Parental Cultural Socialization and Critical Consciousness in Two Samples of BIPOC and White Adolescents

Kaila Daza[1], Marisa Huang[1], James P. Huguley[2], Daphne A. Henry[3], Babatunde Alford[1], Elianny C. Edwards[4] and Scott Seider[1]

[1] Lynch School of Education & Human Development, Boston College, Boston, MA
[2] School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
[3] Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
[4] Department of Psychology, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kaila Daza, Counseling, Developmental & Educational Psychology, Boston College. Email: kaila.daza@bc.edu, Phone: (610) 428-5809. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1636-8630

Citation: Daza, K., Huang, M., Huguley, J.P., Henry, D.A., Alford, B., Edwards, E.C. & Seider, S. (in press). Parental cultural socialization and critical consciousness in two samples of BIPOC and White adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*.

Parental Cultural Socialization and Critical Consciousness in Two Samples of BIPOC and White Adolescents

This study examines: (1) To what extent do received cultural socialization messages predict youth critical consciousness? and (2) Does this relationship differ for White and BIPOC youth? High school students (n = 186) and college undergraduates (n = 373) completed surveys for the present study. Across both samples, race/ethnicity significantly moderated the relation between cultural socialization and critical reflection of racism. For BIPOC youth, cultural socialization was positively associated with critical reflection, suggesting that learning about their cultural group fosters deeper awareness of racially oppressive forces. In contrast, for White youth, cultural socialization was negatively associated with critical reflection, indicating that such messages may relate to a weaker recognition of oppression. These findings highlight the critical role of parental racial/ethnic messages in shaping how young people understand their racialized worlds. We discuss implications for fostering White youth's antiracist development and strengthening BIPOC youth's critical reflection.

Keywords: cultural socialization; critical consciousness; adolescent development; ethnic-racial socialization

Racism remains a deeply entrenched, pervasive element of American society, dramatically shaping institutions, interpersonal relationships, and individual experiences (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Iruka et al., 2022). In the wake of widespread Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, the United States experienced temporary strides in civil rights discourse and increased awareness of racial justice (Dunivin et al., 202; Primbs et al., 2024). However, substantial structural and cultural manifestations of racism have persisted and even spread amidst the rise of right-wing populist movements around the world, reinforcing cycles of inequality, prejudice, and discrimination (Giani & Meon, 2019; Ruisch & Ferguson, 2022).

In this context, ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness have been posited as developmental assets that support youth and young people in coping with and resisting racism. Ethnic-racial socialization, or the verbal and nonverbal messages parents transmit to their children about race, racism, and culture, has been linked to more adaptive coping and stronger ethnic-racial identity among adolescents of color (Hughes et al., 2006). Critical consciousness, or the extent to which an individual recognizes and resists social inequity (Watts et al., 2011), can protect adolescents of color against race-related stress by disrupting the internalization of racial hierarchies and instead fostering an understanding of systemic oppression and motivation to challenge it (Heberle et al., 2020). In this paper, we explore the relations between parental ethnic-racial socialization– with particular attention to cultural socialization– and critical consciousness.

Though ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness are regarded as developmental assets for adolescents of color in particular, we are interested in exploring how the relationship between these two constructs may differ for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and White young people. In doing so, we strive to contribute to theory

regarding the development of critical consciousness and explore how ethnic-racial socialization may factor into the anti-racist development of White adolescents. Importantly, the foundational theories and literatures of both of these constructs are rooted in the experiences of youth and families of color. Thus, in the following sections, we seek to provide an overview of the relevant literature first on ethnic-racial socialization and then on critical consciousness, for both adolescents of color– where the majority of empirical work lies– and White adolescents.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization for Adolescents of Color

In 2006, Hughes and colleagues published a comprehensive review of the literature which documents several types of messaging that are both prominent and relatively consistent across racially diverse samples of families: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarianism, and promotion of mistrust. Other socialization strategies exist and have been documented in the literature (see for example, Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson, 2016; Kyere & Huguley, 2020; Lateef et al., 2024), however, the preceding four strategies are the most broadly discussed. In the present study, we focus on perhaps the most widely-studied parental ethnic-racial socialization strategy: cultural socialization. *Cultural socialization* refers to messages that teach children about their ethnic/racial heritage, history, and traditions and may seek to promote cultural or racial pride. This type of socialization can take many forms, such as parents teaching their children their mother tongue, talking about important historical or cultural figures or events, and traveling to parents' home countries (Hughes, 2003; Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes & Chen, 1997). For many parents of color, imbuing a strong sense of cultural identity and ethnic-racial pride is a key parenting priority that buffers their children against the deleterious effects of cultural racism and White supremacy.

Umaña-Taylor and Hill's (2020) systematic review on family ethnic-racial socialization revealed a strong empirical base showing a large, positive relationship between cultural socialization and multiple indicators of positive development for BIPOC youth– a more positive and robust relationship than has been collectively found for any of the other three primary ethnic-racial socialization strategies. In particular, cultural socialization acts as a promotive factor for adolescents of color through its strong, positive links with indicators of adjustment, including self-esteem (e.g., Gonzales-Backen et al., 2017), psychological well-being (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2015), and ethnic-racial identity (e.g., Brittian et al., 2013). Another recent systematic review by Anderson and colleagues (2024) revealed similarly expansive positive relationships between cultural socialization and a range of developmental outcomes in African American families specifically. Together, empirical work over the last few decades strongly suggests that ethnic-racial socialization experiences provide youth of color with a broad range of psychological benefits, specifically via promoting socioemotional adjustment and a strong sense of both ethnic-racial and cultural identity (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020), which may form the foundation of critical consciousness development.

Notably, parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices are not static throughout childhood, but rather shift dynamically with children's age, experiences, and emerging cognitive abilities (Hughes et al., 2006). As children move from childhood to adolescence, they experience gains in cognitive capacity that allow them to think about abstract concepts like race and ethnicity in ways similar to adults (Aboud, 1988). Thus, most explicit ethnic-racial socialization– particularly ethnic-racial socialization that contends with nuanced racial dynamics– occurs as children age into adolescence (Hughes et al., 2006). It follows then, that the literature has primarily focused on this age range. In the current study, we are interested in exploring the relationship between

ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness in two samples of young people: earlier adolescents and later adolescents/young adults. Our interest in comparing these two populations stems from our recognition that as youth age, parents' role in ethnic-racial socialization may decrease as other socialization agents (e.g., peers, schools, media) become increasingly present, which may shift mechanisms to promote critical consciousness. However, parents remain important socializers throughout development, even as the ways in which their socialization messages continue to influence their children change throughout young adulthood (Jones & Rogers, 2023). We explore these developmental differences in the present study.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization for White Adolescents

The foundational work on ethnic-racial socialization historically focused on families of color, due to the recognition that parents of color employ ethnic-racial socialization as a culturally-informed, adaptive process to intergenerationally share cultural assets and prepare their children to contend with discrimination and marginalization (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Huguley et al., 2019). Whereas the importance of ethnic-racial socialization in the practices of families of color is well known, much less is known about how ethnic-racial socialization operates in the lives of White families. Investigating ethnic-racial socialization messages received by White youth may help illuminate the development of attitudes of racial inclusion/exclusion critical to combating interpersonal bias and prejudice.

In the relatively limited body of research focused on White ethnic-racial socialization, scholars have found that White parents tend to engage in explicit ethnic-racial socialization less frequently than parents of color (Brown et al., 2007; Rivas-Drake et al., 2009; Zucker & Patterson, 2018) and tend to downplay the importance of racial differences as well as the existence of racial inequities, favoring an egalitarian approach (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Pahlke et

al., 2012; Vittrup, 2018). If we understand ethnic-racial socialization to be a relational process that occurs within (and in conversation with) White supremacy (Moffitt & Rogers, 2022), these strategies of silence about race and color-evasive socialization (Vittrup, 2018) serve to reify the messages of White supremacy by rendering Whiteness as "normative and invisible" (Moffitt et al., 2021) and failing to disrupt children's passive absorption of cultural racism.

In their recent systematic review on ethnic-racial socialization in White families, Nieri et al. (2024) found that, although general trends show that White parents tend to engage in significantly less explicit ethnic-racial socialization than their counterparts of color, both traditional (i.e., Hughes et al.'s framework) and more recently documented (e.g., silence about race, color-evasive vs. color-conscious) socialization strategies are in use by White parents. Notably, some of the same ethnic-racial socialization strategies observed in families of color are also reported in White families, including preparation for bias, egalitarian socialization, and cultural socialization. Indeed, both seminal systematic reviews from Hughes et al. (2006) and Umaña-Taylor and Hill (2020) suggest that, by and large, the canonical framework of ethnic-racial socialization may generally be applied to White young people, with some clear exceptions.

On the other hand, in their conceptual review, Loyd and Gaither (2018) posit that ethnic-racial socialization operates qualitatively differently in the development of White youth given their historical social dominance in the racial hierarchy of America. Thus, although cultural socialization is the strategy most frequently employed by parents across race and ethnicity (Hughes et al., 2006), these messages may have considerably different meanings and consequences depending on race. For example, a White parent engaging in cultural socialization may be encouraging a child to be proud of their European ethnic heritage or to be proud of being

a member of the White race– two messages with entirely different hypothesized outcomes for race-consciousness (Nieri et al., 2024). Moreover, White parents engaging in substantial cultural socialization toward an *ethnic* heritage does not necessarily mean they will engage in cultural socialization that encourages positive White *racial* identity development (Syed & Westberg, 2024) – a key precursor to challenging racism in all its forms (Helms, 1993). Thus, understanding how cultural socialization operates for White youth– especially at the intersection of ethnicity and race– is a key question with which scholars are just beginning to grapple. Finally, just as in families of color, the relationship between White parents' socialization messages and the critical consciousness of White young people is likely to shift from earlier to later adolescence, though no studies to our knowledge explore this potential developmental difference. The present study seeks to contribute to these conversations by considering the relationship between cultural socialization and critical consciousness in two samples of White and BIPOC young people.

Critical Consciousness for Adolescents of Color

Critical consciousness, or *conscientização*, was originally conceptualized by Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (Freire, 2000). While working with a group of laborers, Freire observed that as his students developed literacy skills, they became increasingly aware of and interested in their social conditions, and eventually developed a sense of agency to transform their social realities. Today, scholars conceptualize critical consciousness as comprising three dimensions (Diemer et al., 2016). Critical reflection refers to one's awareness of systems of oppression and social hierarchies; critical motivation refers to one's efficacy and feelings of responsibility to change these systems; and critical action refers to one's explicit efforts to

engage in individual and/or collective social or political action to transform unjust systems (Diemer et al., 2016).

Contemporary scholars of critical consciousness regard these three dimensions to be reciprocally related such that as individuals gain more complex understandings of systemic oppression, they are more motivated to take action to change these systems (and as individuals take part in social action, they gain a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which systems are upheld). In their model of youth sociopolitical development, Watts and Flanagan (2014) outline these interrelationships while also noting the importance of opportunity structures (i.e., institutions and structures through which youth may exercise civic engagement) in providing young people with avenues for sociopolitical engagement. Though critical consciousness may refer to any systems of oppression and their interrelations with one another (and a key part of consciousness is recognizing the interconnectedness of systems of power and domination), in this paper, we focus on consciousness toward race and racism (Diemer et al., 2016).

Critical consciousness facilitates marginalized young people's ability to analyze and disrupt the internalization of negative structural forces impeding their development (Heberle et al., 2020; Pinedo et al., 2024), thus playing a protective role in their lives. Specifically, critical consciousness is associated with positive academic and career outcomes (Seider et al., 2020; Rapa et al., 2018; Rogers & Terriquez, 2013) and psychological and socioemotional well-being (Zimmerman et al., 1999), particularly for adolescents of color (Heberle et al., 2020). Moreover, young people with greater critical consciousness are more engaged in sociopolitical action to improve their local conditions (Anyiwo et al., 2020; Diemer et al., 2021). Despite the relatively small and still-growing nature of the literature, the benefits of critical consciousness are well-documented, making the need to understand how to foster critical consciousness central to

the field. Notably, critical consciousness has primarily been studied in populations of youth, given that grappling with civic and political issues is a key part of personal and social identity development in adolescence (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Watts and Flanagan (2007) define the stage of youth– which they describe as a period of political sensitivities– as the years spanning the middle of adolescence through the mid-thirties. Thus, in this paper we understand both of our samples of young people to be firmly in the process of developing their critical consciousness and related sociopolitical identities. However, given greater exposure to different (potentially more expansive) contexts, more time to explore identities, and increased opportunities to engage in sociopolitical action, participants in later adolescence/early adulthood may report higher levels of critical consciousness than their younger counterparts. We explore these developmental differences in the current study.

Critical Consciousness for White Adolescents

Freire originally conceptualized critical consciousness as a tool for the liberation of oppressed peoples (2000). Therefore, much of the existing scholarship concerning critical consciousness has focused on its development and role in the context of marginalized communities. However, Freire (2000) wrote that critical consciousness was the key to the true liberation of both oppressor and oppressed, arguing that oppression dehumanizes both marginalized and privileged individuals. Moreover, considering White youths' relative proximity to resources necessary for social change, it is important to consider how we may foster critical-mindedness and commitment to social justice in this population (Dull et al., 2022). Insofar as critical consciousness is a promotive and protective asset for members of marginalized groups, it may also be a moral imperative for members of privileged groups; though critical consciousness may be different in terms of content and process depending on one's identity,

reflection on one's place within systems of oppression and domination is nevertheless a necessary component of informed and active civic participation (Thomas et al., 2014). Thus, we posit that critical consciousness may also be a tool for White young people to unpack and understand the racial privilege they possess and the oppression to which they contribute, knowingly or not (Hershberg & Johnson, 2019; Jemal, 2017).

Regarding developmental pathways of critical consciousness among White adolescents, scant research exists. However, in existing work, social dominance orientation is a recurring construct and predictor of critical consciousness development. Diemer et al. (2006) argue that a belief in social dominance (i.e., favoring social hierarchy and inequality over social equality) is the antithesis of critical consciousness; thus, critical consciousness may serve to disrupt social dominance beliefs for members of the majority group and help individuals understand their place within the social hierarchy as marginalized, privileged, or a combination of the two (Duriez & Soenens, 2009).

Relatedly, Suzuki et al. (2024) argue that the process of forming critical reflection– a key aspect of critical consciousness– necessarily involves rebuking one's acritical beliefs and coming to terms with systemic oppression and White privilege (Diemer et al., 2019). Moreover, Suzuki et al. (2024) found a significant relationship between White youths' critical reflection and their critical purpose, a construct they define as having a life goal focused on addressing societal oppression. Thus, though scholarship is limited, a promising basis exists to suppose that critical consciousness may be an important asset in the lives of White young people, setting the stage for them to confront and challenge oppression. Accordingly, the present study seeks to explore cultural socialization as a potential factor in the development of White critical consciousness.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization & Critical Consciousness

In their recent integrative review, Heberle and colleagues (2020) summarized findings on several proposed theoretical antecedents of youth critical consciousness. In general, scholars theorize that youth whose microenvironments (i.e., home and school) are promotive of open discussions around sociopolitical issues and critical perspectives, as well as youth who experience marginalization and oppression are more likely to develop greater levels of critical consciousness (Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Heberle et al., 2020; Mathews et al., 2020). Though most of the studies investigating antecedents focus on the role of school climate in the formation of critical consciousness, a handful of studies explore the role of parent socialization in supporting critical consciousness development.

For example, Diemer et al. (2006) found that perceived parental support for challenging racism, sexism, and social injustice was associated with adolescents' critical reflection, and parent support for political development was related to youth political motivation and self-definition (Diemer et al., 2009). Moreover, Diemer (2012) found a positive association between parental political socialization and youth critical consciousness in 10th and 12th grades. Although they are considered as conceptually distinct processes, political socialization (i.e., lessons parents transmit to children about participating in political and civic life) and ethnic-racial socialization share substantial overlap when we consider the central role race-relations play in the sociopolitical climate of the United States (Jennings et al., 2009). Many political issues are directly related to race, such as school choice and police brutality and, similarly, ethnic-racial socialization strategies, such as preparation for bias and racial pride messaging, are directly related to politics (e.g., Black parents encouraging their children to be wary of police or teaching their children about the history of Black leaders who have resisted oppression throughout the course of American history) (Pinetta et al., 2020; Bañales et al., 2021).

This theoretical overlap led Bañales et al. (2019) to explore the relationship between parental racial socialization and aspects of critical consciousness in adolescents, finding that parental racial socialization and structural attributions for racism (a proxy for critical reflection) predicted higher levels of adolescent structural attributions for racism two years later. Moreover, Anyiwo and colleagues (2018) found a relationship between cultural pride socialization and critical agency as youth learn about how the actions of community members have historically catalyzed social change (and how they can take part in this legacy, as well). Finally, in their exploration of White adolescents' racial contexts and critical action, Dull et al. (2022) found evidence that White adolescents whose contexts (i.e., parents, peers, and schools) are conducive to race consciousness reported greater critical action in emerging adulthood, highlighting how racial socialization is an important catalyst in the development of White youths' civic attitudes and orientations toward social justice. These preliminary findings of a relationship between ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness are promising and provide useful insights for leverage points for promoting sociopolitical development in youth. However, no research to our knowledge investigates potential developmental differences in the relationship between ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness, though scholars have discussed the developmental shift in how young people make sense of their parents' socialization messages as they age (Jones & Rogers, 2023). Thus, more research is needed to investigate this intersection, especially across ethnic-racial groups and developmental stages.

Current Study

The present study explores the extent to which received cultural socialization messages predict critical consciousness in two separate samples of young people: high school students (n = 186) and college undergraduates (n = 373). Thus, we seek to answer the following research

questions: (1) To what extent do participants' received cultural socialization messages predict their critical consciousness (i.e., critical reflection of racism, critical motivation, and critical action?) and (2) Does the relation between cultural socialization and critical consciousness differ for White and BIPOC young people? Given the growing body of literature documenting positive associations between ethnic-racial socialization and various aspects of critical consciousness for Black youth (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Bañales et al., 2019), as well as associations between cultural socialization and developmental assets for youth of color, we hypothesize that cultural socialization will be positively associated with all three dimensions of critical consciousness for BIPOC participants. Drawing on work that suggests relationships between parental racial socialization and critical action (Dull et al., 2022) and given that cultural socialization is also promotive of developmental assets for White youth (e.g., Else-Quest & Morse, 2014; Wilson, 2008), we expect that cultural socialization will still be positively associated with critical consciousness for White participants but that this relationship will be weaker than it is for BIPOC participants, if only because we suspect White parents engage in less explicit, frequent socialization compared to their BIPOC counterparts.

Finally, our rationale for including two samples of participants (high school and college-aged) is multifaceted: first, we saw an opportunity to consider the associations between ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness in two groups of young people that are demographically quite different (e.g., in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status). Second and relatedly, analyzing these associations in both groups allowed us to compare findings between analytic samples to provide support for observed relational patterns. Third, including these two samples allowed us to explore potential developmental differences in the relationship between cultural socialization and critical consciousness in earlier and later adolescence/young

adulthood. Because there is only limited research examining the relationship between cultural socialization and critical consciousness, and even less examining developmental differences, our hypotheses are exploratory. However, we expect that any positive relationships between cultural socialization and critical consciousness may be attenuated in the college sample given that the role of parental socialization is more direct in earlier adolescence than it is in later adolescence (when other socializing agents become increasingly important). By investigating these questions, we seek to contribute to the limited but growing literature drawing connections between ethnic-racial socialization and the dimensions of critical consciousness.

Method

Participants

Two samples of young people– high school students and college undergraduates– were individually surveyed for the present study to confirm patterns of relationships between our variables and explore developmental differences between our two groups (a process that yielded two datasets upon which we conducted our respective sets of analyses). Participant demographics for both samples are presented in Table 1. The high school sample of participants came from a portion of a larger data collection effort that included several inquiries from researchers affiliated with the Character Lab Research Network (CLRN). The CLRN simultaneously conducted several independent studies in participating schools, and students who elected to participate in the CLRN were randomized to one of the studies being conducted in their school. High school students who were randomly assigned to this study included 186 adolescents in grades 9-12 attending eight different urban high schools located across the United States. The undergraduate sample consisted of 373 students enrolled in several introductory

psychology courses at a private Catholic university in the northeastern United States. Both data collection efforts were approved by the first author's university IRB.

Importantly, these two samples represent substantively different developmental groups. While the high school sample comprises early to middle adolescents, the college undergraduate sample comprises late adolescents and young adults; however, the demographic differences of the samples extend beyond age. The high school sample is majority students of color who reside in urban areas in the United States, while the college sample is majority female, majority White, and, unlike students at a comprehensive urban high school, these participants were admitted and matriculated into a highly competitive, private university. Thus, while we include these two samples in the present study in order to compare findings and draw more generalizable conclusions, we analyze them separately.

Data Collection

Data for the high school sample were collected on school computers during class time across a 2- to 3-week testing window during the winter of 2021 (n = 75) and 2022 (n = 104). On a set-aside testing day, a teacher proctor at each participating school administered the CLRN research surveys to students. Proctors began by reading a script explaining that all research activities were part of an educational research initiative at their school, that participation in the research activities was voluntary and students' grades were not dependent on their participation, and that teachers would not see their answers. Upon completion of an assent form on the CLRN platform, high school students were then directed to the research survey for the present study. All undergraduate participants completed an online survey using the same measures as those received by high school participants during the 2020-21 academic year via the Qualtrics

platform. Upon completion of a consent form, participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality before being directed to the survey.

Measures

Cultural Socialization

Participants' received socialization messages were measured with five items from the Familial Ethnic Socialization Measure (FESM) (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004), which assesses the degree to which participants perceived their families to have socialized them with respect to their ethnicity. Responses were reported on a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree". Items asked participants to report to what extent they agreed with statements about their parents' socialization practices: "Growing up, one or more of my parents taught me about my ethnic/cultural background" (Cronbach's $\alpha_{HighSchool} = .91$; Cronbach's $\alpha_{College} = .92$). Both the original long-form version and the abbreviated brief version of the FESM were psychometrically validated for use across various racial groups including Black, Latinx, Asian American, and White adolescents (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Critical Reflection of Racism

Participants' critical reflection of racism was measured as a composite of seven items from the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS): Racial Privilege Sub-Scale (Neville et al., 2000), which measured the extent to which participants recognize the pervasive nature of racism in societal institutions and its effect on life chances. Participants responded to items on a 5-point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree." Items asked participants to report the extent to which they agreed with a range of statements regarding racial systemic inequities. For example: "White people in the U.S. have

certain advantages because of the color of their skin" (Cronbach's $\alpha_{HighSchool}$ = .86; Cronbach's $\alpha_{College}$ = .66).

Critical Motivation

Participants' social responsibility was measured as the mean of a four-item youth social responsibility measure adapted from the Pancer et al. (2007) Youth Social Responsibility Scale (YSRS), designed to assess the extent to which youth are motivated to support individuals and groups faced with marginalization and inequity. Response options ranged from 1 "Not at all" to 5 "Definitely" as participants were asked to report their agreement with a range of statements. For example, "It is important to me to consider the needs of other people", "It is important to me to make sure that all people are treated fairly", and "Young people have an important role to play in making the world a better place" (Cronbach's $\alpha_{HighSchool}$ = .84; Cronbach's $\alpha_{College}$ = .77).

In the extant research on critical consciousness, the critical motivation dimension has been conceptualized either as youth social responsibility (the belief that one ought to challenge oppression) or as political efficacy (the belief that one *can* challenge oppression) – or some combination of the two. Several studies have used the YSRS as a measure of critical motivation or political agency, at least in part (e.g., Seider et al., 2020; Seider et al., 2021), and other studies in the sociopolitical development field have investigated social responsibility as a key precursor and motivator of sociopolitical action (e.g., Schmid, 2012), a framework that parallels the proposed relationship between critical motivation and action (Watts et al., 2011). In the present study, we adopt the former approach, using the YSRS and framing it as a measure of critical motivation.

Critical Action

Participants' critical action was measured using four items from the Action subscale of the Critical Consciousness Short Scale (Diemer et al., 2022), which asks participants to report how often they engaged in a range of sociopolitical actions (e.g., "Participated in a civil rights group or organization," "Participated in a political party, club or organization," "Contacted a public official," "Joined a protest, march, political demonstration or political meeting"). One item from the original measure was not included in our survey ("Participated in a human rights, gay rights, or women's rights organization or group") because the larger study was focused on socialization and critical consciousness pertaining to issues of race; thus, we took out the item most explicitly about other forms of oppression. Response options ranged from 1 "Never did this" to 5 "At least once a week" (Cronbach's $\alpha_{HighSchool} = .80$; Cronbach's $\alpha_{College} = .71$).

General Parenting Practices

Several covariates were included in our analysis. Measures of general parenting practices (i.e., emotional responsiveness and open communication) were included to uncouple the effects of parenting more broadly from the influence of ethnic-racial socialization-specific parenting practices on critical consciousness. Gender was included as a covariate due to its theoretically- and empirically-supported relationship with both parental ethnic-racial socialization practices and critical consciousness (Hughes et al., 2006; Heberle et al., 2020). Parental emotional responsiveness was measured by taking the average score for three items adapted from the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (Robinson, 1995). Participants reported their agreement with three statements (e.g., "Growing up, my parent gave me comfort when I was upset") on a 5-point Likert scale. Parent open communication was measured with four items also adapted from the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Participants reported their agreement with statements such as, "Growing up, it was easy to discuss my true feelings with my

parent" on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants reported on each of these measures for each of their parent/caregivers, aggregate scores were calculated for each parent/caregiver (e.g., Parent 1, Parent 2), and then final aggregate scores were calculated for Parental Emotional Responsiveness and Open Communication by calculating the mean of each score for Parent 1 and Parent 2 (Cronbach's $\alpha_{HighSchool} = .91$; Cronbach's $\alpha_{College} = .92$).

Demographic Variables

The analyses described below also included demographic variables, namely gender (0 = male, 1 = female and non-binary participants) and race/ethnicity (0 = White, 1 = BIPOC student). In the present study, gender was dummy-coded such that female and non-binary participants were grouped together. While these groups are certainly not monolithic and we recognize the limitations of such a grouping, this decision was made based on the idea that women and gender minorities tend to face interpersonal, institutional, and cultural challenges stemming from their relations to patriarchal power structures that likely shape their developmental and civic outcomes. Given relatively small subsample sizes, race/ethnicity was dummy-coded by grouping all BIPOC participants together. We acknowledge the limitations of grouping together all of the young people in our sample who identify as BIPOC (i.e., Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, multiracial); however, our relatively modest sample sizes lacked the power the investigate the influence of cultural socialization on critical consciousness for distinct ethnic-racial subgroups within our sample. Thus, we are hopeful that the findings in this exploratory study will motivate future research efforts with more sufficient (and diverse) sample sizes to explore these sorts of additional analyses.

Data Analysis

To investigate the relationship between participants' received cultural socialization messages and their critical consciousness, we fit a single-level OLS regression model investigating the relationship between cultural socialization and each of the three dimensions of critical consciousness for each of our two samples, respectively (Sample 1: high school students; Sample 2: college undergraduates). For each of these main effects models, we added the following control variables: participants' gender, race (BIPOC/White, with White participants as the reference group), and general parenting practices (i.e., parental open communication and emotional responsiveness).

To address our second research question, we also added an interaction term (Social x Race) to investigate potential differences in the relationship between participants' received cultural socialization messages and their critical consciousness for BIPOC versus White participants. The analyses were conducted in StataSE-16 and any missing data was handled using the program's default method of listwise deletion.

Results

The results of the analyses investigating the relationship between young people's received parental cultural socialization messages and their critical consciousness are reported in Tables 2-6 below. Specifically, Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics (*M*, *SD*) for high school students' scores on each of the measures of interest as well as the continuous covariates included in the models (e.g., parental open communication, parental emotional responsiveness), and Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for college students' scores on each of these same measures. Table 4 reports the bivariate correlations among the variables of interest. Finally, Tables 5 and 6 show the main effects between cultural socialization and the three dimensions of critical consciousness, while controlling for participants' gender, race, and parenting practices. We also

included moderation models to explore the extent to which the relationship between cultural socialization and critical consciousness differs for White students versus BIPOC students.

Sample 1: High school students

Main effects models. Table 5 reports associations between high school participants' received parental cultural socialization messages and three dimensions of their critical consciousness development: their awareness of racial privilege– a proxy for critical reflection specifically regarding the ways in which White supremacy shapes society and individuals' life chances (Model 1), critical motivation (i.e. youth social responsibility) (Model 2), and critical action (i.e., social and political participation) (Model 3). OLS regression analyses for the main effects model reveal only one statistically significant positive relationship between cultural socialization and critical action (B = .10, *Robust SE* = .04, p = .04). Additionally, gender, t(115) = .502, p = .002) was a significant positive predictor of critical motivation.

Moderation models. Importantly, for the analysis predicting high school participants' critical reflection, we found evidence of a significant interaction between cultural socialization and participants' race (B = .85, *Robust SE* = .19, p = .007). Specifically, for BIPOC high school students in our sample, a one-unit higher score on cultural socialization was associated with a 0.36 unit increase in critical reflection, while for White students, a one-unit higher score on cultural socialization was associated with a 0.50 unit decrease in critical reflection. This moderation model was significant, $F(6,125) = 5.20$, $p < .001$, and explains a total of 21.18% of the variance in critical reflection (adj. R-squared = .17) (Figure 1). Note that all regression coefficients and standard errors are reported with school-level cluster-robust standard errors to account for potential within-school correlations. The model F statistic (reported for model

significance) is from the non-clustered model due to limitations in the small-cluster adjusted F calculation.

Sample 2: College undergraduate students

Main effects models. Table 6 reports the associations between college participants' received parental cultural socialization messages and their critical consciousness. OLS regression analyses for the main effects model revealed that college participants' received cultural socialization messages negatively predicted their critical reflection scores (i.e., awareness of racial privilege) such that a one-unit increase in cultural socialization was associated with a .07 unit decrease in critical reflection (B = -.70, SE = .03, β = -.13, t(332) = -2.14, p = .03). This model was significant, F(5,332) = 3.69, p = .003, and explains a total of 3.84% of the variance in critical reflection.

Table 6 also displays results for the analysis of associations between college students' received parental cultural socialization messages and their critical motivation and critical action, neither of which were statistically significant (parallel to findings reported above in the high school sample). Gender emerged as a significant predictor of critical motivation, such that identifying as female or non-binary in the college sample was associated with increased critical motivation (p < .001). Additionally, race was a significant predictor of critical motivation, such that identifying as White was associated with reduced critical motivation in the main effects model (p = .004).

Moderation models. A closer look at this relationship in the corresponding moderation model, F(6, 331) = 3.83, p = .001, revealed a significant moderating effect of race (B = .15, SE = .07, β = .63, p =.04). Specifically, for BIPOC college students in our sample, a one-unit increase in participants' cultural socialization scores was associated with a 0.04 unit *increase* in critical

reflection, while a one-unit increase in cultural socialization for White participants was associated with a 0.11 unit *decrease* in critical reflection, mirroring the pattern observed in our high school sample (Figure 2).

To summarize, then, within both our high school and college samples, we found a similar pattern wherein the relationship between participants' received cultural socialization messages and their critical reflection scores differed by race. That is, in both samples, while greater cultural socialization was associated with increased critical reflection scores for BIPOC participants, the opposite was the case for White participants. Cultural socialization was also positively associated with critical action in the high school sample, and a handful of covariates (e.g., gender, race) were significant across models.

Comparing the Two Samples

Given the substantive developmental differences of participants in the two samples (e.g., developmental period, ethnic-racial makeup, gender, socioeconomic class) we chose to include both samples in the present study but analyze them separately. Nonetheless, we performed independent samples t-tests in order to compare the samples and explore the extent to which high school students and college undergraduates differed in their responses to the study's variables of interest (i.e., cultural socialization, critical reflection of racism, critical motivation, and critical action). As expected, t-tests revealed that college undergraduates reported significantly higher critical reflection of racism ($t(205) = -6.87$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.68, -0.37]), critical motivation ($t(238) = -7.93$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.65, -.0.39]), and critical action ($t(528) = -5.02$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.46, -0.20]) than high school students. However, there was not a statistically significant difference in cultural socialization scores between high school and college students, $t(488) = 1.73$, $p = .085$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.33].

Discussion

The present study explores the extent to which received cultural socialization messages predict critical consciousness in two samples of young people: high school students and college undergraduates. We also explored whether the relationship between cultural socialization and critical consciousness differed for those students identifying as people of color (i.e., BIPOC) versus those identifying as White. A small handful of studies (e.g., Anyiwo et al., 2018; Bañales et al., 2019) have documented associations between ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness but no studies to our knowledge have investigated differences in the associations between ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness for BIPOC and White young people. This gap likely reflects the fact that concepts like ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness were originally theorized for minoritized populations and thus their scales were developed and validated with samples primarily comprising people of color (Hughes et al., 2006). However, examining potential differences in how cultural socialization and critical consciousness function across ethnic-racial groups is critical to understanding whether and how these constructs operate distinctly in marginalized versus more privileged groups. To consider these questions, we conducted a series of OLS regression models in which we investigated cultural socialization's relations to each of the three dimensions of critical consciousness for the high school and college samples, respectively. For each sample, we ran both main effects and moderation models wherein participants' race/ethnicity was the moderator. In the following sections, organized by outcome of interest (i.e., critical reflection of racism, motivation, and action) we consider each of this study's key findings in turn.

Critical Reflection of Racism

The present study's main effects models for critical reflection of racism offer mixed evidence of a direct relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection. Though there was no significant direct relationship between high schoolers' cultural socialization and critical reflection, we observed a significant negative relationship between *college* students' received cultural socialization and critical reflection of racism. A closer examination of these relationships in the moderation models shows a significant moderating effect of race/ethnicity in cultural socialization's relationship with critical reflection for both samples of participants. Specifically, for BIPOC young people, cultural socialization was positively linked to critical reflection of racism, but for White young people, cultural socialization was negatively tied to their critical reflection of racism in both the high school and college samples. We speculate that in the high school sample, we see no significant relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection because the positive association between cultural socialization and critical reflection for BIPOC participants and the negative association for White participants are obscuring these respective associations in the broader sample. In the college sample, we see a net negative direct relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection of racism because there is an imbalance of BIPOC and White participants in the sample (with White students being overrepresented) such that the negative relationship for the White participants is driving the main effects relationship. While both samples showed the same directional pattern of moderation by race/ethnicity, the size of the interaction coefficient and the simple slope differences were notably larger in the high school sample than in the college sample. This suggests that race may play a more influential role in shaping the relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection of racism during earlier adolescence than it does in young adulthood. This idea resonates with previous work documenting the relative importance of

parental socialization as a primary source of ethnic-racial learning and the salience of ethnic-racial identity development as an unfolding process in earlier adolescence (Jones & Rogers, 2023).

It is important to note, however, that reliability for the critical reflection of racism scale in the college sample was somewhat lower than ideal (α = .66), and subgroup estimates indicated lower internal consistency for BIPOC students (α = .64) than for White students (α = .70). We believe this difference may reflect the greater variability of racialized experiences and interpretations of racism among BIPOC college students, as well as potential limitations in the measure's use to capture the full range of critical reflection of racism across a diverse range of ethnic-racial groups. Thus, our observed associations for BIPOC students may be attenuated. Future research should consider whether and how the critical reflection of racism measure can be used in diverse ethnic-racial samples to accurately capture critical reflection of young people from a wide range of ethnic-racial backgrounds.

The significant positive relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection of racism for BIPOC participants in both samples aligns with our hypotheses and theoretical support from the limited extant work investigating these relationships (Bañales et al., 2019). That is, for young people of color, cultural socialization may increase awareness of their membership in a marginalized ethnic-racial identity group and, thus, their recognition and understanding of oppressive forces experienced by members of that group (a key part of critical reflection). Moreover, for BIPOC participants, cultural socialization may serve as a fundamental, salient ethnic-racial experience that leads to critical reflection and may be bolstered by their ethnic-racial identity exploration, a construct not measured in the present study. In their postulations on the integration of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness, Mathews et al.

(2020) posit that parental cultural socialization and pride messages in particular may provide an entry point for youth of color to begin thinking about their ethnic-racial group and its relation to their social contexts, leading to both greater identity exploration and critical reflection (Anyiwo et al., 2018: Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009). For BIPOC participants in the present study, more frequent cultural socialization may have encouraged greater awareness of systemic racial oppression and injustice.

The significant negative relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection among White participants in both samples was an unexpected finding, given work that documents associations between cultural socialization and positive developmental assets for White youth (e.g., Hughes et al., 2009; Wilson, 2008), as well as our own hypothesis that cultural socialization might foster a positive White identity (Helms, 1993) which could form the foundation for critical consciousness. In interpreting our findings, we raise the question of what demographic factors (e.g., European ethnic identification and heritage, sociopolitical attitudes/beliefs) may affect White parents' engagement in cultural socialization.

One potential explanation is that White parents who hold a stronger, more central European ethnic identity may be more likely to engage in cultural socialization, more attuned to the specific challenges faced by members of their *own* group, and thus less knowledgeable of and/or sympathetic to the oppressive challenges faced by ethnic-racial minorities today (i.e., less critically reflective), thereby coloring their socialization practices. Their children, in turn, may find the items in the cultural socialization scale to be particularly salient to their ethnic socialization, leading them to report frequent cultural socialization, without corresponding gains in critical reflection of racism. For example, specific ethnic groups such as Irish and Italian Americans who were not fully accepted as White upon arrival to America may seek to maintain a

separate ethnic identity that rejects assimilation into homogenized Whiteness and rather serves– consciously or not– to perpetuate normative racial narratives by citing historic marginalization in their socialization practices. In other words, members of these particular European ethnic groups may reject ideas of structural (dis)advantage associated with higher critical reflection because adopting such beliefs would mean acknowledging that their own groups' relative success in America was due to systemic privilege rather than individual effort, merit, and hard work (Sniderman & Carmine, 1998; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). When parents engage in cultural socialization that reflects these beliefs, their children's beliefs and attitudes, including their critical reflection, are likely affected. Additional demographic factors such as parents' educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and religion also factor into the microcontexts in which parents socialize their children, thereby informing how these developmental processes interact with broader social forces (Abaied et al., 2022; Nieri et al., 2024). Future research should continue to explore these additional factors that shape young people's microcontexts.

Second, recall Syed and Westberg's (2024) notion that parental cultural socialization comprises both *ethnic* and *racial* components (e.g., ethnic heritage maintenance vs. racial pride messaging in BIPOC families). Though parents may engage in substantial cultural socialization pertaining to their ethnic heritage, it does not necessarily mean they will engage in cultural socialization pertaining to a racial identity, especially in White families. Apfelbaum et al. (2008) suggest that White parents are more comfortable engaging in– and more frequently employ– ethnic socialization compared to racial socialization. Thus, it is likely that White parents who engage in cultural socialization do so in a way that, if not explicitly endorsing messages that directly oppose the realities of systemic oppression, at least avoid conversations about issues of privilege and power. When White parents engage in ethnic-racial socialization that ignores the

realities of systemic racial inequities (i.e., color-evasive socialization), they reify the notion that Whiteness is normative, disregard the impact of White privilege as well as their own racial identity, and fail to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of racism (Moffitt et al., 2021). It follows then that White youth who receive cultural socialization that ignores and fails to integrate messages about racial identity would have less advanced understandings of systems of racial oppression and domination.

Given that our findings diverge from our hypothesis that cultural socialization would be positively associated with White adolescents' critical reflection, a key precursor to White solidarity and allyship, we consider the implications of these findings for the development of antiracist White young people. Diemer et al. (2006) posited that a belief in social dominance and adherence to the existing social hierarchy is the antithesis of critical consciousness. If this is true, then White parents engaging in cultural socialization that speaks only to one's ethnic heritage is not enough to engender critical beliefs. Rather, it seems that to cultivate critical reflection of racism in White adolescents, White parents must engage in cultural socialization (and ethnic-racial socialization more broadly) that explicitly challenges notions of social dominance and rejects the existence of a racial hierarchy. Moreover, Mathews et al. (2020) posit that, in youth of color, cultural socialization may provide an entry point to ethnic-racial identity exploration and critical reflection. For White young people, perhaps this is also the case. Applying Helms' (1993) White Racial Identity Development model, we speculate that cultural socialization that attends not only to one's ethnic heritage but also to one's racial identity in the context of White supremacy may provide an entry point to begin grappling with their Whiteness before engaging in more active explorations of systemic racism and eventually confronting racism in all its manifestations (Moffitt et al., 2022). Indeed, this process of White racial identity

development may serve to moderate the relationship between cultural socialization and critical reflection of racism for White young people just as it serves to color the kinds of socialization messages White parents transmit to their children.

Future research should consider what role White racial identity plays in both how White parents choose to engage in cultural socialization and ethnic-racial socialization more broadly, and how these messages are taken up by White young people in their sociopolitical development. Additionally, current measures of cultural socialization fail to accurately measure this kind of socialization around Whiteness that might inform White youths' ethnic-racial identity development. Previous research examining White ethnic-racial socialization has generally used scales adapted from use with ethnically-racially minoritized groups (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Pahlke et al., 2012; for an exception see Hagan et al., 2024), however, White parents have substantively different socialization goals and approaches even within certain types of messaging, like cultural socialization.

Critical Motivation

No significant associations between cultural socialization and critical motivation were observed in the main effects or moderation models in either sample of participants. This finding was surprising given the limited work by Anyiwo and colleagues (2018) that documented an association between cultural pride socialization and critical agency (a construct similar to critical motivation) among African American adolescents.

We speculate that the lack of relationship between parental cultural socialization and critical motivation may be explained by the shifting influence of different socializing agents (e.g., peers, school) throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood. Specifically, we posit that the influence of parents' ethnic-racial socialization processes may be less direct and/or impactful

than the influence of the school context and peers, who adolescents increasingly begin to look to for guidance, advice, and identity-formation during this key developmental period (Delgado et al., 2022). Higher education in particular has been described as a context with the capacity for consciousness-raising (hooks, 1994) and identity formation (Newman & Newman, 1978), as young people engage in a greater range of social experiences with more diverse peer groups and grapple with critical perspectives in the classroom. Perhaps for the first time, college students are able to join cultural associations that shape their thinking about their place in the world with respect to social justice. We think that these factors and experiences may be playing a greater role in the development of critical motivation than is parental socialization. We delve deeper into this idea below as we consider critical action and young people's involvement in social movements as it relates to their peer networks.

Additionally, in speculating about why we observed our unexpected null results, we took a closer look at our critical motivation measure, which was the average of four items taken from Pancer et al.'s (2007) Youth Social Responsibility Scale. Items specifically ask participants to rate the extent to which they agree with a range of statements about how important helping others and ensuring that all people are treated fairly is to them. Importantly, Pancer and colleagues' Youth Social Responsibility Scale has been extensively and reliably used in the field of youth civic engagement (e.g., Hope, 2015; Le et al., 2022; Seider et al., 2023).

However, we note that the nature of the questions, that is, asking participants the extent to which they endorse helping others, is both likely to be endorsed by a wide range of young people (regardless of their critical reflectiveness) and limited in its ability to only capture one aspect of critical motivation– a construct that encapsulates one's social responsibility as well as one's political/civic efficacy to make meaningful change. Accordingly, though Cronbach's reliability

estimates of our measure of critical motivation are relatively high for both samples of participants, we also note the high mean (see Tables 2 and 3) and relative negative skew of the distribution of scores on critical motivation for both the high school and college participants. The relatively high scores and lower variability on critical motivation across both respective samples may, in part, contribute to the lack of significant relationship observed between cultural socialization and critical motivation.

Critical Action

A significant relationship between cultural socialization and critical action emerged in the high school sample (p = .04), although the effect was modest and close to the threshold of significance. This finding suggests that for earlier adolescents, the messages they receive about their ethnic-racial or cultural heritage from their parents may play a significant role in shaping their sociopolitical engagement. Although the association was modest, the positive relationship aligns with prior theory suggesting that early exposure to ethnic-racial socialization in one's microenvironment is associated with later critical agency and critical action in BIPOC and White samples (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Dull et al., 2022). In contrast, we found no significant main effects or interactions in the college sample. The absence of significant findings in the college sample may reflect developmental differences in how cultural socialization relates to critical reflection across the transition to adulthood. In earlier adolescence, when ethnic-racial identity processes and sociopolitical awareness are still developing, cultural socialization experiences from family contexts may have a more immediate and substantive influence on critical action.

In speculating further about why we observed no relationship between socialization and critical action in the college sample (and why the high school effect was relatively small), one notable sub-finding was that the mean scores for critical action were, on average, notably low

across both samples (M_{HS} = 1.42, $M_{College}$ = 1.76 on a 5-point scale). This general lack of engagement in critical action may signal a concerning shortage of opportunities for sociopolitical involvement. In their model of youth sociopolitical development, Watts and Flanagan (2007) identify opportunity structures as a key potential moderator in the relationship between critical reflection and action. That is, without opportunity structures, even critically-minded youth may not be able to engage in effortful behaviors and actions to transform unjust systems. We think that adolescents in this study may have limited autonomy to make decisions about their own sociopolitical involvement given that they are just beginning to experience gains in functional autonomy (Lerner et al., 2001). It may also be the case that participants in the present study attended schools that hindered their opportunity to engage in civic participation via a lack of extracurricular programs or campus culture with a focus on civic engagement.

Furthermore, as noted above, during later adolescence and young adulthood, in particular, we argue that parental socialization may be less influential than peer socialization, especially for engaging in critical action. As adolescents seek independence from parents, they increasingly turn to their peers for support, validation, and decision-making, a process that continues throughout emerging adulthood in contexts such as college and early career environments (Delgado et al., 2022). This emerging reliance on peers for guidance is even more pronounced for identity-related concepts and questions, such as race and ethnicity and, perhaps, one's identity as a sociopolitical actor (Hughes et al., 2011; Nasir et al., 2009). We posit that adolescents and young adults are more likely to participate in critical action (e.g., attending a protest) when their peers are attending as well. Research on motivation for participation in critical action is limited, though previous work on youth environmental protests found that youth cite peer social groups as a key motivator for their participation decisions in strikes: not having any peers to accompany

them to the protest or perceiving protesting as something out of the ordinary for their peer group context were reasons cited for youths' non-participation in critical climate action (Feldman, 2021). Similarly, McAdam (1986) found that stronger and more extensive social ties to other movement participants and protest-attendees was a key predictor of participation in the Freedom Summer project of 1964 for Civil Rights.

Finally, a close examination of the items included in the Action subscale of the Critical Consciousness Short scale (Diemer et al., 2022) raises the question of whether the items capture the types of critical action in which young people are likely to engage (especially in a post-COVID-19 world). Specifically, the scale includes four items that ask participants the frequency with which they have engaged with a series of tasks: participated in a civil rights group or organization; participated in a political party, club, or organization; contacted a public official by phone, mail, or email; and joined a protest, march, political demonstration, or political meeting. While we agree that these four activities are clear examples of critical action, we also think less-involved forms of activism (e.g., posting an infographic on social media, telling your friends about a movement, participating in a school organization that includes elements of civic engagement on a local level) might also be included as forms of critical action, especially for younger adolescents (Anyiwo et al., 2020; Diemer et al., 2021).

Limitations

While there are numerous strengths to the present study, namely in terms of its exploratory contributions to a conversation regarding the intersection of ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness, there are nonetheless limitations. First, it must be noted that the present study's design is correlational. Thus, we can only speak to predictive relationships between cultural socialization and the three dimensions of critical consciousness

but cannot make any claims about directionality or causality. It may be the case, for example, that higher demonstrated critical reflection may cause young people to initiate cultural socialization conversations with their parents, given the important role youth may play in the bidirectional nature of ethnic-racial socialization (Aldana et al., 2019). Additionally, though our measure of cultural socialization (Schwartz et al., 2007; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004) has been validated for use in White samples, it may still have been confusing for those White participants without a clear connection to a specific White ethnic group (i.e., participants who would firmly self-identify as "White" rather than as a label associated with a European ethnicity). For such populations, the items on the Family Ethnic Socialization Measure may have been less relevant or salient to their parents' daily socialization practices; future research should consider how ethnic-racial identity factors into the relationship between ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness, as suggested by Mathews and colleagues (2020).

Third, though scholars theorize the dimensions of critical consciousness to be reciprocally related (Watts & Flanagan, 2014), inspection of our bivariate correlations in the high school sample reveals a lack of interrelatedness among these three dimensions (Table 4). Though critical reflection and critical action exhibit a small, significant correlation, the other dimensions are not correlated with one another– an unexpected subfinding and one not observed in the college sample correlations. This lack of correlation could be due to measurement issues, or it is also possible that the dimensions of critical consciousness (i.e., reflection, motivation, action) may exist and occur more discretely in earlier adolescence and become more aligned and interconnected, with one reinforcing the other, as adolescents age into young adulthood. Future research should investigate these interrelationships in greater detail. Lastly, when performing our analyses, we chose to dummy-code race/ethnicity by grouping all BIPOC-identifying

participants together. Though this decision allowed us to make comparisons between broad racial groups despite our small subsample sizes, we recognize the limitations of grouping together all participants of color as this group is by no means monolithic. We do not intend to homogenize the uniquely different racialized experiences of this diverse group of adolescents but rather seek to contribute to the budding conversation on ethnic-racial socialization and critical consciousness, in the hopes that future research will be able to account for more nuanced subgroup ethnic-racial comparisons.

Conclusion

Overall, our findings suggest that the messages parents convey to their children about their race and ethnicity have important implications for how young people understand their racialized world and their place within it. For youth of color, learning more about their cultural group seems to contribute to a deeper understanding of racially oppressive forces. Previous research has documented associations between cultural socialization and a host of positive developmental outcomes, including ethnic-racial identity, racial pride, and self-esteem (Hughes et al., 2006); the findings in this study suggest that it is also associated with critical reflection for BIPOC youth. In other words, cultural socialization might help make racially oppressive forces more visible to youth of color, thereby preparing them to take on a role in recognizing and challenging these forces.

For White youth, conversely, cultural socialization seems to contribute to a *weaker* recognition of oppressive forces (i.e., reduced critical reflection). Future research must consider how White parents can share their own cultural histories while also acknowledging and educating their children about the existence and consequences of racially oppressive forces in the world today. In her model of positive White racial identity development, Janet Helms notes the

necessity of White people acknowledging their Whiteness in order to work toward true allyship (1993). Findings in the present study suggest that perhaps the ways in which many White parents are currently engaging in cultural socialization are not effectively reinforcing the acknowledgement and allyship messages for which Helms advocates. Scholars in the field of ethnic-racial socialization have shown an increasing interest in exploring how White parental socialization may impact White racial identity development (e.g., Heberle et al., 2024; Huft et al., 2024; Nieri et al., 2023). The present study points to one issue, regarding youth critical consciousness, to which scholars in this emerging field may attend.

Data availability statement: Data used in the present study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

References

Abaied, J. L., Perry, S. P., Cheaito, A. & Ramirez, V. (2022). Racial socialization messages in White parents' discussions of current events involving racism with their adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *32*(3), 863-882.

Aboud, F. E. (1988). *Children and prejudice*. New York: Blackwell.

Aldana, A., Bañales, J. & Richards-Schuster, K. (2019). Youth anti-racist engagement: Conceptualization, development, and validation of an Anti-Racism Action Scale. *Adolescent Research Review*, *4*(4), 46-55.

Anderson, R.A., Johnson, N., Jones, S.C.T., Patterson, A. & Anyiwo, N. (2024). Racial socialization and black adolescent mental health and developmental outcomes: A critical review and future directions. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *53*, 709-732.

Anyiwo, N., Bañales, J., Rowley, S., Watkins, D. & Richards-Schuster, K. (2018). Sociocultural influences on the sociopolitical development of African American youth. *Child Development Perspectives*, *12*(3).

Anyiwo, N., Palmer, G., Garrett, J., Starck, J. & Hope, E. (2020). Racial and political resistance: An examination of the sociopolitical action of racially marginalized youth. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *35*, 86-91.

Apfelbaum, E., Sommers, S. & Norton, M. (2008). Seeing race and seeming racist? Evaluating strategic colorblindness in social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *95*(4), 918-932.

Bañales, J., Marchand, A., Skinner, O., Anyiwo, N., Rowley, S. & Kurtz-Costes, B. (2019).

Black adolescents' critical reflection development: Parents' racial socialization and attributions about race achievement gaps. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *30*(S2), 403-417.

Bañales, J., Hope, E., Rowley, S. & Cryer-Coupet, Q. (2021). Raising justice-minded youth: Parental ethnic-racial and political socialization and Black youth's critical consciousness. *Journal of Social Issues*, *77*, 964-986.

Barnes, H. & Olson, D. (1985). Parent-adolescent communication and the circumplex model. *Child Development*, *56*(2), 438-447.

Bentley-Edwards, K.L. & Stevenson, H.C. (2016). The multidimensionality of racial/ethnic socialization: Scale construction for the cultural and racial experiences of socialization (CARES). *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *25*, 96-108.

Brittian, A., Umaña-Taylor, A. & Derlan, C. (2012). An examination of biracial college youths' family ethnic socialization, ethnic identity, and adjustment: Do self-identification labels and university context matter?. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *19*(2), 177-189.

Brown, T., Tanner-Smith, E., Lesane-Brown, C. & Ezell, M. (2007). Child, parent, and situational correlates of familial ethnic-racial socialization. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *69*(1), 14-25.

Brown, C., Spatzier, A. & Tobin, M. (2010). Variability in the inter-group attitudes of White children: What we can learn from their ethnic identity labels. *Social Development*, *19*(4), 758-778.

Cervantes-Soon, C. (2012). *Testimonios* of life and learning in the Borderlands: Subaltern Juarez girls speak. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *45*(3), 373-391.

Delgado, E., Serna, C., Martinez, I. & Cruise, E. (2022). Parental attachment and peer relationships in adolescence: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(3).

Diemer, M., Kauffman, A., Koenig, N., Trahan, E. & Hsieh, C. (2006). Challenging racism, sexism, and social injustice: Support for urban adolescents' critical consciousness development. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *12*(3), 444-460. 317-344.

Diemer, M., Hsieh, C. & Pan, T. (2009). School and parental influences on sociopolitical development among poor adolescents of color. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *37*(2), 317-344.

Diemer, M. (2012). Fostering marginalized youths' political participation: Longitudinal roles of parental political socialization and youth sociopolitical development. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *50*, 246-256.

Diemer, M., Rapa, L., Voight, A. & McWhirter, E. (2016). Critical consciousness: A developmental approach to addressing marginalization and oppression. *Child Developmental Perspectives*, *10*(4), 216-221.

Diemer, M., Pinedo, A., Bañales, J., Mathews, C., Frisby, M., Harris, E. & McAlister, S. (2021). Recentering action in critical consciousness. *Child Development Perspectives*, *15*(1), 12-17.

Diemer, M., Frisby, M., Pinedo, A., Bardelli, E., Elliot, E., Harris, E., McAlister, S. & Voight, A. (2022). Development of the short critical consciousness scale (ShoCCS). *Applied Developmental Science*, *26*(3), 409-425.

Dull, B. D., Hoyt, L. T. & Chaku, N. (2022). White adolescents' racial contexts: Associations

with critical action. *Child Development*, *93*(6), 1698-1712.

Dunivin, Z. O., Yan, H. Y. Ince, J. & Rojas, F. (2022). Black Lives Matter protests shift public discourse. *PNAS*, *119*(10).

Duriez, B. & Soenens, B. (2009). The intergenerational transmission of racism: The role of Right-Wing Authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *43*(5), 906-909.

Else-Quest, N. & Morse, E. (2014). Ethnic variations in parental ethnic socialization and adolescent ethnic identity: A longitudinal study. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *21*(1), 54-64.

Feldman, H. (2021). Motivators of participation and non-participation in youth environmental protests. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3.

Freire, P. (2000). Pedagogy of the oppressed (30th anniversary ed.). (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Garcia Coll, C., Lamberty, G., Jenkins, R., McAdoo, H., Crnic, K., Wasik, B. & Garcia, H. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development*, *67*(5), 1891-914.

Giani, M. & Meon, P. G. (2019). Global racist contagion following Donald Trump's election. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-8.

Gonzales-Backen, M., Bamaca-Colbert, M., Noah, A. & Rivera, P. (2017). Cultural profiles among Mexican-origin girls: Associations with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, *5*(3), 157-172.

Hagan, C., Halberstadt, A., Cooke, A. & Garber, P. (2024). White parents' racial socialization:

Questionnaire validation and associations with children's friendships. *Journal of Family Issues*, *45*(2), 350-373.

Heberle, A., Rapa, L. & Farago, F. (2020). Critical consciousness in children and adolescents: A systematic review, critical assessment, and recommendations for future research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *146*(6), 525-551.

Helms, J. (1993). I also said "White racial identity influences White researchers". *The Counseling Psychologist*, *21*(2), 240-243.

Hershberg, R. M. & Johnson, S. K. (2019). Critical reflection about socioeconomic inequalities among White young men from poor and working-class backgrounds. *Developmental Psychology*, *55*(3), 562-573.

hooks, b. (1994). Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hope, E. (2015). Preparing to participate: The role of youth social responsibility and political efficacy on civic engagement for Black early adolescents. *Child Indicators Research*, *9*, 609-630.

Hughes, D. (2003). Correlations of African American and Latino parents' messages to children about ethnicity and race: A comparative study of racial socialization. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *31*(1-2), 15-33.

Hughes, D. & Chen, L. (1997). When and what parents tell children about race: An examination of race-related socialization among African American families. *Applied Developmental Science*, *1*(4), 200-214.

Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E.P., Johnson, D. J., Stevenson, H. V. & Spicer, P. (2006).

Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology*, *42*, 747-770.

Hughes, D., Witherspoon, D., Rivas-Drake, D. & West-Bey, N. (2009). Received ethnic-racial socialization messages and youths' academic and behavioral outcomes: Examining the mediating role of ethnic identity and self-esteem. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *15*(2), 112-124.

Huguley, J., Wang, M., Vasquez, A. & Guo, J. (2019). Parental ethnic-racial socialization practices and the construction of children of color's ethnic-racial identity: A research synthesis and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *145*(5), 437-458.

Iruka, I. U., Gardner-Neblett, N., Telfer, N. A., Ibekwe-Okafor, N., Curenton, S., Sims, J., Sansbury, A. & Neblett, E. (2022). Effects of racism on child development: Advancing antiracist developmental science. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology*, *4*, 109-132.

Jemal, A. (2017). Critical consciousness: A critique and critical analysis of the literature. *The Urban Review*, *49*(4), 602-626.

Jennings, M. K., Stoker, L. & Bowers, J. (2009). Politics across generations: Family transmission reexamined. *The Journal of Politics*, *71*(3), 782-799.

Jones, C. M. & Rogers, L. O. (2023). Family racial/ethnic socialization through the lens of Multiracial Black identity: A m(ai)cro analysis of meaning-making. *Race and Social Problems*, *15*(1), 59-78.

Kyere, E. & Huguley, J.P. (2020). Exploring the process by which positive racial identity develops and influences academic performance in Black youth: Implications for social work. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *29*, 286-304.

Lateef, H., Jellesma, F., Boahen-Boaten, B.B. & Borgstrom, E. (2024). The Parental Afrocentric Socialization Scale: A development and validation study with Black emerging adults. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication.

Le, T, Johnson, S. & Lerner, J. (2022). Exploring moderators of the relationship between adolescents' social responsibility and civic actions. *Journal of Community Applied Social Psychology*, *33*, 391-405.

Loyd, A. & Gaither, S. (2018). Racial/ethnic socialization for White youth: What we know and future directions. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *59*, 54-64.

Mathews, C., Medina, M., Bañales J., Pinetta, B., Marchand, A., Agi, A., Miller, S., Hoffman, A., Diemer, M. & Rivas-Drake, D. (2020). Mapping the intersections of adolescents' ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness. *Adolescent Research Review*, *5*, 363-379.

McAdam, D. (1986). Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of Freedom Summer. *American Journal of Sociology*, *92*(1).

Moffitt, U., Rogers, L. O. & Dastrup, K. R. H. (2022). Beyond ethnicity: Applying Helms's White Racial Identity Development Model among White youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *32*(3), 1140-1159.

Moffitt, U. & Rogers, L. O. (2022). Studying ethnic-racial identity among White youth: White supremacy as a developmental context. *Journal of Research in Adolescence*, *32*(3), 815-828.

Morrison, K. & Chung, A. (2010). "White" or "European American"? Self-identifying labels influence majority group members' interethnic attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *47*, 165-170.

Nasir, N., McLaughlin, M. & Jones, A. (2009). What does it mean to be African American?

Constructions of race and academic identity in an urban public high school. *American Educational Research Journal*, *46*(1), 73-114.

Neville, H., Lilly, R., Duran, G., Lee, R. & Browne, L. (2000). Construction and initial validation of the color-blind racial attitudes scale (CoBRAS). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *47*(1), 59-70.

Newman, B. & Newman, P. (1978). The concept of identity: Research and theory. *Adolescence*, *13*(49), 157-166.

Nieri, T. & Huft, J. (2023). Contextual factors in ethnic-racial socialization in White families in the United States. *Societies*, *13*(5), 114.

Nieri, T., Montoya, L. & Carlos, C. (2024). Ethnic-racial socialization of White children by White parents: A systematic review. *Journal of Family Issues*, *45*(7), 1735-1763.

Nguyen, C., Wong, Y., Juang, L., & Park, I. (2015). Pathways among Asian Americans' family ethnic socialization, ethnic identity, and psychological well-being: A multigroup mediation model. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *6*(3).

Pahlke, E., Bigler, R. & Suizzo, M. (2012). Relations between colorblind socialization and children's racial bias: Evidence from European American mothers and their preschool children. *Child Development*, *83*(4), 1164-1179.

Pancer, S., Pratt, M., Hunsberger, B. & Alisat, S. (2007). Community and political involvement in adolescence. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*(6), 741-759.

Pinedo, A., Frisby, M., Kubi, G., Vezaldenos, V., Diemer, M., McAlister, S. & Harris, E. (2024). Charting the longitudinal trajectories and interplay of critical consciousness among youth activists. *Child Development*, *95*, 296-312.

Pinetta, B. J., Martinez, B., Cross, F. L. & Rivas-Drake, D. (2020). Inherently political?

Associations of parent ethnic-racial socialization and sociopolitical discussions with Latinx youths' emergent civic engagement. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1-12.

Primbs, M. A., Holland, R. W., Maatman, F. O., Lansu, T., Faure, R. & Bijlstra, G. (2024). The effects of the 2020 BLM protests on racial bias in the United States. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1-14.

Rapa, L., Diemer, M. & Bañales, J. (2018). Critical action as a pathway to social mobility among marginalized youth. *Developmental Psychology*, *54*(1), 127-137.

Rivas-Drake, D., Hughes, D. & Way, N. (2009). A preliminary analysis of associations among ethnic-racial socialization, ethnic discrimination, and ethnic identity among urban sixth graders. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *19*(3), 558-584.

Robinson, C., Mandleco, B., Olsen, S. & Hart, C. (1995). Authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting practices: Development of a new measure. *Psychological Reports*, *77*, 819-830.

Rogers, J. & Terriquez, V. (2013). *Learning to lead: The impact of youth organizing on the educational and civic trajectories of low-income youth*. Los Angeles, CA: Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access.

Ruisch, B. C. & Ferguson, M. J. (2022). Changes in Americans' prejudices during the presidency of Donald Trump. *Nature Human Behavior*, *6*, 656-665.

Schmid, C. (2012). The value "social responsibility" as a motivating factor for adolescents' readiness to participate in different types of political actions, and its socialization in parent and peer contexts. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(3), 533-547.

Schwartz, S., Zamboanga, B., Rodriguez, L. & Wang, S. (2007). The structure of cultural identity

in an ethnically diverse sample of emerging adults. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *29*, 159-173.

Seider, S., Clark, S. & Graves, D. (2020). The development of critical consciousness and its relation to academic achievement in adolescents of color. *Child Development*, *91*(2).

Seider, S. & Graves, D. (2020). *Schooling for critical consciousness*. Harvard Education Press.

Seider, S., Graves, D., El-Amin, A., Kelly, L., Soutter, M., Clark, S., Jennett, P. & Tamerat, J. (2021). The development of critical consciousness in adolescents of color attending "opposing" school models. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *38*(1).

Seider, S., Henry, D., Edwards, E., Huguley, J., Diaz, B. & Daza, K. (2023). Investigating the relation between critical consciousness and academic achievement for adolescents of color and White adolescents. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *29*(4), 516-529.

Sniderman, P. & Carmines, E. (1998). *Reaching beyond race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sniderman, P. & Piazza, T. (1993). *The scar of race*. Belknap Press/Harvard University Press.

Stevenson, H.C., Cameron, R., Herrero-Taylor, T. & Davis, G.Y. (2002). Development of the Teenage Experience of Racial Socialization Scale: Correlates of race-related socialization from the perspective of Black youth. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *28*, 84-106.

Suzuki, S., Marchand, A. D. & Johnson, S. K. (2024). The role of parents' and adolescents' critical reflection in the development of white youths' commitments to dismantling oppression. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *35*(1).

Syed, M. & Westberg, D. W. (2024). Building better models of racial/ethnic identity

development: A commentary on Satterthwaite-Freiman and Umaña-Taylor. *Human Development*, *68*(3), 139-146.

Thomas, A., Barrie, R., Brunner, J., Clawson, A., Hewitt, A., Jeremie-Brink, G. & Rowe-Johnson, M. (2014). Assessing critical consciousness in youth and adults. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *24*(3).

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Yazedjian, A. & Bamaca-Gomez, M. (2004). Developing the ethnic identity scale using Eriksonian and social identity perspectives. *Identity*, *4*(1).

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Gonzales-Backen, M. A. & Guimond, A. B. (2009). Latino adolescents' ethnic identity: Is there a developmental progression and does growth in ethnic identity predict growth in self esteem? *Child Development*, *80*, 391-405.

Umaña-Taylor, A. & Hill, N. (2020). Ethnic-racial socialization in the family: A decade's advance on precursors and outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 244-271.

Vittrup, B. (2018). Color blind or color conscious? White American mothers' approaches to racial socialization. *Journal of Family Issues*, *39*(3), 668-692.

Watts, R. & Flanagan, C. (2007). Pushing the envelope on youth civic engagement: A developmental and liberation psychology perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*(6), 779-792.

Watts, R., Diemer, M. & Voight, A. (2011). Critical consciousness: Current status and future directions. In C.A. Flanagan & B.D. Christens (Eds.), Youth civic development: Work at the cutting edge. *New DIrections for Child and Adolescent Development*, *134*, 43-57.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Racial socialization, ethnic identity, and cross ethnic relationships*. Unpublished master's thesis. Northern Illinois University.

Youniss, J. & Yates, M. (1997). *Community service and social responsibility in youth*. University

of Chicago Press.

Zimmerman, M., Ramirez-Valles, J. & Maton, K. (1999). Resilience among urban African American male adolescents: A study of the protective effects of sociopolitical control on their mental health. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 27*, 733-751.*

Zucker, J. & Patterson, M. (2018). Racial socialization practices among White American parents: Relations to racial attitudes, racial identity, and school diversity. *Journal of Family Issues*, *39*(16), 3903-3930.