discrimination or prejudice against <i>other</i> ethnic or racial groups.					
11. It is important to appreciate people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds					
12. Something unfair that he/she witnessed was due to racial or ethnic discrimination against <i>another</i> ethnic or racial group.					
13. In the past people from <i>other</i> racial or ethnic groups were discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity.					
14. It is best to have friends who are the same race or ethnic group as we are.					
15. The importance of getting along with people of all races and ethnicities.					
16. Something he/she saw showed poor treatment of different ethnic or racial groups, other than our own.					
17. American society is fair to all races and ethnicities.					
18. People from <i>other</i> racial or ethnic groups are sometimes still discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity.					
19. To learn about the history or traditions of <i>other</i> racial or ethnic groups.					
20. People of our race or ethnic group have better opportunities than people of other racial or ethnic groups.					
21. People of different races and ethnicities have different values and beliefs.					

22. American society is not always fair to all races and ethnicities.					
23. It is a bad idea to marry someone who is of a different ethnic background or race than ours.					
24. Sometimes people are treated badly just because of their race or ethnicity.					
25. About the history of <i>other</i> racial or ethnic groups in our country.					

Modified from Hughes & Chen, 1997

As found in Pahlke, Bigler & Suizzo, 2012

Appendix I

Perceived Parental Ethnic Socialization

Please respond with how often your parents tell you each of the following:

How often have your parents...	How often do your parents tell you this?				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. told you that all people are equal, regardless of race or ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
2. taken you to events/places (lessons/restaurants etc.) where other people mostly look like you?	1	2	3	4	5
3. told you that race or ethnicity don't matter?	1	2	3	4	5
4. done or said things to encourage you to be friends with other White kids?	1	2	3	4	5
5. done or said things to get you to not be friends with other kids who are not White?	1	2	3	4	5
6. encouraged you to watch what you say or do around members of another race?	1	2	3	4	5
7. told you not to pay attention to race or ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
8. said it is important to know about the important people and events in the history of other races?	1	2	3	4	5
9. talked to you about people or events in the history of people of other races, such as Black and Latino (not including school work)?	1	2	3	4	5

10. told you that people have an equal chance in life, regardless of race or ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
11. told you that being White is an important part of who you are?	1	2	3	4	5
12. said to you that you should be proud to be White?	1	2	3	4	5
13. encouraged you to have friends of all racial and ethnic backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
14. said it is important to appreciate people of all races?	1	2	3	4	5
15. said it is important to get along with people of all races?	1	2	3	4	5
16. said it is important to be nice to people of all races?	1	2	3	4	5

Modified from Hughes & Chen, 1997

As found in van Bergen, et al., 2016

Appendix J

Modified Symbolic Racism Scale

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Black people would only try harder they could be just as well off as White people.				
Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Black people should do the same.				
Black leaders have pushed too much and too quickly for social changes.				
Hispanics are taking advantage of their minority status.				
Black people are responsible for creating the racial tension that exists in the United States today.				
Discrimination against Black people exists in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead.				
Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Black individuals to work their way out of the lower class.				
Hispanics have more influence upon school language issues that they ought to have.				
Over the past few years, Black people have gotten less than they deserve.				
Over the past few years, Black people have gotten more economically than they deserve.				
Affirmative action policies discriminate against White people.				
The reasons behind instituting affirmative action in higher education and the workplace no longer exist.				
Hispanics are taking too many jobs from non-minorities.				

Modified from Henry & Sears, 2002

Appendix K

BETS or Black/White Evaluative Scale

How many Black / African American people are ... ?

	<b>None or hardly any</b>	<b>Not many</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Almost all</b>
<b>1. happy</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. dishonest</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. generous</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. cruel</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. honest</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. awful</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. good-looking</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. selfish</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9. nice</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10. unkind</b>	1	2	3	4	5

How many Latino / Hispanic people are ... ?

	<b>None or hardly any</b>	<b>Not many</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Almost all</b>
<b>1. happy</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. dishonest</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. generous</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. cruel</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. honest</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. awful</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. good-looking</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. selfish</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9. nice</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10. unkind</b>	1	2	3	4	5



How many White / Caucasian people are ... ?

	<b>None or hardly any</b>	<b>Not many</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Almost all</b>
<b>1. happy</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. dishonest</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. generous</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. cruel</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. honest</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. awful</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. good-looking</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. selfish</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9. nice</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10. unkind</b>	1	2	3	4	5

Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007

You've done a great job answering these questions today, and I want to thank you for helping me. Do you have any questions about what we talked about today or about the news clips you watched with your mom/dad?

Was it hard for you to watch the videos or answer the questions? Sometimes it can be uncomfortable to talk about times when people aren't treated fairly. These situations can be upsetting to think about and talk about, so it's ok if talking about this made you feel sad or angry.

I asked you questions about African-American people, Hispanic/Latino people, and about White people, and about what they are like. So now that we're finished with that part, I want to talk a little bit more about these groups.

Do you think it's true that African-American people, Hispanic/Latino people and White people can do the same things, and that they should be able to do the same things? So do I.

It's important to remember that, and to remember that all groups of people should be able to do the same things, no matter what they look like, or where they are from, or if they're boys or girls.

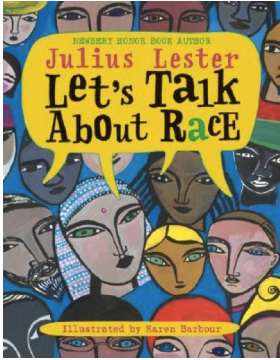
Thanks again for helping me! You really did a great job answering these questions.

Appendix M

Information and literature to continue the conversation

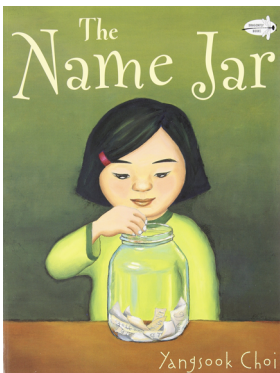
## Books we recommend:

### Picture books



*Let's Talk about Race* by Julius Lester, illustrated by Karen Barbour

As Lester discusses how we all have a story, he brings up questions about why we think race is important and what it means to have a racial identity. This gorgeous book — great to read with kids of any age — allows for open-ended conversation and questions.



*The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi

Eager to fit in upon her arrival in America, Unhei announces that she'll choose an "American" name to use in place of her own. Her whole class gets involved, but ultimately, Unhei sees the power and joy of sharing a bit of her true self with her community.



*Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch

Grace loves stories, whether they're from books, movies, or the kind her grandmother tells. So when she gets a chance to play a part in Peter Pan, she knows exactly who she wants to be, regardless of what anyone else says.

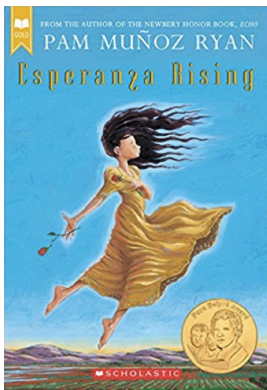
### Middle Grades



*Trouble with the Half Moon* by Danette Vigilante

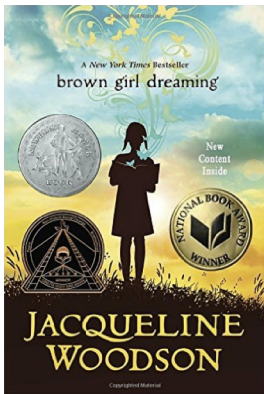
Vigilante's loving and nuanced portrait of life in a housing project — where she explores themes of guilt, forgiveness, and family — shines in this relatable, contemporary middle grade novel.

## Books we recommend:



### *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza and her mama struggle with many challenges as they are forced to leave a comfortable life in Mexico to become undocumented farm workers in California.



### *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world.

## Other media

WNYC public radio's "Being 12" series:

<https://www.wnyc.org/story/people-sometimes-think-im-supposed-talk-ghetto-whatever-kids-race>

Teaching Tolerance website:

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

Here are some discussion guidelines:

- Don't expect to have "the talk" about discrimination. It shouldn't be one conversation. Rather, let the discussion be open and ongoing.
- Parents often avoid talking about hard subjects (including sex, underage drinking and discrimination) because they're personally uncomfortable. Keep talking anyway. The discussions get easier over time.
- Use age-appropriate language children can understand, and don't give kids too much information at once. The conversation will get deeper and more nuanced as they get older.
- Help children feel that their questions are welcome, or they might come to believe that discussing differences is taboo.
- Help children understand the value of diversity. A diverse set of experiences and viewpoints boosts creativity and helps kids (and adults) better understand the world around them. On the other hand, discrimination hurts everyone – not just the targets of discrimination. When people are discriminated against, we can miss an important opportunity to learn from them.
- Take opportunities to raise discussions based on what you see around you – in real life, books, television shows and even video games. You might ask: "There aren't many female characters in this video game. What do you think of that?" or "Do you think that show accurately portrays gay characters, or does it rely on stereotypes?"
- If you hear children say something discriminatory, don't just hush them. Use the opportunity as a conversation starter to address their fears and correct their misperceptions.
- Challenge your own assumptions and behavior. Do you laugh at racially insensitive jokes? Do you cross the street to avoid passing people of a different ethnic group? Children learn from your actions as well as your words.

Courtesy of American Psychological Association  
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/kids-discrimination.aspx>