Adolescent Critical Racial Consciousness

by

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Dedication

To my mother—Angie, father—Juan, siblings—Jessie, Timothy, Mercedes, and my nephew and nieces—Tyson, Scarlet, and Khari. Each of you have shaped me so significantly. Because of you, research is not just research. It's our lives. You are my motivation. Ellos son yo, yo estoy ellos.

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Abstract

Racism remains a deep-seated and pressing social issue in the United States today. Youth may develop a "psychological armor" against racial oppression, referred to as a critical consciousness (Phan, 2010; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Critical consciousness has been described as youths' ability to recognize social issues in their social contexts and throughout society, and attribute their causes to structural issues, sense of confidence that they can create social change, and involvement in behaviors that challenge social injustice (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). The majority of critical consciousness research has not focused on how youth develop beliefs, feelings and actions that challenge specific systems of oppression, including racism (Anyiwo, Bañales, Rowley, Watkins, & Richards-Schuster, 2018).

The purpose of this dissertation is to deepen the conceptualization and understanding of youths' critical racial consciousness—a domain-specific aspect of youths' critical consciousness that involves youths' beliefs about racism, perceptions of racial messages in their social contexts, emotional responses towards racism, and involvement in actions that challenge racism. Comprised of two stand-alone studies, this study investigates different aspects of youths' critical racial consciousness. Study 1 is a qualitative investigation that explores how 384 youth of color and White youth explain the nature of racism. I also explore how youths' beliefs about racism potentially differ based on youths' racial/ethnic background. This study draws on developmental theory and research on children's beliefs about race (McKown, 2004; Quintana, 1994, 2008) and youths' awareness and explanations of racial inequality (Bañales et al., 2019; Hope, Skoog, &

Jagers, 2014). Through the use of an inductive-deductive approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) that incorporates grounded theory (Charmaz, 1996), I find that youth believe that racism involves people's involvement in physical acts of racial discrimination and endorsement of prejudice that occur on the basis of people's physical, cognitive, and behavioral characteristics. Second, youth believe that racism, in the form of physical acts of racial discrimination, has negative consequences on people's lives and/or society. Finally, youth who display a critical reflection of racism describe racism as a system of oppression that is perpetuated by majority groups, often White people, that effects the life opportunities and outcomes of minority groups, often people of color.

  With the same sample of youth, Study 2 is a quantitative investigation that explores how youths' perceptions of racial messages transmitted in their schools inform aspects of their critical consciousness (e.g., critical reflection of perceived inequality, anger towards social injustice) and critical racial consciousness (e.g., anti-racism action). This chapter is informed by the conceptual frameworks of critical consciousness (Diemer et al., 2016) and sociopolitical development (Watts & Flanagan, 2007) and associated bodies of literature relevant to research questions. Using structural equation modeling, this study finds that youth perceive messages in school that encourage them to reflect on the reality of race and racism in U.S. societal outcomes (i.e., critical consciousness messages) as well as messages in school that encourage them to not consider the role of race and race in U.S. societal outcomes and relations (i.e., color-blind messages). Although youths' perceptions of these different racial messages in school were correlated, they related to youths' critical consciousness and critical consciousness in unique ways. Findings from this dissertation have implications for how youth and adults discuss racism in the context of a school-based intergroup dialogue.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Racism is a system of privilege and oppression that affects the lives of youth of color (García Coll et al., 1996) and White youth (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). Youth have varied beliefs about the contemporary relevance and consequences of racism (GenForward, 2017; Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2014). For instance, research with college students indicates that White young people believe that racism is no longer an issue in the United States (U.S.), whereas some young adults of color believe that racism is omnipresent (Harwood, Choi, Orozco, Huntt, & Mendenhall, 2015; Nichols, 2010). Younger youth of racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds acknowledge that racism is an issue and challenge this complex issue through various forms of social action (Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019). Critical consciousness (CC) theory and research inform an understanding of how youth come to understand, negotiate, and challenge systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, and sexism (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). More specifically, this body of work indicates that CC is multidimensional (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016) and is comprised of youths' *critical reflection* (i.e., the ability to identify social issues and attribute their causes to structural factors), *political efficacy* (i.e., a personal sense of confidence that one can contribute to social change), and *critical action* (i.e., involvement in individual and collective behaviors that challenge the status quo). This research provides insight into why and how youth who engage various systems of oppression, but there has been minimal focus on how youth develop a CC in the context of racism (Anyiwo, Bañales, Rowley, Watkins, & Richards-Schuster, 2018). In other words, there is limited research on the

nature of youths' beliefs, feelings and actions that challenge racism—or youths' *critical racial*

consciousness (CRC). It is possible that youths' CC is different from the nature, predictors, and

consequences of youths' CRC.

Statement of the Problem

To address this gap in the literature, this dissertation, which is comprised of two studies,

draws on multiple theories to explicate how youth develop a CRC. Informed by grounded theory

and research that explicate the nature of beliefs about race and racism among White people and

people of color, including youth (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Charmaz, 1996; Quintana, 2008), Study 1

of this dissertation is a qualitative investigation that explores youths' beliefs about racism. This

study also examines how youths' beliefs relates to their racial/ethnic background. Study 2 is a

quantitative investigation that draws on critical consciousness (CC) theory to explore how

youths' perceptions of school racial messages relate to their CC and CRC. CC is considered a

multidimensional phenomenon that involve youths' beliefs about the structural causes of social

issues (i.e., a critical reflection of perceived inequality), their sense of agency to challenge social

issues (i.e., a sense of political efficacy), and involvement in behaviors that alter the political and

social status quo (i.e., critical action), as well as process that involves other contextual and social

identity factors (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2012; Mathews et al., 2019; Watts et al., 2010; Watts

& Flanagan, 2007).

There are multiple bodies of research that highlight the role of race and racism in youths'

lives, but an understanding of how youth personally define racism and how youths' learning

about race and racism in school might elicit youths' CC and CRC remains unclear. For instance,

racial/ethnic identity research focuses on how youth explore and develop affective connections to

their racial/ethnic identities (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Research on youths' experiences with

racial discrimination investigates how, when, and why young people of color appraise interpersonal forms of racial discrimination in their lives (Seaton & Lida, 2019; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Spears, 2008). The parental racial socialization literature explores how youth, primarily of color, receive diverse messages about race, intergroup relations, and racial discrimination from their parents (Hughes et al., 2006; Wang, Smith, Miller-Cotto, & Huguley, 2019). There is an emerging focus on how youth of various racial/ethnic backgrounds perceive racial socialization within their schools (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Byrd, 2017). The CC literature (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Watts et al., 2011) investigates how youth develop a critical reflection of societal inequality, a sense of political efficacy, and involvement in behaviors critical action behaviors. The bodies of research described above are all united in that they acknowledge that racism infringes on youths' psychological and behavioral development; however, they focus on different aspects of how youth contend with racism and other systems of oppression.

The current dissertation situates its research questions, identification of gaps in the literature, and suggestions for future research in the CC literature for its focus on youths' beliefs, feelings, and actions that challenge a system of oppression, specifically racism. Study 1, in particular, is situated in and has implications for research that explores people's beliefs and attitudes about racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Quintana, 2008; Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013). This dissertation addresses two gaps in the CC literature. There are direct calls for CC research to be more domain-specific and intersectional in that it should consider how youth contend with and challenge specific systems of oppression, and how systems of oppression intersect to shape youths' lived experiences (Aldana et al., 2019; Anyiwo et al., 2018; Godfrey & Burson, 2018). The current dissertation responds to this call by focusing on how youth define

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racism and exploring how youths' perceptions of racial messages in their schools are related to their engagement in behaviors that challenge racism and other CC and CRC related psychological processes. A focus on youths' CC and CRC will contribute to an understanding about whether these processes function similarly in youths' social justice development and positive development, broadly.

The current dissertation also advances CC research for its focus on youth of color and White youth. There is discussion in the CC literature about how more privileged youth, such as White youth, develop a CC, as the majority of CC research has focused on the experiences of youth of color (see Bañales et al., 2019; Diemer et al., 2016; Rapa, Diemer, & Bañales, 2018; Seider et al., 2019). Focusing only on youth of color in CC research unintentionally implies that dismantling systems of oppression is less relevant for White youth. Indeed, youth of color face systemic and interpersonal racial disadvantage in society, and they face unique challenges and experiences in a system of racism (García Coll et al., 1996). However, White youth, as a group that receives systemic and interpersonal racial privilege in the U.S, also face unique experiences in a system of racism (Hagerman, 2018). For example, research with White college students and adults finds that there are psychological costs of racism for White people, such as having irrational fear of people of color as well as limiting cross-racial friendships and networks (Schooley, Lee, & Spanierman, 2019; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). Evidently, both youth of color and White youth have a stake in disrupting racism. The current dissertation not only responds to calls for CC research to be more inclusive of youth from racially/ethnically privileged and marginalized backgrounds, it also has the potential to contribute to the development school-based programs (e.g., a school-based intergroup dialogue) that allow youth of color and White youth to critically examine and challenge racism.

Critical Consciousness Development During Adolescence

The developmental underpinnings of youths' CC and CRC abilities likely deepen and change during adolescence (Quintana, 2008). In general, adolescence is characterized as a time of change, with regard to the brain (Burnett, Sebastian, Cohen Kadosh, & Blakemore, 2011), social identity (Erikson, 1968) and sociocogntive processes (Selman, 1980). These changes set the stage for youth to develop beliefs, feelings and actions that challenge racism.

For instance, as compared to childhood, adolescents have greater sociocognitive skills that allow them to think more abstractly and complexly about race and racism. In particular, early adolescents (approximately 10 –14 years of age) gain a social perspective of race, in that they have the potential to recognize the racial structure of their environments (e.g., students of color are overly represented in less rigorous courses in school), and racial differences in social interactions (e.g., White students are treated more favorably by teachers) (Brown & Bigler, 2005; Quintana, 1994, 2008). At approximately 14 to 18 years of age, middle to late adolescents are capable of understanding the racialized structure of society and institutional forms of discrimination (Brown & Bigler, 2005; Hughes & Bigler, 2011). For instance, research with Black high school students finds that youth think more about the structural causes of the Black-White academic achievement gap as they age (Bañales et al., 2019). Youths' structural analysis of social issues, such as the achievement gap, is the result of youths' ability to generalize seemingly isolated cases of racial discrimination as being a part of a generalized pattern of racial discrimination among certain racial/ethnic group members (Quintana, 2008).

In addition to sociocognitive gains, youth have racially/ethnically salient experience in their schools and homes that contribute to their CC and CRC development during adolescence. Middle to late adolescents recognize racial/ethnic differences in achievement gaps, such as in

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graduate rates and advanced course placement, between students of color and White students as they progress through school (Brown & Bigler, 2005). Black middle school adolescents attribute these race gaps to structural (e.g., Black kids do not have as many advantages as White students) and/or individual (e.g., Black students are to blame for these gaps) causes (Bañales et al., 2019). Youths' racial beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are informed by the racial messages they receive from their parents (Hughes et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2019). Similarly, an emerging body of research indicates that youths' racial beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are shaped by the racial messages they receive in school (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Byrd, 2015, 2017). In all, the sociocognitive abilities and racial experiences youth acquire throughout adolescence inform youths' CRC and CC development.

Adolescents' Beliefs About Racism

There are established theoretical models and empirical research that articulate how children become aware of race (see Quintana & McKown, 2008), and some theory and research focus on how youth describe the nature of racism. Research on racially/ethnically diverse children's (aged 6-10) development of beliefs about racism found that children believed that racism is comprised of multiple components, including stereotypes, prejudice, interpersonal racial discrimination (e.g., physical exclusion), and they considered the perpetuators and target of racism amongst other factors (McKown, 2004). Similarly, a study with children (aged 10 - 13) in the Netherlands found that children considered verbal insults, an unequal sharing of goods, and social exclusion (i.e., interpersonal discrimination) as key forms of ethnic discrimination (Verkuyten, Kinket, & van der Weilen, 1997). This work also revealed that children refrained from identifying negative behavior as discriminatory if they thought the target was deserving of the negative treatment or that the perpetrator engaged in the behavior unintentionally. By age 10,

children voiced that discrimination is typically perpetrated by a member of an ethnic majority group, toward a member of a different racial/ ethnic group, often a minority group member as the recipient (Verkuyten et al., 1997). Thus, youth are likely to be attuned to distinct dimensions of racism (e.g., prejudice, stereotypes), as well as the dynamics of racism, such as who the perpetrator and recipient are and the perceived intentions behind the perpetrator's actions.

Children also make inferences about the causes of discrimination and adolescents are likely to make such inferences as well. McKown & Weinstein (2003) found that children aged between 7 and 10 had the ability to infer that a person's endorsement of stereotypes undergirds their involvement in discrimination, with this skill increasing with age (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Quintana and Vera (1999) explored how 7- and 12-year-old Mexican American and African American children explained the causes of ethnic prejudice and discrimination and found that younger children thought prejudiced was caused because of people's physical characteristics and older children attributed prejudice to socialization and strained intergroup relations.

The definitions racial justice organizations use to describe the nature of racism also provide insight into how youth may define racism. For instance, the Center for Racial Justice Innovation states that racism consists of various levels of oppression. These levels include the intrapersonal (e.g., the endorsement of stereotypes and prejudice), interpersonal (e.g., involvement in physical and verbal forms of racial discrimination), institutional (e.g., the functioning of laws, policy, discourse, and cultural practices that advance White people and limit the life opportunities and success of people of color within schools, hospitals and other institutions) and structural (e.g., the functioning of and connections between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional racism). Previous research on youths' racial and social experiences suggest that youth are aware of some of these aspects of racism. For example,

research that investigates youths' racial discrimination experiences finds that youth have the ability to identify interpersonal racism as they report daily experiences with racial microaggressions (Seaton, Yip, Morgan-Lopez, & Sellers, 2012), but whether youth name these experiences as forms of racism is unclear, because youth are often not asked to define what racism means to them. Furthermore, research in the CC literature indicates that youth have the ability to identify structural forms of bias. For example, focus groups with Black early adolescents illuminate that youth recognize issues in their schools and attribute their cause(s) to structural factors (e.g., their schools have inadequate school facilities due to disproportionate spending between schools); however, youth do not explicitly name these experiences as forms of racism (Hope & Bañales, 2018). This might be the case because youth were not explicitly asked to do so in focus groups. Asking adolescents to define racism, in their own words, has the potential to determine whether youths' beliefs about racism include an awareness of the various levels and dynamics of racism described by racial justice organizations.

Children and youths' social identity characteristics contribute to whether young people recognize and how they discuss discrimination (Spears, 2008; Brown & Bigler, 2005). Thus, it is highly probable that youths' racial/ethnic background inform youths' beliefs about racism. For instance, McKown (2004) found that, when prompted to discuss racial/ethnic groups in the context of an imaginary story, Black and Latino children (aged 6 to 10) were more likely than White children to discuss discrimination. These racial/ethnic differences are situated in the fact that people of color and White people have unique racial/ethnic histories in the U.S. with communities of color having more racial/ethnic marginalization experiences than White people. Because of these experiences, youth of color are more likely than White youth to discuss race and racism in their homes, and personally experience racial/ethnic discrimination (Hughes &

Johnson, 2001; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). These racial/ethnic experiences, which inform youths' racial/ethnic identification, are likely to relate to youths' beliefs about racism.

Adolescents' Perceptions of Racial Messages in School and Associations with Critical Consciousness and Critical Racial Consciousness

Schools serve as developmental contexts for youths' CC development (Diemer & Li, 2011; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Luter, Mitchell, & Taylor, 2017; Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017). This research suggests that youth who have opportunities to make classroom and school decisions and discuss political and social issues in class develop different aspects of CC. Although all social contexts, including schools, are racialized in that historical racism informs the opportunities for and dynamics of race relations (Byrd & Chavous, 2011; Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016), minimal CC research considers how schools serve as racial contexts and how these contexts informs youth CRC development, although some exceptions do exist (Seider et al., 2018; Seider et al., 2019; Seider & Graves, 2020).

For instance, Aldana & Byrd (2015) argue that youth learn about race and racism through various aspects of schools, such as through peer relations, teachers' educational practices, and the broader school climate. Indeed, Diemer, Hsieh & Pan (2009) found that reports of school race relations (e.g., the frequency of interracial friendships at school) by students, teachers and school principals were directly and positively related to youths' sociopolitical self-definition. Although this study did not examine youths' exposure to school messages that explicitly involve racism, it suggests that schools convey racial messages through opportunities provided at school and that these opportunities shape aspects of youths' CC. Further underscoring the roles of schools as sites for racial learning, Byrd (2018) validated a measure of school racial socialization with college students and found that youth may be exposed to an array of messages about race

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and racism in schools. An analysis of how these messages were associated with youths' CC and CRC was not pursued. Accordingly, the current dissertation considers how youths' perceptions of school messages that emphasize the reality of racism (i.e., Critical Consciousness Messages) and deemphasize the reality of racism (i.e., Color-Blind Messages) relate to youths' critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice (aspects of youth CC) and anti-racism action (an aspect of youth CRC).

Adolescents' Anger Towards Social Injustice and Anti-Racism Action

CC and sociopolitical development (SPD) theory suggest that youths' "emotional faculties" inform whether youth challenge social injustice (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). People's emotional responses towards social issues are deeply personal in that they reflect personal or group-based connection to social issues. In the same way that the "personal is political" (Hanisch, 1970), there is reason to believe that youths' involvement in critical actions that challenge racism are motivated by their emotional responses towards social injustice. For instance, developmental research that explores associations between emotional competencies and civic engagement finds that youths' empathy is positively associated with different aspects of civic engagement, such as social responsibility values and informal helping (Metzger et al., 2018; Segal, 2011). Yet, there is limited empirical research in developmental research that explores how emotions that are often considered negative, such as anger towards social injustice, might motivate critical actions against racism.

There are competing beliefs about the role of anger in youths' lives in the youth development literature. One the one hand, anger has been described as a negative emotion that should be avoided because it has the potential to stifle youths' goals (Zembylas, 2007). On the other hand, anger has been described as an emotion that might motivate people, including youth,

to challenge social injustice in their communities (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Zembylas, 2007). Indeed, qualitative research with Latinx youth suggests that youth use their anger towards xenophobic policy as a springboard into civic action (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Informed by this research, youths' anger towards social injustice might alter associations between their exposure to school racial messages and their anti-racism action.

Statement of the Problem

Racism is a system of privilege and oppression that affects the lives of White youth and youth of color (García Coll et al., 1996; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). However, little is known about how youth develop a CRC, or beliefs, feelings and actions that challenge racism. More specifically, it is unclear how adolescents define racism and the extent to which their racial/ethnic backgrounds relate to these beliefs. An understanding of how adolescents reflect on racism will provide insight into how youth interpret a complex system of oppression and privilege that permeates many aspects of U.S. life.

Messages that highlight or deemphasize the reality of racism may also be transmitted to youth in U.S. schools (Byrd, 2017, 2018). Theoretical work suggests that youths' perceptions of racial messages in schools contributes to youths' awareness of racial inequality (Aldana & Byrd, 2015), but limited research explores youths' perceptions of racial messages in school and how these perceptions motivate action against racism. Being that youths' emotions motivate their participation in behaviors that support the well-being of communities (Metzger et al., 2018; Segal, 2011), it is important to consider how youths' emotional responses towards social issues might motivate their actions against racism.

Significance of Studies

This dissertation has implications for gaps in the CC literature as well as the development of school and research partnerships that allow youth to explore race and racism in schools in dialogic spaces (Aldana, 2014). The first paper in this dissertation explores youths' beliefs about racism, which are one component of youths' CRC, and how youths' racial/ethnic background relate to these beliefs. The majority of mainstream research on youths' psychological development in psychology has been adult centered in that adults have created theories and measures about youths' lives without consulting youth (see Anderson, 2019 for a review of youth participatory action research for exceptions). In Study 1, I rely on youths' voices to illuminate how they make sense of racism, rather than assume their beliefs about this system. Findings from this study have the potential to inform youth-centered theory on and measurement of youths' beliefs about racism. Study results may also guide how adults and youth development workers (e.g., teachers, community organizers) discuss racism with youth in developmentally and culturally relevant ways.

Study 2 of this dissertation investigates the role youths' perceptions of school racial messages have in adolescents' CC and CRC development. Specifically, I examine how youths' perceptions of messages in school that highlight, and minimize, the reality of racism in contemporary U.S. society might contribute to youths' perceptions of societal inequality, anger towards social injustice and anti-racism action. Exploring these research questions will determine the types of racial messages in school that promote, or hinder, youths' beliefs and feelings towards societal inequality and actions against racism. Findings from this study may inform the development of school-based intergroup dialogues that allow youth to explore their perceptions of racial messages communicated in schools, their emotional responses towards these messages, and devise action plans on how to challenge racism.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This dissertation is comprised of two studies with three main research questions. The first question is: How do adolescents define racism? Informed by grounded theory and research on children's and youths' beliefs about race and racism (Charmaz, 1996; McKown, 2004; Quintana, 2008), I hypothesized that youth would have varied beliefs about racism and that these beliefs would be situated in people's personal endorsement or enactment of intrapersonal and interpersonal racism (Mckown, 2004; Spears, 2008).The second research question is: How do youths' racial/ethnic backgrounds relate to their conceptions of racism? Consistent with grounded theory, I make no specific hypothesis pertaining to this question, beyond that youths' conceptions of racism and racial/ethnic identification will be related. The third research question is: How do school racial messages (i.e., messages that emphasize, or minimize, the reality of racism) contribute to adolescents' CC (e.g, critical reflection of societal inequality, anger towards social injustice) and CRC (e.g., anti-racism action)? Guided by CC and SPD theories, I hypothesize that school racial messages will differentially relate to adolescents' CC and CRC.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation has four chapters. Chapter I offered a brief theoretical and empirical background relevant for study research questions, the statement of problem, research questions and hypotheses. Chapter II, or Study 1, explores the first two research questions of this dissertation, which involve how youth define racism and the ways in which their racial/ethnic background relates to these beliefs. This chapter will provide a literature review, methodology, results and a discussion. Chapter III, or Study 2, explores the ways in which adolescents' perceptions of school racial messages relate to their CC and CRC development. A literature review, hypotheses, methodology, results and a discussion are provided in this chapter. The final

chapter of the dissertation, Chapter IV will conclude with a discussion of how study results may

be applied to future research and school-based programming that stimulates youths' CC and

CRC development.

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Chapter 2: Something We Can See, Hear, and Feel: Adolescents' Beliefs about Racism

As racial/ethnic disparities and issues (e.g., strained interracial relations) remain pressing social issues in the United States (U.S.), it is important to understand how adolescents understand racism—the very system in which these issues are created and embedded. Research suggests that youth have diverse opinions about the contemporary relevance of racism, and devise creative solutions to counter racism (Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019; Cohen, 2011; GenForward, 2017). Despite this information, little is known about how adolescents describe the nature of racism. Additionally, minimal research examines how youths' racial/ethnic background might inform their beliefs about racism. An understanding of youths' beliefs of racism has the potential to shed light on how youth reflect on, feel about, and challenge racism.

Guided by developmental theory on youths' racial awareness, this qualitative investigation illuminated how 384 racially/ethnically diverse adolescents across the U.S. reflect on racism when asked—How do you define racism? —with an open-ended question. Additionally, racial/ethnic differences in youths' beliefs about racism were examined to consider how youths' unique racial/ethnic group histories in the U.S. might shape their understanding about racism. This research contributes to theory and research on the nature of adolescents' analysis of systems of oppression and societal injustice (Flanagan et al., 2014; Hope & Bañales, 2018; Quintana, 1998; 2008), and has the potential to inform how parents, schools, and community workers discuss racism with youth in ways that are developmentally and culturally relevant.

Defining Different Aspects of Racism in the Context of Adolescence

Adolescence is a key period in which youth develop and further develop racial beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors from childhood. Youth are likely to develop racial stereotypes, which are preconceived beliefs about people based on their perceived racial/ethnic group membership (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015). The ability to infer that specific people harbor stereotypes and that people hold stereotypes, broadly, emerges during childhood (between 6 and 10-years-old), and this skill increases with age (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Youth are likely to endorse stereotypes about certain racial/ethnic groups, as they gain greater access to social institutions (e.g., media, school) that reify these beliefs (Rowley, Kurtz-Costes, Mistry, & Feagans, 2007). Youth may also develop racial prejudice, or negative attitudes towards other racial/ethnic groups (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015). People who personally believe that racial stereotypes and prejudice are valid about their own racial/ethnic group and other racial/ethnic groups display internalized racism (David, Schroeder, & Fernandez, 2019). For example, White youth who have internalized racism might believe that White people are smarter or more attractive than people of color, and youth of color who have internalized racism might also believe these stereotypes and prejudice to be true. Ultimately, internalized racism perpetuates White privilege and dominance. Youth who recognize that people may endorse stereotypes and prejudice have an awareness of intrapersonal racism, as they recognize forms of racism are harbored within people's personal beliefs and attitudes.

Youth have ability to infer that people's endorsement of stereotypes and prejudice drives their racial discrimination (Bigler & Liben, 2007; McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Racial discrimination is defined as involvement in physical and verbal forms of racial bigotry (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015). Youth who recognize that racism involves racial

discrimination have an awareness of interpersonal racism, as they recognize that racism is rooted in people's engagement in discriminatory behaviors towards other people. In all, youth who recognize that racism consists of intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of racism display an individual analysis of racism (Tawa, Suyemoto, & Roemer, 2012), as they do not reference the ways in which racial bias and inequity are perpetuated throughout institutions.

Youth may also recognize that intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of racism comprise a system of institutional racial discrimination, which is defined as a system that privileges White people and disadvantages people of color through the functioning of culture, laws, and polices through institutions, such as schools (Tatum, 2017). Institutional racism that functions across multiple institutions creates structural racism or "[a] historically rooted system of power hierarchies based on race— infused in our institutions, policies and culture—that benefit White people and hurt people of color." (The Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2015, p. 31). Structural racism is comprised of intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of racial discrimination. Social perspective taking skills (a type of social cognitive skill) are key for youth to recognize institutional and structural racial racism, as these skills allow youth to reflect on how their personal racial experiences might differ from others, and connect how seemingly isolated racial experiences comprise racial trends throughout society (Quintana, 2008). Youth who are aware of institutional and structural racism display a critical reflection of racism (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

There are also dynamics of racism that must be considered in the understanding of racism. It is argued that people do not need to engage in intentional forms of racism to perpetuate the system of racism (Tatum, 2017). Engaging in cultural practices that benefit White people and isolate or exclude people of color is considered racism, regardless of the intention to perpetuate

White privilege or not. It is also argued that only White people—and not people of color—can be "racists," because racism involves the exercise of racial dominance and social power that dictates the life opportunities of people of color and White people (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; DiAngelo, 2010). Because people of color do not have collective social, economic, and political power, it is believed that they cannot perpetuate racism. Although there is scholarly discussion of the complex nature and dynamics of racism, empirical research with children, youth, and adults suggest that people are more aware of interpersonal forms of racism than institutional aspects of racism (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; McKown, 2004). Theoretical and empirical work on color-blind racial ideology and developmental theory on how young people develop an awareness of race and racism help inform an understanding of why this might be the case.

Theoretical Framing: From Color-Blindness to Color Consciousness

Theory and research on color-blind racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) and ethnic perspective taking (Quintana, 1998; 2008) guide an understanding of the ways in which youths' racial beliefs may fall on a spectrum where beliefs about racism may be held simultaneously. This spectrum may include a lack of awareness of the various components of racism on one end (defined as a color-blind racism perspective) to an awareness of these forms of racism on the other end (defined as a critical reflection of racism). A framing of racial beliefs as a spectrum of racial awareness acknowledges that people may endorse beliefs about racism that range in the extent to which they acknowledge the reality, multidimensional nature, complex dynamics, and consequences of racism. Such a spectrum does not suggest that youths' beliefs about racism are an "either-or" phenomenon, or that youth will only hold perspectives that are color-blind or critical in nature. To the contrary, a spectrum of racial awareness recognizes that youth have the

potential to hold various beliefs about racism that are or appear to be conflicting, as previous research on the formation of racial attitudes and social beliefs suggests among youth and adults of various racial/ethnic backgrounds (Bañales et al., 2019; Godfrey & Wolf, 2015; Warikoo & de Novais, 2015).It is also possible that youth might be more aware of one form of racism (e.g., interpersonal racism), but less aware of another (e.g., structural racism). Considering youths' beliefs about racism on a spectrum of racial awareness allows for complex and contradictory beliefs about racism to emerge.

The current study's conception of a color-blind racial perspective draws on an interdisciplinary framework of color-blind racial ideology that aims to explain how and why people, primarily White college students and adults, endorse beliefs that ignore and/or minimize the role of race in U.S. society (Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013). Color-blind ideology is considered a form of new racism as it allows people to endorse racial prejudice and stereotypes without fear of being deemed a "racist" because their expressed beliefs are grounded in U.S. American values that emphasize individualism, meritocracy and work ethic (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). By relying on these values as explanations for people's life outcomes, people can avoid discussion of the role race, colonization, slavery, and land displacement have in people's current access to resources, success, and the larger structure of society (DiAngelo, 2010).

There are four dimensions of color-blind racial ideology referred to as the denial of race, blatant racial issues, institutional racism, and White privilege (Neville et al., 2013). A denial of race involves denying that people have racialized experiences. A denial of blatant racial issues involves a lack of awareness of explicit forms of racial discrimination. A denial of institutional racism includes a limited awareness of the presence of institutional forms of racism, and the denial of White privilege involves people's lack of awareness of the advantages White people

inherit and experience in U.S. society (Neville, Lily, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). These manifestations of color-blind ideology are united in that they emphasize color evasion (i.e., the denial of racial differences and emphasizing sameness) and power evasion (i.e., the denial of racism by emphasizing equal opportunities). A multiculturalism perspective is the alternative belief system for color evasion as it involves recognizing racial differences, and a critical awareness of the existence of racism serves as the alternative perspective for power evasion. The latter perspective is referred to as a critical reflection of racism in the current study. Similarly, sociological research with White college students and adults explores people's use of racial frames, or lens through which people perceive the world, that minimize racial differences and power in people's life opportunities and outcomes (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, & Embrick, 2004). These frames, which comprise people's color-blind ideology, have been described as *Abstract Liberalism*, *Naturalization*, *Cultural Racism*, and the *Minimization of Racism* (see Bonilla-Silva, 2006 for a full review of frames). All of these frames give "raceless" explanations for societal outcomes and dynamics. For example, the abstract liberalism frame emphasizes the importance of choice and individualism in racial affairs and issues without consideration of historical and contemporary social context. The minimization of race frame acknowledges the existence of race but significantly deemphasizes the construct's role in the lives of people of color and White people today. People who endorse this frame conceive of racism as overt acts of bigotry rather than subtle behaviors, verbal slights, or institutional manifestations of racism.

White people and people of color may endorse a color-blind perspective, although endorsing this ideological belief system has different implications for both groups (Neville et al., 2013). White adults who endorse a color-blind racial ideology endorse greater levels of modern

racism, racial and gender intolerance, beliefs in a just world, the superiority of White people and the inferiority of people of color, and a lack of support for policy that addresses racial inequity (Neville et al., 2000; Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). People of color who adopt a color-blind racial ideology express a sense of internalized racism, or an endorsement of racial stereotypes of their racial/ethnic group or other people of color, self-criticism and criticism of other people of color for their role a lack of success, which ultimately results in a lack of participation in individual and collective responses against social issues (Rendón, Aldana, & Hom, 2018; Neville et al., 2013; Neville, Coleman, Falconer, & Holmes, 2005). Ultimately, White people and people of color who endorse a color-blind perspective perpetuate White privilege throughout society, internalized racism among White people and people of color, and uphold the racial status quo (DiAngelo, 2010; Neville et al., 2013).

Developmental theory on children's beliefs about race and ethnicity offers insight into how young people may express a racial awareness that is less color-blind and more critical of the role of race and racism in people's life and societal outcomes. One influential theory is Quintana's (1998) developmental theory on ethnic perspective taking. This stage-theory suggests that children (into adolescence) undergo four levels, or stages, of racial awareness as they explore and question the role of race and ethnicity, and eventually racism, in their lives, the lives of others, and the functioning of the world. At level 0, children have physical and egocentric perspectives of race such that they use observable and physical aspects of race (e.g., skin, hair) to define the construct. At Level 1, children have a literal understanding of race and apply this understanding to people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. For example, a child in this stage might believe that only mean people can perpetuate racial discrimination. At Level 2, children in late childhood and early adolescence have a social perspective of race that allows them to notice

subtle features of racial phenomena. For instance, children may begin to notice how social class is racialized and can identify that certain environments are racially segregated. Children in this stage have the potential to notice the social implications of race (e.g., race dictates where people can live), and infer the intentions of people's race-related behavior. Thus, this is a stage in which children have the potential to identify forms of interpersonal racism, but do not necessarily have skills to identify institutional and structural racism. Consequently, children view race-related incidents as isolated occurrences. At Level 3, now as adolescents, young people have sociocognitive skills that allow them to understand the racialized nature of society and may identity institutional forms of discrimination. Youths' social perspective taking skills allow them to generalize seemingly isolated acts of interpersonal racial discrimination as integrated acts of discrimination that sustain a system of racial bias. Youth are also able to reflect on the intentions and motivations of individuals and understand that people's behaviors have consequences for the functioning of society. Thus, "the development of critical consciousness may find its roots in Level 2, but may be accelerated by the development of Level 3, development of a racial group consciousness" (Quintana, 2008, p. 34). Although Quintana's model of ethnic perspective taking is presented as a stage-model in which children progress into different stages of racial awareness of over, it is likely that youths' beliefs about race and racism are more fluid and cyclical and context dependent (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Tatum, 2017). In all, an understanding of beliefs about racism that fall on a spectrum that includes color-blind racial ideology on one end of the spectrum to a critical reflection of racism on the other end is informed by a diverse body of theory and research with White college students and adults (primarily the work on color-blind racial ideology) and children and youth of color of racially/ethnic diverse backgrounds (primarily the work on developing an awareness of race and racism).

Research on the Nature of Youths' Beliefs About Racism

There is minimal research about how adolescents describe the complexities of racism, although some research provides insight into children's understanding of racism and stereotypes. For instance, McKown (2004) conducted a content analysis of structured interviews with children (6 to 10-years-old) on how they described racism and examined associations between their understanding of racism and children's age and ethnicity. Results indicated that children's narratives of racism were multidimensional in that they included an awareness of stereotypes (beliefs), prejudice (attitudes), discrimination (behaviors), conflict between ethnic groups, and hopeful narratives that condemned racism. Thus, children only mentioned intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of racism. The endorsement of these aspects of individual-level racism also varied across racial/ethnic groups. For example, Latino, White and Asian children (across all ages) were likely to state that stereotypes and prejudice were prime characteristics of racism, and 10-year-old White and Black children, in particular, were likely to name discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice as forms of racism. African American children were the most likely to state that racism included interpersonal racial discrimination and ethnic conflict than children of other racial/ethnic groups.

These results partly challenge experimental research with children of the same range that finds that children of color who are stigmatized in academic settings (i.e., African American, Latino, and Native American) are more aware of racial stereotypes throughout society than White and Asian Children (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Together, this research suggests that children's beliefs about racism are multidimensional, these dimensions differ based on racial/ethnic group membership, and are overwhelming situated racism within individuals' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

Research that focuses on adolescents' experiences with racial discrimination reveals that youth of various racial/ethnic backgrounds have the potential to recognize intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of racism. For instance, research finds that adolescents of different racial/ethnic backgrounds perceive interpersonal forms of behavioral (e.g., differential treatment in the classroom, physical assault) and verbal discrimination (e.g., racial slurs, racial jokes) in their lives (Douglass, Mirpuri, English, & Yip, 2016; Seaton & Iida, 2019), potentially contributing to an understanding that racism is something that they can see, hear, or personally feel. Youth of color are more likely to experience racial discrimination from peers and adults than White youth (Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2017; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000), and these experiences might relate to greater awareness of interpersonal forms of racial discrimination. Although youth voice that they are routinely exposed to certain forms of interpersonal racial discrimination, they do not always consider racial discrimination as a negative experience. For instance, Douglass and colleagues (2016) found that youth considered the negative stereotypes embedded in racial jokes as harmless.

Youth also have the potential to recognize structural aspects of racism, but whether youth of color or White youth might be more attuned to the structural dynamics of racism is unclear. These unclear findings might involve the fact that the majority of research on adolescents' understandings and explanations of racism has been qualitative and conducted with youth of color, and research that explores White youths' understanding of societal issues has been quantitative and not necessarily focused on their beliefs about racism. For instance, focus groups with Black early adolescents in predominantly Black schools find that youth blame individuals and unjust conditions in their schools (structural factors) for students' academic difficulties (Hope & Bañales, 2018). However, youth did not explicitly describe these experiences as forms

of racism, potentially because youth were not directly asked if they thought their racial experiences were racist.

Middle school and high school-aged youth of color who are explicitly asked to reflect on racism in their lives and society through youth participatory action research and school curriculum designed to increased students' awareness of race and racism recognized the presence and consequences of interpersonal and institutional racism in their schools, neighborhoods, and society (Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2014; Roberts, Bell, & Murphy, 2008). Similarly, Wray-Lake and colleagues (2018) found that Latinx youth who are asked to reflect on their reactions to President Trump's immigration politics (a specific political issue), but did not participate in a structured experience that raised their awareness of racism, displayed an awareness of various components of racism, including the interpersonal (e.g., "[the President] is racist and wants all Mexicans out") and structural ("It's like he's giving White people the privilege to do whatever they want even if it's a criminal action"). This research also demonstrated that youths' analysis of racism may differ with respect to the aspect of racism described, who is perceived to be the perpetrator and receipt of racism, and the societal consequences of racism.

Quantitative research with White youth and youth of color in the critical consciousness literature presents mixed findings about whether more privileged youth, such as White youth, are more aware of the structural manifestations of racism. For example, research finds that White youth are more likely than youth of color to believe that certain marginalized groups (e.g., people of color, women, poor people) face unequal opportunities in society (Diemer, Voight, Marchand, & Bañales, 2018). Yet, research with Black youth who attend low-income schools and White youth who attend low- and middle-income schools finds that Black youth endorse a greater critical reflection of racism than White youth who attended both types of schools (Tyler,

Geldhof, Black, & Bowers, 2019). These mixed findings might be explained by the fact that measures of youths' critical reflection have been assessed in different ways. For instance, some measures of youth and young adult critical reflection are broad in that they ask youth to report the extent to which they recognize that various marginalized groups (e.g., low-income people, women, people of color) face inequitable opportunities (Bañales, Mathews, Hayat, Anyiwo, & Diemer, 2019; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017) or measures do not name the privilege and oppressed groups on which youth are to reflect (Thomas et al., 2014). It could be that youth of color who reflect on questions on how people of color face unequal opportunities in society as compared to White people might endorse a greater critical reflection than White youth, as previous research finds (Tyler et al., 2019). Asking youth to report how they conceive of racism, in particular, might reveal unique features of youths' critical reflection of racism and how these features might uniquely relate to youths' racial/ethnic background.

The Current Study

Theory and research on people's beliefs about race and societal injustice offer insight into how youth might develop beliefs about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2063; Quintana, 1998; 2006), but theoretical and empirical research on how youth define racism, in particular, is lacking. To address this gap, the current study used an open-ended question with 384 adolescents (i.e., youth were asked "How do you define racism?") to illuminate their beliefs about racism. The use of open-ended question qualitative methodology was necessary, as it detects complexity and potential contradictions in people's understanding of social world (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Relying on grounded theory allowed me to not make a firm hypothesis on the nature of youths' beliefs about racism. However, as informed by the literature, I did expect that youth would have varied beliefs about racism (McKown, 2004; Spears, 2008). Similarly, although I did not have a

concrete hypothesis on how youths' beliefs about racism would differ based on youths' racial/ethnic background, I did expect racial/ethnic differences to emerge based on groups' racial/ethnic histories with privilege and oppression in the U.S. This research contributes to theory and research on the nature of adolescents' beliefs about racism and the ways in which youths' racial/ethnic backgrounds, which are informed by unique and shared racial, ethnic, and cultural histories in the U.S., relate to these beliefs.

Method

Procedure

Adolescents were recruited using Qualtrics panel services, which is an online survey panel platform that aids in the development and administration of surveys. The use of Qualtrics for participant recruitment is common in psychology and other fields (Zakharov, Nikulchev, Ilin, Ismatullina, & Fenin, 2017). Qualtrics houses a panel with the contact information of a representative sample of U.S. adolescents. Based on the current project's participant criteria (i.e., a racially/ethnically diverse sample of adolescents), participants from the larger panel were randomly selected and sent an email with a link to the study. To minimize self-selection bias, the survey invitation did not include details about the contents of the survey. Participants who were 18-years-old gave consent to complete the survey, whereas youth who were below this age gave assent and their parents gave consent for youth to participate. The survey lasted approximately twenty minutes and youth received incentives for survey completion in the form of cash, airline miles, gift cards, redeemable points, sweepstakes entrance, or vouchers. Distribution of incentives was managed by Qualtrics Panel services. The Institutional Review Board at the author's institution granted permission for the administration of the Qualtrics survey.

The survey began with questions that assessed youths' demographic information (i.e., racial/ethnic group membership, gender, age), the extent of their intergroup relations in their school and neighborhood contexts, and validated and unvalidated psychological measures on youths' critical consciousness, school racial socialization, civic and political engagement. At the end of the survey youth were asked—"How do you define racism. Please provide and explain your definition with a few sentences below"—as an essay text box that allowed youth to respond with no length restrictions.

Participants

This study included 384 youth, which included White adolescents (n = 100) and youth of color (n = 282). Two youth identified as "other" or had missing race/ethnicity data. Adolescents of color identified as Black/African American (n = 98), Latinx/o/Hispanic (n = 74), Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 52), multiracial (n =38), and Native American (n = 20). Youth who identified as multiracial were of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, such as "Black and Hispanic," "Native American and Vietnamese," and "White and Black." Youth lived in regions across the U.S. (Northeast (18.2%), South (40.6%), Midwest (16.7%), West (19.8%), Hawaii (.5%), Puerto Rico (.3%). Although youth had to live in the U.S. to qualify for participation in the current study, some youth reported that they lived in Moscow (.3%) and Iraq (.3%). [1] Some youth did not report information on where they lived (3.4%).

Youth were between 14 and 18 years of age (*Mage* = 17.00, *SD* = 1.29) and were about equally divided between males (49.0%) and females (51.0%). The majority of the youth were U.S. born (88.0%). The majority of the sample had parents with a high school diploma or GED (46.1%), 9.4% had parents whose highest level was junior high school or less, 14.3% had parents

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[1] It is possible youth moved to these countries after they qualified for the study.

with some college experience, 11.5% of parents received a college diploma, and 15.6% had parents with a graduate/professional degree. A small portion of youth (3.1%) reported that their parent had an "other" form of education or that they were "unsure."

To gain an understanding of youths' racial contexts and experiences, adolescents were asked to report the number of cross-racial friendships they had in their school and neighborhood using four items (1 = *none*; 4 = *many*) from the Developmental Intergroup Contact Survey (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2005). The majority of youth indicated that they had high amounts of interracial contact in their schools, reporting that they participated in some or more school projects with youth of other racial/ethnic backgrounds (90.4%), and that they had some or more friends at school of different racial/ethnic backgrounds (91.1%). Similarly, youth reported substantial amounts of interracial contact in their neighborhoods, indicating that they had some or more neighbors of different racial/ethnic backgrounds (86.7%) and that they had some or more neighborhood friends of different racial/ethnic backgrounds (80.7%). These results are surprising given that racial segregation remains a pressing issue in the U.S. and limits the availability of interracial contact and friendships between people of color and White people (Logan, 2013).

Positionality

Positionality in research with more marginalized (e.g., youth, youth of color) and privileged communities (e.g., White youth) is important to account for in the research process (Bourke, 2014). As such, I considered how my social identities contributed to my interpretation of youths' beliefs about racism. I identify as a Latina woman who has published on racially/ethnically diverse adolescents' awareness of, feelings towards, and actions against racism. In addition, I create and facilitate intergroup dialogues with young adults on their

understanding of racism and interracial experiences. My research and applied work ensure that I am knowledgeable and sensitive to issues around youths' beliefs about racism. In light of my expertise, I did not take youths' racial experiences and perspectives for granted. I kept a reflective journal and recorded audio memos that documented my reactions to youths' understanding of racism and how my social identities might have informed my reactions. This exercise was important to implement as I coded the data of youth who occupied different and similar social identities from myself. For instance, I, as a Mexican American woman with advanced levels of education have access to knowledge that shapes my understanding of and personal experiences with racism. A reflective journal ensured I accurately represented youths' lived experiences while being self-reflective about my assumptions about youths' lives. To triangulate the results of my coding, a trained undergraduate research assistant who identified as a White woman also separately coded the data. Our different life experiences and perspectives ensured resulting codes and themes accurately represented adolescents' perspectives. Subjectivity in the analysis and interpretation of the data was further accounted through discussions with a diverse group of academics from psychology, social work, and education who have an expertise on youth development. These discussions ensured that subjectivity in coding, interpretation and analyses was surfaced and managed.

Code Development

An inductive and deductive thematic approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) was used to analyze youths' responses to the open-ended question. This iterative approach to coding (Braun & Clarke, 2012) allowed me to create initial codes using grounded theory—a methodological approach that is sensitive to detecting nuances, complexity, and contradictions in people's analysis of complex social issues (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Following steps for

qualitative data analysis informed by grounded theory (Charmaz, 1996), I: 1) familiarized myself with the data; 2) generated initial codes; 3) searched for themes; 4) reviewed themes; 5) defined and named themes in a codebook; and 6) produced a report. All steps were pursued in Dedoose; a software for mixed-methods research.

To become familiar with the data, open coding strategy was used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These steps included the following four steps. First, the undergraduate research assistant and I first assessed the data separately, reading responses line by line and assessing similarities and differences across words and phrases (Step 1). We then came together to discuss these similarities and differences and identified indicators that appeared consistently throughout the data. Consistent words and phrases became codes (Step 2) and recurring codes became themes (Steps 3). Disagreements over codes were discussed until an agreement was reached. There was never an instance where an agreement was not reached. This could be the case because I, as the project lead, had more social power than the undergraduate research assistant due to my advanced level of education and age, although I did not occupy a more privileged racial/ethnic group status. I created themes on my own but sought feedback from the previously described group of experts on youth development, particularly for codes on which the undergraduate research assistant and I initially disagreed. Codes and themes were combined to generate a codebook (Step 4). This codebook consisted of 9 main codes and associated sub-codes. Main codes are overarching codes that unified sub-codes that were conceptually similar with regard to the level and aspect of racism they referenced. These main codes included the *Interpersonal/Intrapersonal Racism* main code that was comprised of 7 sub-codes that also had sub-codes; the *Attributions of Racism* main code that had 10 sub-codes; the *Perpetrators and Recipients of Racism* main code that had 6 sub-codes; the *Consequences of Racism* main code

that had 2 sub-codes, the *State of Racial Affairs* main code that had no sub-codes, the *Moral Stance* main code that had no sub-codes; the *Intention* main code that had 6 sub-codes; the *Anti-Racism Action* main code that had no sub-codes, and the *Structural Analysis of Racism* main code that had no sub-codes.

From the initial analysis of codes, it was apparent that youths' responses fell on a continuum of racism awareness, that included color-blindness ideology on one end of the spectrum to a critical reflection of racism on the other end. For example, some participants took a moral stance against racism, stating that we should look past the color of people's skin because the content of their character should guide how they are treated. This analysis of racism reflects an aspect of color-blind racial ideology, as the historical context of race and racism in our country is not taken into account with how the content of people's character is judged (Neville et al., 2000). On the other end of the spectrum, some youth displayed a critical reflection of racism, recognizing that racism is a *system* of oppression that creates and includes racial segregation, verbal and physical assault, and power imbalances.

The majority of participants fell somewhere in the middle: they acknowledged that racism was a reality but described racism as an interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomenon that was situated in individuals' beliefs, feelings, values, and behaviors. However, there were some youth who displayed a critical reflection of racism through their discussion of the dynamics of racism (e.g., who the perpetrator and recipient of racism could be, the consequences of racism). Therefore, this manuscript focuses on the ways in which youth described racism as an interpersonal/intrapersonal phenomenon as well as a system that functions and has consequences outside the individual (i.e., a critical reflection of racism). Table 1 depicts these 2 main codes, their frequencies and examples. These beliefs about racism greatly overlapped with the

attributions youth made about the causes of racism, the perpetrators and recipients of racism, and the consequences of racism. Therefore, these 3 main codes are also described below. Racial/ethnic differences within all codes are highlighted in Table 2. Following the description and discussion of codes and racial/ethnic differences within codes, coding procedures and analysis of data will be reviewed, and then themes that emerged from the data will be discussed.

Description and Discussion of Codes and Racial/Ethnic Differences

Interpersonal/Intrapersonal Racism (Main Code 1; n = 343). This main code is comprised of 7 sub-codes that discussed the ways in which individuals expressed racism through engagement in derogatory behaviors and speech *towards* people, some of which included the use of racial jokes and labeling others' racial/ethnic backgrounds. These behaviors and actions are termed interpersonal forms of racism because they occur between people. This main code also included sub-codes that referenced the ways in which racism is harbored within people through the endorsement of stereotypes, prejudice, and personality traits. Racism that is situated in people's personal beliefs, attitudes, and personal characteristics is referred to as intrapersonal racism.

Physical Behaviors (Sub-Code 1) and *Derogatory Speech* (Sub-Code 2). The first two sub-codes of interpersonal racism included adolescents' beliefs that racism was manifested through people's enactment of *Physical Behaviors* (n = 142) and *Derogatory Speech* (n = 47). These sub-codes suggested that racism was something people could see or hear. Some youth who described physical behaviors as racism used single words, such as "antagonism," "bullying," "coercion," "violence," "exclusion," "discrimination" and "bullying" to describe racism, whereas some youth used phrases and sentences to describe this aspect of racism. Examples of these phrases included beliefs that racism involves "separating yourself from other ethnicities", "an act

of mistreatment," "signaling out a race," "treating people of another race as less than you, "any culture or race offending a different one," and "treating those of different ethnicity unequally." Youth of color (Black: 15.0%, Native American: 4.2%, Asian/Pacific Islander: 22.5%, Multiracial: 11.3%, Latinx: 16.2%) and White youth (30.3%) both reported that racism is physical, or behavior based.

Youth were more likely to use phrases to describe derogatory speech as a form of racism. Youth described racism as "any type of offensive hate speech, "someone saying go back to where you came from," "when you say something bad about someone's background or ethnic," "using racial slurs and discriminating against people that are different, "when someone of one race makes fun of or speaks lowly of a race different from theirs," "calling someone of a different race out and saying something that may not be true for all or just late not be true at all," and "using slurs, derogatory terms, hurtful comments." Black youth (30.0%) were more likely to report that racism involves derogatory speech, as compared to other racial groups (Native American: 13.0%, Asian/Pacific Islander: 19.1%, Multiracial: 11.0%, Latinx: 11.0%, White: 17.0%).

Some youth of color, the majority of whom were Black described specific racial slurs people, often White people, used towards them and other people of color. These youth shared that racism is when "someone calls a black person Nigger (Black youth)," "I was walking down the street and a white feminist called me a nigger (Native American youth)," "Tbh [to be honest] just because I'm dark and got a black person's nose racist rich white kids at school callin me nigger but I'm filipino that's offending me the most (Multiracial youth),""when a Caucasian person call [me] a nigro or monkey in the jungle (Black youth)," and "if a white person says " black people need to go back to [Africa] (Asian/Pacific Islander youth)." Youths' responses

suggest that racial slurs often aim to attack the African American community, and are often used by White people, illuminating the reality of widespread anti-Blackness that is perpetuated by White people in the U.S. Anti-Blackness is so pervasive that youth did not even have to identify as Black to personally experience racial slurs directed towards the African American community. Two youth of color indicated that derogatory speech can be specifically used against White people. These youth stated that racism is "talking junk about the opposite color that you are as in "I hate white people" or saying "White people can't twerk (Black youth)" and ""when you call white ppl [people] cracker (Asian/Pacific Islander youth)."

Racial Jokes (Sub-Code 3) and *Racial Labeling* (Sub-Code 4). Adolescents stated that people's use of racial jokes was a form of racism. *Racial Jokes* (n = 25) were generally described as people "making fun of other people's ethnicity," "making fun of someone based on commonly known stereotypes," "if some makes fun of u for where u come or your color," "making fun of a race by the way they look or talk," or as "jokes about people." In light of these responses, there was some disagreement about whether racial jokes were forms of racism. One youth stated that racism is when "when one race…*believes t*hat it is okay to make fun of [others]," whereas other youth indicated that racism is "anything negative, even if it is a *so called joke*," or "when people judge you of your culture and makes fun of it *when it's not funny at all*." These youths' responses highlight that some youth consider the intention behind people's use of racial jokes and how these jokes are interpreted as deciding factors in whether racial jokes are considered racist. Black (44.0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (28.0%), and Latinx youth (12.0%) were more likely than Multiracial (8.0%), White (8.0%) and Native American youth (0%) to voice that racial jokes were forms of racism. One multiracial girl provided detail on a specific group of

people who could experience a racial joke and where. She stated that "It could be that at school, one girl is Muslim and people make fun of her or treat her differently."

The most infrequent way adolescents described interpersonal racism was by stating that simply making racial observations, or *Racial Labeling* (n = 6), is a form of racism. For instance, adolescents stated that racism is "seeing people for the color of their skin or how they look, instead of for who they actually are," "defining some based on color, "labeling different races," and as "someone who identifies themselves as in what race they are." One Latinx youth challenged beliefs that racial labeling in and of itself is a form of racism. He stated that "Although it is not necessarily racist to point out certain statistics by race, it is indeed racist if one uses the race itself to justify the actions of a person. Races as whole groups may be tentatively described with certain descriptors, but these should never be applied to any individual person, by themselves." Interestingly, only Latinx (50%), White (33.3%) and Multiracial (17.0%) youth indicated that seeing race or racial labeling were forms of racism.

Prejudice (Sub-Code 5), *Stereotypes* (Sub-Code 6), and *Personality Traits* (Sub-Code 7). The next three codes reflected youths' beliefs that racism was harbored within individuals through their endorsement of prejudice, stereotypes, and personality traits. Youth who described racism as a form of *Prejudice* described the negative racial attitudes "racist" people have. These negative attitudes included "thinking your race is superior to other races," "hatred," "one race or person who thinks they are in some way superior or better than someone else or a group of people and make it known that they think they are better," "someone [that] doesn't like the person because of their skin tone," "somebody who hates me because of my skin or because I'm a queen and more powerful then they will ever be," or "when people judge you about your skin." Some youth also described prejudice as ethnocentrism or "in-group love." The majority of youth

of color were likely to report that racism is *Prejudice* (n = 91): Native American (5.5%) and Multiracial youth (11.0%), although Black (38.5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (23.1%), and Latinx (19.0%) youth were the most likely to discuss prejudice as a form of racism. White youth (3.3%) were the least likely to report that racism involves prejudice attitudes.

There were two sub-codes within the Prejudice sub-code called *Prejudice Plus Action* and *Prejudice Plus Power*. Although infrequent, eight youth believed that endorsing prejudice attitudes alone was not enough to declare that someone perpetrated racism. Youth stated that one must act on their prejudice through behaviors in order for racism to transpire—*Prejudice Plus Action* (n = 6). These youth explicitly stated that racism involved "prejudiced actions towards a group of people," and "acting on a racial prejudice." Only White (66.7%) and Asian/Pacific Islander youth (33.3%) made these claims. Two Asian/Pacific Islander youth stated that *Prejudice Plus Power* (n = 2), or "power + prejudice" and "when one person has both prejudice against another person and social power over them," was required in order to racism to be deemed.

A group of youth described racism as people's endorsement of *Stereotypes* (n = 23), or negative racial beliefs. Words such as "stereotypes" and "generalizations" were used to describe this aspect of racism. More detailed phrases, such as "beliefs that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race," "believing in and/or encouraging conversation that stereotypes a minority group," "the belief that one race possesses inherent traits that makes that particular race superior," "even though racism isn't always shown clearly there's always stereotypes that show it," and "offensive stereotyping of a person," were used to describe stereotypes as a form of racism." One youth described stereotypes as "majority rules" that should not be followed. They said: "We all have similarities no matter if we're African American,

Caucasian, Mexican, Arab. I feel as if they judge a certain race by what they see on the news, basically by what they visually see, but not everyone is the same. Not everyone is rude or ignorant, society shouldn't keep using the "majority rules" meaning you shouldn't say I know blacks are ignorant because "majority" of the ones I met was that way. When that isn't right, race shouldn't be a label it should just be a color that is accepted by others." One youth stated that color-blind beliefs or "believing that we are all human, one species" are stereotypes. White youth (30.4%) were the most likely to state that stereotypes were forms of racism, followed by Latinx (21.7%), Black (17.4%), Asian/Pacific Islander (13.0%), Multiracial (8.7%), Native American (4.3%), and "Other" (4.3%).

A smaller portion of adolescents indicated that certain *Personality Traits* (n = 7) make people racist. These youth stated that people who are "rude," "stubborn," "ignorant" "have a superiority complex" "an unwillingness to change" or "refuse to see [ethnic groups] as anything else" are considered racist. These responses implied that youth believed people were inherently "racist" and these characteristics were immutable. Multiracial (43.0%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (29.0%) youth were more likely to indicate that personality traits are forms of racism, followed by Latinx (14.3%), White (14.3%), Black (0%) and Native American (0%).

Attributions of Racism (Main Code 2). The second main code involved the attributions adolescents made about the causes of racism. This code was applied to youth responses that made a claim about the nature of racism, and also stated *why* people engaged in a specific form of racism. This overarching main code consisted of 10 sub-codes that indicated the basis on which racism occurred. As a whole, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and White youth were the most likely to make attributions about the causes of racism as compared to other youth, although there were some exceptions with regard to the specific attributions made.

Appearance, Behavioral, and Cognitive Characteristics (Sub-Code 1) and *Different Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds* (Sub-Code 2). According to youth, the most common cause of racism was people's *Appearance, Behavioral, and Cognitive Characteristics* (n = 86) (e.g., skin color, talking style, intelligence). White youth (27.0%) were more likely than youth of color to believe that racism was initiated due to differences in people's appearance, behavioral and cognitive characteristics, although Black (26.0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (16.3%), Latinx (13.0%), Multiracial (10.5%), and Native American youth (9.3%) also believed this to be the case. The second most common cause of racism, according to youth, was the fact that people were of *Different Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds* (n = 87). In this case, people's race and ethnicity were described broadly and were not defined as physical characteristics. These findings paralleled racial/ethnic group differences outlined above, such that White youth (32.3%) were more likely than youth of color to state that racism was perpetuated on the basis of race or racial/ethnic background. However, Black (14.0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (18.4%), Latinx (19.5%), Multiracial (11.5%), and Native American youth (3.4%) also believed racism was initiated on the basis of race.

Prejudice Attitudes (Sub-Code 3), *People's Culture or Where People Come From* (Sub-Code 4), and *Accent/Language Use* (Sub-Code 5). A smaller portion of adolescents stated that racism occurred because people endorsed *Prejudice Attitudes* (n =17) (White (18.0%), Black (29.4%), Asian/Pacific Islander (23.5%), Latinx (6.0%), Multiracial (12.0%), and Native American youth (12.0%). Youth also believed racism occurred because people had assumptions about *People's Culture or Where People Come From* (n = 22) (White (36.4%), Black (27.3%), Asian/Pacific Islander (32.0%), Latinx (4.5%), Multiracial (0%), Native American (0%) youth and/or had biased against people's *Accent/Language Use* (n = 3) (White (33.0%), Black (33.0%),

Asian/Pacific Islander (33.0%), Multiracial (0%), Native American (0%) youth). Surprisingly, no

Latinx youth (0%) stated that racism occurred on the basis on people's accent/language use.

People's Personality Traits (Sub-Code 6), *Endorsement of Stereotypes* (Sub-Code 7),

Religion (Sub-Code 8), *Historical Factors* (Sub-Code 9), and *For No Reason* (Sub-Code 10).

There were three attributions about the causes of racism where unique racial/ethnic differences

emerged. The first involved youths' beliefs that People's *Personality Traits* (n = 4) were the

basis of racism and only youth of color, specifically Black (50.0%), Latinx (25.0%), and

Asian/Pacific Islander youth (25.0%), made this claim. Similarly, people's Endorsement of

Stereotypes (n = 7) were described as a cause of racism by Black (14.3%), Latinx (57.1%),

Asian/Pacific Islander (14.3%), and also White youth (14.3%). *Religion* (n = 8) was also cited as

a cause of racism by Native American (37.5%), White (37.5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (12.5%)

and Black youth (12.5%). A small portion of youth expressed a more critical analysis of racism,

stating that racism was caused by *Historical Factors* (n = 6), such as "Jim Crow" and

"Imperialism." These youth were primarily Black (50.0%), White (17.0%), Latinx (17.0%), and

Asian/Pacific Islander (17.0%). Finally, some youth of color stated that racism occurred *For No*

Reason (n = 5), which included the responses of Asian/Pacific Islander (80.0%) and Black youth

(20.0%).

Perpetrators and Recipients of Racism (Main Code 3). This main code included youths'

discussion of who the *Perpetrators and Recipients* of racism could be. There were 5 sub-codes

that varied in the extent to which youth focused on certain social identity groups that could

perpetuate and initiate racism. These sub-codes included youths' beliefs that all people can enact

and receive racism, a discussion of specific and non-specific racial groups of color, minority or

religious groups that can receive racism, beliefs that White people can receive racism or perpetuate racism, and that societal institutions can initiate racism.

     All People Can Enact and Receive Racism (Sub-Code 1) The most prominent sub-code captured youths' beliefs that *All People Can Enact and Receive Racism* (n = 91). The majority of youth stated that people simply needed to be from different racial/ethnic backgrounds in order to enact racism, implying that all people could perpetuate and receive racism. Some youth conveyed this perspective generally, stating that racism is "having hatred towards someone from a different race or having different religions," "downsizing another person or people's race," "prejudice and stereotyping of people who are culturally different," and "blatant disrespect and disregard of those whom are of a different race/ethnicity." Some youth were more explicit in their beliefs that all racial/ethnic groups could enact and receive racism. They stated that racism is "when some race is ignorant towards another race such as whites and Hispanics or African Americans etc.," "exists on each side the race," "when a person of color or a Caucasian person [don't] like each other because of their skin color," "when a white person calls a black person nigger, when a black person calls a white person cracker," "you can be racist towards ANY kind of person, whether it be white, black, asian, hispanic, etc., and, "all races can be racist. It's just not one group, it can be all of the races." The majority of youth indicated that all people could enact and receive racism: White (25.3%), Black (24.2%), Latinx (10.0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (22.0%), Multiracial (11.0%), and Native American youth (8.0%).

     Against Specific Racial Groups of Color, Minority, and Religious Groups that were Defined and Undefined (Sub-Code 2) and *Against White People* (Sub-Code 3). Following youths' understanding that people could perpetrate and receive racism, youth were more likely to focus on specific social identity groups that could receive racism as opposed to who could

perpetuate this system of privilege and oppression. These beliefs involved two sub-codes that

included youths' beliefs that racism is implemented *Against Specific Racial Groups of Color,*

Minority, and Religious Groups that were Defined and Undefined (n = 30) and *Against White*

People (n = 1). In describing specific social identity groups that could receive racism, youth

named social identity groups (e.g., Black people, Asian people, people of color, minorities) or

provided examples that illuminated their conceptions of who could receive racism. These

examples included youths' beliefs that racism involved "not letting someone play because they're

Asian," "someone who is a different color and is not Caucasian" or "discrimination against

people who have been historically disenfranchised by imperialism." White (32.1%), Black

(25.0%), and Latinx youth (21.4%) were more likely than Asian/Pacific Islander (11.0%),

Multiracial (7.1%), and Native American youth (3.6%) to discuss or name specific minority

groups as recipients of racism. The only youth who stated that White people could receive racism

was Asian/Pacific Islander.

   White People Perpetrate Racism (Sub-Code 4) and *Societal Institutions Perpetuate*

Racism (Sub-Code 5). There were instances in which youth explicitly named and discussed

characteristics of the perpetuators of racism, although this was infrequent. These two codes

involved youths' beliefs that *White People* (n = 10) and *Societal Institutions Perpetuate Racism*

(e.g., a company) (n = 1). Youth who voiced that White could perpetrate racism described the

role White people have in various forms of racism. For instance, youth stated that racism is

"when a Caucasian person call me a nigro or monkey In the jungle," "a white person [that is]

racist towards a black," "a white person says " black people need to go back to Africa," "a White

feminist" and "White males." Youth emphasis that White women who are feminists and White

men could commit some form of racism highlights youths' recognition that power is attached to

social identity and that identification with a marginalized social identity (e.g., identifying as a woman) does not guarantee that one will not engage in racism. With the exception of Multiracial youth (0%), youth from all racial/ethnic backgrounds stated that White people could perpetuate racism: Asian/Pacific Islander (40.0%), Black (30.0%), Latinx (10.0%), Native American (10.0%) and White youth (10.0%). The one youth who described a societal institution as a perpetrator of racism was Asian/Pacific Islander.

Consequences of Racism (Main Code 4). The consequences of racism code consisted of adolescents' beliefs about who racism effects and how it makes people feel. There were 2 sub-codes. These sub-codes involved youths' beliefs that racism had negative consequences for others and society and on youth personally.

Consequences for Others and Society (Sub-Code 1) and *For Youth Personally* (Sub-Code 2). Youth stated that racism had negative *Consequences for Others and Society* (n = 40) by "fueling hate, anger, sadness", and "making people feel uncomfortable". In describing the external consequences of racism, some youth indicated that racism had political, economic, and social consequences for the lives of people, as this system "disenfranchises people," "affects [people's lives, jobs, relationships, insurance, and education], and presents people with "unequal chances" in life. To some extent, youth from all racial/ethnic backgrounds discussed that negative implications of racism for others and society: White (35.0%), Black (12.5%), Latinx (15.0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (20.0%), Multiracial (12.5%), Native American youth (2.5%), and one youth with missing race data (2.3%).

A small percentage of youth described the consequences of racism *For Youth Personally* (n =2), stating that they get really upset about the reality of racism. These youth identified as Black and Asian/Pacific Islander. In describing her personal reactions to racism, the

Asian/Pacific Islander youth indicated that "[racism] hurts me a lot because my best friend is African American and I would do anything to make sure isn't treated poorly." To this youth, the effects of racism are personal because of the love she has for her African American friend. These effects of racism extend beyond this youths' personal experiences with racism to include the negative racial experiences her friend has. The Black youth who described the consequences of racism on his personal life stated that: "If they call us a mean name I get upset and want to hit them but we could just tell them that's not nice and not pick on other people." This youth's use of the word "us" suggests that he views himself a part of his racial/ethnic group and that verbal forms of racial bigotry against his community is an afront to his personal life, which is intertwined in his racial/ethnic identity, as well. In discussing his anger towards experiencing these verbal insults, he considers engaging in physical violence as a form of anti-racism action against the perpetrator. At the same time, he reflects on possibly engaging in a less physical anti-racism action that involves standing up for oneself through words.

Critical Reflection of Racism (Main Code 5). The *Critical Reflection of Racism* (n = 19) code was applied to youth responses that indicated an understanding of the institutional and structural manifestations of racism. Youth who displayed a critical reflection of racism described racism as "systematic and institutional oppression" that is comprised of "social power" that creates "segregation, verbal/physical assault, shift of power, and social classes founded on race." Youth also described that racism negatively effects people's "lives, jobs, relationships, insurance and education" through "unequal chances" in society. The majority of youth who endorsed a critical reflection of racism were Asian/Pacific Islander (26.3%) and White (31.6%) youth followed by Black (21.1%), Latinx (10.5%), and Multiracial (10.5%) youth.

Coding Procedures and Analysis

Once codes were established, selective coding was used to explore themes in the data (Charmaz, 1996). Because youth were likely to make multiple claims about the nature of racism, study themes were extracted from examining the co-occurrence of main study codes. Thematic analysis was used to illustrate patterns in the data and make sense of the shared meaning among adolescents' understanding of racism (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This analysis was suitable because it allowed for nuances to be detected in adolescents' understanding of racism, and for multiple conceptions of racism to emerge from the data. The code co-occurrence chart in Dedoose was used to aid in the visualization of overlapping codes and themes. Three themes were identified in the data. These themes indicated that youth believed that racism 1) Is a Skin-Deep Offense that is Enacted through Physical Behaviors and Prejudice, and 2) Involves Physical Forms of Discrimination that Hurt People and/or Society. Although less common, some 3) youth displayed a critical reflection of racism and this analysis of racism was multidimensional.

Theme 1: Racism is a Skin-Deep Offense that is Enacted through Physical Behaviors and Prejudice.

The most common way adolescents described racism was by stating that it involved people's engagement in physical forms of discrimination and endorsement of prejudice. In this case, youth did not suggest that they believed that people's prejudice caused people's engagement in physical forms of racial discrimination (e.g., assault). Instead, youth described racism as people's engagement in physical discrimination and endorsement of prejudice as distinct features of racism. In describing the motivations of these co-occurring aspects of racism, youth voiced that people engaged in these forms of racism for "skin-deep" reasons, or because people had differences in appearance, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics. Youth also did not put boundaries on who they believed could perpetuate and receive racism. They stated that

people needed to only be of a different race/ethnicity in order to perpetuate physical forms of discrimination and endorse prejudice, suggesting that youth believed that all people can perpetuate and experience racism. Youth who made these claims stated that racism is: "discriminating [against] someone based on their race, thinking your race is superior to other races, disrespecting someone just because of their race, etc.," "judging people based on their race, discriminating, harassing, believing that people are better or worse because of their race, etc," "discrimination and/or prejudice against someone based on their race" "being rude to someone of a different ethnicity or skin color. People or are racist exclude different races and think that they are superior to others," "Racism is the bias against those of differing color. Being racist is disliking other people because of what they look like."

Youths' location of racism within individuals' behaviors and attitudes suggests that youth believe that racism can be controlled, as people have the power to alter their behaviors and attitudes towards people's appearance (e.g., hair texture, skin tone), cognitive (e.g., intelligence) and behavioral (e.g., how people walk) characteristics. If all people have the choice to be racist or not, it is unsurprising that youth believe that all racial/ethnic groups can perpetuate and experience racism. This individual-level notion of racism is consistent with the mainstream societal belief that racism only involves mean-spirted people that participate in behavioral forms of racial discrimination or endorse negative attitudes towards other racial/ethnic groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001). Although locating racism within individuals might have some positive consequences (e.g., individual-level racism is acknowledged), it ignores that racism also functions as an institutional system of power.

In focusing on individual racism, youth fail to take into account the unique histories of people of color in the U.S. (e.g., the prohibition of Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S.

through the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1883), and how historical and contemporary experiences with slavery, mass incarceration, land displacement, and native language loss might inform which social identity groups have the collective power to perpetuate and receive racism. By not recognizing the historical and structural factors that create and sustain racism as a system of privilege and oppression, youth reduced racism to individual acts of bigotry that occur due to superficial or inferred characteristics that all people can engage, including people of color. This perspective upholds aspects of color-blind ideology, namely abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) and power-evasion (Neville et al., 2014), as it overly emphasizes that belief in equal opportunity and thus people's individual power to control their behaviors and attitudes. An overemphasis on people's personal choice overlooks racism as a *system* of racial dominance that is created and maintained through the imbalance of social, political, economic and cultural power between White people and people of color (Tatum, 2017).

Theme 2: Racism Involves Physical Forms of Discrimination that Hurt People and/or Society.

Consistent with the previous theme, youth voiced that racism comes in the form of physical acts of bigotry. Yet, in this case, youth provided additional context on the types of consequences these behaviors might have in order for racism to be deemed as such. Specifically, youth stated that physical forms of racial discrimination have negative consequences on others and/or society to be considered racist. For instance, youth stated that racism is "singling out a race to berate them," "treating someone different (badly) because of the color of their skin. Usually racism…meant to hurt or put someone else down," and "discrimination and action that someone takes to offend or not accept a certain person by the color of their skin and where they come from." Implicit in youths' understanding of racism is that people's intention to inflict harm

onto others must be taken into account when considering what is and is not racism. Indeed, two youth explicitly discussed people's intentions in their definitions of racism.

For instance, one White youth stated that racism involves "Treating people badly because of the color of their skin. Usually racism is…*meant* to hurt or put someone else down." Similarly, another youth who identified as multiracial stated that "If you're doing an act in which you say or provoke another to *intentionally* instill hate, sadness, or anger, then that would be of racial discrimination." According to these youths' understanding of racism, seemingly benevolent forms racism (e.g., the model-minority stereotype towards Asian Americans) might not be considered racist because these forms of racism are not believed to be malicious or intended to hurt others' feelings. In fact, they are often perceived as compliments (Thompson & Kiang, 2010). Youth who voiced that physical, blatant forms of racial discrimination must intend to hurt others render subtle and unintentional forms of racism as well as structural components of racism invisible, thus perpetuating racism as a system of privilege and oppression that goes unchallenged.

Theme 3: Youths' Critical Reflection of Racism is Multidimensional.

Youths' critical reflection of racism, or their recognition of the institutional and structural components of racism, was multidimensional, in that there were various ways youth demonstrated an understanding of the complex nature, consequences, and dynamics of racism. For instance, youth focused on the *structural nature* of racism, describing racism as a "system" and "institution of oppression" that creates unequal opportunities for certain racial/ethnic groups. Within this structural analysis of the nature of racism, youth also described racism as "something [that gives people] *unequal opportunities*," which then have negative *consequences on people's life opportunities*, such as on "their lives, jobs, relationships, insurance and education."

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Other youth displayed a critical reflection of racism in their discussion of the *dynamics of racism*, particularly the role "*social power*" had in determining who can and who cannot engage in racism. These youth stated that a person needed to have social power over others' lives and opportunities in order for behaviors to be deemed as forms of racism. In some cases, the role of social power was situated in a discussion of people's endorsement of prejudice in that youth stated that "power + prejudice" was needed for racism to be classified as such. Thus, according to this definition of racism, not all people can engage in racism. People need to have social power and must act on this power through the endorsement of negative attitudes towards other racial/ethnic groups in order for racism to occur.

Greater clarity on youths' beliefs about which groups hold social power over others became evident as youth mentioned who could *perpetrate and receive racism*. Two youth stated that *institution*s, such as "a company [that hires] more Caucasian people than those of other races," may initiate racism, revealing youths' ability to think beyond their immediate social contexts and reflect on how distal contexts may perpetuate racism. This particular analysis of racism also indicates that youth believe that White people reap the benefits of inequitable hiring decisions from a company and that other racial/ethnic groups, potentially people of color, are disadvantaged. One youth was particularly concrete in their description of who receives benefits and disadvantages from racism, stating that racism involves "Mostly the dominant group which would be White males [gaining] benefits over the oppression of the minority." This youth displays an intersectional analysis of racism and sexism in that they recognize that being a White man, in particular, is key to power in society, whereas being a person of color and woman are associated with more disadvantaged. In all, youths' critical reflection of racism need not be confined to how they describe the nature of racism. Youths' critical reflection of racism was

apparent in their recognition that the system gives people unequal life opportunities that have negative consequences on people's life opportunities, is shaped by social power, which privileges and disadvantages certain racial/ethnic groups.

Discussion

Research suggests that youth have diverse opinions about racial issues and challenge racism in creative ways (Aldana et al., 2019; GenForward, 2017); however, the ways in which youth describe racism is unclear. This study aimed to address this gap by asking youth how they defined racism in their own words. This study also explored whether racial/ethnic differences emerged in youths' understanding of racism.

This research contributes to multiple bodies of research that illuminate adolescents' beliefs about racism and societal inequality. First, it advances developmental research on children's beliefs about race (Quintana, 1998; 2008), racism and prejudice (McKown, 2004; McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Quintana & Vera, 1999). In doing so, this study promotes and captures youths' voices (Kirshner, 2003) on their understandings of racism. Youths' voices were captured through the use of an open-ended question that did not restrict the length and content of responses. Allowing youth to speak freely about racism is important given that beliefs about racism are fluid, and informed by social norms, historical and social content (Bonilla-Silva, 2013; Neville et al., 2013). This research also advances research, such as critical consciousness research, that investigates the nature of youths' understanding of social issues, broadly, through its focus on how youth of color and White reflect on racism, in particular. The majority of research on adolescents' understanding of racial discrimination in the critical consciousness literature has been with youth of color via participatory action research or curricula that aim to stimulate youths' awareness of racism as a system of oppression (Hope et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2008).

The current study explored how White youth and youth of color in non-intervention and curricular contexts define racism, calling attention to the fact that youth of various racial/ethnic backgrounds reflect on racism in their daily lives and that all youth, both of color and White, have beliefs about racism.

Consistent with previous research on children's beliefs about racism (McKown, 2004) and work that reveals the nature of youths' beliefs about racial discrimination (Douglass et al., 2016; Hope et al., 2014; Wray-Lake et al., 2018), one of the main findings of this research is that youth of color and White youths' beliefs about racism are multidimensional. That is, youths' beliefs about racism included an awareness of the intrapersonal (i.e., stereotypes and prejudice), interpersonal (i.e., physical and verbal forms of racial discrimination), and structural components of racism. In addition, youths' conceptions of racism include an understanding of the dynamics (e.g., perpetrators and recipients of racism, attributions of the causes of racism) and consequences of racism. These racial beliefs fell on a continuum of racial awareness that ranged from a color-blind perspective on one end to a critical reflection of racism on the other. The majority of youth fell in the middle, as they reported an individual-level awareness of racism, stating that racism was primarily an intrapersonal and/or interpersonal phenomenon. That is, racism was believed to be harbored within people's individual beliefs (e.g., stereotypes), attitudes (e.g., prejudice), and behaviors (e.g., discrimination that is behavioral and verbal).

These findings are consistent with developmental research that finds youth of various racial/ethnic backgrounds are aware of forms of racism that is perpetuated by individual people (Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2017; Fisher et al., 2000). Of note, these findings support research on children's beliefs about racism that finds that children's conceptions of racism include an understanding that racism is comprised of stereotypes, prejudice, and physical forms of racial

discrimination (McKown 2004). However, adolescents' beliefs about racism appear to be more diverse and nuanced than children's beliefs about racism as they describe multiple types of interpersonal forms of racism (e.g., the use of racial jokes and racial slurs), and provide context on the causes and consequences of racism. Youths' understanding of racism as an issue that stems from people's endorsement of negative beliefs and attitudes and engagement in behavioral and verbal forms of racial bias is consistent with societal narratives on the nature of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Although the majority of youth had an individualistic understanding of racism, some youth expressed a critical reflection of racism. These youth expressed a critical analysis of racism in their understanding of the institutional nature of racial oppression, the consequences racism may have on the life opportunities of people, the role of power in shaping racial dynamics, and the ways in which power shaped who could initiate and receive racism. All of these conceptions situated racism outside individuals' personal beliefs, feelings, and behaviors, and, instead, critiqued racism as a system of oppression that creates and perpetuates unequal chances for people with less social power.

These findings contribute to the critical consciousness literature, or the body of research that explores how youth gain an understanding of the structural nature of social issues, a sense of agency they can create social change, and engage in collective and individual forms of actions to promote social justice. This body of work indicates that youths' critical reflection is comprised of an awareness that certain marginalized groups (e.g., people of color) face unequal chances in society (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017; Hope & Bañales, 2018). The current study finds that youths' beliefs about racism, which represents an aspect of youths' critical reflection of racism, includes the same aspects as youths' critical reflection, such as recognizing that certain

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marginalized communities face unequal chances in society. However, youths' critical reflection of racism also includes an awareness that racism is a *system* of oppression that involves power differentials between marginalized and privileged institutions (e.g., a company) and people (e.g., White men) that create unequal life opportunities for marginalized communities, primarily people of color.

Youths' racial/ethnic group membership shaped how youth conceived of the different dimensions of racism. There were some dimensions of racism that all youth considered forms of racism. For example, all youth (both of color and White) stated that behavioral forms of racial discrimination were forms of racism, with White youth reporting this aspect of racism more than other racial/ethnic groups. These findings are consistent with the mainstream societal narrative that racism is blatant, or easily seen or heard (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Although all youth described behavioral forms of racial discrimination as key examples of racism, beliefs that racism is visible or blatant might serve different purposes for White youth and youth of color. These beliefs might be protective for White youth, as they allow White people to consider themselves and other White people as well-intentioned in interactions with people of color, as long as they do not engage in blatant forms of racial discrimination (Bonilla, 2006). Research finds that there are psychological costs for White young adults who do not recognize the invisible and visible advantages of Whiteness, such feeling distressed when reflecting on their Whiteness, having limited cross-racial friendships and interactions (Neville, Poteat, Lewis, & Spanierman, 2014; Todd, Spanierman, & Aber, 2010).

Beliefs that racism comes in the form of blatant racial discrimination might also be protective for youth of color in the short term. Youth of color who believe that racism is obvious do not have to expend additional cognitive and emotional resources in determining whether

behavioral forms of racism are racist, as they are easier to interpret as compared to more subtle

forms of racism (Sue et al., 2007). However, youth, including youth of color, who endorse

beliefs that justify the political status quo in society (e.g., beliefs that racism consists of blatant

forms of racial discrimination) have stronger declines in self-esteem and classroom behavioral

regulation and a greater rise in deviant behaviors across middle adolescence (Godfrey, Santos, &

Burson, 2019).

The majority of youth were also like to state that people's use of derogatory speech (e.g.,

racial slurs) is a form of racism; however, Black youth were more likely than other racial/ethnic

groups to make this observation. Although unique hate speech and racial slurs have been waged

against people of color from various racial/ethnic backgrounds, Black youth might be especially

cognizant of the use of racial slurs against the Black community, in particular, and communities

of color, in general, as racial slurs made against the African American community were

politically and socially sanctioned and embedded into U.S. institutions during chattel slavery and

the Jim Crow era. Today, Black youth still report exposure to racial discrimination and some of

the most common forms involve verbal insults and racial slurs (Simons et al., 2002).

Similarly, all youth named racial jokes as a type of racism, with the exception of Native

American youth. It is unsurprising that most youth of color described racial jokes as examples of

racism, because racial jokes that involve people of color, in particular, are common in the media

and young people's schools (Cabrera, 2014; Douglass et al., 2016). These jokes draw on

stereotypes about Black and Latinx people as "ghetto," "overly sexually active," "criminals" and

"welfare queens," and Latinx and Asian youth as "perpetual foreigners" (Guo & Harlow, 2014;

Zou & Cheryan, 2017). These widespread stereotypes, which are infused in racial jokes, might

have informed Black, Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islander youths' beliefs that racial jokes are

forms of racism. Indeed, these groups were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to discuss racial jokes as forms of racism. Inconsistent with current study findings, previous research finds that Latinx and Black youth in urban schools consider their use of racial jokes among their friends as empowering, because they allow youth to "flip the script" and reclaim negative racial narratives imposed on youth of color (Roberts et al., 2008), especially since racial jokes are "just jokes" (Grigg & Manderson, 2015). Although youth often consider racial joke as harmless, research finds that anxious youth who are exposed to racial jokes experience increased anxiety (Douglass et al., 2016).

Surprisingly, multiracial and Native American youth were less likely than other youth of color to voice that racial jokes were forms of racism. In fact, the frequency with which they described racial jokes as examples of racism were more similar to White youths' reports. Although it is highly probably that multiracial and Native American youth are exposed to racial jokes about various racial/ethnic groups including their own, these groups are often rendered invisible in the media and other mainstream contexts (Jeffreys & Zoucha, 2001; Fryberg & Stephens, 2010). This invisibility might encourage multiracial and Native American youth to develop a "get over it" mentality as a coping skill against racial discrimination, thus potentially contributing to why fewer youth in these racial/ethnic groups indicated racial jokes were forms of racism.

The small percentage of White youth who voiced that racial jokes were forms of racism is consistent with empirical research on White young people's beliefs that racial jokes are not racist (Cabrera, 2014). These results might stem from the fact that White youths' social power in society allows them to be detached from the impact of racial jokes, in general, and against their racial/ethnic group, in particular. Indeed, racial jokes that involve stereotypes about White

people exist (e.g., White people cannot play basketball). However, the nature of these racial jokes and stereotypes on which they draw often do not question the intelligence and beauty of White people—traits that U.S. society values and use as indicators of success and self-worth—as racial jokes and stereotypes against people of color often do (Steele, 2011). The few racial jokes that call Whites people's sense of worth into question and White young people's potential detachment from the impact of racial jokes (Cabrera, 2014) might explain why so few White youth indicated that racial jokes were forms of racism.

The majority of youth stated that prejudice and stereotypes were forms of racism, with White and Native American youth being the least likely to report that prejudice was a form of racism and Native American youth as the least likely to discuss stereotypes as forms of racism. It should be reiterated that Native American youth were the least represented group in the current study's sample (only 20 youth participated), contributing to these youths' infrequent responses relative to other racial/ethnic groups. In light of this, the increased national discussion around the continued relevance of race and racism in U.S. society and the historical exclusion of people of color in this country might explain these trends. Over the past four years, there has been national discourse about whether the formation of laws and policies that limit and deny the rights of people of color and rhetoric from top political officials, such as President Donald J. Trump, are due to people's endorsement of prejudice and stereotypes against people of color and immigrants (Dost, Enos, & Hochschild, 2019). Specific attacks against the Latinx and Black communities through policy (e.g., the rescinding of the Deferred Action Against Childhood Arrivals in 2017) and discourse (e.g., discussion of Baltimore, Maryland as a "rodent infested community") might explain why youth from these racial/ethnic backgrounds are especially vocal about prejudice and stereotypes representing forms of racism. Similarly, Asian/Pacific Islander youth have been

consistently othered in U.S. society through assumptions that they are perpetual foreigners, regardless of their immigration status (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Consequently, Black, Latinx, and Asian/Pacific Islander youth might be particularly aware of these national events and forms of exclusion, informing their beliefs that racism consists of prejudice and stereotypes.

White youths' limited discussion of prejudice as a form of racism might stem from them having difficulty inferring the unobservable racial attitudes of people. As discussed previously, White youth were likely to report that racism involves overt behaviors or derogatory speech, suggesting that White youth might believe that racism must be blatant and visible. Although previous research finds that there are no racial differences in children's ability to infer an individual's endorsement of stereotypes (McKown & Strambler, 2009), it could be that White youth have difficulty identifying or admitting that people endorse prejudice. This might be the case because implicit and explicit negative attitudes towards people of color are normalized in the homes of White families (Hagerman, 2018). White youth do have the ability to make inferences about people's racial beliefs, as they were the most likely to report that stereotypes were a form of racism as compared to other racial/ethnic groups and made attributions about the causes of racism, but recognizing that prejudice is a form of racism seems to be uncommon for White youth.

In addition to endorsing individualistic beliefs about racism, youth also considered the consequences of racism. Although some youth indicated that racism can have negative consequences on people's life opportunities (an example of a critical reflection of racism), the majority of youth stated that racism, in the form of physical acts of racial discrimination, has negative consequences on people's lives. In describing the negative consequences on people's lives, youth stated that racism hurts people's feelings, makes them feel alone and sad, etc. Given

that youths' definition of racism primarily consisted of individual-level examples of racism, it is unsurprising that youth were more likely to consider the negative effects racism has on the lives of individuals. Youth who focus more on the negative consequences of racism on people's lives render structural and institutional forms of racism and their consequences (e.g., racial disparities) invisible (Tatum, 2017). Additionally, youth who focus on the negative consequences of racism overlook how seemingly benevolent forms of racism may hurt recipients (Sue et al., 2007). Acknowledging that racism has negative consequences on people's lives allows certain forms of racism to be acknowledged and for others to be minimized (e.g., structural racism, racial jokes).

Some youth did demonstrate a critical analysis of racism. These youth voiced an awareness that racism was a system of oppression, created unequal opportunities and negatives consequences on people's life opportunities and the structure of society, and involved social power that determined who may perpetuate and receive racism. Of note, Asian/Pacific Islander youth and White youth were the most likely to voice a critical reflection of racism, followed by Black, Latinx, and Multiracial youth. Quantitative research with White youth and youth of color in the critical consciousness literature presents mixed findings about whether more privileged youth, such as White youth, are more aware of structural racism. For example, research finds that White youth are more likely than youth of color to believe that certain marginalized groups (e.g., people of color, women, poor people) face unequal opportunities in society, or that they endorse a greater critical reflection (Diemer et al., 2018). Other research with Black youth who attend low-income schools and White youth who attend low- and middle-income schools finds that Black youth endorse a greater critical reflection of racism than White youth who attended both types of schools (Tyler et al., 2019). These mixed findings might stem from differences in how youths' awareness of social issues is measured, as most measures of critical reflection assess

youths' beliefs about the nature of various systems of oppression in the same measure. These findings might also involve the complex nature of youths' critical reflection of racism, as the currently study suggests. It could be that youth reflect on various aspects of racism (the nature, consequences, and dynamics of racism) and other systems of oppression as they respond to critical reflection measures, potentially contributing to mixed findings in the literature. Greater clarity on how youth conceptualize systems of oppression is needed to shed light on these mixed findings.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research advances an understanding of youths' beliefs about racism, but limitations should be acknowledged. Future research should consider how youths' intersecting identities shape their awareness of intersecting systems of privilege and oppression. For instance, it could be that undocumented youth of color are attuned to the ways in which racism intersects with xenophobia in the U.S., increasing their awareness that both systems of privilege and oppression sustain one another. There was some evidence that youth reflected on the intersectional nature of racism and other systems of oppression, such as "discrimination against Muslims" or Islamophobia. Although these discussions were infrequent, future research should explore how youths' intersecting identities might shape their analysis of intersecting systems of oppression and privilege (Godfrey & Burson, 2018).

Youths' age should also be considered alongside their social identities and beliefs about racism. Children's beliefs about racism become more complex over time in that they make more independent statements about racism that involve different components of racism (McKown, 2004). Black youth, in particular, become more aware of the structural factors that cause Black-White achievement gaps across late adolescence (Bañales et al., 2019). In light of this research,

research with White adults and adults of color finds that adults, like youth, are more likely to recognize intrapersonal and interpersonal manifestations of racism than institutional and structural aspects of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Rendón et al., 2018). Beliefs about race and racism are fluid, cyclical, and contradictory (Tatum, 2017), and future research that explores youths' belief about racism should investigate how social experiences and skills that accompany different ages might relate to unique beliefs about racism. This research should employ methodologies that are sensitive in capturing small shifts in youths' beliefs about racism, such as daily diary methods.

Although a strength of this work was its ability to capture youths' voices through an open-ended question, future research should assess youths' beliefs about racism with other methodologies, such as longitudinal semi-structured individual and group interviews. Assessing youths' beliefs with multiple methods has the potential to determine whether the current study's findings completely reflect youths' beliefs or may be attributed to the open-ended question used in this study. Before seeing the open-ended question, youth were primed to reflect on race and racism through exposure to other measures in the study that assessed youth anti-racism action, perceptions of school racial messages, among other aspects of youth CC and CRC. It is possible that youths' exposure to these questions encouraged youth to reflect on racism more or in different ways than they normally would. However, none of these measures defined the concept of racism for youth, thus I am more confident that the responses youth provided are valid. It is also possible that it was easier for youth to write about intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of racism in an open-ended question, as opposed to institutional and structural racism, since these forms of racism can be described using single words and short phrases (e.g., stereotypes, prejudice, and physical assault). Yet, this is unlikely as current study findings are largely

consistent with previous research on children's and adults' beliefs about race and racism that used in-depth semi-structured interviews (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; McKown, 2004; Rendón et al., 2018). Mixed-methods research that incorporates open-ended questions, quantitative survey measures, and interviews might provide more comprehensive information on youths' beliefs about racism.

Future research should examine how youths' racial contexts and experiences shape their beliefs about racism. Theoretical and empirical work indicates that parental racial socialization, or the messages parents give to children about race, ethnicity, and racism, inform aspects of youths' critical reflection of racism, including youths' awareness of stereotypes and explanations of the causes of racial disparities (Anyiwo, Bañales, Rowley, Watkins, & Richards-Schuster, 2018; McKown & Strambler, 2009). Other work that highlights schools as sites for racial socialization also suggests that messages about racial inequality from course curricula, school activities and the broader school climate shape youths' ethnic-racial consciousness (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Cabrera, Meza, Romero, & Rodriguez, 2013; Seider & Graves, 2020). Future research should investigate how parent and school racial messages intersect to shape youths' beliefs about racism. As more information is uncovered about youths' exposure to racial messages, research should also explore how the frequency and quality of youths' interracial experiences and friendships might shape their understanding of racism (Brown, 2008). It is possible that youth with more interracial friendships have a more multidimensional understanding of racism. The current research was unable to explore this question, as there was little variability in youths' reports of their interracial contact and friendships at school and in their neighborhoods. Future research should investigate these associations.

Finally, future research should explore the consequences of youths' beliefs about racism

on their actions against racism. Youth who over-emphasize individual-level forms of racism as key forms of racism overlook the ways in which historical factors (e.g., colonization) and social power create racially biased institutions, cultural practices, laws and life opportunities (Neville et al., 2013). Such a perspective might be associated with negative social and civic outcomes for youth. For instance, youth who conceptualize racism as an individual-level problem might be prone to believe that racism is no longer a societal issue, as blatant forms of racism are less socially and politically sanctioned than during the pre-Civil Rights era and are thus less likely to occur in most social contexts (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). However, there is some evidence that more blatant forms of discrimination are becoming more socially acceptable (see Allbright & Hurd, 2019). Youth who conceive of racism as stemming from individuals might also be unlikely to engage in civic and political behaviors that promote structural change through policy work because individuals, not systems, need to be changed. Indeed, previous research finds that White college students who view race through a color-blind and diversity lens (i.e., a view that considers racial difference as important but also minimizes the reality of different racial experiences) are less likely to support social policy that addresses opportunity gaps between marginalized and privileged communities (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Additional research on the unique associations between beliefs about racism and civic and political outcomes is needed, particularly among youth.

Summary and Conclusion

This research explored the ways in which adolescents' defined racism and the racial/ethnic differences that emerged in their responses using an open-ended question. Findings suggest that youths' beliefs about racism are multidimensional in that they include an awareness that racism consists of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and, to some extent, structural aspects of

racism. Youths' beliefs also comprised an awareness of the causes of racism, the perpetrators and recipients of racism, and the consequences of racism. Ultimately, the majority of youth indicated that racism is something that can be seen or felt. In other words, youth described racism as a tangible phenomenon that included physical acts of discrimination and prejudice that occurred on the basis of people's characteristics that hurt others and society. Some youth expressed a critical reflection of racism in various ways, such that their understanding of racism included a recognition that racism is a system of oppression that has negative consequences on people's life opportunities, and that people and institutions with social power create these inequitable outcomes. Taken together, study findings suggest that youth of color and White youth have the potential to reflect on the structural causes and nature of racism, but that it is more common for both racial groups to situate racism at the level of people's behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes.

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Table 2.1. *Codes for Adolescents' Beliefs about Racism.*

Theme	Example
1. Interpersonal/Intrapersonal Racism (n = 349)	
1a. Behaviors (n = 142)	"D*iscrimination* towards another race. It could be that at school, one girl is Muslim, and people make fun of her or treat her differently."
1b. Derogatory Speech (n = 47)	"One race who *talks badly* about another race or behaves in a way that acts like their race is better than another."
1c. Racial Jokes (n = 25)	"The *mocking*, *making fun* of or saying rude comments about another race because you see their race as lower than yours."
1d. Racial Labeling (n = 6)	"*Seeing people for the color of their skin* or how they look, instead of for who they actually are"
1e. Prejudice (n = 91)	"People [who] *think that they are superior to others.*"
• Prejudice Plus Action (n = 6)	"Racism is considering someone who is a different race from you to be less important then you, not smarter than you, or less unique then you. *Some of your actions are driven by this belief.*"
• Prejudice Plus Power (n =2)	"Racism is acting on a racial prejudice. *To be racist you must have power + prejudice.*"
1f. Stereotypes (n = 23)	"*The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities* specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races."
1g. Personality Traits (n = 7)	*"Rude people* bashing people for their skin color or religion."
2. Attributions of Racism (n = 245)	
2a. Appearance, behavioral and cognitive characteristics (n = 86)	"Racism is not only by color. It's [based on] how *somebody looks walks, talks.*"

2b. Different racial/ethnic backgrounds (in general) (n = 87)

"The belief in the superiority of one race over another, which often results in discrimination and prejudice towards people *based on their race or ethnicity*."

2c. Prejudice attitudes (n = 17)

"The discrimination of someone *based on the belief that your race is in some way superior to theirs*."

2d. People's culture or where people come from (n = 22)

"I think racism is judging someone based on their skin color the language they speak or *where they come from* what they're beliefs are and who and what they represent."

2e. Accent/language (n = 3)

"Racism is the degrading or belittling of a person, society or group due to their skin color, culture, or *language*."

2f. Personality (n = 4)

"Racism is when someone of some race is ignorant towards another race such as whites and Hispanics or African Americans etc. *Because of ignorance* some people tend to dislike or just think a certain race is bad."

2g. Stereotypes (n = 7)

"I would define racism as the act of differing oneself or a group from everyone else based on race. Also making fun of someone *based on commonly known stereotypes*."

2h. Religion (n = 8)

"Rude people bashing people for their skin color *or religion*."

2i. Historical reasons (e.g., imperialism) (n = 6)

"Racism is you hate them *because they used to be slaves* and judging them from their color."

2j. For no reason (n = 5)

"Hating a certain race *for no good reas*on and there is no good reason along with that."

3. Perpetrators and Recipients of Racism (n = 131)
3a. White people perpetuate racism (n = 10)

"Bullying others based on their skin color or religion. *Mostly the dominant group which*

	would be white males gaining benefits over the oppression of the minority."
3b. Against specific racial groups of color, minority, and religious groups that are defined or undefined (n = 30)	"Discrimination through race. Ex.: Not letting someone play *because they're Asian*."
3c. Against White people (n = 1)	"Racism is when you call *white [people]* cracker."
3e. All people can enact and receive racism (i.e., against different races) (n = 91)	"Racism is when *someone of some race is ignorant towards another race such as whites and Hispanics or African Americans etc*."
3f. Institutions (n = 1)	"For example, *a company* hiring more white or Caucasian people than those of other races."
4. Consequences of Racism (n = 42)	
4a. **For others and society** (n = 40)	"The prejudiced actions towards a group of people that *affects their lives, jobs, relationships, insurance and education*."
4b. **For youth personally** (n = 2)	"If they call us a mean name *i get upset and want to hit them* but we could just tell them that's not nice and not pick on other people."
5. Critical Reflection of Racism (n = 20)	"Racism is the *social and systematic oppression* of a particular ethnic/racial group in a society."

Table 2.2. Racial/Ethnic Differences for Codes on Adolescents' Beliefs about Racism.

Theme	Racial/Ethnic Group Membership					
	Latinx (n =74)	Black (n = 98)	Native American (n = 20)	Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 52)	Multiracial (n = 38)	White (n = 100)
1. Interpersonal/Intrapersonal Racism (n = 349)						
1a. Behaviors (n = 142)	(23) 16.2%	(21) 15.0%	(6) 4.2%	(32) 22.5%	(16) 11.3%	(43) 30.3%
1b. Derogatory Speech (n = 47)	(5) 11.0%	(14) 30.0%	(6) 13.0%	(9) 19.1%	(5) 11.0%	(8) 17.0%
1c. Racial Jokes (n = 25)	(3) 12.0%	(11) 44.0%	0.0%	(7) 28.0%	(2) 8.0%	(2) 8.0%
1d. Racial Labeling (n = 6)	(3) 50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(1) 17.0%	(2) 33.3%
1e. Prejudice (n = 91)	(17) 19.0%	(35) 38.5%	(5) 5.5%	(21) 23.1%	(10) 11.0%	(3) 3.3%
• Prejudice Plus Action (n = 6)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(2) 33.3%	0.0%	(4) 67.0%
• Prejudice Plus Power (n =2)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(1) 100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1f. Stereotypes (n = 23)	(5) 21.7%	(4) 17.4%	(1) 4.3%	(3) 13.0%	(2) 8.7%	(7) 30.4%
1g. Personality Traits (n = 7)	(1) 14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	(7) 29.0%	(3) 43.0%	(1) 14.3%
Total Responses:	57	85	18	82	39	70

2. Attributions of Racism (n = 245)

2a. Appearance, behavioral and cognitive characteristics (n = 86)	(11) 13.0%	(22) 26.0%	(8) 9.3%	(14) 16.3%	(9) 10.5%	(22) 27.0%
2b. Different racial/ethnic backgrounds (n = 87)	(17) 19.5%	(12) 14.0%	(3) 3.4%	(16) 18.4%	(10) 11.5%	(28) 32.2%
2c. Prejudice attitudes (n = 17)	(1) 6.0%	(5) 29.4%	(2) 12.0%	(4) 23.5%	(2) 12.0%	(3) 18.0%
2d. People's culture or where people come from (n = 22)	(1) 4.5%	(6) 27.3%	0.0%	(7) 32.0%	0.0%	(8) 36.4%
2e. Accent/language (n = 3)	0.0%	(1) 33.3%	0.0%	(1) 33.3%	0.0%	(1) 33.3%
2f. Personality (n = 4)	(1) 25.0%	(2) 50.0%	0.0%	(1) 25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2g. Stereotypes (n = 7)	(4) 57.1%	(1) 14.3%	0.0%	(1) 14.3%	0.0%	(1) 14.3%
2h. Religion (n = 8)	0.0%	(1) 12.5%	(3) 37.5%	(1) 12.5%	0.0%	(3) 37.5%
2i. Historical reasons (n = 6)	(1) 17.0%	(3) 50.0%	0.0%	(1) 17.0%	0.0%	(1) 17.0%
2j. For no reason (n = 5)	0.0%	(1) 20.0%	0.0%	(4) 80.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Responses:	36	54	16	50	21	67

3. Perpetrators and Recipients of Racism (n = 131)

3a. All people can enact and receive racism (n = 91)	(9) 10.0%	(22) 24.2%	(7) 8.0%	(20) 22.0%	(10) 11.0%	(23) 25.3%
3b. Against specific racial groups of color, minority, and religious groups that were defined or undefined (n = 30)	(6) 21.4%	(7) 25.0%	(1) 3.6%	(3) 11.0%	(2) 7.1%	(9) 32.1%
3c. Against White people (n = 1)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(1) 100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3d. White people perpetuate racism (n = 10)	(1) 10.0%	(3) 30.0%	(1) 10.0%	(4) 40.0%	0.0%	(1) 10.0%
3e. Societal institutions perpetuate racism (n = 1)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(1) 100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Total Responses:	16	32	9	29	12	33
4. Consequences of Racism (n = 42)						
4a. For others and society (n = 40)	(6) 15.0%	(5) 12.5%	(1) 2.5%	(8) 20.0%	(5) 12.5%	(14) 35.0%
4b. For youth personally (n = 3)	(1) 33.3%	(1) 33.3%	0.0%	(1) 33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Responses:	7	6	1	9	5	14
5. Critical Reflection of Racism (n = 20)	(2) 10.0%	(4) 20.0%	0.0%	(5) 30.0%	(2) 10.0%	(6) 30.0%
Total Responses:	2	4	0	5	2	6

Note. The number of youth who reported a particular dimension of racism is in parentheses. Percentage totals that do not equal 100% are the result of youth who did not report their race/ethnicity or reported an "other" racial/ethnic background in the survey.

Chapter 3: Youth Anti-Racism Action: Contributions of Youth Perceptions of School Racial Messages and Critical Consciousness

Youth have beliefs and feelings towards racism and challenge this system of oppression through critical action, civic/political engagement, and community organizing (Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2014; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). The formation of beliefs, feelings and actions towards societal issues, such as racism, is known as CC development (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Schools, as normative social contexts, contribute to youth CC, including their beliefs, feelings and actions towards racism (Seider, Kelly, et al., 2018; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Although it is likely that school experiences might motivate youth anti-racism action, research in this area is sparse. The majority of research on youth action against racism and other social injustices focuses on youth already involved in community organizing and other structured contexts (e.g., ethnic studies programs) that stimulate youth action against social injustice (Cabrera, Meza, Romero, & Rodríguez, 2013; Christens & Speer, 2015).

The current study advances CC and community organizing literatures for its focus on a domain-specific aspect of youth CC, or youths' CRC development (Bañales, Aldana, Seider, & Graves, 2019a; Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019). In doing so, we focus on race-related, school-level predictors (e.g., school racial messages that emphasize or deemphasize the significance of racism in societal outcomes and functioning of schools) and individual-level predictors that are not completely race-related (e.g. critical reflection of perceived inequality, anger towards social injustice) on youth anti-racism action. Anti-racism action involves behaviors that challenge racism through interpersonal, communal and political initiatives,

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including community organizing behaviors (Aldana et al., 2019). These questions were explored in a national sample of youth of color and White youth (i.e., the same sample in the previous study) who were not necessarily involved in community organizing, contributing information on normative contexts and CC pathways that prompt youth into community-organizing and other critical actions against racism. Study findings have implications for partnerships between schools and youth community-organizing initiatives focused on youth anti-racism action.

Adolescence: A Formative Time for Critical Consciousness Development

Adolescence is a key time to consider how CC around racism might develop. During this period, young people gain sociocognitive skills (e.g., perspective taking, abstract thinking) that enable them to explore and refine their racial identities and question the nature of racism (Brizio, Gabbatore, Tirassa, & Bosco, 2015; Quntana, 2008). Schools are tasked with facilitating youths' sociocognitive skills and preparing youth for civic responsibilities and commitments. Thus, schools are a rich context for exploring adolescent CC around racism.

Originally formulated by Paulo Freire (1970), CC theory sought to explain how marginalized adults come to reflect on and challenge systems of oppression that are most relevant to their lives. Watts and colleagues (2011; Watts & Flanagan, 2007) expanded Freire's theory around adult CC to apply to adolescent CC and other sociopolitical processes. In particular, CC theory articulates that youth CC consists of three distinct, yet overlapping components: critical reflection of perceived inequality, political efficacy and critical action (Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection of perceived inequality is the more cognitive component, and refers to the ability to identify social disparities and issues, and attribute their cause to structural factors, such as unequal opportunity (Hope & Bañales, 2018). Political efficacy consists of sociocogntive and emotional aspects and is defined as a sense of confidence in one's

capacity to implement social change (Christens, Winn, & Duke, 2015; Watts et al., 2011).

Critical action is the more behavioral component and is defined as one's participation in

individual and collective actions that challenge the status quo (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). CC

components are believed to be reciprocally related, in that critical reflection of perceived

inequality predicts political efficacy which, in turn, predicts critical action (Watts et al., 2011).

For example, empirical research finds that sociopolitical action predicts aspects of political

efficacy among Latinx young adults, rending preliminary support for the reciprocal nature of CC

components (Bañales, Mathews, Hayat, Anyiwo, & Diemer, 2019c).

Particularly among marginalized youth, the development of CC is associated with a range

of positive outcomes, such as academic engagement (Luter, Mitchell, & Taylor, 2017) and civic

engagement (Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017). CC is believed to promote positive

outcomes because marginalized youth should be less likely to blame themselves for their groups'

social status if they are aware of the structural and historical roots of societal disparities and

social issues (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Although

developing CC is expected to be relevant for marginalized youths' development, there is mixed

evidence on the extent to which marginalized youth endorse a greater CC than more privileged

youth. For instance, research indicates that White youth report a higher latent mean level of

critical reflection of perceived inequality than youth of color (Diemer, Voight, Marchand, &

Bañales, 2019); however, other research finds that youth of color report a higher latent mean

level of sociopolitical control (a construct akin to political efficacy) than White youth (Diemer &

Li, 2011). Research also finds that higher socioeconomic status (SES) youth are more likely than

lower SES youth to critique systems of oppression, in that they attribute the causes of poverty to

structural factors (e.g., job opportunities) as opposed to individual factors (e.g., personal

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motivation), for example (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; Flanagan, et al., 2014). These findings suggest that White and higher SES youth have more opportunities to learn about the functioning of "the system" in their families and schools (Kahne & Middaugh, 2009).

CC research has been broad, in that theory and measurement focus less on youths' awareness of and interactions with specific social issues and more on how youth gain a CC towards social issues, in general. Broad assessment of CC limits insight into youths' beliefs, feelings, and actions towards specific social issues, such as racism (Bañales et al., 2019a). There have been calls for CC research to be more domain-specific and intersectional in its conceptualization and assessment of CC, suggesting that research should consider how youth develop a CC around racism, or a CC of the intersections between systems of oppression (Godfrey & Burson, 2018). Investigating how youth develop beliefs, feelings and actions towards racism will reveal potentially unique contextual and CC related pathways to anti-racism action.

Youth Anti-Racism Action

Consistent with CC theory and work on youth sociopolitical/critical action (Aldana et al., 2019; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015), youth anti-racism action is a multi-dimensional form of critical action. Anti-racism action is a domain-specific form of critical action in that it is initiated by individuals and groups to challenge the status quo (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014), particularly with regard to aversive race relations, racial issues and climates. The current study used a youth-developed measure of anti-racism action (Aldana et al., 2019). The measure was created by former participants in a youth dialogue program to aid the evaluation of that program's effectiveness in empowering youth to challenge racism. The measure was validated with a separate sample of adolescents, in order to establish the

psychometric validity of the measure to aid in the assessment of youth anti-racism efforts, and to advance CC research on critical action. The majority of critical action measures are general in that they assess how youth challenge social issues, broadly, making it difficult to determine whether youth challenge racism, in particular. The development and validation of the youth anti-racism action established a multidimensional framework to conceptualize anti-racism action, suggesting that anti-racism action may occur on interpersonal, communal, and political levels.

Interpersonal action refers to adolescents' individual responses to racism. These behaviors shape the culture of youths' proximal social contexts and their relations with parents, peers, or non-familial adults. These actions occur in the moment as youth are prompted to respond to potentially unexpected forms of racism (Rozas & Miller, 2009). Consequently, youth participation in interpersonal anti-racism action is not necessarily proactive. *Communal action* refers to youth involvement in collective efforts and organizing at school or in the community that address issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. Finally, *political change action* consists of youth engagement with political officials/institutions or participation in protests. This aspect of action also captures youths' individual initiative to conduct research on and inspire others to address issues related to racism. Communal and political change anti-racism actions are similar in that these actions may occur in youths' local ecologies (e.g., school, neighborhood); however, as compared to interpersonal anti-racism action, participation in these activities is more proactive because youth are not necessarily prompted by "in-the-moment" racism. Youth who engage in communal and political change action also initiate interactions with adults, other youth, social and political leaders around issues related to racism. In all, youth action against racism occurs through multiple means (Christens & Speer, 2011), including

through youth-led community organizing as well as interpersonal and political initiatives. These forms of actions are interrelated and dependent on one another (Aldana et al., 2019).

School Racial Messages: A Context for Youth Critical Consciousness Development

A good deal of what is known about youth critical action is based on research with youth who are already involved in community organizing. Insofar as participating in any organized youth program is constrained by availability, time, transportation, knowledge about the organization, and supportive relationships from influential adults (Christens & Dolan, 2011; Christens & Kirsher, 2011), there are selection biases in such samples. In the current study, we focus on schools as sites in which nearly all young people participate and where students are exposed to many messages about race and racism.

Schools likely shape youth CC in many ways, including youth anti-racism action, via curriculum, classroom discussions, and school norms (Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Seider et al., 2017; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Schools directly and indirectly transmit a range of racial messages that emphasize, or deemphasize, the importance of interracial relations, mainstream U.S. ideals, cultural knowledge and competence, and the relevance of race and racism in society (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Seider, Kelly, et al., 2018). Recent theoretical and empirical work indicates that parents' racial messages contribute to youth CC (Anyiwo, Bañales, Rowley, Watkins, & Richards-Schuster, 2018; Bañales et al., 2019b). By extension, it was expected that schools' transmission of racial messages that differ in their emphasis on the reality of racism would differentially relate to youth CC (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Byrd, 2017, 2018).

We focused on two types of school racial messages – critical consciousness (CC) and color-blind (CB) messages. CC messages captured whether youth perceived information from their teachers, classes, and school opportunities that emphasized racial inequality in the U.S.,

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how race dictates who is and who is not successful, and opportunities to learn about social issues and social justice. CB messages assessed whether youth perceived information from their school and people in their school that race/ethnicity is an unimportant factor in people's life outcomes, to ignore racial/ethnic differences and other perspectives that minimize attention to race. Research on school racial socialization describes racial messages as distinct in their goals for youth awareness of race and racism (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). Yet, research finds that seemingly distinct racial messages co-occur, and that youth might not necessarily distinguish unique goals of racial socialization messages as intended by socializing agents, such as parents (Bañales et al., 2019b). Given that there is limited empirical research on the role of school-based CC and CB messages in youth CC development, we draw on disparate bodies of literature to support our hypotheses that CC and CB messages might differentially relate to youth CC.

Critical Consciousness Messages, Critical Reflection, and Anti-Racism Action

Research on youth participatory action research, intergroup dialogue, ethnic studies, and youth CC suggests that racial messages that highlight race and racism (i.e., CC messages) contribute to youths' critical reflection of perceived inequality and critical action (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Cabrera et al., 2013; Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). These studies indicate that the more youth are exposed to messages about the reality of racism through school curricula, programmatic and dialogic efforts, the more they report an awareness of the structural underpinnings of racism and act to disrupt racism. Studies that focus on the role of school civic missions and pedagogies on youth CC find associations between civic cultures within schools, which are often racialized, and youths' critical reflection of perceived inequality and critical action (Seider, Graves, et al., 2018; Seider, Kelly, et al., 2018; Seider et al., 2017).

Of note, Seider and colleagues (2018) interviewed a predominantly adolescent of color sample to illuminate school practices that contribute to youth sociopolitical consciousness. Students voiced that their structural analysis of racism as well as their anti-racism action increased, because they were exposed to theoretical frameworks about racism in their classes. Students also credited their increased structural analysis of racism and anti-racism action to their ability to connect personal experiences of racial oppression with other groups' experiences of racial oppression and opportunities to educate one another about racial injustice—experiences that were provided by teachers and class projects. The current study extends this earlier work with a complementary methodological approach.

Color-Blind Messages, Critical Reflection, and Anti-Racism Action

CC research indicates that people who blame individuals for life circumstances, as CB attitudes do, are unlikely to endorse a critical reflection of perceived inequality and engage in critical action (Watts et al., 2011). Among a sample of low-income women of color, participants who attributed economic inequality to individual factors (e.g., lack of hard work) displayed a less developed critical reflection, or they made fewer structural attributions to explain the causes of poverty and wealth (Godfrey & Wolf, 2015). Adults who endorse such individualistic beliefs are less willing to protest (Jost et al., 2012). Informed by this work, it was anticipated that youth who were exposed to messages that deny the role of racism in societal outcomes might be less likely to endorse a critical reflection of perceived inequality than youth who received fewer such messages. Consequently, these youth would be unlikely to engage in anti-racism action.

The Role of Anger in Youth Critical Consciousness Development

Relatively little empirical research examines the role of emotion in sociopolitical processes, though some theory suggests that youth sociopolitical development draws on emotion

development (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). For example, there is a growing body of research that suggests that political efficacy is positively associated with civic action (Hope & Jagers, 2014). However, little is known about the role other emotions, such as anger towards social injustice, have in youth critical action, in general, and in youth anti-racism action, in particular. Although political efficacy and anger towards social injustice are not identical psychological phenomena, they may elicit anti-racism action in similar ways as they are both motivational processes (Watts et al., 2011; Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Anger is important to consider in youth CC development, because anger is a common emotional reaction people feel in response to experiencing and/or leaning about societal injustice (Montada & Schneider, 1989). Although the predominant discourse around anger is that it is dangerous and should be avoided or repressed (Zembylas, 2007), recent work suggests that emotions, such as anger towards social injustice, can be used to mobilize critical action and prosocial behavior (Thomas, Mavor, & McGarty, 2012; van Doorn, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2014; Wray-Lake et al., 2018).

According to research on justice-oriented emotions, emotions have various components that might facilitate certain actions against injustice. Emotions include a recognition of who is responsible for creating and reducing inequities, and an understanding of who is affected by injustice (Montada & Schneider, 1989). For instance, youth who are angry towards social injustice might believe that politicians are responsible for creating or perpetuating racial inequities, and that it is politicians' responsibility to ameliorate racial issues. Youth might also believe that people of color are negatively affected by racism and that White people benefit from this system of privilege. Anger towards social injustice, conceived as moral outrage in previous research, is an emotion that is often directed towards agents deemed responsible for social inequity rather than the people harmed by injustice (Montada & Schneider, 1989). As such, it is

possible that youth who are angry towards social injustice might engage in all forms of anti-racism action, as they are motivated to challenge perpetrators (e.g., family, friends, politicians) of racial injustice. It is also possible that youth who are angry towards social injustice might refrain from anti-racism action, because they are hopeless that "adults in power" and other socializing agents will institute racial justice (Christens & Dolan, 2011). Due to limited theory and research on emotion and anti-racism action among youth, the investigation of the relation between anger towards social injustice and anti-racism action was exploratory.

The Current Study

This study investigated whether youths' exposure to school racial messages that highlight the reality of racism (i.e., CC messages) or deny the presence of racism (i.e., CB messages) contributes to youth CC, or their critical reflection of perceived inequality, anger towards social injustice and anti-racism action (see Figure 1 for a conceptual model). It was hypothesized that CC messages would be positively associated with critical reflection of perceived inequality, anger towards social injustice, and anti-racism action. It was expected that critical reflection of perceived inequality would positively predict youths' anger towards social injustice and anti-racism action. It was hypothesized that youths' anger towards social injustice would be related to anti-racism action, although the direction of these associations was unclear. We also expected that more CB messages would be negatively associated with critical reflection of perceived inequality, anger towards social injustice, and anti-racism action.

Method

Procedure

A national sample of youth was recruited using Qualtrics Panel Services, an online survey platform that creates and administers surveys. The current sample was selected by the

platforms' panel partners from a database that houses the contact information of youth in the

U.S. These youth consent to be contacted for research affiliated with the panel services.

Prospective participants were contacted based on the authors' participant selection criteria.

Participants had to identify as an adolescent boy or girl (age 14-18) and of Black/African

American, White/European American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, or

Native American descent. The demographics of adolescents in the panel database are

proportional to the U.S.'s racial/ethnic population. Qualtrics panel services randomized the

names of youth in the database before the survey was administered. After randomization, youth

were selected and sent a link to the survey. To avoid self-selection bias, the survey invitation did

not include details about the content of the survey. Participants who were 18 years of age gave

consent to complete the survey, whereas youth who were below this age gave assent and their

parents gave consent for them to participate. The survey lasted approximately twenty minutes

and youth received incentives for their completion in the form of cash, airline miles, gift cards,

redeemable points, sweepstakes entrance, or vouchers. Distribution of incentives was managed

by Qualtrics Panel Services. The Institutional Review Board at the first author's institution

granted permission for use of these data for research.

Participants

Participants (N = 384) were between 14 and 18 years of age (M_{age} = 17.00, SD = 1.29)

and were about equally divided between males (49.0%) and females (51.0%). The majority of

the participants were U.S. born (88.0%). Adolescents' racial/ethnic identification included

White/European American (n = 101; 26.1%), Black/African American (n = 98; 25.6%),

Latino/Hispanic (n = 74; 19.3%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 52; 13.6%), Multiracial (n =38;

9.9%), Native American (n = 20; 5.2%) and "other" (n = 1; .3%). Less than half of the sample

had parents with a high school diploma or GED (46.1%), 15.6% had parents with a graduate/professional degree, 14.3% had parents with some college experience, 11.5% of parents received a college diploma, 9.4% had parents whose highest level was junior high school or less and 3.1% reported that their parent had "other" education or that they were "unsure."

Measures

Response options, sample items, descriptive and reliability statistics for measures are detailed below (see Table 1 in appendix for item-level statistics). Cronbach's Alpha and mean inter-item correlations (IIC) were used as measures of scale reliability. Alpha is a biased estimate of reliability, in that more items in a scale result in higher reliability scores (DeVellis, 2003). Thus, Alpha and IICs were computed to balance this bias. An acceptable IIC ranges from .15 to .50, with larger values reflecting higher levels of internal consistency. All scales were internally reliable, as indicated by alphas that ranged from .65-.93 and IICs that ranged from .24-64.

Anti-Racism Action was assessed with three subscales of a youth-developed measure of anti-racism action, scored as whether youth had or had not engaged in anti-racism actions that occurred through interpersonal, communal and political change initiatives (0 = *No*, 1 = *Yes*). (Aldana et al., 2019). *Interpersonal action* ($M = .57$, $SD = .32$, $\alpha = .77$, IIC = .29) was assessed with five items that captured youths' responses to family, peers, non-parental adults, and strangers expressions of racism (e.g., "Challenged or checked a family member who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke). *Communal action* ($M = .32$, $SD = .34$, $\alpha = .65$, IIC = .21) was captured with four items that measured youths' involvement in school- and community-based organizing initiatives that address race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation (e.g., "Participated in a leadership group or committee working on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation (i.e. youth organizing group), etc.). *Political change action* (*M*

= .32, *SD* = .29, *α* = .76, IIC = .24) was assessed with seven items that measured youths' engagement with political officials and outlets and participation in protests. This aspect of action also captured youths' individual initiative to conduct research on and inspire others to address issues related to racism. Higher scores on all subscales indicated more anti-racism action.

School Racial Messages (1 = *Not at all true* – 5 = *Completely true*) were assessed with two subscales from a measure of school racial socialization (Byrd, 2017, 2018). The first subscale measured youths' perceptions of *Critical Consciousness Messages* in school with four items (*M* = 3.09, *SD* = 1.05, *α* = .83, IIC = .55). These items assessed youths' exposure to school messages that encourage them to reflect on the role of racism in the functioning of people's lives and society (e.g., "Teachers teach about racial inequality in the United States"). Two items were less specific to race and racism; instead they captured youths' perceptions that their teachers and school opportunities exposed them to knowledge about social justice and social issues. The second subscale assessed youths' perceptions of *Color-Blind Messages* in school with four items (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = 1.07, *α* = .82, IIC = .53). This scale captured youths' exposure to messages that negate the relevance of race and racism in people's success and the functioning of society (e.g., "At your school, people think race/ethnicity is not an important factor in how people are treated"). Higher scores indicated more perceptions of a particular racial message.

Critical Refection of Perceived Inequality (1 = *Strongly disagree* – 6 = *Strongly agree*) was measured using eight items from the *Critical Reflection of Perceived Inequality* subscale (*M* = 3.44, *SD* = 1.32, *α* = .93, IIC = .64) of the Critical Consciousness Scale (Diemer et al., 2017). This measure assessed youths' awareness that marginalized communities have fewer chances to get ahead in society (e.g., "Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education"). Higher scores represented a greater critical reflection of perceived inequality.

Anger Towards Social Injustice (1 = *Strongly disagree* – 5 = *Strongly agree*) was captured using three items from the *Anger about Social Injustice* scale (*M* = 3.93, *SD* = .98, *α* = .83, IIC = .62; Flanagan, Syversten, & Stout, 2007). This scale measured whether youth were angry about the inequitable social conditions certain people face (e.g., "It makes me angry when I think about the conditions some people have to live in"). Higher scores indicated more anger towards social injustice.

Methodological Approach

Data Analysis Strategy

Means, standard deviations and correlations were conducted as preliminary analysis. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to determine how well observed items represented latent constructs. Then, a multiple indicator and multiple causes (MIMIC) model was pursued. A MIMIC model determines if latent constructs have different mean levels or if individual items display differential functioning for youth with certain demographics. The current study explored whether youth race/ethnicity (i.e., youth of color vs. White youth) and SES (i.e., youth reports that their parent had a high school diploma or less vs. some college experience or more) predicted latent means levels of constructs or differential item functioning of observed items. Any detected differences were controlled for in the structural equation model (SEM). That is, if a group reported higher scores at the level of a mean or an individual observed item than another group (i.e., bias was displayed in favor of one group over the other), these differences were statistically controlled for in subsequent modeling. Finally, a SEM estimated direct and indirect effects between school racial messages and youth CC. SEM estimates predictive relations between variables, while simultaneously accounting for measurement error (Kline, 2016).

Descriptive statistics were computed in SPSS 24 (IBM Corp, 2016). The MIMIC, CFA, and SEM were pursued in Mplus Version 8.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). These analyses used the weighted least square mean and variance adjusted estimator (WLSMV), as the anti-racism action items were binary (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Indirect effects were computed using the Sobel method; a method that multiples the direct effect of a predictor on an outcome and the direct effect of a mediator on an outcome (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007).

Model fit for CFA, MIMIC, and SEM analyses was assessed using the comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), root mean square error (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). For CFI and TLI, values at or above .90 indicate acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). A RMSEA of .05 and below and an SRMR of .08 and below indicate good fit (Kline, 2016). WLSMV uses pairwise deletion to handle missing data. However, in models with covariates, the number of observations included in analysis is dictated by missingness on covariates (e.g., youth SES). As such, sample sizes for study models changed across models, depending on the presence of particular covariates in models. There was a low percentage of missing data across observed items and study covariates (.03 - 4.9% missing).

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A CFA (N = 384) determined how well observed items represented latent constructs. According to goodness-of-fit indices, the initial CFA was an acceptable-to-less than acceptable fit to the data: CFI (.90), TLI (.89), RMSEA (.04), and SRMR (.07). However, inspection of modification indices computed by Mplus indicated that two pairs of items from the interpersonal anti-racism action subscale (i.e., item 1 with item 2; item 1 with item 4) and three pairs of items from the critical reflection of perceived inequality subscale (item 1 with item 2; item 1 with item

3; item 4 with item 7) shared error variance and conceptual similarity. Thus, their error variances were correlated in all subsequent models, resulting in a CFA with acceptable-to-good fit: CFI (.91), TLI (.90), RMSEA (.03), and SRMR (.07). All observed items represented latent constructs well, as indicated by positive and significant item loadings that ranged from .50 to .87. Items displayed minimal skewness and kurtosis. The communal and political change anti-racism action latent constructs were strongly and significantly associated (.97). Therefore, these subscales were combined into a single latent construct referred to as "Communal/Political Change Anti-Racism Action." An additional CFA that included this new latent construct, as well as the original latent constructs was conducted, resulting in the same acceptable-good fit as the CFA that estimated communal/political change anti-racism action as separate latent constructs: CFI (.91), TLI (.90), RMSEA (.03), and SRMR (.07). Because items represented constructs well and given the need to probe for bias, a MIMIC model was pursued (Kline, 2016).

Multiple Indicator and Multiple Causes Model

A MIMIC model (N = 371) explored whether latent constructs displayed different mean levels and if observed items displayed differential item functioning according to youth race/ethnicity and SES. An item displays differential functioning when social identity groups have an unequal probability of giving a response. Youths' self-reported race/ethnicity was dichotomized, in that youth who identified as people of color (i.e., Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, Native American) were combined into one group and youth who identified as White/European American were combined into another group (0 = youth of color, 1 = White youth). The one youth who identified as "other" was not included in analysis because they did not provide details on their race/ethnicity. Similarly, youth reports of their parents' educational attainment were dichotomized, in that youth who reported that their

parents had a high school diploma or less were included in one group (0 = lower SES youth) and youth who reported that their parents had some college experience or more were included in another group (1 = higher SES youth). All latent constructs were regressed on the race/ethnicity and SES covariates to explore differences in the mean levels of latent constructs. Modification indices were examined to detect differential item functioning.

The MIMIC model was an adequate-to good-fit to the data, according to CFI (.92), TLI (.91), RMSEA (.03), and SRMR (.07). According to CFI and TLI, this model was a slightly better fit to the data than the CFA, or the model that did not include youth race/ethnicity and SES as exogenous covariates. As seen in Figure 2, youths' race/ethnicity did not significantly predict mean levels of latent constructs or differential item functioning among observed items. This suggests that the latent mean levels of psychological phenomena are similar for youth of color and White youth, and that individual items function similarly for both groups. As for youth SES, more affluent youth reported higher mean levels of critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice than less affluent youth. These group differences were accounted for in the SEM. Items did not display differential item functioning between more affluent and less affluent youth.

Structural Equation Modeling

SEM (N = 372) explored associations between school racial messages and youth critical reflection of societal inequality, anger towards social injustice, and anti-racism action. According to goodness-of-fit indices, the model was an adequate-to-good fit to the data: CFI (.92), TLI (.91), RMSEA (.03), SRMR (.07). Standardized coefficients (β) were used to estimate effect sizes. An estimate between .10 and .30 is considered a small effect, .30 to .50 is considered a medium effect, and above .50 is considered a large effect (Kline, 2016).

As seen in Figure 3, there was no association between CC messages and critical reflection of perceived inequality. Yet, there were significant and positive associations between CC messages and anger towards social injustice, interpersonal and communal/political anti-racism actions. CB messages were unrelated to critical reflection of perceived inequality and both forms of anti-racism action but was negatively related to anger towards social injustice. Critical reflection of perceived inequality was significantly and positively related to anger towards social injustice but was unrelated to all forms of anti-racism action. Youths' anger towards social injustice was significantly related to anti-racism action but in unique ways. Youth who were angry towards social injustice engaged in more interpersonal anti-racism actions but engaged in fewer communal/ political anti-racism actions.

Six indirect effects were estimated within the SEM: Two of which considered how critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice simultaneously linked the association between school racial messages (i.e., CC and CB messages) and interpersonal and communal/political anti-racism actions. Four additional indirect effects explored how critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice separately linked associations between school racial messages and interpersonal and communal/political anti-racism actions. Results for indirect effects were mixed (see Table 1).

Critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice did not simultaneously mediate associations between CC messages and anti-racism action. However, anger towards social injustice, as a distinct mediator, displayed a significant and positive indirect effect between CC messages and interpersonal anti-racism action. Furthermore, anger towards social injustice, as a distinct mediator, displayed a significant and negative indirect effect between CC messages and communal/ political anti-racism action. Youths' critical reflection of

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perceived inequality, as a distinct mediator, did not display indirect effects between CC messages and anti-racism actions.

Critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice did not simultaneously mediate associations between CB messages and all forms of anti-racism action. However, anger towards social injustice, as a distinct mediator, displayed a significant and negative indirect effect between CB messages and interpersonal anti-racism action. Furthermore, youths' anger towards social injustice, as a distinct mediator, did not display a significant indirect effect between CB messages and communal/ political anti-racism action. Critical reflection of perceived inequality, as a distinct mediator, did not display indirect effects between CB messages and anti-racism action.[2]

Discussion

Adolescents have varied beliefs, feelings, and actions towards racism (Hope et al., 2014; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). Schools transmit a range of racial messages about the relevance of race and racism in society to youth (Aldana & Byrd, 2015), and exposure to school messages that highlight the reality of racism motivate youth anti-racism action (Seider, Graves et al., 2018). Despite these links, the majority of research on youth action against racism focuses on youth already involved in community organizing and educational contexts intentionally designed to deconstruct the presence and effects of racism (Cabrera et al., 2013; Christens & Speer, 2015). Attending to this gap, the current research examined whether youths' perceptions of school racial messages that highlight the reality of racism in society (CC messages) or deny the reality of racism (CB messages) contributed to youth anti-racism action on interpersonal and communal/

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[2] To address potential issues of multicollinearity between CC and CB racial messages, separate models that tested the effects of these messages, in isolation, were conducted, resulting in identical and/or highly similar results as the model with both predictors.

political action levels. Secondly, this research explored whether these relations were mediated by youth CC, or their critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice.

This work advances CC research for its ability to assess a domain-specific aspect of youth CC, or youths' development of beliefs, feelings and actions towards racism. In doing so, we advance theory and research on the role racial contexts (e.g., school racial messages) and racial processes that develop within individuals (e.g., anti-racism action) have in youth CC development. Focusing on how youth develop a CC around racism provides insight into potentially unique contextual and CC pathways to anti-racism action (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013).

Consistent with previous research on youths' exposure to CC messages in schools and community-based intergroup dialogues (Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013), CC messages were related to both forms of anti-racism action. That is, youth who were encouraged to reflect on how race/ethnicity contributes to who is successful in society, the presence of racial inequality in the U.S., social justice and other social issues from their teachers, classes and school opportunities were likely to challenge racism from their family and friends, participate in community organizing initiatives at school and contact political officials on issues related racism, for example. These findings advance theoretical and empirical work that suggest racial messages from social contexts are precursors to youth CC (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Bañales et al., 2019b). Moreover, this research responds to calls for CC research to be more domain-specific in its analysis of the types of social issues youth address through critical action (Godfrey & Burson, 2018). Thus, it appears that when youth are exposed to school experiences that address, rather than avoid, conversations about racism, they are likely to engage in critical actions that challenge racism through interpersonal and communal/political initiatives.

Surprisingly, there were no associations between CC messages and critical reflection of perceived inequality. These non-significant findings might involve the developmental nature of critical reflection of perceived inequality, and our broad measurement of the construct. Previous longitudinal research on the role of school civic missions in youth critical reflection of racism and economic inequality found that youth who attended schools that discussed social justice issues and encouraged students to be active citizens underwent more growth in their critical reflection (Seider, Kelly, et al., 2018). Thus, it could be that CC messages raise youth critical reflection of perceived inequality over time when combined with critical pedagogy strategies. Furthermore, youth who are exposed to CC messages might require prolonged time to reflect on the potentially abstract nature of structural racism, and other aspects of critical reflection of perceived inequality around racism. In all, this finding suggests that perceiving school CC messages about racism alone may not be enough to foster critical reflection.

Moreover, our measure of critical reflection of perceived inequality was broad in that it captured youths' perceptions that various marginalized groups have "fewer chances" to get ahead in society. This type of measurement does not provide a deep analysis of how youth conceive of "fewer chances" and other structural barriers that impede the success of people of color and promote the advancement of White people, in particular. Yet, this broad measure of critical reflection allows for use of this measure across different settings (e.g., academic, community organizing), and increases the likelihood that youth with limited access to language on how oppression operates on structural levels can respond to the measure. A more refined measure of critical reflection of perceived inequality that captures youths' awareness of multiple structural barriers that affect the life outcomes of different racial/ethnic groups might elucidate associations between school racial messages and critical reflection of perceived inequality.

Unlike critical reflection of perceived inequality, youths' anger towards social injustice predicted youth anti-racism action, albeit in unique ways. Youth who were angry towards social injustice were likely to engage in interpersonal anti-racism action, but unlikely to engage in communal/political action anti-racism action. These findings are consistent with work that articulates relations between youth civic behaviors and values and emotional responses (e.g., hopelessness, anger) towards racial injustice and social injustice, broadly (Wray-Lake et al., 2018; Zembylas, 2007). Yet, the current study provides more quantitative clarity on differential associations between anger towards social injustice and anti-racism action.

The different role anger towards social injustice played in promoting interpersonal anti-racism action and communal/political anti-racism action might involve the nature and measurement of anger and anti-racism action. Interpersonal anti-racism action involves reactionary responses against racism, as these behaviors occur when parents, peers, and non-familial adults use racial slurs or jokes in the "moment" (Aldana et al., 2019). Thus, youth who report anger towards social injustice might be motivated to act when exposed to racial jokes and slurs from people in their proximal social contexts, suggesting that youth might be angry towards the people who enact interpersonal racism in their presence. This speculation should be interpreted in light of the fact that our measure of anger towards social injustice does not specify the perpetrators of and the people affected by injustice (Montada & Schneider, 1989). Rather, it assesses anger towards the inequitable social conditions "some people" face. A measure of anger towards social injustice that specifies whether anger is the result of racism perpetrated by individuals or structural factors (e.g., historical racism built into policy) and the recipients of racism would shed light on these speculations.

Our measurement of anger towards social injustice and communal/political action might also explain the negative relation between these phenomena. Communal/political anti-racism actions involve responses against racism that are more organized and intentional, because they involve groups efforts with peers and interactions with political officials and other sociopolitical leaders to challenge racism (Aldana et al., 2019). According to research on justice-oriented emotions, emotions include a recognition of who is responsible for creating and ameliorating social inequality. Although our measure of anger towards social injustice does not specify the agent(s) responsible for social injustice, it is possible that youth might hold school officials, politicians and other public officials accountable for racism. Youth who blame "adults in power" for social inequality might feel that political leaders are unable to address social issues, as these people might be perceived as being more invested in maintaining the status quo than advancing the lives of underrepresented communities (Christens & Dolan, 2011; Hope & Bañales, 2018; Hope & Jagers, 2014). Emotions, such as anger towards social injustice, fail to result in prosocial or critical action when there is a loss of faith that equity can be restored, or when one does not believe in their capacity to make social change (Christens, Collura, & Tahir, 2013; van Doorn et al., 2014). Thus, youth who are angry towards social injustice might have less faith in their individual power to challenge injustice and might stray away from communal/political anti-racism action. It is also possible that youth who are angry towards social injustice might be cynical towards political officials' ability to institute change, resulting in less communal/political anti-racism action, as these behaviors often involve engagement with "adults in power." Measures of political efficacy, political cynicism, and beliefs in government responsiveness were not available in the current data, therefore, these points are largely speculative.

It is also likely that opportunities for communal/political anti-racism action are scarce for youth in the age range studied, thus limiting their ability to translate their anger towards social injustice into this type of action. Participation in community organizing, after school groups and activities, and political behaviors (e.g., contacting political officials) require knowledge of these activities, support from adults, after-school and weekend time commitments, access to transportation amongst other forms of social and economic capital (Christens & Dolan, 2011; Christens & Speer, 2015). Low SES youth, in general, and low SES youth of color, in particular, are less likely than their higher SES and White counterparts to participate in extracurricular and political activities due to barriers that stem from classism, racism and sexism (Fox et al., 2010). Although there were no latent mean or observed item differences between low SES and high SES youth on anti-racism action subscales, a post-hoc paired samples t test indicated that youth participated in more interpersonal anti-racism action than communal/political anti-racism action ($t(381) = -12.02$, $p < .001$). These results are unsurprising given that youth are likely to have greater access to informal interactions with their family, peers and non-parental adults than organized and political activities that challenge racism. Being that community organizing and organized programs provide youth with opportunities to reflect on their emotions (Christens & Dolan, 2011; Rusk et al., 2013), barriers associated with communal/political change anti-racism behaviors might limit youths' ability to reflect on how their anger towards social injustice may be used as fuel for community organizing and other critical actions (Zemblyas, 2007).

Furthermore, youths' anger towards social injustice positively facilitated the link between CC messages and interpersonal anti-racism action. Thus, it appears that youth who encounter messages in school that highlight the reality of racism in society, and subsequently become angry towards social injustice, might use their anger as motivation for interpersonal anti-racism action

(Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Contrary to this finding, youths' anger towards social injustice had a negative indirect effect between CB messages and interpersonal anti-racism action. In isolation, there was no association between CB messages and interpersonal anti-racism action and CB messages were negatively related to anger towards social injustice. However, CB messages were negatively related to interpersonal anti-racism action when anger towards social injustice was considered a mediator of this relation. It appears that CB messages are harmful messages (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) that do not provide youth with skills to develop emotional responses that condemn social injustice and interpersonal behaviors that challenge racism.

Further, youths' anger towards social injustice had a negative indirect effect on the relation between CC messages and communal/ political anti-racism action. CC messages were positively and significantly associated with communal/ political anti-racism action, and anger towards social injustice was negatively and significantly related to this form of anti-racism action. Youth need organized opportunities to reflect on their emotions towards social injustice, and how emotions can be channeled for social justice (Rusk et al., 2013; Zembylas, 2007). Informed by study findings, it appears that the potential for CC messages to result in communal/political anti-racism action might rest on youths' access to structured opportunities that foster their ability to channel their anger towards social injustice into more organized and political responses against racism.

In light of differences between CC and CB school racial messages on CC outcomes, these conceptually distinct racial messages were positively and significantly correlated. Although parents' and schools' communication of different types of racial messages are described as unique in their goals for youth awareness of race and racism (Aldana & Byrd, 2015), empirical research finds that youth do not necessarily distinguish the content of racial messages, instead

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interpreting racial messages as broad discussions about race (Bañales, 2019b). Consistent with this argument, a post hoc paired samples *t*-test indicated that reports of CC and CB messages were not significantly different from one another (*t*(371) = 1.97, *p* = .05), suggesting that youth reported equal amounts of these messages. Yet, the different relations CC and CB messages had on youth CC warrants further investigation of the nature and measurement of school racial messages and their role in youth CC around racism.

Limitations and Future Directions

The major limitation of the current study was its inability to test longitudinal associations between study phenomenon, as these data were cross-sectional. In particular, a study that examines changes in youth critical reflection of perceived inequality across adolescence might shed light on non-significant associations between this aspect of CC and study constructs. Being that the formation of critical reflection of perceived inequality is considered a developmental process (Watts et al., 2011), growth in critical reflection of perceived inequality might better predict anti-racism action across adolescence (Seider, Kelly, et al., 2018). Moreover, longitudinal research is needed to test bi-directional effects between school racial messages and youth CC and among CC dimensions. It is possible that anger might motivate youth to reflect more on the presence of social issues in their communities and society. It is also plausible that youth who are more aware of inequitable social conditions self-select into settings that emphasize the deep-seated nature of racism in U.S. Theoretical and empirical work were used to guide hypothesized structural relations (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Bañales, 2019b), but future longitudinal research will be well poised to test questions on directionality between variables.

Future research should consider the role of political efficacy in youth anti-racism action. Youths' emotional responses towards social injustice have been described as potential

springboards into civic action (Wray-Lake et al., 2018), suggesting that anger towards social injustice may represent an aspect of political efficacy and/or that political efficacy involves emotional responses against injustice. It is also probable that youths' anger towards social injustice develops simultaneously with political efficacy and/or that these processes are bidirectional. The current study was unable to test associations between youths' anger towards social injustice and political efficacy; therefore, we encourage future research to explore these questions. Future research should also consider relations between political efficacy and other emotions, such as hope for social justice, in youth anti-racism action development.

Because school racial messages are diverse in content (Byrd, 2017), future research should consider the role of youths' perceptions of different racial messages on youth CC. For instance, youth who perceive cultural competence messages in school, or messages that encourage youth to learn about the history and traditions of other racial/ethnic groups and cultures, might learn to value the cultures of other social groups, but might be unlikely to challenge racism because these types do not necessarily emphasize marginalized groups' experiences with oppression. Being that the current study relied only on youth perceptions of school racial messages, perceptions of different school racial messages should be captured from parents, teachers, and other school officials to yield a more comprehensive review of the school racial context. Additional research should also explore these questions with larger samples of youth of color and White to permit multi-group analyses that compare the structural paths between school racial messages and CC.

Summary and Conclusion

In all, this research found that school racial messages on the reality of racism positively contributed to youth anti-racism action, and that youths' anger towards social injustice promoted

or hindered these links, depending on the type of anti-racism action in question. Schools and youth community organizing initiatives have a unique opportunity to partner in the development of school-based, programmatic efforts that encourage youth to learn about, reflect on and act against racism in ways that promote positive youth development and a more anti-racist society.

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Table 3.1. *Descriptive Statistics and Factor Loadings of Study Variables.*

Latent Variable/Indicators	N	*M*	SD	% Missing	Skewness	Kurtosis	Stand. Loading	SE
Anti-Racism Social Action Scale 0-1, 0=No – 1=Yes								
Interpersonal Action 1: Challenged or checked a friend who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke	382	.65	.48	.08%	N/A	N/A	.50	.08
2: Challenged or checked a family member who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke	381	.57	.50	1.0%	N/A	N/A	.54	.07
3: Challenged or checked an adult who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke who is not a family member (i.e. parent's friend, coach, boss, teacher, etc.)	382	.48	.50	.08%	N/A	N/A	.72	.06
4: Defended a friend who is the target or a racial slur or joke	376	.68	.47	2.3%	N/A	N/A	.61	.07
5: Defended a stranger who is the target of a racial slur of joke	372	.48	.50	3.4%	N/A	N/A	.69	.06
Communal Action 1: Attended a meeting on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation	379	.30	.46	1.6%	N/A	N/A	.78	.04
2: Joined a club or group working on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation	380	.28	.45	1.3%	N/A	N/A	.84	.03
3: Tried to get into a leadership role or committee (i.e. student council, etc.)	378	.37	.48	1.8%	N/A	N/A	.66	.05
4: Participated in a leadership group or committee working on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation (i.e. youth organizing group) etc.	378	.33	.47	1.8%	N/A	N/A	.82	.04
Political Change Action 1: Called/written/emailed the media (i.e. newspaper, TV, internet) when you have seen something that is offensive	381	.25	.43	1.0%	N/A	N/A	.77	.05
2: Called/written/emailed an elected official (i.e. city council, mayor, legislator)	379	.22	.42	1.6%	N/A	N/A	.73	.05
3: Attended a protest on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination and/or segregation	378	.26	.44	1.8%	N/A	N/A	.83	.03
4: Organized your own action project on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination and/or segregation	379	.25	.44	1.6%	N/A	N/A	.82	.03
5: Invited someone to a meeting or protest related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation	376	.28	.45	2.3%	N/A	N/A	.85	.03
6: Inspired others to work on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation	380	.42	.49	1.3%	N/A	N/A	.66	.05

7: Researched/investigated issues or social problems in my community	376	.53	.50	2.3%	N/A	N/A	.56	.06

School Racial Messages
Scale 1-5, 1= *Not at all – 5=Completely true*
Critical Consciousness Messages

1: Your teachers encourage awareness of social issues affecting your culture	368	3.15	1.29	4.4%	-.22	-1.00	.69	.04
2: Teachers teach about racial inequality in the United States	370	3.16	1.27	3.9%	-.11	-.97	.76	.04
3: In your classes you have learned about how race/ethnicity plays a role in who is successful	370	2.86	1.34	3.9%	.10	-1.08	.78	.04
4: You have opportunities to learn about social justice	371	3.19	1.28	3.6%	-.17	-.95	.75	.04

Color-Blind Messages

1: At your school, people think that race/ethnicity is not an important factor in how people are treated	370	2.96	1.33	3.9%	.04	-1.12	.65	.04
2: People here think it's better to not pay attention to race/ethnicity	369	3.04	1.32	4.2%	-.10	-1.08	.72	.04
3: Your school has a colorblind perspective	360	2.94	1.34	6.5%	.04	-1.13	.76	.04
4: Your school encourages you to ignore racial/ethnic differences	370	3.03	1.37	3.9%	-.06	-1.17	.76	.04

Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality
Scale 1-6, 1= *Strongly disagree – 6=Strongly agree*

1: Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education	377	3.33	1.64	2.1%	-.05	-1.16	.68	.04
2: Poor children have fewer chances to get a good high school education	373	3.50	1.64	3.1%	-.05	-1.10	.75	.03
3: Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs	369	3.54	1.57	4.2%	-.15	-.94	.83	.02
4: Women have fewer chances to get good jobs	369	3.22	1.57	4.2%	-.00	-1.07	.76	.03
5: Poor people have fewer chances to get good jobs	372	3.60	1.59	3.4%	-.20	-1.00	.83	.02
6: Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get ahead	366	3.55	1.63	4.9%	-.18	-1.09	.87	.02
7: Women have fewer chances to get ahead	368	3.20	1.65	4.4%	.05	-1.19	.73	.03
8: Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead	370	3.64	1.61	3.9%	-.22	-1.00	.82	.03

Anger Towards Social Injustice
Scale 1-5, 1= *Strongly disagree – 5=Strongly agree*

1: It makes me angry when I think about the conditions some people have to live in	384	3.83	1.21	.03%	-1.03	.19	.79	.05
2: When I think about the hard times some people are going through, I wonder what's wrong with this country	381	3.87	1.21	1.0%	-.92	.15	.86	.05
3: I get mad when I hear about people being treated unfairly	382	4.13	1.02	.08%	-1.36	1.53	.72	.05

Note. Stand = standardized. SE = standard error. Skewness and kurtosis values not given for categorical items in Mplus.

Table 3.2. *Indirect Effects of Study Phenomena.*

	Interpersonal Anti-Racism Action	95% Confidence Intervals	Communal/Political Anti-Racism Action	95% Confidence Intervals
CC→ CR→ ANG	.003	[-.01, .01]	-.002	[-.01, .00]
CC→ ANG	.10*	[.03, .16]	-.07*	[-.13, -.01]
CC→ CR	.001	[-.01, .01]	.004	[-.01, .02]
CB→ CR→ ANG	.001	[-.01, .009]	-.001	[-.01, .01]
CB→ ANG	-.07*	[-.13, -.01]	.05	[.00, .11]
CB→ CR	.001	[-.01, .001]	.002	[-.01, .01]

Note. CC = Critical consciousness messages, CB = Color-blind messages, CR = Critical reflection of perceived inequality, ANG = Anger towards social injustice. $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$
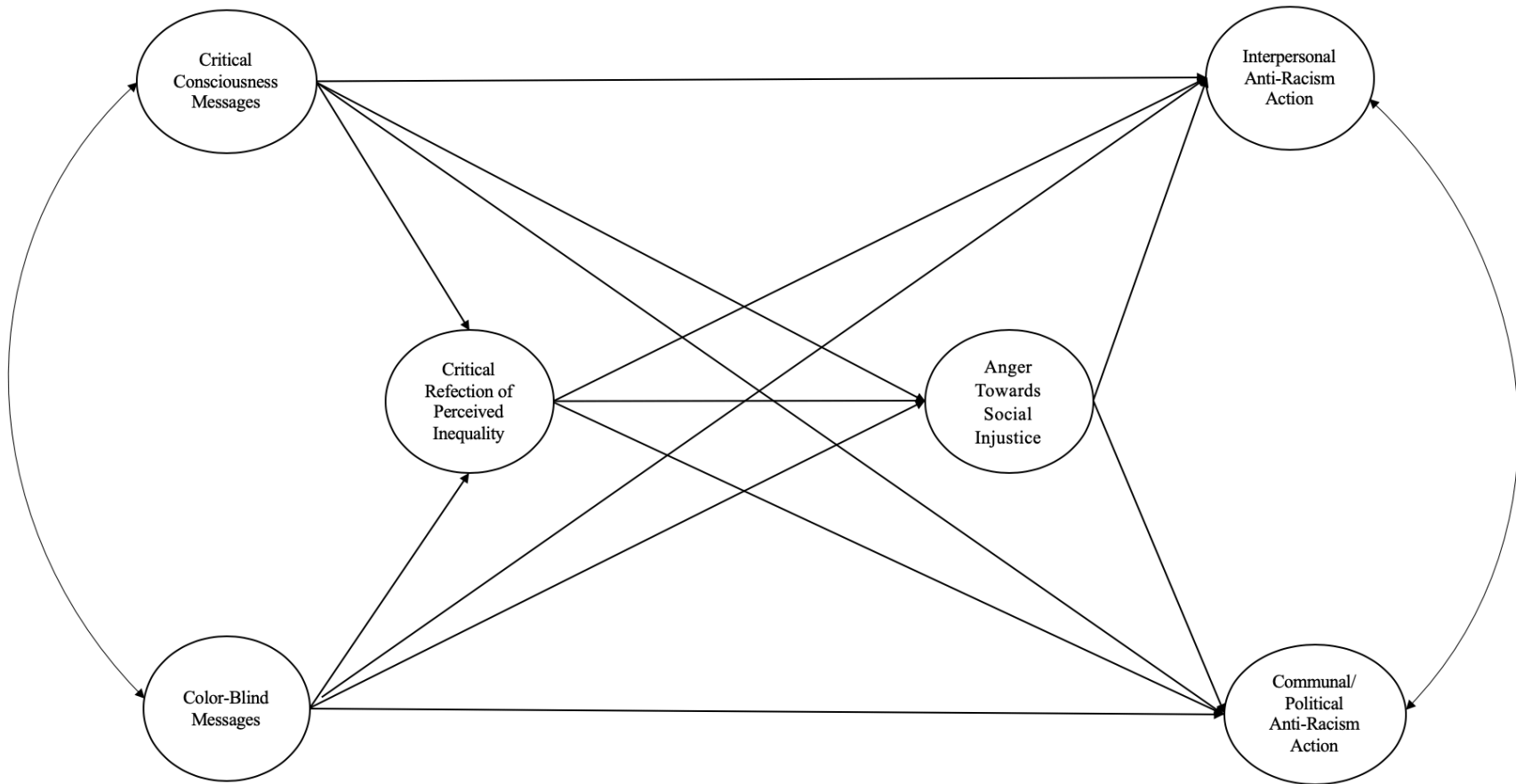
Figure 3.1. Conceptual Model.
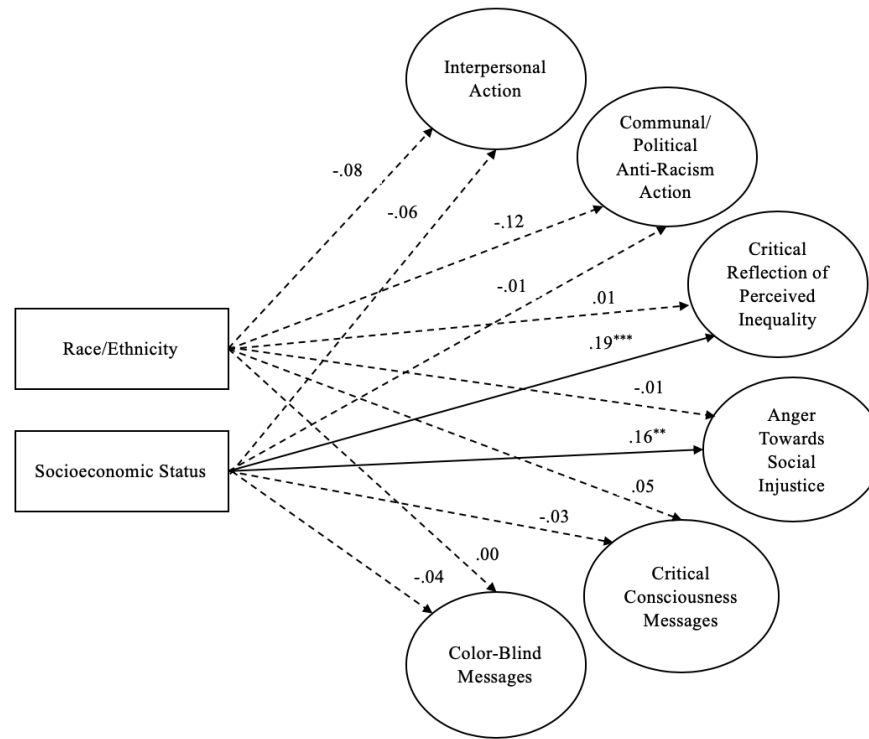
Figure 3.2. Multiple Indicator and Multiple Causes Model with Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status as Exogenous Covariates.

Note. (0 = Youth of color; 1 = White youth) and socioeconomic status (SES) (0 = lower SES youth, 1 = higher SES youth)
$p < .05^{*}, p < .01^{**}, p < .001^{***}$
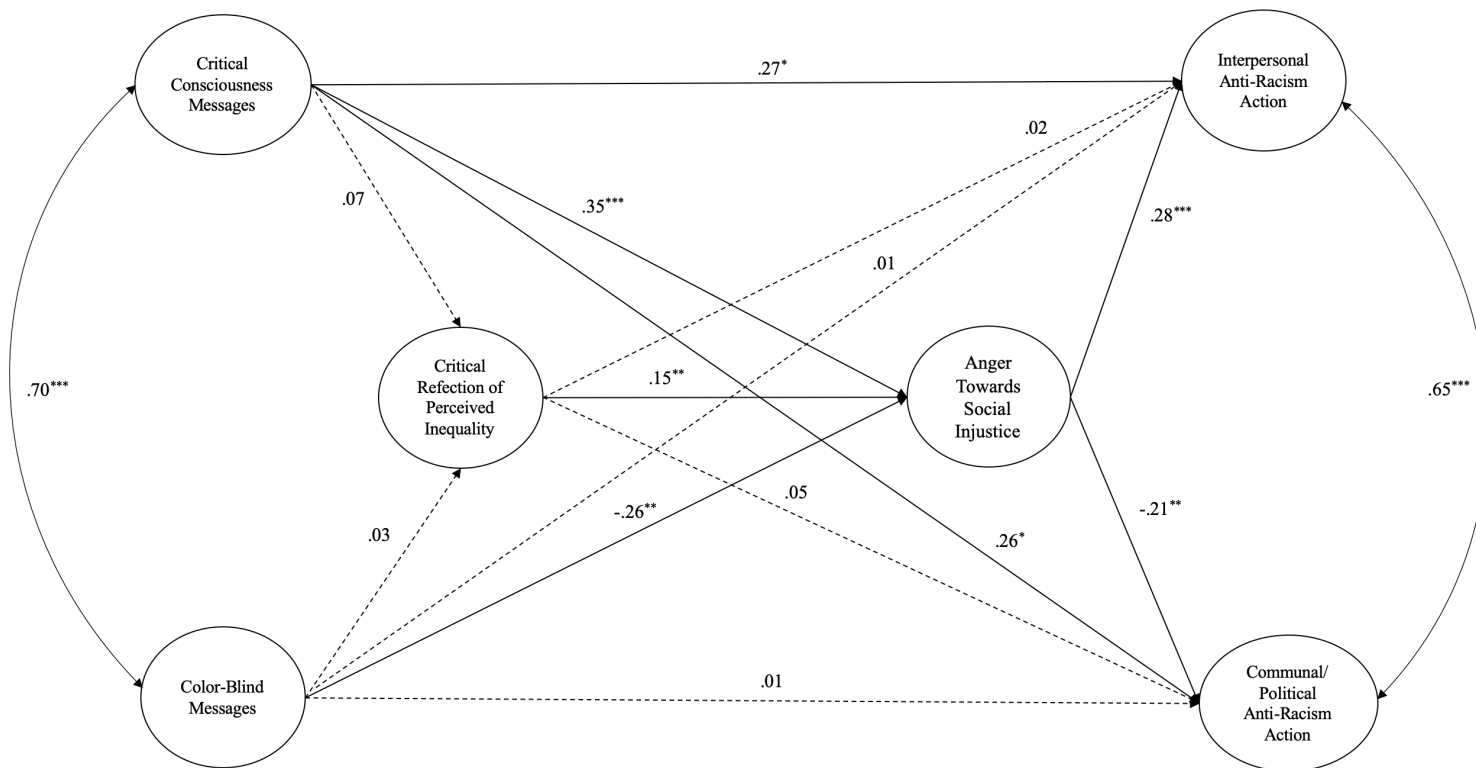
Figure 3.3. Standardized Estimates of School Racial Messages Predicting Critical Consciousness.

Note. Dashed lines are non-significant and bold lines are significant. Significant effects of SES on critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice not depicted. $p < .05^{*}$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this two-study dissertation was to deepen an understanding of adolescents' critical racial consciousness (CRC), or youths' beliefs, feelings, and actions towards racism. To do so, Study 1 was a qualitative investigation that explored how youth defined racism. This study also explored racial/ethnic group differences in youths' beliefs about racism. Study 2 was a quantitative examination of how youths' perceptions of messages about race and racism in their schools relate to their CC (e.g., critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice) and CRC (e.g., anti-racism action).

Study 1 used an open-ended question that asked 384 youth, whom were of color and White, how they defined racism. This study also examined racial/ethnic differences in youths' beliefs about racism. Through the use of an inductive and deductive thematic approach and grounded theory, this study revealed that youth had a multidimensional understanding of racism that primarily included an understanding that racism involved intrapersonal (e.g., the endorsement of stereotypes and prejudice) and interpersonal (e.g., the use of racial jokes and derogatory speech) forms of racism. Other research similarly finds that children and youth have these same conceptions of racism, with youth being more likely than children to name racial jokes in their discussion of racism (McKown, 2004; Roberts, Bell, & Murphy, 2008). Youths' analysis of these individual-level forms of racism coincided with an understanding of the dynamics of racism that included the attributions they made about the causes of racism, descriptions of the people who could perpetuate and receive racism, and the consequences of racism on the lives of youths' themselves, other people and society. These findings are congruent

with qualitative research that prompt youth to reflect on racism and social issues in focus groups, youth participatory action research and school curricula, finding that youth have the ability to explain the causes of social and racial issues, may identify the people responsible for these issues, and are aware of the consequences of these issues on their and others' lives (Hope & Bañales, 2018; Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2014; Roberts et al., 2008). The current study extends these findings for its ability to illuminate that youth have the ability to reflect on the "why, who, what, and how" of racism even when they are not promoted to do so in facilitated discussions about race and racism.

There were three major themes that undergirded youths' beliefs about racism. Youth voiced that racism 1) involved individuals' engagement in physical discriminatory behaviors and endorsement of prejudice that occurred on the basis of appearance, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics, and that these behaviors and attitudes could be enacted and received by all racial/ethnic groups; 2) is characterized by physical discriminatory behaviors that hurt people and society; and 3) had structural components and consequences that involved the unequal distribution of social power that was perpetrated by majority groups, often White people, and institutions. These themes suggested that youths' racial beliefs fell on a spectrum of racial awareness that ranged from a color-blind perspective on one end to a critical reflection of racism on the other. However, the majority of youth believed that racism was something that is seen or internalized and had negative consequences on people's lives. The few youth who expressed a critical reflection of racism recognized that racism was a system of oppression that had negative consequences on people's life opportunities and access to resources. These youth were attuned to the ways in which social dynamics shaped who could be deemed racist. For instance, youth

recognized that "power + prejudice" was needed in order for people to perpetuate racism, and that institutions and White people were the people or things with such power.

Racial/ethnic differences were also apparent in how youth described racism, but there were some features of racism on which youth agreed. All youth, regardless of their racial/ethnic background, were likely to described racism as a phenomenon that was situated in individuals' negative beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. In considering specific types of interpersonal/intrapersonal racism, White youth were more likely than youth of color to describe racism as physical forms of racial discrimination and stereotypes, and Black youth were more likely than other youth to describe racism as involving derogatory speech, racial jokes, and prejudice. Latinx youth were more likely than the other racial/ethnic groups to describe racism as people's use of racial labeling, and multiracial youth were more likely than the other racial/ethnic groups to describe racism as people's personality traits.

Study 2 was a quantitative investigation about how youths' perceptions of messages about race and racism in their schools was associated with their CC (e.g., critical reflection of perceived inequality and anger towards social injustice) and CRC (e.g., anti-racism action). This study revealed that youth received mixed messages about race and racism in their schools. Youth reported that their schools encouraged them to reflect on the role race has in shaping people's life outcomes in society (i.e., youth reported receiving CC messages in school) and, at the same time, youth reported that their schools encouraged them to *not* reflect on the role of race in shaping people's life experiences and outcomes in society (i.e., youth reported receiving CB messages in school). Although these racial messages were positively and significantly correlated, they were related to youths' anger towards social injustice and anti-racism action in distinct ways. Youth who perceived CC messages were angry towards social injustice, and youth who perceived CB

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messages were less angry towards social injustice. Youths' anger towards social injustice positively facilitated their interpersonal anti-racism action and hindered communal anti-racism action.

Contributions

The main contribution of this dissertation is its ability to center how youth contend with, perceive, and act against racism in developmental research, particularly CC research. Over the past two decades, there have been major calls for developmental research to consider the effects of racism and race on the psychological development of youth of color (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). The resulting body of literature has focused on how youth of color, primarily, develop healthy racial/ethnic identities (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), appraise and cope with racial discrimination (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Seaton & Iida, 2019), and learn about and discuss race and racism in their homes through parental racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006; Wang, Smith, Miller, & Huguley, 2019). Consistent with these bodies of research, the current dissertation not only acknowledges that racism infringes on the lives of youth of color and White people, it investigates how youth *explain* the nature of this system of privilege and oppression, *perceive* racial messages about racism in schools, and *act* against racism in their homes, schools, and communities.

The main contribution of Study 1 is that is centers youths' voices to ascertain how youth define racism. Scholars describe racism as a system of racial dominance that is deeply engrained in the beliefs, feelings and actions of people, the functioning of societal institutions, cultural practices and discourse (see Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Neblett, 2019). Because racism involves power differentials between people of color and White people, it is often argued that people of color cannot perpetuate racism (Tatum, 2017). Youth did not make

the same claim; they indicated that all people, regardless of their racial/ethnic background, can perpetuate and receive racism. There appears be a disconnect between youths' definitions of racism and how scholars discuss racism.

This disconnect has the potential to inform the development of theory and measures on youths' beliefs about racism. Quintana's (1994, 2008) developmental model on ethnic perspective taking indicates that children may develop a CC during adolescence. This model primarily describes the sociocognitive skills that allow youths' CC to prosper. For instance, this model suggests that youth have the ability to infer that seemingly isolated racial experiences comprise racial trends, and the ability to identify and question the collective perspectives of other racial/ethnic groups. An understanding of the sociocogntive skills that makes youths' CC and CRC possible is key. However, there is a need for theory to understand the nature of youths' beliefs about racism as well. Developmental theory that is concerned with youths' explanations of societal injustice will be expanded if it considers the "how and why," with regard to youths' beliefs about racism, alongside other developmental skills (e.g., empathy, perspective taking) youth gain across adolescence.

This emerging theory has the potential to inform psychological measures on youths' beliefs about, awareness of, and experiences with racism. Measures that assess youths' perceptions of racism often interpret youths' responses as youth reflecting on racism as a structural force or a phenomenon that is external to youth and families (see Bañales et al., 2019; Lesane-Brown, Brown, Caldwell, & Sellers, 2005; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). Quantitative measures on youths' analysis of and experiences with racism might not be capturing the diverse and complex ways youth reflect on racism. In answering items that include the word "racism," youth might be reflecting on racism as an intrapersonal/interpersonal phenomenon or a

structural phenomenon or both at the same time. Youth might also be reflecting on the characteristics of the people who they believe can and cannot perpetrate racism, likely shaping their reports of racism. Quantitative and qualitative studies that explore youths' beliefs about and experiences with racism might consider asking youth how they define racism, so researchers interpret youths' responses accurately. Furthermore, measures and interview protocol can be more carefully developed to more specifically assess youths' perceptions of racism.

A contribution of Study 2 is its ability to test emerging theory on school racial socialization with new measures that assess youths' perceptions of school racial messages, CC and CRC. There is a large body of research that argues that schools are racial contexts that informs youths' beliefs about race and racism in explicit and implicit ways through school curriculum, peer and teacher relations, the broader school climate amongst other factors (Byrd, 2017; Seider & Graves, 2020). Recent theoretical work argues that the racial messages schools communicate to youth inform youths' awareness of and analysis of racism (Aldana & Byrd, 2015) and psychological measures have been developed to assess youths' perceptions of these messages (Byrd, 2017, 2018). Study 2 of this dissertation is one of the first studies to empirically test and link emerging theory and measures on youths' perceptions of school racial messages and youths' CC, particularly their anger towards social injustice. This dissertation also expands emerging theory on school racial socialization not only for its ability to test and link school racial messages with how youth feel towards social injustice, but also with how youth challenge racism through anti-racism action in their home, school, and community contexts. Findings from this dissertation serve as fertile ground for research that aims to explore how youths' racial experiences in school shape how they challenge racism in and outside of school.

Implications for Policy and Practice

This dissertation has implications for youth and adults (e.g., psychologists, educators, social workers, youth and adult community-organizers) who are invested in youths' CRC. Being that the majority of youth in Study 1 have a more individualistic understanding of racism as opposed to a structural analysis of racism, the conversations youth have about racism with adults and other youth should be scaffolded. As adults and youth talk about racism, they can first discuss whether racism remains a pressing social issue in society. To facilitate this conversation, youth and adults may look at historical statistics that convey racial disparities between people of color and White youth. Youth should be asked their opinions on why they believe these racial trends exist. Asking youth to explain their beliefs about the causes of racial issues and racial disparities has the potential to promote youths' critical reflection of social issues (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Following this conversation, youth and adults can discuss how racism may manifest through intrapersonal/interpersonal forms of racism and how these aspects of racism provide a foundation for institutional and structural racism (Seider & Graves, 2020). Although the majority of youth in Study 1 acknowledged the reality of racism, some youth might have a hard time grappling with understanding institutional and structural racism, as Study 1 suggested. To make these potentially abstract forms of racism visible, adults should make explicit links between historical forms of racial marginalization (e.g., land displacement, slavery, native language loss) and contemporary racial issues (e.g., forced English use in schools, income disparities) with youth. Once these links are made, youth should be given the opportunity to discuss how intrapersonal/interpersonal forms of racism uphold these forms of racism. For example, youth may be guided to discuss how people's endorsement of stereotypes may serve as the foundation of racially biased policies that create racial inequities between White people and people of color.

These conversations about racism may occur in the context of a school-based intergroup dialogue that includes youth and adults. As Study 2 of this dissertation and other research suggests (Byrd, 2017; Seider et al., 2018), schools inform youths' beliefs about racial inequality and actions against social injustice. The implementation of a school-based intergroup dialogue that allows youth of different racial/ethnic backgrounds to come together to discuss their beliefs about racism may serve as one racial socializing site within schools that stimulates youths' CRC (Aldana, 2014). This intergroup dialogue should allow youth to unpack the nature and complexity of stereotypes, prejudice, physical and verbal discrimination, racial jokes, and other dimensions of racism. This dialogue should encourage youth to reflect on within-group differences among youth of color and between-group differences between youth of color and between youth of color and White youth so an in-depth understanding of youths' beliefs about racism can be realized.

A school-based intergroup dialogue should give youth ample opportunities to reflect on racism as a system of privilege and oppression. As seen in Study 1, the majority of youth believed that racism came in the form of physical discrimination and prejudice, is done on the basis of people's characteristics, and has negative consequences on others and society. Thus, they recognized the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of racism. Although these aspects of racism contribute to the system of racism, youth should reflect on the ways which racism functions as a system that privileges White people and disadvantages people of color and how this power differential changes the dynamics (e.g., who can perpetuate and receive different types of racism) and consequences of different forms of racism. Being that the functioning of contemporary racism is often inconspicuous (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), youth should be exposed to

various resources (e.g., podcasts, books, music) and experiential activities that allow them to recognize how racism is rendered invisible through the development of policy, cultural practices (e.g., gentrification, segregation), and the functioning of societal institutions (e.g., the development of prisons and jails).

This intergroup dialogue should also allow youth and adults to discuss the role schools have socializing youths' beliefs, feelings and actions towards racism. It should be highlighted that school racial messages relate to youth anti-racism action, as Study 2 found that youth who had teachers, classes and opportunities that allowed them to reflect on the importance of race and racism in the functioning of society were likely to challenge racism through interpersonal and communal/political anti-racism actions. Content covered in the dialogue may also stress the importance of emotion in youths' anti-racism action, as youths' anger towards social injustice was positively related to interpersonal anti-racism action. Youth should have structured opportunities to reflect on their emotions and channel emotions into interpersonal and communal anti-racism action, assuming action makes sense for youths' lives. This is particularly important because anger towards social injustice was negatively related to communal/political anti-racism action, suggesting that youth might require more guidance on how to facilitate their anger into anti-racism action that is more organized and political. Being that CC and CB messages were positively correlated in this study, we suggest that program facilitators explicitly mention the presence of CC and CB messages in schools and acknowledge that CB messages might hinder youths' emotional response against injustice.

The development of a school-based intergroup dialogue should include the voices of youth, teachers, community organizing groups, other youth development practitioners, and researchers. Of note, there is great potential for partnerships between schools and youth

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community organizing initiatives that address barriers associated with each institution with regard to discussions about and actions against racism. Schools have historical and contemporary struggles with addressing the relevance of race and racism in society and students' lives, as indicated by principals' inadequate responses to racial incidents and anti-racism policy (Aveling, 2007), and the dismantling of Mexican American Studies programs in high schools, for example (see Cabrera, Meza, Romero, & Rodríguez, 2013). In particular, teachers express difficulty discussing issues related to race and racism with their students (Dunn, Sondel, & Baggett, 2019), making the implementation of critical conversations of and action against racism in school strenuous. Further, schools have civic missions that differ in the extent to which racial justice is emphasized as a core mission of the school community (Seider & Graves, 2020). Contrary to these struggles, youth community organizing efforts are largely concerned with raising youths' racial/ethnic identity and awareness of structural oppression (Warren, Mira, & Nikundiwe, 2008). Yet, youth participation in community organizing initiatives is selective and rarely found within schools, as participation in these efforts are constrained by time, money, awareness of organizing opportunities and support from key socializers and stakeholders that monitor school curricula and activities (Aveling, 2007; Christens & Speer, 2011). Collaboration between schools and youth community organizing efforts may help overcome challenges associated with each institution's approach to stimulating youths' beliefs, feelings and actions towards racism.

Being that all youth must attend school, developing programs during the school-day or infusing discussions about race and racism into curricula would be ideal in stimulating youths' beliefs, feelings and actions towards racism. Teachers and other school officials should have sustained professional development opportunities that provide them with knowledge on historical and contemporary racism, and training on how to support youths' awareness of, feelings towards,

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and actions against racism (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Williams, 2019). Youth community organizing groups should be involved in developing and implementing these efforts, as they are likely to ensure youth have power in designing curricula and incorporate a youth-led action component into anti-racism programming. Youth community organizing groups have experience facilitating difficult dialogues between students, parents, and school officials around social injustice (Checkoway, 2012; Su, 2007), and are capable to address tension that arises during the development of youth anti-racism programming.

Conclusion

Racism is a pressing social issue that effects the lives of youth of color and White youth. Youth have the potential to challenge racism by developing beliefs, feelings, and actions that challenge racism. In other words, youth may develop a CRC that may serve as "antidote towards oppression" that allows youth to directly alter the manifestations of racism in their lives (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). The current dissertation suggests that developing this psychological antidote does not necessarily come easy. Study 1 of this dissertation explored the nature of youths' beliefs about racism using an open-ended question. This study revealed that youths' beliefs about racism are multidimensional (i.e., comprised of an awareness that racism involves beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and dynamics of racism), and that these dimensions differed based on youths' racial/ethnic backgrounds. An inductive and deductive thematic approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) that incorporated grounded theory (Charmaz, 1996) was used to analyze themes in the data. This analysis revealed that youth primarily described racism as a skin-deep offense that is enacted through physical behaviors and prejudice, and that physical forms of discrimination, in particular, hurt people and/or society. A small portion of youth

displayed a critical reflection of racism that was multidimensional nature in that it included an awareness of the nature, dynamics, and consequences of racism. For instance, youth who displayed a critical reflection of racism recognized that racism was a system of oppression that is perpetuated by people and institutions in power that has negative consequences on people's life opportunities and success.

Study 2 was a quantitative investigation of how youth perceived racial messages in their schools and how these perceptions related to their critical reflection of perceived inequality, anger towards social injustice, and anti-racism action. Using SEM, this study indicated that youth perceived their schools to transmit messages that encouraged them to be aware of the reality of race and racism and, at the same time, ignore the reality of race and racism. Although youths' perceptions of these messages were positively correlated, these messages did not relate to youths' CC and CRC in the same way. For instance, youths' perceptions of CC messages were positively associated with interpersonal and communal/political action, whereas CB messages were unrelated to anti-racism action. Together, findings from Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that youth are especially well poised to develop a CC and CRC, but they need facilitated and guided opportunities from schools and other socializing agents and contexts (e.g., families, neighborhoods, peers) to actualize this potential into emotional responses and actions that challenge racism and other forms of injustice (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Findings from this dissertation have the potential to inform how youth and adults discuss race and racism with one another in school settings, such as a school-based intergroup dialogue. This dialogue may draw on findings from Study 1 to inform conversations about racism with youth that are developmentally and culturally sensitive. Findings from Study 2 may inform the development of a school-based intergroup dialogue that raises youths' and adults' awareness of

the powerful role schools have in shaping youths' CC and CRC. This school-based intergroup dialogue has the potential to inform greater cross-racial understanding between youth of color and White youth, as well as actions against racism that dismantle systemic White privilege and the marginalization of people of color.

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Appendix: Critical Racial Consciousness Survey

Principal Investigator: Katie Richards-Schuster, PhD., School of Social Work and University of Michigan

Other: Adriana Aldana, PhD., School of Social Work, California State University

Overview and purpose: We are asking you to be part of a study that will explore adolescents' experiences in multicultural settings and the civic actions they may take. The main objective of this study is to validate the Anti-Racism Social Action scale.

Description of your involvement: If you agree, you may complete an anonymous survey exploring adolescents' experiences in multicultural settings and the civic actions they may take. Survey administration will take approximately 15-20min. You can choose not to answer a specific question, or you may stop the survey at any time.

Benefits: While you may not receive a direct benefit from participating, the development and validation of this scale will enable other researchers to use this scale as a tool in their research and understanding of anti-racism social action.

Risks and discomforts: Answering questions about your experiences in multicultural settings and your understanding of your experiences may be uncomfortable. You can choose not to answer a question, or you may stop the survey at any time.

Confidentiality: We plan to publish the results of this study and share the findings in public settings. Because the survey is anonymous, we cannot link anything you say to your personal information. The data will be stored on password protected computer files with access only by the study team. We will plan to keep the data for up to five years for study and recordkeeping purposes. The data will not be made available to other researchers beyond the study team.

Voluntary nature of the study: Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may change your mind and stop at any time. You may also choose to not answer a question for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research, your data will not be shared with us.

Contact information: If you have questions about this research, you can contact Katie Richards-Schuster, PhD, University of Michigan School of Social Work, at kers@umich.edu or 734-615-2118.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd., Bldg. 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

X→

Assent *I have read the information given above. By continuing with the survey, I am agreeing to participate and to allow my responses to be included in the study.*

○ I agree to participate in this survey (1)

○ I DO NOT agree to participate in this survey (2)

Cancel **We understand that you did not agree to participate in this survey.** Thank you for your consideration.

End of Block

Identification Block

Preamble Welcome to our online survey.
Your responses are very important to us. There are no right or wrong answers on this survey. We are only interested in your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. So, please be as honest as possible in your response. We appreciate your participation.
Instructions: Please fill out each question to the best of your knowledge. Let us know if you have any questions.

SEX Please indicate your gender.

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Transgender (3)

Page Break

End of Block

Demographics

AGE What is your age? (Please enter numeric value)

_____

IMG Were you born in the U.S.?

   ○ Yes (1)

   ○ No (2) (If no, what country?)

SCHL_CITY What city is your school in?

_____

SCHL What type of school do you attend?

   ○ Public (1)

   ○ Private (2)

   ○ Charter (3)

   ○ Other (4)

SCHL_R How mixed do you think your school is in terms of the ethnic/racial background of the students?

   ○ Very mixed (1)

   ○ Fairly mixed (2)

   ○ Hardly mixed at all (3)

NEIGHSCH Do you go to your neighborhood school?

   ○ Yes (1)

   ○ No (2)

GEOG What state do you live in?

_____

ZIP What is your zip code?

RACE What is your race or ethnicity? (please check one)

○ African American/Black (1)

○ Asian/Pacific Islander (2)

○ Hispanic/Latino (please specify) (3)

_____

○ Multi Racial (please specify) (4)

_____

○ Native American (5)

○ White/Caucasian/European (6)

○ Other Race/Ethnicity (please specify) (7)

_____

Grdian Who is your primary guardian?

○ Mother (1)

○ Father (2)

○ Grandparent (3)

○ Other family member (If yes, who is this family member?) (4)

_____

Grdian Who is your secondary guardian?

○ Mother (1)

○ Father (2)

○ Grandparent (3)

○ Other family member (If yes, who is this family member?) (4)

_____

Grdian1 What is the highest level of education your primary guardian has achieved?

○ Junior high school or less (1)

○ Some high school (2)

○ Received high school diploma (3)

○ Some college (4)

○ Received college diploma (5)

○ Some graduate school (6)

○ Master's Degree (7)

○ Ph.D./M.D./J.D. (8)

○ Not sure (9)

Grdian2 What is the highest level of education that your secondary guardian has achieved?

○ Junior high school or less (1)

○ Some high school (2)

○ Received high school diploma (3)

○ Some college (4)

○ Received college diploma (5)

○ Some graduate school (6)

○ Master's Degree (7)

○ Ph.D./M.D./J.D. (8)

○ Not sure (9)

End of Block

Anti-Racist Social Action

Action. For the following questions, please indicate whether you do these things.

	No (0)	Yes (1)
Challenged or checked a friend who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke. (action_01)	○	○
Challenged or checked a family member who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke. (action_02)	○	○
Challenged or checked an adult who uses a racial slur or makes a racial joke who is not a family member (i.e. parent's friend, coach, boss, teacher, etc.). (action_03)	○	○
Challenged or checked myself before using racial slur or making a racial joke. (action_04)	○	○
Talked with friends about issues of race, ethnicity, discrimination and/or segregation. (action_05)	○	○
Talked with a family member about issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination and/or segregation. (action_06)	○	○
Defended a friend who is the target of a racial slur or joke. (action_07)	○	○
Defended a stranger who is the target of a racial slur or joke. (action_08)	○	○
Paid attention to news articles/media stories about issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. (action_09)	○	○
Called/written/emailed the media (i.e. newspaper, TV, internet) when you have seen something that is offensive. (action_10)	○	○
Called/written/emailed an elected official (i.e. city council, mayor, legislator). (action_11)	○	○
Made efforts to get to know others of diverse backgrounds. (action_12)	○	○

Attended a meeting on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. (action_13)	○	○
Joined a club or group working on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. (action_14)	○	○
Attended a protest on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination and/or segregation. (action_15)	○	○
Organized your own action project on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination and/or segregation. (action_16)	○	○
Tried to get into a leadership role or committee (i.e. student council, group officer position, organizing an event or program). (action_17)	○	○
Invited someone to a meeting or protest related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. (action_18)	○	○
Inspired others to work on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. (action_19)	○	○
Researched/investigated issues or social problems in my community. (action_20)	○	○
Participated in a leadership group or committee working on issues related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation. (action_21)	○	○
Sat with others who are different racially/ethnically from me in the school cafeteria or at an event. (action_22)	○	○

Page Break

Emotions

EMT How do you generally feel when interacting with people from racial-ethnic groups different from your own?

	1 (0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	6 (5)	7 (2)	8 (3)	9 (4)	
Not trusting at all (1) (PosEmo_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very trusting (10)
Not excited at all (1) (PosEmo_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very excited (10)
Not open at all (1) (PosEmo_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very open (10)
Not engaged at all (1) (PosEmo_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very engaged (10)
Not worried at all (1) (NegEmo_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very worried (10)
Not anxious at all (1) (NegEmo_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very anxious (10)
Not tense at all (1) (NegEmo_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very tense (10)
Not fearful at all (1) (NegEmo_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very fearful (10)

EMT How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Uncertain (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
It makes me angry when I think about the conditions some people have to live in. (AngEmo_1)	○	○	○	○	○
When I think about the hard times some people are going through, I wonder what's wrong with this country. (AngEmo_2)	○	○	○	○	○
I get mad when I hear about people being treated unjustly. (AngEmo_3)	○	○	○	○	○

EMTNTEXT The previous questions asked you to consider the living conditions or mistreatment of "some people". Who came to mind as you answered these questions?"

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block

Extracurricular Participation

EXTRA How many days each week are you involved in any kind of club or organization?

○ Not at all (1)

○ Less than once a week (2)

○ Once or twice a week (3)

○ Three or four days a week (4)

○ Five or more days a week (5)

○ Every day of the week (6)

Critical Consciousness

Please respond to the following statements by checking one box to indicate how much you agree or disagree.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Mostly disagree (2)	Slightly disagree (3)	Slightly agree (4)	Mostly agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)
Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education. (CCCR01)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor children have fewer chances to get a good high school education. (CCCR02)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs. (CCCR03)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Women have fewer chances to get good jobs. (CCCR04)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor people have fewer chances to get good jobs. (CCCR05)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get ahead. (CCCR06)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Women have fewer chances to get ahead. (CCCR07)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead. (CCCR08)	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for young people to speak out when an injustice has occurred (CCPE01)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Young people have an important role to play in making the world a better place (CCPE02)	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for young people to know what is going on in the world (CCPE03)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Political issues are not relevant to people who are not old enough to vote (CCPE04)	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to be an active	○	○	○	○	○	○

and informed citizen (CCPE05)

It is important to correct social and economic inequality (CCPE06)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

It is important to confront someone who says something that you think is racist or prejudiced (CCPE07)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

It is my responsibility to get involved and make things better for society (CCPE08)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

People like me should participate in the political activity and decision making of our country (CCPE09)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

It does not matter whether I participate in local organizations or political activity because so many other people are involved (CCPE10)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

Please respond to the following statements by checking one box to indicate how often you were involved in each activity in the last 1year.

	Never did this (1)	Once or twice last year (2)	Once every few months (3)	At least once a month (4)	At least once a week (5)
Participated in a civil rights group or organization (CCSA01)	○	○	○	○	○
Participated in a political party, club, or organization (CCSA02)	○	○	○	○	○
Wrote a letter to a school or community newspaper or publication about a social or political issue (CCSA03)	○	○	○	○	○
Contacted a public official by phone, mail, or email to tell him/her how you felt about a particular social or political issue (CCSA04)	○	○	○	○	○
Joined in a protest march, political demonstration, or political meeting (CCSA05)	○	○	○	○	○
Worked on a political campaign (CCSA06)	○	○	○	○	○

Participated in a discussion about a social or political issue (CCSA07)	○	○	○	○	○
Signed an email or written petition about a social or political issue (CCSA08)	○	○	○	○	○
Participated in a human rights, gay rights, or women's rights organization or group (CCSA09)	○	○	○	○	○

Intergroup Contact

Q193 Please answer the following questions about your school:

	None (1)	Little (3)	Some (8)	Many (9)
How many students in your school are from racial or ethnic groups different from you own? (1)	○	○	○	○
How often do you work on school projects and/or study with students from other racial/ethnic groups? (2)	○	○	○	○
At school, how many friends do you have who are from a different racial or ethnic group than you? (3)	○	○	○	○
Outside of school, how many friends do you have who are from a different racial or ethnic group than you? (4)	○	○	○	○
In the neighborhood where you live, do you have neighbors from other racial or ethnic groups? (5)	○	○	○	○
How many of your friends from your neighborhood are from a different racial or ethnic group than you? (6)	○	○	○	○

School Racial Socialization

SRS How true are the following statements?

	Not at all true (0)	A little true (1)	Somewhat true (2)	Very true (4)	Completely true (5)
In your classes you've learned new things about your culture.(SRS01)	○	○	○	○	○
At your school, you have chances to learn about the history and traditions of your culture (SRS02)	○	○	○	○	○
At your school, you have participated in activities that teach you more about your cultural background. (SRS03)	○	○	○	○	○
Your teachers encourage awareness of social issues affecting your culture. (SRS04)	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers teach about racial inequality in the United States. (SRS05)	○	○	○	○	○
In your classes you have learned about how race/ethnicity plays a role in who is successful. (SRS06)	○	○	○	○	○
You have opportunities to learn about social justice. (SRS07)	○	○	○	○	○
At school you learn what it means to be an American. (SRS08)	○	○	○	○	○
Your school teaches you core American values. (SRS09)	○	○	○	○	○
At your school, they encourage you to be proud of what people in the U.S. have accomplished. (SRS10)	○	○	○	○	○

Your classes have taught you about what makes the United States unique from other countries in the world. (SRS11)	○	○	○	○	○
At your school, people think race/ethnicity is not an important factor in how people are treated. (SRS12)	○	○	○	○	○
People here think it's better to not pay attention to race/ethnicity. (SRS13)	○	○	○	○	○
Your school has a colorblind perspective. (SRS14)	○	○	○	○	○
Your school encourages you to ignore racial/ethnic difference. (SRS15)	○	○	○	○	○
Your classes teach you about diverse cultures and traditions. (SRS16)	○	○	○	○	○
You have learned about new cultures and traditions at school. (SRS17)	○	○	○	○	○
You have the chance to learn about the culture of others. (SRS18)	○	○	○	○	○
In school you get to do things that help you learn about people of different races and cultures. (SRS19)	○	○	○	○	○
Your textbooks show people of many different races/ethnicities. (SRS20)	○	○	○	○	○
At your school, they encourage you to learn about different cultures. (SRS21)	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Types of Citizen

Cit How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Uncertain (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I think people should assist those in their lives who are in need of help. (PRCit_1)	○	○	○	○	○
I think it is important for people to follow rules and laws. (PRCit_2)	○	○	○	○	○
I try to help when I see people in need. (PRCit_3)	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to help others without being paid. (PRCit_4)	○	○	○	○	○
I try to be kind to other people. (PRCit_5)	○	○	○	○	○
I think it is important to tell the truth. (PRCit_6)	○	○	○	○	○

Cit How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Uncertain (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
After high school, I will work with others to change unjust laws. (JRCit_1)	○	○	○	○	○
I think it is important to protest when something in society needs changing. (JRCit_2)	○	○	○	○	○
I think it's important to buy products from businesses who are careful not to harm the environment. (JRCit_3)	○	○	○	○	○
I think it is important to challenge inequalities in society. (JRCit_4)	○	○	○	○	○

Cit How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Uncertain (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility (PCCit_1)	○	○	○	○	○
Being concerned about state and local issues is an important responsibility for everybody. (PCCit_2)	○	○	○	○	○
I believe I can make a difference in my community. (PCCit_3)	○	○	○	○	○
By working with others in the community I can help make things better. (PCCit_4)	○	○	○	○	○

School-Based Youth Agency

SchAgen. When you think about yourself at school, how much do you relate to the following statements? Please rate how true each statement is for you.

	Very untrue (1)	A little bit untrue (2)	A little bit true (3)	Very true (4)
I feel confident I can advocate for myself if I am graded unfairly. (SchAgen_1)	○	○	○	○
I feel certain I will be listened to if I request to be placed in honors and AP courses. (SchAgen_2)	○	○	○	○
I feel hopeless when I think about my academic performance. (SchAgen_3)	○	○	○	○
I feel able to contribute positively to my school. (SchAgen_4)	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable challenging unfair school rules. (SchAgen_5)	○	○	○	○
I feel anxious about joining extracurricular activities (sports, student clubs), because I may not be accepted. (SchAgen_6)	○	○	○	○
I feel at ease when I talk with teachers and school staff during one-on-one meetings. (SchAgen_7)	○	○	○	○

Racism Definition

Q182 How do you define racism? Please provide and explain your definition with a few sentences below.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!