

Racial and Ethnic Identity: Developmental Perspectives and Research

Stephen M. Quintana
University of Wisconsin—Madison

Developmental research is reviewed to evaluate how race, ethnicity, racial identity, and ethnic identity are defined and investigated for minority populations. First reviewed is how these terms are used in developmental and counseling research. Early practices limited these terms to their demographic denotations (e.g., heritage), but more recent practices have expanded to include socially constructed connotations. Second, developmental research was used to evaluate key assumptions in theories of racial and ethnic identity development, with an emphasis on recent longitudinal studies. Research supports some, but not all, of these developmental predictions. Longitudinal research supported the progressive nature of ethnic and racial identity development and that exposure to racism appears to stimulate further identity development during adolescence. In contrast, available evidence does not support the claims of a developmental hierarchy for racial ideologies and that identity crises are normative. Adjustment was not predicted by a single racial or ethnic identity ideology, but research suggested that the adolescent's sociocultural identity and socialization should be tailored to the nature of the racial and ethnic context for development. Implications for counseling research and practice are offered.

Keywords: racial identity, ethnic identity, development

Counseling psychology has shown leadership within psychology in defining and describing processes associated with race, ethnicity, and culture. Developmental psychology has made, however, important strides in investigating and characterizing psychological processes that are influenced by race, ethnicity, and culture (see, e.g., Quintana et al., 2006). With longitudinal methodology and large samples, developmental psychologists are conducting important investigations into how racial and ethnic identity develops. These important innovations supplement counseling psychology's reliance on cross-sectional and self-report methodologies (see Hoyt, Warbasse, & Chu, 2006).

Below are described recent practices and findings that provide a developmental perspective on debates into how race, ethnicity, racial identity, and ethnic identity are defined and conceptualized for minority populations. Although there are models of identity development for White populations (e.g., Helms, 1995), this review focuses on racial and ethnic minority populations, as relatively little information about the development of racial identity in White populations exists. First reviewed are trends in how these sociocultural terms are defined, and recommendations are made for increasing the preciseness and meaningfulness in the use of these terms. Next, several foundational principles are identified in theories about racial and ethnic identity development, followed by a review of available research to determine which of these theoretical principles have been empirically supported. For those that lack support, historical biases are identified as a way to explain why these principles may have been originally postulated.

Trends in Terminology Associated With Race and Ethnicity

For decades, scholars have noted and tried to correct inconsistencies in how race, ethnicity, racial identity, and ethnic identity have been used in counseling psychology research and theory (e.g., Helms & Talleyrand, 1997). Much of the inconsistency regarding definitions of race and ethnicity stems from the multiple influences on the definitions. There are, of course, explicit as well as implicit definitions of race and ethnicity (e.g., Phinney, 1996). Like other terms in lay and technical language, these terms evolve and change in the context of their use. Explicit definitions, akin to dictionary definitions, need to be updated from time to time to reflect the way the terms have evolved in common usage. Some have been troubled by the tendency for race and ethnicity to be used interchangeably (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997), but some of these practices may reflect the natural evolution of language in which popular and common usage of terms eventually become reflected in official definitions.

A clear trend in the uses of these terms has been an evolution from definitions that are restricted to these terms' demographic denotations to definitions that include socially constructed connotations of these terms. This evolution first occurred for race and more recently for ethnicity. To begin, the uses and definitions of race have evolved from being based on exclusively biological and genetic dimensions to being reflective of socially constructed meanings (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997). The way in which race is of particular interest to counseling psychology is not based on the genetic or biological denotations, per se, but on the socially constructed connotations of the term. In brief, race and racial differences are based on perceived differences or, more technically, the social distance between different racial groups (Quintana, 1998). Social distance among sociocultural groups can be objectively measured by indexing sociological features such as rates of intermarriage, level of segregation, and interracial attitudes. More

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Stephen M. Quintana, Department of Counseling Psychology, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 350 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI 53706. E-mail: quintana@education.wisc.edu

important, the use of race has moved from its strictly demographic origin and now reflects sociological processes, namely, the social distance between groups (Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

Similarly, ethnicity has also been defined historically in demographic terms (e.g., common language, national origin, culture), but it also has some socially constructed meanings as well, even if these socially constructed meanings are not always acknowledged in counseling psychology. For example, in attempting to differentiate ethnicity from race, Helms and Talleyrand (1997) have allowed only race to reflect socially constructed connotations and limited their definition of ethnicity to its demographic denotations. Developmental psychologists (e.g., Phinney, 1996; Quintana et al., 2006) and anthropologists (e.g., Roosens, 1989) do not restrict ethnicity to its demographic denotations but acknowledge the socially constructed connotations of the term. Counseling psychology needs to keep pace with other disciplines by including not only the demographic denotations of the term but also the socially constructed connotations of ethnicity such as the social distance between ethnic groups.

One reason why the socially constructed connotations of ethnicity have not been widely adopted with counseling psychology is because, I believe, the use and definitions of sociocultural terms are most often based on a Black–White perspective. It is, however, useful to explore how these terms could be applied to other sociocultural groups. The sociocultural classification of Hispanics is complex and provides a critical test for the general usefulness of definitions of race and ethnicity. In official governmental classification, ethnicity, rather than race, has been used to differentiate Hispanics from non-Hispanics. However, the degree of social distance, reflected in numerous ways, between Hispanics and non-Hispanics approaches and, in some cases, exceeds the social distance among other sociocultural groups that are considered racially different. For example, the school segregation of Hispanic children now exceeds that of African American children (Valencia, 2000). Longitudinal research shows that the impact of ethnic prejudice of Latino youth is similar to the impact of racial prejudice on African American youth (Alstchul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006). Even though White and Asian Americans are considered racially different, there are greater differences in, for example, real and perceived educational success between Hispanics and White American populations than there are between White and Asian Americans. In a rare moment of consensus among scholars, the American Anthropological Association (1997) formally declared opposition to treating ethnicity and race as different social groups; the official statement reads:

... by treating race and ethnicity as fundamentally different ... , the historical evolution of these category types is largely ignored. For example, today's ethnicities are yesterday's races. In the early 20th century in the U.S., Italians, the Irish, and Jews were all thought to be racial (not ethnic) groups whose members were inherently and irredeemably distinct from the majority white population. (para. 20)

Hence, the differentiation made between race and ethnicity in counseling psychology may be a distinction without a meaningful difference, at least from the perspective of developmental and counseling research. By allowing race and ethnicity to include socially constructed connotations, we find that the important difference between the two is due to perceived differences associated with either racial or ethnic heritage. Research has yet, however, to

demonstrate that racial prejudice has a different psychological impact when compared with ethnic prejudice (e.g., Pahl & Way, 2006). The critical influence of sociocultural prejudice is likely to be the nature and frequency of the exposure to prejudice rather than whether it is focused on racial or ethnic heritage.

One way to resolve this inconsistency is to reclassify the ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, as racial groups (Helms & Cook, 1999). There are some merits to this approach given that skin color and other phenotypical characteristics are used to identify members of ethnic groups. One problem with this approach is that this reclassification implies that the social distance is only a product of racial differences. Instead, much of the prejudice experienced by, for example, Latinos is ethnic in nature and focused on national origin as well as linguistic and other cultural patterns. Another alternative is to reclassify racial groups as a subset of ethnic groups (Phinney, 1996), and there is, again, some merit to this resolution given that the social distance between racial groups is often based on judgments about cultural or ethnic characteristics. Preferences of *African American* over *Black* or, historically, *Negro* as self-identifications represent shifts in emphasis from racial to ethnic self-identifications. However, the proposed solution of reclassifying racial groups as ethnic groups has been criticized (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997) because it appears to exclude the racial basis of the social distance among sociocultural groups.

An obvious third alternative, proposed by Cross and Cross (in press), to these two classification strategies is to use a hybrid approach: classifying groups as racial-ethnic. This approach would acknowledge that the social distance and treatment of Latinos or Hispanics is based on racial as well as ethnic features. Similarly, there are important ethnic features to African Americans' racial identity, and there is a growing number of calls to theorize and investigate the ethnic foundation to African Americans' identity (see Cokley, 2005). Cross and Cross (in press) have taken this hybrid approach a step further and suggested that sociocultural identities be referred to as racial-ethnic-cultural identities because the phenomenological experience of minority populations does not support the artificial differentiation of race, ethnicity, or culture as separate identities.

Another problem in practices regarding the use of ethnic and racial terms is the tendency to use labels based only on sample demographic characteristics. To explain, the term *racial identity*, for example, is often used when the participants are selected because they are members of a racial group rather than because the sociocultural identity being investigated is necessarily racial for all participants. That is, if the sample is African American, then, almost by definition, the sociocultural identity is often described as racial identity. Similarly, when Latinos are sampled, the sociocultural identity is often labeled as ethnic identity.

The potential problem with the convention of using sociocultural terms on the basis of sample demographics is that it may fail to capture the complex psychological dimensions that are involved in forming a sociocultural identity (see also Cross & Cross, in press). Moreover, this convention assumes that the participants use ethnic and racial terms in the same way as the researchers. Yet, participants associate the same sociocultural descriptor in different ways. For example, in interviews of what it meant to be Korean, international (sojourner) Koreans associated being Korean with cultural characteristics, Korean Americans associated being Korean with ethnic and racial features, while transracially adopted

Koreans associated being Korean with racial phenotype (Kim et al., 2004). Obviously, a Korean identity could be cultural, ethnic, racial, or some amalgamation of all three. In the Kim et al. study, Korean identity would be most appropriately classified as Cross and Cross (in press) suggested: racial-ethnic-cultural identity—to describe it differently would not do justice to the participants' perspectives. Hence, the sociocultural construct being investigated should reflect the psychological phenomenon being studied rather than the sample demographics, per se.

Psychologists, like many of the adolescents we study, invest much meaning in different ethnic or racial labels, but research has yet to demonstrate that psychological processes are associated with different labels, per se. Rather, the psychological investment in the labels seems more important than the actual term used in some contexts. For example, although adolescents invest much meaning in the particular sociocultural labels with which they identify, the different identity labels have been found to be unrelated to predicting other psychological variables (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005). That is, Fuligni et al. found that the strength of adolescents' sociocultural identifications was more important than if the sociocultural identity was based on cultural (e.g., Chinese, Mexican), ethnic (Latino), or racial (Asian American) labels. Similarly, Quintana and his colleagues (Kim et al., 2004; Quintana, 1998; Quintana, Chun, Gonsalves, Kaeo, & Lung, 2004) have found parallel forms of development for a wide range of groups regardless of whether the groups are considered, in demographic terms, ethnic or racial, including transracially adopted Koreans, Native Hawaiians, Latinos, and several racial-ethnic-cultural groups in Guatemala. Analogously, Helms and colleagues have suggested that the basic rhythm for racial identity development appears to be similar for a number of different sociocultural groups (e.g., Helms, 1995). Hence, these underlying psychological processes appear similar regardless of whether the group is considered demographically ethnic or racial or, many times, regardless of the specific label with which the participants identify. Clearly, on an individual or idiographic basis, racial-ethnic terms are important, but they appear less important on a nomothetic basis when attempting to understand the underlying psychological processes across individuals. Hence, these trends in research support Cross and Cross's (in press) recommendation to refer to sociocultural identity in more precise ways rather than arbitrarily privileging some aspects (e.g., race) of a sociocultural identity over other ones (e.g., ethnic or culture).

Similarly, discrimination against a group is often labeled as racism because the sample was a racial group rather than because the discrimination was based specifically on racial bias. Historically, so called *old fashioned racism* was clearly racial in nature given that it involved categorical rejection of a group of people on the basis of racial status (McConahay, 1986). However, so called *modern racism* (e.g., takes the form of "I don't dislike all Blacks, only those that act 'black'" or "I don't dislike all Latinos, only those that refuse to learn English") appears to take an ethnic or cultural focus, rather than racial focus, per se. To illustrate, sociocultural bias against African Americans should be labeled racial if it is based on attributions only about racial heritage, ethnic if it is based only on ethnic heritage, but in those situations in which the bias is an amalgamation of racial, ethnic, and cultural features, Cross and Cross's (in press) recommendation should be followed: The bias should be labeled racial-ethnic-cultural in order to capture

more fully the nature of the bias. Consequently, the conventions of applying sociocultural terms on the basis of sample demographics underrepresents and misrepresents the complex psychological processes involved in the development of sociocultural identity. In short, if we are to move forward, then we need to be more thoughtful rather than reflexive in how we label the sociocultural processes we are attempting to represent and describe.

Developmental Assumptions of Models of Racial and Ethnic Identity and Socialization

It is important to identify core developmental assumptions underlying models of racial and ethnic identity. The value of this approach is illustrated with a brief reference to developmental research. For decades, democratic or authoritative parenting styles were theorized to be positively associated with child development due to these styles' supporting children's autonomy, whereas the autocratic or authoritarian styles were negatively related to development because these styles interfered with children's autonomy needs. Cross-cultural research found that, contrary to anticipation, maternal interference was not associated with negative child outcomes for Latino infants (Ispa et al., 2004) and that more controlling styles of parenting were found to be associated with positive youth development for some minority groups. To reconcile these issues, Ispa et al. pointed out that the cross-cultural differences in parenting styles reflected different ways of expressing parental warmth and involvement and that parental warmth and involvement, not parenting style per se, may be the critical dimensions that are responsible for developmental outcome. This illustrates the importance of unpacking psychological constructs and not accepting them at face value (see also Hoyt et al., 2006).

In the following review of racial and ethnic identity development, I break with convention by first reviewing studies across different programs of research. Positivistic approaches to a philosophy of science would dictate that each research program needs to be reviewed and understood separately because the different operationalizations are reflecting different phenomena. For example, a positivistic approach would imply that research based on Cross's racial identity measure could not be meaningfully compared with research in which Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) is used. Within positivistic notions of science, comparing research on the basis of different instrumentation would be analogous to comparing apples and oranges because of the different operational definitions used, each defining unique phenomenon. In contrast, post-positivistic approaches allow different measures of similar psychological constructs to be compared. Post-positivistic approaches encourage critical multiplism (Quintana & Maxwell, 1999) by valuing multiple measures (Hoyt et al., 2006) or perspectives to more fully represent the underlying construct that is imperfectly measured by any single measure. An apt metaphor is the proverb of the blind men describing different parts of an elephant. Each different vantage point (or measure) provides different perspective on the underlying phenomenon with a fuller understanding being provided by integrating findings across the different perspectives. I posit that the different measures of racial and ethnic identity provide different vantage points for understanding the development of sociocultural identity that is better approximated by applying principles of critical multiplism. All this discussion is to justify integrating across different measures to reach

conclusions about the development of sociocultural identities. Subsequently, I separately consider research investigating two models of development associated with racial and ethnic identity.

A few foundational theoretical tenets can be abstracted from models of ethnic and racial identity development. Racial identity, and to a lesser extent, ethnic identity models, collapse a number of developmental assumptions across levels of development. Below, research is reviewed to evaluate the developmental assumptions that (a) an increase in racial-ethnic identity exploration occurs during adolescence and that the exploration is psychologically intense, (b) exposure or encounters with discrimination stimulates racial-ethnic identity development, (c) development of positive in-group affiliation and identification that is associated with racial-ethnic identity has developmental advantages, (d) racial-ethnic identity involves the preparation for discrimination and that this preparation has developmental advantages, and (e) the theorized sequencing of identity stages or racial ideology reflects a developmental hierarchy. When developmental assumptions are not supported by research, several reasons for why the assumption may not be valid are considered.

Developmental Assumption: Racial-Ethnic Identity Development Involves Exploration and Crisis

There is growing evidence from both cross-sectional and longitudinal research that supports the notion that racial-ethnic identity exploration is normative during adolescence. Many models characterize racial-ethnic identity development as involving explorations of the adolescents' membership in a racial or ethnic group (Cross, 1971, 1995; Helms, 1995; Phinney, 1989; Quintana, 1994, 1998). Cross, Parham, and Helms (1991) suggested adolescents and young adults may immerse themselves in their racial group as a way of exploring the roles of race and racial group membership in their lives. Phinney (1989) originally applied Marcia's (1966) ego identity statuses (i.e., identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion) to account for ethnic identity development. A critical component of Marcia's and Phinney's models is an identity moratorium status in which adolescents actively search their identity. Quintana (1998) described a level of ethnic perspective-taking ability in which adolescents develop an ethnic group consciousness, which is consistent with Phinney's and other theorists' description of ethnic identity development during adolescence.

As mentioned, there is consistent evidence that identity exploration is a normative component of racial-ethnic minority adolescents' development. Specifically, across several longitudinal studies, there is evidence that African Americans, Latinos, and American Indians manifest a gradual increase in racial-ethnic identity exploration during adolescence (Pahl & Way, 2006; Whitesell, Mitchell, Kaufman, & Spicer, 2006). Longitudinal research suggests that there is an increase or acceleration of racial-ethnic identity exploration, using primarily Phinney's (1992) MEIM instrumentation, in the transition into and during middle school but that there is a deceleration of identity searching during high school (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2000, 2006; Pahl & Way, 2006; Perron, Vondracek, Skorikov, Tremblay, & Corbière, 1998).

Similarly, scores on Phinney's (1992) Identity Achievement subscale are associated with chronological age in cross-sectional

studies and have been shown to be associated with development of ethnic perspective-taking ability (Quintana, Castañeda-English, & Ybarra, 1999). Analogously, Newman (2005) found that ethnic identification was associated with Loevinger's (1998) measure of ego development. These cross-sectional studies support the developmental foundation for Phinney's theory of ethnic identity development.

It is important to note, despite the consistency of evidence supporting the developmental increase of identity exploration, that this movement is gradual and relatively subtle. Indeed, the anticipation of a normative identity crisis that implies a more dramatic shift or immersion into one's racial group has not been explicitly supported. To illustrate, Seaton, Scottham, and Sellers (2006) and Yip, Seaton, and Sellers (2006) using cluster analyses identified distinct groups of participants corresponding to the four ethnic identity statuses from Phinney's model. However, the youth classified in the moratorium cluster were marked more by moderately low scores on commitment than by high scores of identity searching or exploration. Indeed, the identity exploration of these participants was about average for the whole sample. Consequently, the empirical evidence supports some progressive and gradual increase in identity searching but does not support an ethnic identity crisis, as was originally described by Phinney (1992). Analogously, the relatively subtle increase of identity searching during early adolescence does not appear to match the intensity reflected in the immersion stage, as theorized by Cross's (1995) and Helms's (1995) models. For example, across research investigating Cross's and Helms' models, there is no group of participants (see Fischer & Moradi, 2001) in which the Immersion scores are higher than other scores; instead, Internalization scores tend to be highest among the different scales among adolescents and college students—suggesting against a dramatic shift in a dramatic immersion stage or status.

The expectation of a dramatic identity crisis for racial and ethnic identity development may reflect a bias in traditional models of ego identity development in which a period of "storm and stress" during adolescence was believed to be normative, which was a popular notion during the 1960s and 1970s (see Quintana, 1993). Developmental research has shown overwhelmingly that the various forms of adolescent crises that were anticipated by developmental theory are not indicative of normative development (Holmbeck & Hill, 1988). Hence, the anticipation of "storm and stress" or crises during adolescence seems to be a prevalent bias in developmental theories, and racial-ethnic identity theorists may have been unduly influenced by this bias. Moreover, this bias appears to be more prevalent among those theorists who are applied psychologists and may be using their clinical work as a model for normative development (e.g., Erik Erikson). Clearly, clinical work with troubled adolescents may lead theorists to perceive crisis as a natural part of development. Similarly, racial identity theorists who are also trained as clinicians may exaggerate the normative nature of identity crises. There may also be a historical bias in anticipating racial-ethnic identity crises. Theorists formulating their theories of development during or immediately after the turbulent 1960s may view dramatic shifts in orientation as normative. The appearance of two similar racial identity models by Cross (1971) and Thomas (1971) with a "storm and stress" characterization of identity development may reflect this historical bias, a product of the 1960s, but without clear evidence that

identity crises is as normative as seems to have been implied in many developmental models.

Developmental Prediction: Experiences of Racism Trigger Racial Identity Exploration

Both Cross (1971, 1995) and Helms (1995) describe that people of color's encounter with racism triggers identity exploration and movement through different levels of racial identity development. Both theorists describe an encounter experience as one in which the person confronts the reality of racism and is no longer able to deny that racism unjustly influences his or her life. The encounter may be a single incident of racism or it may be an accumulation of everyday incidences of racism, a proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back." Theoretically, the encounter experience shakes the person's worldview from one of basic racial fairness to an undeniable awareness of the insidiousness of racism. Other racial or ethnic identity models, such as Phinney's (1989) or Quintana's (1998), do not specifically address the role of exposure to racism or ethnic prejudice as stimulating identity development.

Research has provided consistent support for the connection between racial-ethnic identity development and exposure to discrimination. Until recently, this evidence had been in the form of cross-sectional research, in which significant correlations between racial identity development and perceptions of prejudice had been observed (e.g., Alvarez, Juang, & Liang, 2006). The problem with cross-sectional research in this area is that persons with advanced levels of racial and ethnic identity development are also expected to be more acutely sensitive to discrimination and prejudice. The correlation between racial identity development and perceptions of discrimination, therefore, may be due to the enhanced sensitivity to discrimination of advanced levels of racial identity development. Fortunately, longitudinal research has examined the connection between these constructs prospectively, predicting later racial-ethnic identity development from earlier exposure to discrimination, after controlling for previous levels of identity development. Impressively, several longitudinal studies using different measures of racial or ethnic identity have demonstrated connections between perceptions of discrimination and subsequent increases in racial and ethnic identity, providing compelling support for this developmental prediction (Pahl & Way, 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). It is important to note that the evidence is particularly intriguing because this prospective connection was demonstrated using measures of ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1992) that does not include items focused on discrimination. Phinney's MEIM scales focus on a sense of exploration of the meaning of ethnic identity and sense of affirmation and belonging to the ethnic group and does not include any items focused on ethnic discrimination, prejudice, or bias. This research, therefore, suggests that the empirical link cannot be explained by some overlap in item content between measures of ethnic identity development and exposure to bias. Indeed, evidence suggesting discrimination triggers ethnic identity development is particularly compelling because the measure of development does not include items associated with discrimination, which provides evidence that Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, and Chavous (1998) argued is particularly critical, given that so often the criterion variables used to validate measures of racial identity attitudes are themselves alternate forms of racial attitudes and thereby are an empirical tautology.

These longitudinal studies also support the suspicion that some forms of racial identity increase persons' sensitivity and perception of later bias, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between racial identity and perceptions of discrimination. Specifically, Sellers and Shelton (2003) demonstrated that those for whom racial status was more central to their identity perceived more bias 6–9 months later. It is important to note that Pahl and Way (2006) separately tested the direction of influence between discrimination and ethnic identity development and found support for discrimination influencing ethnic identity but not for the reverse—suggesting that discrimination has a larger influence on racial identity development than the influence of racial identity on adolescent perceptions of racial discrimination.

Developmental Assumption: Benefits of Positive Identification With Racial-Ethnic Group

There are two main foci for racial and ethnic identity: (a) foster identification and positive affiliation toward a racial or ethnic group and (b) preparation for bias. Each of the racial identity stages or statuses reflect various emphases given to these two underlying dimensions (see Cross, 1995; Helms, 1995; Vandiver, Phagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, & Worrell, 2001). Essentially, racial identity models articulate the transformation from self-loathing due to an internalization of racial discrimination to pride in and positive identification with one's racial group (Cross, 1971).

In what may be one of the most influential lines of research within psychology, Clark and Clark (1939, 1940) conducted the famous doll study, the findings of which were cited in the Supreme Court decision declaring school segregation unconstitutional (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954). Recall that the Clarks' doll research conducted more than 50 years ago demonstrated that young African American children tended to show preference for dolls that reflected not their own skin color, but ones that were representing Caucasian skin coloration. Despite some methodological shortcomings, similar findings have been found in different contexts using different methodologies. Hence, these findings were interpreted not as artifacts of methodological features but as suggesting that African American children appear to be internalizing racial stigmatization and failing to develop a positive identification with their own racial group.

More recent research suggests, however, that personal or self-esteem is not tied to racial stigmatization (e.g., Cross, 1991; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002; Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Cross (1991) reviewed research to determine whether young African American children really manifest self-hatred and loathing, as was widely thought. Cross's review failed to find the low self-esteem in young African American children that was anticipated. Indeed, a more recent meta-analysis reveals that African American children have the highest levels of self-esteem, relative to White and other children of color (Twenge & Crocker, 2002), with Latino and Asian American children's self-esteem being lower than that of White and African American children. The pattern of self-esteem across race appeared to reflect the relative amount of individualism that is emphasized within the racial groups. Specifically, Oyserman et al.'s (2002) meta-analyses revealed that Latino and Asian American samples have lowest levels of individualism, with White samples having higher levels of individualism, and African American samples having yet higher

levels of individualism. Parenthetically, this last finding that African American groups score higher on scales of individualism runs counter to prevailing notions, but this trend appears to be a robust finding across a number of empirical studies and contexts. In short, the anticipated self-loathing predicted in African American children was unfounded, particularly in recent research.

The lack of a connection between personal and racial esteem led Cross (1991) to rethink his model of nigrescence and posit different forms of identity: personal and reference group identity. He reasoned that members of stigmatized groups could hold a negative reference group orientation while holding a positive personal identity or esteem. Hence, a main purpose in Cross's reformulated model of racial identity development was to transform a negative orientation toward African Americans' reference group into a positive one by cultivating pride in the reference group and its culture and history. Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity development focuses on youths developing a positive affiliation and pride in their ethnic group. A considerable amount of developmental research supports the importance for members of stigmatized groups to develop a positive orientation toward their racial-ethnic group.

Longitudinal research suggests that adolescents who focus on the positive aspects of their ethnic group are associated with positive adjustment. Across two studies, later academic achievement has been positively associated with those adolescents who have a positive view of their racial group (Chavous et al., 2003) and who are strongly connected to their racial-ethnic group (Altschul et al., 2006). Additional research supports the connections among ethnic pride, ethnic identification, and psychological adjustment. Ong, Phinney, and Dennis (2006) also found that high scores on Phinney's MEIM was associated with later grade point average (GPA) in college. It is interesting that ethnic identity scores moderated the relationship between socioeconomic class (SES) and GPA: Ethnic identity was more strongly associated with GPA for those students from low-SES backgrounds, compared with those with moderate to high-SES backgrounds.

Additionally, Whitesell et al. (2006) found that for American Indian youth on reservations, the more positive they felt and closely they identified with their cultural group, the higher their self-esteem later in life. It is important to note that these youths' identification with European American culture was also associated with high self-esteem and other positive indicators of adjustment such as social support and community-mindedness. Cross-sectional research also suggests that indicators of ethnic identity achievement, as described by Phinney (1992), are also associated with well-being and low levels of depression (Seaton et al., 2006; Yip et al., 2006). These trends are supported by research on parental socialization of youth. Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, and Lohrfink (2006) found that African Americans' cognitive development was positively associated with cultural socialization in which racial-ethnic pride was cultivated. Similarly, McHale et al. (2006) found that cultivating racial pride was positively associated with adolescents' ethnic identity and negatively predictive of adolescent scores on depression. Additionally, it appears that high levels of ethnic regard and positive feelings toward his or her ethnic group are effective buffers against *nonracial* forms of stress. Specifically, Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backlen, Witkow, and Fuligni (2006) investigated daily variations in ethnic identity and stress and found that ethnic regard moderated the relationship between

daily (i.e., nonracial) stress and the level of well-being on the next day. That is, stress had a negative effect on the next day's sense of well-being, but that this prospective effect was weaker when the adolescent had high levels of ethnic regard (Kiang et al., 2006). Collectively, these findings support the importance of having pride in one's ethnic and racial background and group.

Developmental Assumption: Benefits of Being Prepared for Discrimination

The second main goal for racial identity models is to prepare the youth for discrimination. Racially stigmatized youth need, according to Cross (1995) and Helms (1995), to develop an awareness and understanding of the racial discrimination they will experience. In short, the argument is that youth need to develop not only a positive group orientation but also the resources to buffer against racial-ethnic discrimination. Indeed, longitudinal and cross-sectional research suggests that the exposure to discrimination moderates the relationship between in-group pride and positive outcomes. That is, under certain circumstances, there are disadvantages to adolescents developing a strong connection to their racial-ethnic group. These circumstances are associated with contexts in which there is high exposure to discrimination. Sellers and colleagues (1998) found that those individuals for whom racial identity was more central to their identity were more strongly affected by discrimination, compared with those for whom their racial identity was less central. Greene, Way, and Pahl (2006) also found that strong connections or identification with a racial group was negatively associated with well-being in the context of discrimination. Namely, Greene et al. found that high levels of ethnic identity (affirmation and achievement) made the adolescents more vulnerable to the effects of discrimination compared with those who had lower scores on ethnic identity scales. Under conditions of discrimination, Latino, Asian, and African American youth who had *low* levels of ethnic affirmation and identity exploration tended to have higher self-esteem than those youth who felt proud of their ethnic origin. Conversely, ethnic identity components associated with pride and centrality were associated with higher self-esteem in conditions in which there were low levels of discrimination. Hence, awareness of discrimination buffered against the negative relationship between racial centrality and adjustment in the context of discrimination.

Important longitudinal research supported the connection between awareness of racism and later adjustment, but in some research, this relationship is moderated by exposure to discrimination. Altschul et al. (2006) found that academic achievement was positively related to awareness of racism for Latino and African American youth in their transition to high school. More important, researchers have identified components of racial identity that appear to protect the adolescent against racial discrimination. Sellers et al. (1998) investigated the forms of racial identity that protected adolescents against discrimination. They found that those who endorsed an oppressed minority ideology, demonstrating awareness that many minority groups experience discrimination, were most buffered against the deleterious effects of discrimination (i.e., showed better adjustment) nearly 1 year later, relative to those who endorsed nationalist or humanist ideologies. Conversely, those youth with a nationalist ideology were protected against distress only under conditions of frequent discrimination

but were more vulnerable to distress under conditions of infrequent discrimination. Research on parental socialization also suggests that there are some negative effects associated with cultivating children's awareness of discrimination. For example, research has found that parent socialization of youth that focused on preparing the child for discrimination was negatively associated with internal locus of control (McHale et al., 2006) and associated negatively with children's cognitive development (Caughy et al., 2006).

Taken together, these results suggest that specific combinations of racial and ethnic identity components are associated with positive adjustment in the context of discrimination. Namely, a sense of connection to a group while it is being racially or ethnically stigmatized must be combined with a critical consciousness about the discrimination in order to lead to later adjustment. This combination allows the adolescent to retain a strong connection and identification with his or her racial-ethnic group while also buffering against discrimination. Of equal importance, adolescents of color need to tailor their level of vigilance for discrimination to the level of discrimination to which they are exposed, with an emphasis and underemphasis of discrimination being associated with psychological disadvantages in alternate circumstances.

Developmental Assumption: Sequencing of Racial-Ethnic Stages and Statuses

The above review indicates that there is supportive evidence, including results from longitudinal research, for many of the developmental assumptions inherent in racial-ethnic identity models. Thus far, this review has focused on evaluating the support for some of the broad dimensions across racial and ethnic identity models of development. It is important to consider the sequencing of development that is specific to different models of racial-ethnic identity development. That is, in addition to the broad dimensions described above, there are assumptions of how development proceeds specific to particular racial and ethnic identity development (Cross, 1971, 1995; Helms, 1995; Phinney, 1989).

Ethnic identity stages. The previous review of research has indicated that several components of Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity development has been supported with cross-sectional and longitudinal research, specifically demonstrating an increase in racial-ethnic identity searching during middle adolescence (e.g., French et al., 2000, 2006). Namely, Phinney predicted that adolescence is marked by an increase in identity searching and that strong attachment to an in-group would have developmental advantages. As summarized above, research has not, however, confirmed the presence of an identity moratorium or crisis that was borrowed from models of ego identity development (Marcia, 1966). It is important to note that most of the research reviewed above has been conducted using the MEIM and its continuous scales while less research has attempted to classify participants into various ethnic identity stages.

Relatively little research has investigated the sequence of these identity stages of development progressing from unexamined forms of ethnic identity (i.e., foreclosure and diffusion) to an examination of ethnic identity (i.e., moratorium) and ultimately to identity achievement. Phinney's (1989) cross-sectional research suggested that the highest stage, Ethnic Identity Achievement, was associated with psychological adjustment and ethnic identity scale. Seaton et al. (2006) conducted a longitudinal study and used

cluster analyses to group participants into four identity statuses, separating Phinney's (1989) unexamined ethnic identity into foreclosure and diffused statuses, and investigated the relations between identity status and later adjustment. The progression of individuals proceeded according to Phinney's theory, with most students (72%) either remaining at the same stage or progressing to higher stages, but a relatively small percentage appeared to depart from the anticipated sequence of development (28%), regressing to a lower identity status. In another study, Yip et al. (2006) used cluster analyses with cross-sectional data across a wide age range (adolescence through adulthood). The cross-sectional pattern conformed to expectations with age differences in the proportion of persons classified in the lower (e.g., diffusion) or higher identity statuses (e.g., achievement) and the expected psychological adjustment associated with membership in the identity clusters, including the tendency for adolescents to be more likely classified in the moratorium status and less likely to be classified in the achieved status, when compared with older adults. Overall, membership in the diffused status was associated with elevated depression, but this effect was strongest for the college student sample, suggesting a critical period for racial-ethnic identity development during college. The extant research provides support to Phinney's developmental hierarchy of identity statuses, with the caveat that there may be some developmental regression for a subset of youth.

Racial identity ideologies: Developmental or individual differences? One of the more critical components for racial identity development models is the prediction that various racial ideologies (Sellers, Rowley, & Chavous, 1997) are organized in a developmental hierarchy. The basic developmental rhythm across racial identity development models is the movement from assimilation ideologies to more nationalistic ideologies (Sellers et al., 1997). In original racial identity models (e.g., Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990), pre-encounter or conformity ideologies, dominated by pro-White and anti-Black attitudes, were expected to occur developmentally earlier than other ideologies. Immersion attitudes, representing orientations that are the opposite of pre-encounter or conformity, were described as developmentally more sophisticated (e.g., Cross, 1971). Finally, various forms of internationalization attitudes, involving a lessening of the intensity of immersion attitudes, were characterized as the most developmentally sophisticated ideologies. More recently, Helms (1995) and Worrell, Cross, and Vandiver (2001) acknowledged that their models do not adhere to some aspects of stage theory (qualitative differences between stages) and, for Cross's, that the stages are not invariant. Nonetheless, these models retain the claim that there are more advanced or sophisticated levels of development. Helms (1995) wrote: "The statuses are assumed to develop or mature sequentially. . . ." (p. 184), and Helms and Cook (1999) wrote that ". . . the developmental process involves successive differentiations of increasingly more sophisticated statuses [ideologies]. . ." The change from stages to statuses was made "without intentionally changing the concepts underlying either term" (p. 183). Although the developmental sequence is retained to a lesser degree in Cross and colleagues' 2001 model (see Worrell et al., 2001), the developmental assumptions remain in some form in this model, as illustrated by the retention of "pre-encounter" and "encounter" levels, implying a sequencing and retention of some aspects of stage theory (Worrell et al., 2001). Moreover, many in the field continue to assume a developmental framework for these theories and operationaliza-

tions thereof (e.g., Abrams & Trusty, 2004; Hocoy, 1999; Watt, Robinson, & Lupton-Smith, 2002). It is important to note that Cross and Cross (in press) have recently proposed a life span model. Consequently, the following review evaluates the versions of Cross's model from 1971 to 2001, and more research is required to evaluate the significantly expanded life span model (Cross & Cross, in press).

Of critical importance, no longitudinal research could be found that supports this developmental progression during adolescence, using search terms such as *longitudinal*, *racial identity*, and *development*, among others. Moreover, some cross-sectional research is inconsistent with the age-related progression of racial identity stages or attitudes. For example, Plummer (1996) found with participants ages 14–59 years that adolescents endorsed primarily internalization attitudes, those in early adulthood endorsed encounter attitudes, and that the endorsement of pre-encounter increased during early adulthood—all of which is inconsistent with presumed developmental progression. Other researchers find that internalization scores tend to be highest and pre-encounter tends to be among the lowest scores of identity scales across adolescence (see Fischer & Moradi, 2001), which again seems inconsistent with a developmental hierarchy for racial ideologies. Cross-sectional research yields only indirect evidence of development via relationships between racial identity ideologies and other developmental variables (e.g., ego development or identity development), and this evidence is inconsistent. For example, Looney (1988) found inverse relationships between Loevinger's (1985) measure of ego development, a well-regarded marker for ego development, and racial identity stages or statuses. The strongest support for indirect connections to development are based on relationships with closely aligned measures, such as Phinney's (1992) MEIM measure of ethnic identity and the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (Bennion & Adams, 1986), a measure of ego identity development with separate subscales of Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion (see, e.g., Miville, Koonce, Darlington, & Whitlock, 2000). It is important to note that just because the racial identity scales have empirical relationships with measures that have developmental trends does not demonstrate, per se, that the racial identity scales are developmental. For example, ego identity scales are related to depression and anxiety, but the developmental nature of ego identity scores does not make this empirical relationship evidence that depression and anxiety constructs are developmental. There is, nonetheless, evidence supporting the relationship of the highest scale (i.e., Internalization), with positive indices and correlations of the lowest stages or statuses such as pre-encounter (see Fischer & Moradi, 2001) and with negative indices of adjustment, but there is also evidence that these Internalization and Pre-encounter scales also reflect some socially desirable and undesirable responding, respectively (Abrams & Trusty, 2004; Fischer, Tokar, & Serna, 1998). In counseling and psychological research, many positive indices tend to converge and many negative indices converge in research dominated by self-report methodologies (see Hoyt et al., 1996).

Moreover, some developmental pattern would be expected for racial identity scales even if the racial ideologies do not follow a developmental hierarchy, given the overlap between Helms's (1995) and Cross's (1995) racial identity subscales and the developmental trajectories of identity exploration that was described above. That is, the presumed movement across racial identity

stages or statuses involves movement across racial ideologies as well as movement from unexamined to examined forms of identity. We might expect some developmental disadvantages to be associated with pre-encounter, for example, because it involves an unexamined form of identity (see Phinney, 1989) and not necessarily because of the racial ideology that is associated with pre-encounter. Analogously, internalization scores might be associated with adjustment and ego identity because the operationalization of internalization involves an achieved form of identity and not necessarily because of the specific racial ideology(ies) associated with internalization. In short, there seems to be insufficient evidence that the racial ideologies follow a normative developmental trend, and what supportive evidence that exists is somewhat inconsistent, indirect, and seems insufficient to demonstrate the specific developmental hierarchy of racial ideologies.

The paucity of evidence supporting the developmental hierarchy of racial ideologies may result, in part, from the instrumentation created to assess racial identity. The scales representing racial identities are not organized in ways that reflect developmental progression. For example, the instruments have been administered to participants early in adolescence (e.g., Plummer, 1996), producing scores for all of the racial ideology scales, including the purportedly more advanced levels, even though these forms of racial identity are not expected to be manifest until later in life. Moreover, relationships reported (e.g., Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) indicate that scores representing the highest forms of development (internalization) are sometimes positively related to those representing the lowest forms of development (pre-encounter) but negatively related to a form that is developmentally adjacent (e.g., immersion). These empirical patterns depart from more standard patterns of development in other domains of psychological functioning.

The extant evidence, however, is insufficient to reject the developmental foundation for racial ideologies. Just as it is difficult to prove a theory with empirical evidence, it is difficult to falsify a theory with empirical evidence. Postmodern views of science acknowledge that science develops not because empirical evidence speaks for itself and is apparent to all but because scientific communities weigh the evidence and build consensus about how to interpret the available empirical evidence (Campbell, 1984). Hence, to determine the viability of the assumptions underlying the predicted developmental trajectory of racial identity ideologies, we can use trends in theory and research produced by the community of researchers to infer the direction of consensus among scholars.

More important, there is a trend among racial identity theorists themselves moving away from a strict hierarchy of racial ideologies. The revised Cross model (Vandiver et al., 2001) explicitly acknowledges that there may be a variety of racial ideologies at the highest and lowest levels of development. Specifically, this model identifies three different pre-encounter ideologies, two separate immersion ideologies, and two internalization ideologies. Hence, over the course of a reflective, probing, and innovative career conceptualizing and investigating racial identity, Cross has reconsidered the original ideologies. While maintaining much of the same rhythm of the movement from pre-encounter to immersion-emersion to internalization, the 2001 revision to Cross's model (Vandiver et al., 2001) is an acknowledgement that the original hierarchy was overly restrictive. Another trend is that new models of identity development explicitly reject the developmental hier-

archy of racial ideologies (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994; Sellers et al., 1998). Sellers et al.'s model specifies four racial identity ideologies (assimilationist, humanist, oppressed minority, and nationalist), which bear some resemblance to the racial ideologies described in the more traditional racial identity models, but they (Sellers et al., 1998) do not include the critical assumption that the racial ideologies are organized in a developmental hierarchy: "[T]he MMRI makes no value judgment as to what constitutes a healthy versus an unhealthy racial identity" (pp. 23–24). The growing popularity of Sellers et al.'s model, including longitudinal investigations of adolescent development (e.g., Sellers & Shelton, 2003), suggests that despite ongoing interest in developmental processes associated with ethnic and racial identity, researchers are turning to models and empirical strategies in which there is no presumed hierarchy of racial ideologies.

There remains, nonetheless, one important source of evidence supporting a developmental hierarchy of racial ideologies: anecdotes on the basis of retrospective accounts. Indeed, the origin of racial identity developmental models was based on the retrospective reflections on the racial identity process (see Cross, 2001). The inspiration for the original racial identity development was the transformation of a racial identity during the heady days of the Civil Rights movement. Consequently, the available evidence is that although the progression through racial ideologies may not be normative or associated with a chronological age or other markers of basic development, the developmental progression through racial ideologies is likely a viable account of development for some subset of persons. Specifically, Cross's revision (Vandiver et al., 2001) allows for multiple trajectories with some version of pre-encounter through to internalization, with various subsets of individuals cycling through different pre-encounter, immersion, and internalization ideologies. Given the multiplicity of possible trajectories through this model, a critical test of the developmental hierarchy would be to evaluate the sequencing of racial ideologies to ensure that only the forward movement through the ideologies occurs. However, the concept of re-cycling has emerged, which suggests that movement through the levels of development is not invariant but may involve transitioning from higher forms of development to lower forms of development (Parham, 1989). Unfortunately, extant instrumentation does not allow for a clear or precise test of these developmental predictions due to the inability to classify individuals into specific developmental levels.

In summary, there is relatively little evidence supporting the developmental hierarchy of racial ideologies. The strongest evidence is based on retrospective reflections of individuals' development. The prevailing trend in empirical and theoretical research is that the presumed movement through racial ideologies is not based on normative development in the sense that most or a plurality of individuals experience a phase of racial identity development during a particular period of adolescence or early adulthood. The present instrumentation makes it difficult to establish firm conclusions about the presence or absence of developmental hierarchy. At present, given the paucity of supportive evidence, it seems prudent not to presume that some racial ideologies are developmentally more advanced than others.

Conclusions and Implications

Many, but not all, of the developmental predictions made by racial-ethnic identity theorists have been supported by longitudinal research. This research shows that during early adolescence, there are consistent, normative, albeit gradual, increases in racial-ethnic identity exploration and identification. The prediction that encounters with discrimination stimulates racial-ethnic identity development was also supported and, impressively, demonstrated to have an impact on measures of ethnic identity development (e.g., the MEIM) that do not include items associated with discrimination. The sequelae of racial and ethnic identity development reveal complex, but consistent, patterns. Cultivation of pride in and identification with youth's racial-ethnic groups was associated with adjustment and development, but this general finding was limited to those contexts in which discrimination was infrequent. Analogously, racial-ethnic identity orientations associated with being vigilant of and prepared for discrimination was adaptive in contexts in which discrimination was frequent, but apparently not adaptive in contexts in which discrimination was infrequent. Research appears to support a developmental trajectory from unexamined to examined forms of sociocultural identity, but not necessarily a stage of moratorium marked by intense identity searching. Relatively little and indirect evidence was available to support the presumed developmental hierarchy of different racial ideologies. Instead, there appears to be no single racial ideology that provides adaptive advantages over other ideologies in all contexts—clearly, different ecological contexts require different racial identity ideologies and orientations.

Implications for Research and Theory

Extant counseling research into racial-ethnic identity development seems to have been limited by some practices and assumptions, including the attempt to evaluate theoretical models using an instrumentation strategy that reflects mono-operational bias.

A main theme of this review is the importance of examining different dimensions of racial-ethnic identity development (e.g., hierarchy of racial ideologies, identity exploration and examination) separately. Although research may appear to support a model based on evidence generated from a single instrument purportedly operationalizing the model, a compelling evaluation of racial-ethnic identity models is limited by confounds inherent in the measurement strategy. Recall decades of research supporting developmental advantage of different parenting strategies, but a clear test of the underlying theory was obfuscated by an apparent confound in the measure of parenting style with dimensions of parental warmth and involvement. Analogously, the components of racial-ethnic identity development need to be separately evaluated, preferably using different instrumentation strategies, consistent with principles of critical multiplism discussed earlier.

The strategy of attempting to validate a model of racial-ethnic identity development using a single instrument seems to rely on positivistic notions of philosophy of science in which the validity of the psychometric properties of an instrument may be confused with the validity of the theory on which the instrument is based. Instead, multiple representations, ideally using different methodologies, need to be used to more fully investigate the developmental aspects of racial-ethnic identity. The vast majority of counsel-

ing research into racial-ethnic identity is cross-sectional, infrequently attempts to conduct critical tests of developmental processes, and relies almost exclusively on self-report methodology (see also Hoyt et al., 2006). Colgan, Quintana, and Catherwood (2005), however, have proposed alternative instrumentation on the basis of peer nominations in which youth nominate their peers on various dimensions as an alternative to youth self-report. Colgan et al. found that nominations of those youth who were accepted by their ethnic group (i.e., received a high number of nominations from peers) was associated with youth's self-report of their attachment to their ethnic group. This provided a critical evaluation of the self-report MEIM subscale. Similarly, strategies could be conducted to evaluate other self-report measures of racial-ethnic identity.

It seems curious that there has been little apparent interest into designing interventions or programs that might produce movement in racial-ethnic identity development. Theory and research into racial identity interventions would seem particularly important to counseling psychology given its emphasis on racial identity and long-standing interest in promoting positive change. Chandler, Quintana, and Owen (2006) have suggested an alternative conceptualization of movement through the racial identity ideologies on the basis of processes of racial forgiveness (i.e., forgiving those individuals who have transgressed against them in a racial manner), with internalization attitudes associated with racial forgiveness, pre-encounter attitudes associated with pseudo-forgiveness for racial transgressions, and immersion attitudes associated with a lack of racial forgiveness. If, as suggested by Chandler et al., racial identity stages are associated with racial forgiveness, then interventions promoting racial forgiveness might produce concomitant changes in racial-ethnic identity development. In this regard, movement through racial identity stages may be related not necessarily to normative development but associated with other psychological processes or transformation. If confirmed, then this would provide a critical test of the theoretical heuristic of connections between racial forgiveness and racial identity attitudes.

Counseling Implications

This review provides information into the process for identity development that may assist counselors working with youth from stigmatized racial-ethnic groups. Counselors working with youth confronted with racial-ethnic discrimination may facilitate the identity work (e.g., identity exploration) that may be stimulated by these experiences. It seems important that counselors do not assume that immersion and internalization racial ideologies necessarily define the most appropriate or advanced ideologies for their clients. The above research suggests that in some contexts in which there may be minimal exposure to discrimination, adjustment is not predicted by immersion-like attitudes. Positive orientations toward Whites were associated with positive adjustment in situations that were predominately White (e.g., predominately White universities), but also in ethnic enclaves, such as Indian reservations (Whitesell et al., 2006). Clearly, counselors need to be aware of a multiplicity of racial attitudes and orientations associated with positive adjustment. In short, counselors should support clients' adoption of racial ideologies that match the sociocultural context, particularly relevant to the level of exposure to discrimination.

The information reviewed above could be used to design educational interventions for youth in middle and high school contexts. Knowing that there is a normative increase in racial-ethnic identity exploration during middle school and the transition to high school and that discrimination stimulates identity development, school counselors could organize support groups, forums, or discussion groups that explore racial-ethnic identity and discrimination. Moreover, this research may help school counselors to identify racial-ethnic orientations and attitudes that are associated with later academic achievement, depending on the context of the school, and to support the maintenance and development of these racial identity orientations.

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