

Is Gender More Important and Meaningful Than Race? An Analysis of Racial and Gender Identity Among Black, White, and Mixed-Race Children

Leoandra Onnie Rogers and Andrew N. Meltzoff
University of Washington

Objectives: Social categories shape children's lives in subtle and powerful ways. Although research has assessed children's knowledge of social groups, most prominently race and gender, few studies have examined children's understanding of their own multiple social identities and how they intersect. This paper explores how children evaluate the importance and meaning of their racial and gender identities, and variation in these evaluations based on the child's own age, gender, and race. **Method:** Participants were 222 Black, White, and Mixed-Race children (girls: $n = 136$; $M_{\text{age}} = 9.94$ years). Data were gathered in schools via 1-on-1 semistructured interviews. Analyses focused on specific measures of the importance and meaning of racial and gender identity for children. **Results:** We found that: (a) children rate gender as a more important identity than race; (b) the meanings children ascribe to gender identity emphasized inequality and group difference whereas the meaning of race emphasized physical appearance and humanism/equality; and (c) children's assessments of importance and meaning varied as a function of child race and gender, but not age. **Conclusion:** The findings extend research on young children's social identity development and the role of culture and context in children's emerging racial and gender identities. Implications for identity theory and development and intergroup relations are discussed.

Keywords: race, gender, identity formation, social learning, middle childhood

Supplemental materials: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000125.supp>

Interviewer: How important is being a boy to you?

Child: A lot, um because a big part of me is being a boy.

Interviewer: What do you think it means to be a boy?

Child: It means that you're different from other people . . . I'm different because I'm really fast.

Interviewer: How important is being black and white to you?

Child: Not much. Because I, I get treated normally. I don't see the difference in race.

—*Mixed-Race boy, Grade 3*

Race and gender are two prominent social categories in the United States that shape how we are seen by others and how we understand ourselves. Race and gender self-perceptions influence

children's psychosocial well-being, peer interactions, and academic pathways (Cooper, García Coll, Bartko, Davis, & Chatman, 2005; Cvencek, Meltzoff, & Greenwald, 2011; Evans, Copping, Rowley, & Kurtz-Costes, 2011; Marks, Szalacha, Lamarre, Boyd, & García Coll, 2007). Children's development is nested within the macrocontext of culture and the proximal context of school (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; García Coll et al., 1996), and both exert pressure on what and how children learn about social categories. Today's children are raised in an increasingly diverse sociopolitical climate, including the first Black president of the United States, a dynamic dialogue about race and gender labels, and the redefinition of marriage (Funderberg, 2013). Schools, in addition, serve as proximal spaces where children experience race and gender and discover what these constructs mean for them in their everyday lives (Brown, 2006; Lewis, 2001).

Prior research has examined children's knowledge about others' race and gender, but less is known about how children construe their own racial and gender identities. In racially diverse schools, we gathered data from Black, White, and Mixed-Race children in middle childhood (7–12 years old) to explore the expressed importance and meaning of racial and gender identity.

Race and Gender Categories in Childhood

When and what children learn about race and gender has been the focus of much research. Before the age of 3, children can accurately label themselves (and others) based on gender, and by the age of 5 (often even earlier for racial-ethnic minority children) children will apply racial labels (Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Martin &

This article was published Online First October 13, 2016.

Leoandra Onnie Rogers, College of Education and Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, University of Washington; Andrew N. Meltzoff, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, University of Washington.

Leoandra Onnie Rogers is now at Northwestern University.

This research was supported by NSF (SMA-1303753) and the Spencer Foundation/National Academy of Education.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Leoandra Onnie Rogers, Department of Psychology, Northwestern University, 2029 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201. E-mail: onnierogers@northwestern.edu

Ruble, 2009; Slaughter-DeFoe, 2012). These young children also acquire knowledge about behaviors and characteristics associated with race and gender (e.g., boys play with trucks), and as early as preschool, will assign more positive attributes to their own social group and more negative ones to others (i.e., in-group bias), (Cvencek, Greenwald, & Meltzoff, 2011, 2016; Pfeifer et al., 2007). By mid- to late childhood, they can explicitly report beliefs about the social status of these groups (Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Ocampo, Knight, & Bernal, 1997; Quintana, 1998) and show awareness of prejudice and discrimination (Brown & Bigler, 2005; Killen, 2007; McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Children also use race and gender to justify the exclusion of peers (Killen & Stangor, 2001; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 1996).

The literature focuses on children's knowledge of social groups and biases, but less is known about how children explicitly explain, interpret, and justify what it means to be Black or White, a boy or girl, and how important these categories are to them—that is, how they interpret and reflect upon their own developing identities.

Social Identity and Multidimensionality

Social identity refers to the ways in which an individual views him or herself as part of a larger social group, such as race or gender (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These social groups provide a sense of group belonging, which influences self-esteem and intergroup relations (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Cvencek et al., 2016; Thoits & Virshup, 1997). Current theories of social identity formation posit a multidimensional structure in which importance and meaning are two key aspects of social identity (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The *importance* dimension refers to how much value one places on a social identity, how central it is to the overall self. For example, some people view their race as a central element of who they are, others view it as less relevant. Children vary in how much value they place on their racial and gender identities (e.g., Turner & Brown, 2007). Racial minority children tend to view race as more important than White children (e.g., Akiba, Szalacha, & García Coll, 2004), and girls may rate gender as more important to them than boys (Cvencek et al., 2016; Turner & Brown, 2007; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001).

The *meaning* of identity refers to how one understands what it means to be a member of a social group, the “content” of identity (Syed & Azmitia, 2010). Research with adolescents shows that the meaning of racial-ethnic identity includes physical appearance, language, pride, and group differences (Niemann, Romero, Arredondo, & Rodriguez, 1999; Syed & Azmitia, 2010), and limited, prior work in younger children suggests that racial-ethnic identity also includes such dimensions (e.g., Rogers et al., 2012). Moreover, in several studies, Black children emphasize racial pride whereas White children stress more humanistic views of race (Risman & Banerjee, 2013; Rogers et al., 2012). For gender, studies suggest that children mostly focus on physical attributes (e.g., clothing, hair length), personality traits, and activity preferences; girls tend to stress physical appearance and boys focus on personality traits (Miller, Lurye, Zosuls, & Ruble, 2009).

Identity importance and meaning are also linked theoretically (Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998). For example, a child who views race as highly important may ascribe a meaning to her racial

identity that is distinct from a child who places little value on race. Likewise, the importance placed on gender may shape how it affects a child's interpretation of gender roles and meaning.

It is useful to distinguish identification (or labeling) from the more nuanced ideas of importance and meaning, particularly for children. Measures of identification are often about classification and category knowledge. For example, the “Me/Not Me” paradigm asks children to classify themselves into the appropriate social group using social labels: Boy = “Me” or “Not Me”. A fuller and more nuanced sense of identity, however, involves a psychological sense of “we-ness” or belonging (Master, Cheryan, & Meltzoff, 2016; Ruble et al., 2004; Thoits & Virshup, 1997) and is more graded rather than dichotomous. If identification is a statement of group membership (“I am ____”), then identity engages the value children assign to that membership and the subjective meaning they ascribe to it. It has been suggested that identification is a precursor to identity (e.g., Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Ocampo et al., 1997) and that “like-me” social categorization begins early in development (Meltzoff, 2013). Beyond self-classification, a more comprehensive theory of identity development will incorporate the personal importance and subjective meaning children assign to such categories and the role they play in their lives.

Middle Childhood

Middle childhood (7–12 years old) is an important time to explore the emergence of social identity because children's cognitive advancements and social pressures invite new ways of thinking about self–other relations using social concepts such as race and gender (Akiba et al., 2004; Bennett & Sani, 2004; Rowley, Burchinal, Roberts, & Zeisel, 2008; Ruble et al., 2004). Children's social worlds expand during this period, as they spend more time in school and with peers, and become attuned to the social experiences of peer exclusion and rejection (Berndt & Ladd, 1989; Killen, 2007).

Erikson (1968) referred to middle childhood as the stage of “industry versus inferiority” in which the child discovers and refines self-confidence and competence—introspecting “Am I industrious or am I inferior?” Social categories, such as race and gender, will influence how children navigate this question (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996), and it is through reflecting on what it means to be a member of different social groups that children learn, in part, who they are. Moreover, the sense of self a child forms in middle childhood lays a critical foundation for identity development across the life span (Erikson, 1968).

Extant identity theory and research is less integrated across age and development than would be desirable for a comprehensive theory. Research in early childhood tends to focus on identification and category knowledge (e.g., Ocampo et al., 1997), whereas research in adolescence taps subjective reports about importance, meaning and belonging (e.g., Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004; Yip, Seaton, & Sellers, 2006). What happens in between? The social–cognitive advancements of middle childhood indicate that children are not only aware of social categories and their memberships in them, but also begin to grapple with how those social memberships are personally relevant and meaningful to them. We sought to examine this important transition period.

Multiple Identities: Race and Gender

Identity theory and research is often divided according to domains—tending to focus either on race/ethnicity or gender. But, individuals have multiple identities which can be hierarchically structured such that some social identities are perceived as more important or central to the self than others (e.g., Kiang, Yip, & Fuligni, 2008). One study found that White children rated gender as more important than race, but racial minority children (predominately Hispanic) rated race and gender as equally important (Turner & Brown, 2007). Another study found that Portuguese immigrant children ranked gender higher than race-ethnicity, but Cambodian and Dominican immigrant children ranked race-ethnicity as more important than gender (Akiba et al., 2004). Finally, a study with Black adolescent boys reported that gender identity was more important than racial identity to the participants (Rogers, Scott, & Way, 2015). Existing data are thus inconclusive with regard to the relative perceived importance of racial and gender identity and how this balance may change with development.

One might think that in middle childhood gender is less important than race, based on the findings that gender rigidity (e.g., gender-specific toys and activities, same-gender peers) declines during this time (Halim & Ruble, 2009; Martin & Ruble, 2009), and children’s awareness and knowledge of race increases (McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Slaughter-DeFoe, 2012). However, rather than referencing race more often with age, some research suggests that children appear to acknowledge it less. In an experimental study, Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, and Norton (2008) found a surprising outcome in which younger children (8–9 year olds) outperformed older children (10–11 years old) on a challenging sorting task that included Black and White faces. The 8–9 year-olds openly referenced race (e.g., skin color), but the 10–11 year-olds actively avoided talking about it. Apfelbaum and colleagues explain their results as a developmental onset of “colorblindness,” a shift in children’s understanding of social norms in relationship to race.

Societal beliefs and practices also mark gender as more visible, and perhaps more important for children, than race. Gender is used routinely in daily life, from bathrooms to sports teams to clothes and toy isles. During the Jim Crow era, race was also used in this way, but such practices are now legally and socially disparaged. Instead, the dominant racial narrative espouses multiculturalism and colorblindness. Schools are especially likely to uphold a colorblind racial ideology, emphasizing the idea that “everyone is the same” (Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004; Schofield, 2006). Thus, even though personal adherence to gender rigidity decreases and awareness of race increases, the cultural context of race and children’s awareness of social norms about racial silence may lead children to rate racial identity as less important than gender identity. Exploring the meanings that children ascribe to race and gender can provide insight into how they understand these social identities and why they matter (or do not) to them.

Current Study

The current study assessed: (a) the importance and meaning that children ascribe to their racial and gender identities; (b) variation in these identity constructs as a function of child age, gender, and race; and (c) whether the importance of identity predicts its content meaning.

This study advances the literature on children’s social identities and identity scholarship by investigating both racial and gender identity in the same children, adding to new literature on multiple and intersecting identities (e.g., Ghavami, Katsiaficas, & Rogers, 2016). Our inclusion of Black children in a study of gender identity is important because much of the gender literature focuses on White middle-class samples (Skinner, Perkins, Wood, & Kurtz-Costes, 2015). We also make a concerted effort to examine Mixed-Race children. These children are less well studied than their monoracial peers, but increasingly represented among our nation’s youth (Funderberg, 2013; Saulny, 2011).

Method

Data were drawn from a larger, ongoing longitudinal study of children’s self-perceptions in elementary and middle school. All data were collected via individual semistructured interviews. The interview incorporated qualitative and quantitative measures, including: a card sorting task, forced-choice measures, and open-ended questions. The data analyzed here were collected during the 2013–2014 academic year in the first wave of data collection.

School Setting and Characterization

The study was conducted in three racially diverse public schools in a predominantly low-income, urban community in the Pacific Northwest. Schools were selected from the same school district using the following inclusion criteria: (a) a minimum of 30% Black students and 30% White students; (b) no more than 50% of any one racial group; (c) a minimum of 70% of students eligible for the free/reduced lunch program. Table 1 reports demographics of the participating schools. We chose this setting because racial diversity influences awareness of and beliefs about race (e.g., Lewis, 2001), and we wanted to study youth navigating their identities in racially diverse schools. More broadly, the setting is relevant because the racial-ethnic diversity of American youth is growing (Saulny, 2011), and the majority of students categorized as lower socioeconomic status are children of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Participants

A total of 242 children participated in the initial wave of data collection for a larger study. The full sample includes Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Mixed-Race children. For this analysis, racial-ethnic groups with small sample sizes ($n < 10$) were excluded. Our sample includes 222 children ($M_{age} = 9.94$ years)

Table 1
Demographics of Participating Schools

| School | % Free/ reduced lunch | Asian | Black | Hispanic | White | Other | % of Research sample |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------------------------|
| School A (K–5 th) | 79% | 5% | 37% | 14% | 39% | 5% | 37% |
| School B (K–5 th) | 95% | 9% | 38% | 15% | 30% | 8% | 24% |
| School C (6 th –8 th) | 74% | 5% | 35% | 9% | 44% | 7% | 39% |

who self-identified as Black, White, or Mixed-Race. Sample descriptives are reported in Table 2.

Procedure

At each school, students in second through sixth grade were invited to participate in the study and given parent consent forms at the beginning of the school year. Students who returned parental consents were individually interviewed in a private space at school (e.g., classroom, office). The first author conducted all of the interviews and spent a full academic year at the schools assisting in classrooms and at recess. The data for each child were collected during a single, audio-recorded session. Interviews averaged 40 minutes (range: 19–79 min). Children received a college-themed pencil and \$5 gift card for participating. Audio files were transcribed verbatim by a professional company and verified by research assistants.

Measures

The full interview protocol included five main sections: *family background*; *school and academics*; *friendships and peer groups*; *self and identity*; and *future aspirations*. Specific measures of racial and gender identity used in this analysis are detailed below in the order in which they appeared in the self and identity section of the interview.

“Me/Not Me” identity selection task. Children’s racial and gender identifications were determined via the “Me/Not Me” identity selection task (modified from Ruble et al., 2004). This task marked the beginning of the self and identity section of the interview. The task included five social labels: *Gender*, *Race*, *Family*, *Student*, and *Athlete*. These identity labels were selected based on prior research (Marks et al., 2007; Turner & Brown, 2007). Each child was shown the following identity labels: *boy*, *girl*, *daughter*, *son*, *student*, *Asian*, *Black*, *Hispanic*, *White*, *athlete*. Each was printed on a laminated 2 × 3.5-inch card and presented to the child one at a time in the order listed above. The presentation order of identity labels was held constant for each participant. For each card, the child was asked, for example, “Are you a [boy]?” and told to sort the card into the “Me” pile if the label described them and into the “Not me” pile if it did not. After all cards were sorted in this manner, the child was asked: “Are there any cards in the ‘Not me’ pile that you would like to move to the ‘Me’ pile?” so that children could revise their selections. For this analysis,

children who selected more than one racial label (e.g., Asian and White) were classified as “Mixed-Race.” Once identity labels were affirmed, the “Not me” cards were removed. The cards in the “Me” pile were reserved and utilized for subsequent tasks during the interview.

Identity importance. Two tasks were used to measure the importance of identity.

Identity card sort and rank task. The cards in the “Me” pile were laid out visibly on the table and children were asked to rank them in order of importance. Ranking was achieved using the following instruction: “Looking at the cards in the ‘Me’ pile, which one is most important, so important that without it you wouldn’t really feel like yourself anymore?” This procedure was repeated three successive times (so each child selected his or her top three identities). Then, of the last two identity cards, the child was asked which card was “least important?” The remaining card was placed fourth, yielding a 5-tier identity hierarchy. Thus, if a child selected Gender (boy/girl) first, in the position of *most important*, it was assigned a value of “1” whereas if Gender was selected last, as the *least important*, it was assigned a value of “5” (see online supplemental materials).

Importance rating scale. Later in the interview, children were asked to rate the importance of their respective racial and gender identities separately. For example, if the child chose “girl” as their gender identity, the interviewer said: “Now, let’s talk about Girl [pointing to “Girl” card]. How important is being a girl to you?” Children were instructed to answer using a 3-point visual scale: 1 = *not much*, 2 = *a little bit*, or 3 = *a lot*. The parallel question sequence was asked for racial identity labels. These identity ratings were done separately so that a child could rate race and gender as equally important (unlike in the rank-order task).

Identity meaning. After children rated the importance of identity, they were asked about its meaning. The meaning children ascribed to their racial and gender identities was measured from an open-ended question: “What does it mean to be a [boy/girl]?” and “What does it mean to be [Black/White/Mixed]?” Children’s answers were transcribed verbatim and then content analyzed and categorized into “meaning codes.”

Coding for meaning. Using a data-driven approach (Thomas, 2006), each child’s transcript was examined to document repeating words, ideas, and concepts that defined and distinguished children’s understandings of race and gender. These were grouped into an initial coding scheme that was preliminarily tested on 25% of the responses. Revisions were then made to reduce redundancy and further specify codes. The final coding scheme had five content meaning codes for race and gender: *Physical Appearance*, *Inequality and Group Difference*, *Humanism/Equality*, *Pride/Positive Traits*, and *Family*. Definitions and examples of meaning codes are in Table 3. Each code was established as a dichotomous variable: “0” = the meaning code was *absent* from the response; “1” = the meaning code was *present*. Codes were not mutually exclusive, so that each child could receive multiple meaning codes. Most children received one code for race (70%) and one for gender (74%). We included one mutually exclusive code for “I don’t know” responses. This code was used for participants whose only answer to the meaning question was “I don’t know,” and was applied to 11% of the sample for racial identity and 14% for gender identity.

Interrater agreement for coding was assessed using two independent scorers. The first author and a trained scorer coded the full

Table 2
Participants ($N = 222$) by Gender, Race, and Age

| Gender | Black | White | Mixed-Race ¹ |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Boys ($n = 86$) | | | |
| n | 17 | 37 | 32 |
| M_{age} | 9.58 (1.32) | 10.29 (1.63) | 9.65 (1.60) |
| Girls ($n = 136$) | | | |
| n | 37 | 46 | 53 |
| M_{age} | 9.65 (1.67) | 10.34 (1.52) | 9.83 (1.74) |
| Total | 54 | 83 | 85 |

¹The Mixed-Race sample includes: Black/White ($n = 36$), Hispanic/White ($n = 21$), Asian/White ($n = 9$), Hispanic/Black ($n = 6$), and multiracial ($n = 13$).

Table 3
Race and Gender Meaning Codes: Examples and Frequencies

| Meaning code | Definition | Example | | Prevalence | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|------------|--------|
| | | Race | Gender | Race | Gender |
| Physical Appearance | Appearance; concrete/observable (skin, hair, clothing) | “Um it means like you have brown skin and white means you have kind of a whitish/yellowish skin.” | “Um it means that you have more hair than boys and um you wear pretty girl clothes like this—and you wear pretty headbands, because boys don’t like wearing headbands or dresses.” | 32% | 19% |
| Inequality and Group Difference | Group stereotypes, comparison; discrimination | “Um, I think it means —that mixed people are kinda treated differently instead of being all one thing—like people ask me what I am a lot.” | “Being a boy means that you can do a lot of stuff that girls can’t do.” | 19% | 43% |
| Humanism/Equality | Equality/same across groups; it doesn’t mean anything | “I believe race doesn’t matter at all. It just matters about who you are. It matters how you care about other people.” | “Being a boy doesn’t mean a lot because it still really doesn’t matter what gender you are, you can have fun whether you’re a girl or a boy.” | 30% | 14% |
| Family | Family or lineage; relatives | “The reason why I’m Mexican too is because I’m related to my auntie and my uncle, he is from Mexico and that’s how I got the Mexican in me . . . like inside I am [Mexican].” | “Being a boy means that um I am a son to my dad and my mom.” | 13% | 3% |
| Pride/Positive Traits | Affect; positive traits or evaluation | “I’m happy that I’m Black. It is good and happy. I like being me.” | “Being a girl means you’re smart, loyal, and intelligent.” | 14% | 19% |
| I Don’t Know | Only response was “I don’t know” | | | 11% | 14% |

data set, with strong interrater agreement: racial identity, $\kappa = .82$ to $.98$; gender identity, $\kappa = .86$ to $.94$. A second independent scorer then coded 25% of the sample with adequate interrater agreement: $\kappa = .74$ to $.90$ for race and $\kappa = .82$ to $.96$ for gender. Coding disagreements were resolved through discussion.

Results

The results are presented in three sections: (a) the importance of racial and gender identity, (b) the meaning of racial and gender identity, and (c) the relationship between identity importance and meaning.

Importance of Race, Gender, and Other Identities

The identity card sort and rank task. These data were analyzed first. From the five social identity categories (Family, Student, Gender, Race, Athlete), Family (being a son/daughter) was, on average, the most important identity ($M = 2.12$; lower scores indicate higher importance). Student ($M = 2.62$) was ranked second, followed by Gender ($M = 3.12$) and Athlete ($M = 3.26$). Race was most often ranked last ($M = 3.95$). On average, children ranked Gender significantly higher in importance than Race, $t(220) = -5.56, p < .001, d = 0.53$.

To test for variation in the average ranking of identities, we conducted a 2 (Gender: boy, girl) \times 3 (Race: Black, White, Mixed) \times 5 (Importance: gender, race, athlete, family, student) Multivariate Analysis of Covariance. Age was entered as a cova-

riate and was not significant in any of the models. Post hoc tests (with Bonferroni correction) were used for significant effects.

Results from the full model comprising the five identities yielded three significant multivariate effects: child’s race, *Pillai’s Trace* = $.22, F(10, 422) = 5.08, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$; child’s gender, *Pillai’s Trace* = $.17, F(5, 210) = 8.70, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$; and a significant interaction between child’s race \times child’s gender, *Pillai’s Trace* = $.08, F(10, 422) = 1.85, p = .05, \eta^2 = .04$. Univariate effects are summarized in Table 4. Significant models are discussed below.

The importance of racial identity varied as a function of child’s race, $F(1, 37.75) = 20.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$. Black ($M = 3.72, SD = 1.56$) and Mixed-Race ($M = 3.35, SD = 1.59$) children ranked race higher in their identity hierarchy than White children ($M = 4.73, SD = .85$), $p < .01$ and $p < .001$, respectively. There was also a main effect of the child’s gender on their judgments about the importance of racial identity, $F(1, 8.71) = 4.86, p = .03, \eta^2 = .02$, such that girls ($M = 3.78, SD = 1.55$) ranked race slightly higher than boys ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.32$), $p = .05$.

The importance of gender identity varied as function of child’s race, $F(2, 6.25) = 4.01, p = .02, \eta^2 = .04$. White children ($M = 2.80, SD = 1.17$) ranked gender higher than Mixed-Race children ($M = 3.32, SD = 1.35$), $p = .05$. There was no main effect of the child’s gender, meaning boys and girls did not differ from each other in their assignment of gender identity importance.

The importance of family identity varied as a function of the child’s gender, $F(1, 18.91) = 16.76, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$. Girls

($M = 1.89, SD = .96$) ranked being a daughter significantly higher in their identity hierarchy than boys ranked being a son ($M = 2.49, SD = 1.27$).

The importance of the athlete identity varied as a function of the child's gender, $F(1, 53.95) = 33.66, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$. Boys ($M = 2.69, SD = 1.38$) ranked athlete higher in their identity hierarchy than girls ($M = 3.62, SD = 1.25$). This main effect was qualified by a race \times gender interaction, $F(2, 9.30) = 5.81, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$. The follow-up ANOVA was significant for boys [$F(2, 6.72) = 3.57, p = .02, \eta^2 = .09$] and showed that Black boys ($M = 1.89, SD = 1.13$) ranked athlete significantly higher in their identity hierarchy than White boys ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.04$), $p = .02$, as seen in Figure 1.

The race importance and gender importance rating scales.

Table 5 presents the frequencies for importance ratings by child race and gender. Results were consistent with the rank-order task: gender was rated as *A little* important ($M = 2.15, SD = .80$) and race was rated closer to the *Not much* category ($M = 1.63, SD = .82$); the mean-difference on the paired samples *t* test was significant, $t(220) = 6.95, p < .001, d = .48$. Chi-square tests were conducted to evaluate differences by child's race and gender. Results show that race importance varied as a function of child race, $\chi^2(4, N = 222) = 37.37, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .28$. This is a large estimated effect size (Cohen, 1992).¹ Approximately half of Black and Mixed-Race children rated race as *A little* or *A lot* important compared to 11% of White children, which means that 89% of White children answered that race as *Not* important (see Table 5).

In sum, across measures of importance, gender was evaluated as more important than race, and levels of identity importance varied as a function of child gender and race, but not age.

Table 4
MANCOVA: Significant Univariate Effects for Multiple Identities

| Identity | df | error | F | p | η^2 |
|--|----|-------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Racial identity | | | | | |
| Age | 1 | .72 | .40 | .53 | .00 |
| Race | 2 | 37.75 | 20.92 | .001 | .16 |
| Gender | 1 | 8.77 | 4.86 | .03 | .02 |
| Race \times Gender | 2 | 2.52 | 1.39 | .25 | .01 |
| Gender identity | | | | | |
| Age | 1 | .06 | .04 | .84 | .00 |
| Race | 2 | 6.25 | 4.01 | .02 | .04 |
| Gender | 1 | .25 | .16 | .69 | .00 |
| Race \times Gender | 2 | .56 | .36 | .70 | .00 |
| Family identity | | | | | |
| Age | 1 | 3.28 | 2.91 | .09 | .01 |
| Race | 2 | 3.50 | 3.10 | .05 | .03 |
| Gender | 1 | 18.91 | 16.76 | .001 | .07 |
| Race \times Gender | 2 | 4.45 | 3.95 | .03 | .04 |
| Athlete identity | | | | | |
| Age | 1 | .55 | .341 | .56 | .00 |
| Race | 2 | 5.64 | 3.52 | .03 | .03 |
| Gender | 1 | 53.95 | 33.66 | .001 | .14 |
| Race \times Gender | 2 | 9.31 | 5.81 | .01 | .05 |
| Student identity | | | | | |
| Age | 1 | 2.65 | 1.82 | .18 | .01 |
| Race | 2 | 5.18 | 3.62 | .03 | .03 |
| Gender | 1 | .00 | .00 | .98 | .00 |
| Race \times Gender | 2 | .95 | .67 | .51 | .01 |

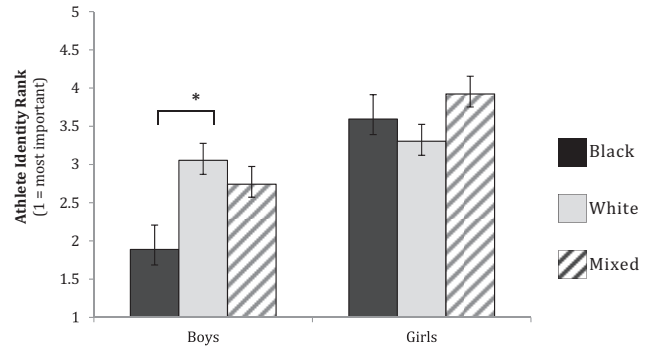


Figure 1. Significant race \times gender interaction for rank order of athlete identity.* $p < .05$.

Meaning of Race and Gender

The meaning of identity was assessed via the six content meaning codes (including "I don't know") derived from the transcripts of children's open-ended answers (see Table 3). For racial identity, physical appearance (32%) and humanism/equality (30%) were the most prevalent, followed by inequality and group difference (19%). For gender identity, the most frequent meaning code was inequality and group difference (43%), followed by physical appearance (19%) and pride and positive traits (19%). We conducted a series of chi-square tests to assess whether the prevalence of the meaning codes varied as function of child age, gender, and race. Significant results are reported below.

Race meaning. There were significant differences as a function of the child's race in two of the race meaning codes, family and pride, and a marginal difference for humanism/equality.

Family. The prevalence of family meanings varied as a function of child's race, $\chi^2(2, N = 222) = 13.25, p = .001$, Cramer's $V = .25$. Mixed-Race children comprised 69% of the responses referencing *family*. For example: "[I]t means having a mix between Hispanic and American and having different races from different states" (Mixed-Race boy, Grade 5). White children represented 24% of responses referencing family and Black children comprised 7%.

Pride. The prevalence of racial pride varied as a function of child's race, $\chi^2(2, N = 222) = 21.87, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .32$. Black children made up 58% of the references to pride: "I think it means I'm proud to be Black. I like who I am" (Black boy, Grade 4). One-third of the references to pride were made by Mixed-Race children (29%) and only 13% of White children.

Humanism/equality. The prevalence of humanism/equality was marginally significant for child's race, $\chi^2(2, N = 222) = 5.16, p = .06$, Cramer's $V = .15$. White children comprised 42% of the responses that referenced humanism/equality: "I believe race doesn't matter at all. It just matters about who you are. It matters how you care about other people" (White girl, Grade 6). A quarter of Black (26%) and Mixed-Race (27%) children mentioned humanism/equality.

¹ Cramer's V estimates of effect size are interpreted as: small = .06; medium = .17; large = .29 (Cohen, 1992).

Table 5
Race and Gender Importance: Frequencies (N) by Child Gender and Race

| Demographic group | Gender importance | | | Race importance | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------|-------|-----------------|----------|-------|
| | Not Much | A Little | A Lot | Not Much | A Little | A Lot |
| Boys | | | | | | |
| Black | 29% | 24% | 47% | 53% | 24% | 23% |
| White | 38% | 24% | 38% | 89% | 8% | 3% |
| Mixed-Race | 16% | 40% | 44% | 50% | 19% | 31% |
| Girls | | | | | | |
| Black | 28% | 28% | 44% | 35% | 35% | 30% |
| White | 15% | 46% | 39% | 76% | 17% | 7% |
| Mixed-Race | 28% | 36% | 36% | 43% | 19% | 38% |
| Total | 25% | 34% | 41% | 58% | 20% | 22% |

Gender meaning. There were significant differences for two gender meaning codes: physical appearance and pride and positive traits.

Physical appearance. The prevalence of physical appearance varied as a function of child’s gender, $\chi^2(1, N = 222) = 5.51, p = .02$, Cramer’s $V = .16$. Girls reported 77% of the references to physical appearance. For example: “I think [being a girl] means glam. Like looking glamorous and pretty for everyone” (Mixed-Race girl, Grade 5).

Pride and positive Traits. The prevalence of pride varied as function of child’s race, $\chi^2(2, N = 222) = 6.78, p = .03$, Cramer’s $V = .17$. Over 70% of the responses coded for gender pride were from children of color (Black: 40%; Mixed-Race: 31%); “Being a boy means helping one another and being there for one another, having another person’s back” (Black boy, Grade 5). White children comprised 29% of the responses that were coded for pride.

Identity Importance Predicting the Content Meaning of Identity

The last set of analyses examined whether the importance of racial and gender identity predicted its content meaning. We conducted a series of stepwise logistic regressions assessing the impact of racial identity importance (*Not much, A little, A lot*) and gender identity importance (*Not much, A little, A lot*) on the likelihood of referencing each content meaning code (physical appearance, family, pride and positive traits, inequality and group difference, humanism/equality, and I don’t know). The reference group for importance was *Not much*; boy was the reference group for gender, and Black was the reference group for race. Models were run separately for the meaning of race and gender. Each model included child age, gender, and race (Step 1), followed by race importance and gender importance (Step 2). Significant models are discussed below.

Race meaning. There were significant models for three of the meaning codes: pride and positive traits, inequality and group difference, and humanism/equality.

Pride and positive traits. The full logistic regression model assessing the likelihood that pride was present in the meaning of racial identity was significant: $\chi^2(8, N = 222) = 34.49, p < .001$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between children who referenced pride in the meaning of race and those who did not. The model as a whole explained between 14.6% (Cox & Snell R^2)

and 26.2% (Neglekerke R^2) of the variance in race meanings referencing *pride*. The odds ratio for race importance was 3.89 ($p = .01$), indicating that children who rated race as *very important* were nearly 4 times more likely to define race in terms of pride and positive traits than children who stated that race was *not important*, net of all variables in the model.

Inequality and group difference. The full logistic regression model assessing the likelihood that inequality and group difference was present in the meaning of racial identity was significant: $\chi^2(8, N = 222) = 18.21, p = .02$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between children who referenced racial inequality and group difference and those who did not. The model explained between 8% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 12.8% (Neglekerke R^2) of the variance. Race importance yielded a significant odds ratio of 3.41 ($p = .01$), net of all other predictors. This means that, compared to children who stated that race was *not important*, children who rated race as *very important* were more than three times more likely to define race in terms of inequality and group difference.

Humanism/equality. The full logistic regression model predicting the likelihood that humanism/equality was present in the meaning of racial identity was significant, $\chi^2(8, N = 222) = 20.53, p = .01$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between children who referenced humanism/equality and those who did not. The full model explained between 9% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 12.8% (Neglekerke R^2) of the variance in race meanings referencing humanism/equality. Race importance yielded a significant odds ratio of .24 ($p < .01$), net of all other predictors. This indicates that, compared to children who stated that race was *not important*, rating race as *very important* decreased the likelihood of defining race in terms of humanism/equality by a factor of .24.

Gender meaning. There was one significant model for the meaning of gender identity. The full logistic regression model predicting the likelihood of referencing humanism/equality in the meaning of gender identity was significant: $\chi^2(8, N = 222) = 18.91, p = .01$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between children who referenced humanism/equality in the meaning of gender and those who did not. The full model explained between 8.2% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 14.6% (Neglekerke R^2) of the variance. Gender importance yielded a significant odds ratio of .21 ($p < .01$), net of all other predictors in the model. This indicates that, compared to rating gender as *not important*, rating gender as *very important* decreased the likelihood of referencing humanism/equality by a factor of .21.

Discussion

This study advances our understanding of social identity development in middle childhood by exploring how a sample of children in predominately low-income, racially diverse schools discuss the importance and meaning of their racial and gender identities. We found that: (a) children explicitly rate gender as a more important identity than race; (b) the meanings children ascribe to gender identity stress inequality and group difference but the meaning of race emphasizes physical appearance and humanism/equality; and (c) children’s appraisals of importance and meaning vary as a function of race and gender (but not across the age range tested).

The content of children’s reports about their own identities further suggests that gender is more meaningful than race to them.

Children mostly defined their racial identities in terms of physical appearance (e.g., “It’s the color of you, like brown skin”) and humanism/equality (“It doesn’t mean anything”; “White is the same thing as Black”). They discussed gender in terms of inequality and group difference (“You can do more things that girls can’t do”), pride and positive traits (“It feels good because boys are strong. I’m happy to be a boy”), and physical appearance (“Girls wear skirts and high heels, and always look pretty”). Moreover, children who rated race or gender identity as being more *important* used more “meaningful” descriptions, such as pride and positive traits or inequality and group difference. In contrast, children who ranked or rated race or gender as *not important*, offered more “meaningless” definitions such as humanism/equality (“It’s just your color, it doesn’t matter about anything”). In other words, the rated importance of an identity is related to the extent to which one acknowledges (or silences) group differences.

These findings offer empirical support for the theoretical link between the dimensions of importance and meaning in a multidimensional identity framework. In addition, the variation in importance and meaning suggests evidence of the “we-ness” that characterizes social identity. That is, although children did not vary in their ability to classify themselves into social groups (identification), there was considerable variability within and across groups in their subjective evaluations about the centrality and meaning of those group memberships (social identity). Some of the meanings children provided suggest group knowledge and categorization based on physical appearance, but their references to inequality, social comparison, and humanism suggest an understanding of the social and personal norms and implications of these groups. Such meanings, coupled with their evaluations of importance, may indicate the transition from simple categorical identification to a more nuanced explicit understanding of how it “matters” to their developing sense of self in relation to others. Developmentally, these middle childhood identities then serve as building blocks for the identity constructs more often measured in adolescence, such as exploration and a sense of belonging to social groups (e.g., Master et al., 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Gender Is More Important and Meaningful Than Race

Gender identity, as measured by importance ratings and content meaning, appears to trump racial identity in this sample. However, gender was not the first or most important identity selected either; it was most often ranked third (behind family and student), which aligns with the theorized decline or plateau of gender centrality at this age (Halim & Ruble, 2010). The overall low importance ratings for racial identity may reflect the age of our sample. The mean age of our sample (9.94 years) lies on the cusp of where Apfelbaum and colleagues (2008) found the adoption of “colorblindness” (at age 10). The meaning of race further supports this conclusion, as children frequently expressed that race “doesn’t matter.”

The cultural context and the school context are relevant to understanding how children in our sample interpreted the importance and meaning of racial and gender identity. The dominant gender narrative in the United States is one of *difference*: It is said that boys and girls behave differently, think differently, feel differently, and have different preferences and abilities (e.g., Vencek et al., 2011; Liben & Bigler, 2002). Gender labels are routinely

used to categorize children by gender: Boys and girls have separate bathrooms, sports teams, clothing and toy aisles, and (sometimes) separate classrooms and schools. In school, teachers routinely divide students into “boys and girls” and make explicit linguistic references to gender (Hilliard & Liben, 2010; Lamb & Brown, 2007). This may help explain why children in our sample also discussed gender by emphasizing difference, separating boys from girls. For example, one participant said being a boy is “really important because I don’t want anyone thinking I’m a girl!” (White boy, Grade 4).

The cultural narrative about race, in contrast, is focused on *sameness*. The message of equality and diversity comes in the package of being “colorblind” or “color-mute” (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Pollock, 2004). As found in previous research (e.g., Schofield, 2006), colorblindness in the school context was also present in our study. The participating schools had posters and slogans in the hallways and classrooms that emphasized the adage that “everyone is the same.” As stated by one of our young participants: “Being Black doesn’t really matter. ‘Cause if you’re Black or White, you’re still the same thing. ‘Cause God created you the same in the inside. You probably just look different on the outside” (Black girl, Grade 2). Our point is certainly not that encouraging diversity and inclusion is inherently problematic; rather, we want to show how such messaging can sometimes communicate racial silence and may shape the way children articulate their own racial identities.

Developmental, cultural, and contextual influences combine to shape children’s racial and gender identities. Our conclusion is not simply that gender is more important, or that race is invisible to children, but rather that children consider gender to be more important and meaningful than race because of how these categories are “seen” and used in their daily lives. More biological explanations for the perceived importance of gender over race may also be entertained (see Appiah, 1990), and future cross-cultural studies would be useful in sorting out this complex issue.

Variation in Identity Correlates With Children’s Racial and Gender Group

As expected (Rogers et al., 2012; Turner & Brown, 2007), the importance and meaning of identity varied across demographic groups. Specifically, the racial minority children in our sample rated racial identity as significantly more important than their White peers, a pattern that is consistent with the adolescent and adult identity literature (e.g., Phinney, 1990).

Mixed-Race children. A unique aspect of the current work is the inclusion of Mixed-Race children, for whom data are quite limited. Studies of identity among Mixed-Race (Black/White) adults show that they often fall midway between Blacks or Whites (e.g., Jaret & Reitzes, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002). In our child sample, Mixed-Race children’s ratings of racial identity importance were more statistically similar to their Black peers.

Differences between demographic groups also emerged in the content meaning of racial identity. Black children focused on pride and positive traits, Mixed-Race children on family, and White children on humanism/equality. These patterns support prior research on racial-ethnic identity meaning (Rogers et al., 2012) and the literature on racial socialization. Specifically, Black American parents frequently use racial pride messages to teach their children

about race whereas White families (at least in U.S. communities similar to those tested here) mostly communicate egalitarian messages (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006). The attention to family among Mixed-Race children seemed grounded in the blending of two backgrounds. For example: “It [Mixed-Race] means that—well first of all I know that I’m half-Black and half-White because my dad is Black and my mom is White” (Mixed-Race boy, Grade 3). Young children’s concrete or “essentialist” views of the heritability of race has been discussed in previous research (Hirschfeld, 1998), but the special importance of race among Mixed-Race children at this age may point to a significant role that the family plays in making sense of racial identity in a mixed/multiracial family (Rockquemore & Brunσμα, 2002).

Gender. Surprisingly, no significant gender differences were detected in the importance of gender identity (Verkuuyten & Thijs, 2001). However, our data do suggest “gendered” nuances in the identities of boys and girls. For example, in terms of meaning, girls were more likely to use physical appearance to define the meaning of gender than boys. On the identity ranking task, girls ranked family higher in their identity hierarchy than boys, and boys ranked athlete significantly higher than girls (with Black boys ranking athlete as their most important identity). These gendered patterns align with societal norms (e.g., Halim & Ruble, 2010) by which girls are assumed (and socialized) to be more relational and family oriented, whereas boys, specifically Black boys, are assumed and expected to be more physical and athletically inclined.

Multiple identities. Although we found mean-level racial differences in the importance of race, with children of color evaluating race as more important than White children, the hierarchical structure of racial identity and gender identity was consistent across groups. That is, children from all racial groups rated gender higher than race in their identity hierarchy. This is not wholly consistent with some reports showing that the relative importance of race and gender differs for racial minority versus majority children (e.g., Akiba et al., 2004; Turner & Brown, 2007). But, some evidence from adolescents and adults has similarly shown that gender trumps race on measures of importance for both racial majority and minority groups (e.g., Jaret & Reitzes, 1999; Rogers et al., 2015). How the relative importance of multiple identities is shaped by the stereotypes of the social group, and how importance ratings change over time and link to intersectionality are questions for further empirical study (e.g., Ghavami et al., 2016).

Theoretical Implications and Future Directions

Identity is a lifelong concern with known consequences for social-emotional well-being, relationships, and life success (Erikson, 1968; Master et al., 2016; Quintana, 2007; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). The field lacks detailed empirical data about the transition from early social identification to the stages of adolescent identity development. Children’s emergent understandings of the importance and meaning of racial and gender identity, as tapped here, may mark the first steps in a transition from categorical identification with a social category to a more nuanced social identity and sense of belonging with multiple social groups. For example, children who rate race and gender lower in importance in preadolescence may also engage in less identity exploration during adolescence than children who rate their identities higher importance (e.g., Yip et al., 2006).

Similar developmental questions with respect to multiple identities and intersectionality can be explored (Ghavami et al., 2016). At what age do children see these identities as intersectional? Explicit questions asking children what it means to be a “Black girl” and how important this intersectional identity is to children, is a needed next step. Such designs would shed light on when children grasp intersectionality and how it differs from their understandings of singular identities (e.g., the ways in which being a “Black girl” is unique or distinct from being “Black” or a “girl”).

Children’s identities may also be related to important social outcomes, such as research on intergroup attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. For example, defining race and gender in terms of inequality and group difference may be related to children’s perceptions, awareness, and negotiation of discrimination or their experiences with group-based exclusion. Some research suggests that children are more aware of gender bias than racial-ethnic bias (Brown, 2006), and they often believe it is justifiable to exclude peers on the basis of gender but not race-ethnicity (Killen & Stangor, 2001; Møller & Tenenbaum, 2011). Research that explores how children’s own racial and gender identities influence such processes is needed for advancing our understanding of the links between social identity, outcomes and behavior in everyday life.

Limitations

Our study is limited to the age of the sample tested and a cross-sectional design, which restrict our ability to detect age-related changes in racial and gender identity importance and meaning. The results are also limited to the specific five social identity options presented in the “Me/Not Me” task. This methodological decision did not allow us to assess the importance of other social labels that we did not test (e.g., nationality, religion). The nonrandomized presentation order of identity options may also raise concern about the results of identity importance. However, the selection task was presented separate from the importance rankings and ratings of identities. Also, the patterns in the data do not suggest notable primacy/recency effects. For example, gender (boy/girl) was presented first but was outranked by family. Nonetheless, further study is needed to rule out potential influence of order effects. We also recognize that “Mixed-Race” was not an explicit option in the identity selection task but a direct response to children selecting more than one racial label and describing themselves using both. More research examining the nuances of identity formation in Mixed-Race children is needed.

The single-item measure of importance we used does not afford in-depth understanding of children’s interpretation of this construct. The data suggest that children may interpret importance as a proxy for asking about differential treatment or the legitimacy of differential treatment—“It’s [being White] not important at all because you shouldn’t judge people because of their color.” Thus, children may say race “doesn’t matter” because they do not want to discriminate (or want to be discriminated against). Additional measures, including more in-depth interview analysis, behavioral measures, or implicit tests of social cognition (Cvencek, Nasir, O’Connor, Wischnia, & Meltzoff, 2015) may prove useful for understanding the ways that race does matter to children. Finally,

our findings are limited to the school context. The high ranking of student identity, for example, may reflect that the data were collected in school. Given the prevalence of the colorblind ideology in schools (e.g., Schofield, 2006), asking questions about racial identity in the home (or other nonschool contexts) might yield fewer colorblind responses, inasmuch as racial messages at home, especially for minority children, are likely to include more race-related conversations (Hughes et al., 2006).

Conclusion

Children's developing social identity is relevant to theory and practice because today's children are growing up in an increasingly diverse society. The boundaries of race and gender categories are increasingly complex and nuanced, with Mixed-Race people creating new racial categories and transgender people redefining the gender dichotomy. Such cultural shifts concerning social categories simultaneously reshape our collective definitions of diversity, inclusion, and equality. Documenting how children make sense of their social identities and position themselves within these dynamic cultural narratives contributes to the scholarly literature and informs applied work with children in educational settings, families, and communities.

References

- Akiba, D., Szalacha, L. A., & García Coll, C. T. (2004). Multiplicity of ethnic identification during middle childhood: Conceptual and methodological considerations. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2004*, 45–60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cd.103>
- Apfelbaum, E. P., Pauker, K., Ambady, N., Sommers, S. R., & Norton, M. I. (2008). Learning (not) to talk about race: When older children underperform in social categorization. *Developmental Psychology, 44*, 1513–1518. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0012835>
- Appiah, A. (1990). But would that still be me?" Notes on gender, "race," ethnicity, as sources of "identity". *The Journal of Philosophy, 87*, 493–499. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5840/jphil1990871026>
- Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*, 80–114. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.1.80>
- Bennett, M., & Sani, F. (Eds.). (2004). *The development of the social self*. New York, NY: Psychology Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203391099>
- Berndt, T. J., & Ladd, G. W. (1989). *Peer relationships in child development*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In M. Gauvian & M. Cole (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children* (4th ed., pp. 37–43). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
- Brown, C. S. (2006). Bias at school: Perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination among Latino and European American children. *Cognitive Development, 21*, 401–419. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2006.06.006>
- Brown, C. S., & Bigler, R. S. (2005). Children's perceptions of discrimination: A developmental model. *Child Development, 76*, 533–553. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2005.00862.x>
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*, 155–159. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.112.1.155>
- Cooper, C. R., García-Coll, C. T., Bartko, W. T., Davis, H. M., & Chatman, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Developmental pathways through middle childhood: Rethinking contexts and diversity as resources*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Crocker, J., & Wolfe, C. T. (2001). Contingencies of self-worth. *Psychological Review, 108*, 593–623. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.108.3.593>
- Cvencek, D., Greenwald, A. G., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2011). Measuring implicit attitudes of 4-year-olds: The preschool implicit association test. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 109*, 187–200. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2010.11.002>
- Cvencek, D., Greenwald, A. G., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2016). Implicit measures for preschool children confirm self-esteem's role in maintaining a balanced identity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 62*, 50–57. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.09.015>
- Cvencek, D., Meltzoff, A. N., & Greenwald, A. G. (2011). Math-gender stereotypes in elementary school children. *Child Development, 82*, 766–779. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01529.x>
- Cvencek, D., Nasir, N. S., O'Connor, K. O., Wischnia, S., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2015). The development of math-race stereotypes: "They say Chinese people are the best at math". *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 25*, 630–637. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jora.12151>
- Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Evans, A. B., Copping, K., Rowley, S. J., & Kurtz-Costes, B. (2011). Academic self-concept in Black adolescents: Do race and gender stereotypes matter? *Self and Identity, 10*, 263–277. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2010.485358>
- Funderberg, L. (2013, October). The changing face of America: We've become a country where race is no longer Black and White. *National Geographic, 224*, 76–91.
- García Coll, C., Lamberty, G., Jenkins, R., McAdoo, H. P., Crnic, K., Wasik, B. H., & Vázquez García, H. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development, 67*, 1891–1914. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1131600>
- Ghavami, N., Katsiaficas, D., & Rogers, L. O. (2016). Toward an intersectional approach in developmental science: The role of race, gender, sexual orientation, and immigrant status. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior, 50*, 31–73. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/bs.acdb.2015.12.001>
- Halim, M. L., & Ruble, D. (2010). Gender identity and stereotyping in early and middle childhood. In J. C. Chrisler & D. R. McCreary (Eds.), *Handbook of gender research in psychology* (pp. 495–525). New York, NY: Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1465-1_24
- Hilliard, L. J., & Liben, L. S. (2010). Differing levels of gender salience in preschool classrooms: Effects on children's gender attitudes and intergroup bias. *Child Development, 81*, 1787–1798. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01510.x>
- Hirschfeld, L. A. (1998). *Race in the making: Cognition, culture, and the child's construction of human kinds*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hughes, D., Rodríguez, J., Smith, E. P., Johnson, D. J., Stevenson, H. C., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology, 42*, 747–770. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.42.5.747>
- Jaret, C., & Reitzes, D. C. (1999). The importance of racial-ethnic identity and social setting for Blacks, Whites, and multiracials. *Sociological Perspectives, 42*, 711–737. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1389581>
- Katz, P. A., & Kofkin, J. A. (1997). Race, gender, and young children. In S. S. Luther, J. A. Burack, D. Cicchetti, & J. R. Weisz (Eds.), *Developmental psychopathology: Perspectives on adjustment, risk, and disorder* (pp. 51–74). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kiang, L., Yip, T., & Fuligni, A. J. (2008). Multiple social identities and adjustment in young adults from ethnically diverse backgrounds. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 18*, 643–670. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2008.00575.x>
- Killen, M. (2007). Children's social and moral reasoning about exclusion. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 16*, 32–36. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00470.x>

- Killen, M., & Stangor, C. (2001). Children's social reasoning about inclusion and exclusion in gender and race peer group contexts. *Child Development, 72*, 174–186. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00272>
- Lamb, S., & Brown, L. M. (2007). *Packaging girlhood: Rescuing our daughters from marketers' schemes*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Lewis, A. E. (2001). There is no "race" in the schoolyard: Color-blind ideology in an (almost) all-White school. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*, 781–811. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00028312038004781>
- Liben, L. S., & Bigler, R. S. (2002). The developmental course of gender differentiation: Conceptualizing, measuring, and evaluating constructs and pathways. I. Introduction. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 67*(2, Serial No. 269). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1540-5834.t01-1-00188>
- Marks, A. K., Szalacha, L. A., Lamarre, M., Boyd, M. J., & García Coll, C. (2007). Emerging ethnic identity and interethnic group social preferences in middle childhood: Findings from the Children of Immigrants Development in Context (CIDC) study. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 31*, 501–513. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0165025407081462>
- Martin, C. L., & Ruble, D. N. (2009). Patterns of gender development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 61*, 353–381. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100511>
- Master, A., Cheryan, S., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2016). Computing whether she belongs: Stereotypes undermine girls' interest and sense of belonging in computer science. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 108*, 424–437. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/edu0000061>
- McKown, C., & Weinstein, R. S. (2003). The development and consequences of stereotype consciousness in middle childhood. *Child Development, 74*, 498–515. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.7402012>
- Meltzoff, A. N. (2013). Origins of social cognition: Bidirectional self-other mapping and the "Like-Me" hypothesis. In M. R. Banaji & S. Gelman (Eds.), *Navigating the social world: What infants, children, and other species can teach us* (pp. 139–144). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199890712.003.0025>
- Miller, C. F., Lurye, L. E., Zosuls, K. M., & Ruble, D. N. (2009). Accessibility of gender stereotype domains: Developmental and gender differences in children. *Sex Roles, 60*, 870–881. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-009-9584-x>
- Møller, S. J., & Tenenbaum, H. R. (2011). Danish majority children's reasoning about exclusion based on gender and ethnicity. *Child Development, 82*, 520–532. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01568.x>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). *Concentration of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch*. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp
- Niemann, Y. F., Romero, A. J., Arredondo, J., & Rodriguez, V. (1999). What does it mean to be "Mexican"? Social construction of an ethnic identity. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 21*, 47–60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0739986399211004>
- Ocampo, K. A., Knight, G. P., & Bernal, M. E. (1997). The development of cognitive abilities and social identities in children: The case of ethnic identity. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 21*, 479–500. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/016502597384758>
- Pfeifer, J. H., Ruble, D. N., Bachman, M. A., Alvarez, J. M., Cameron, J. A., & Fuligni, A. J. (2007). Social identities and intergroup bias in immigrant and nonimmigrant children. *Developmental Psychology, 43*, 496–507. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.2.496>
- Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*, 499–514. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.499>
- Pollock, M. (2004). *Colormute: Race talk dilemmas in an American school*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Quintana, S. M. (1998). Children's developmental understanding of ethnicity and race. *Applied & Preventive Psychology, 7*, 27–45. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0962-1849\(98\)80020-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0962-1849(98)80020-6)
- Quintana, S. M. (2007). Racial and ethnic identity: Developmental perspectives and research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*, 259–270. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.259>
- Risman, B. J., & Banerjee, P. (2013). Kids talking about race: Tween-agers in a post-civil rights era. *Sociological Forum, 28*, 213–235. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/sof.12016>
- Rivas-Drake, D., Syed, M., Umaña-Taylor, A., Markstrom, C., French, S., Schwartz, S. J., & Lee, R. (2014). Feeling good, happy, and proud: A meta-analysis of positive ethnic-racial affect and adjustment. *Child Development, 85*, 77–102. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12175>
- Rockquemore, K. A., & Brunsma, D. L. (2002). *Beyond Black: Biracial identity in America*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rogers, L. O., Scott, M. A., & Way, N. (2015). Racial and gender identity among Black adolescent males: An intersectionality perspective. *Child Development, 86*, 407–424. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12303>
- Rogers, L. O., Zosuls, K. M., Halim, M. L., Ruble, D., Hughes, D., & Fuligni, A. (2012). Meaning making in middle childhood: An exploration of the meaning of ethnic identity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 18*, 99–108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0027691>
- Rowley, S. J., Burchinal, M. R., Roberts, J. E., & Zeisel, S. A. (2008). Racial identity, social context, and race-related social cognition in African Americans during middle childhood. *Developmental Psychology, 44*, 1537–1546. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0013349>
- Ruble, D. N., Alvarez, J., Bachman, M., Cameron, J., Fuligni, A., García Coll, C., & Rhee, E. (2004). The development of a sense of "we": The emergence and implications of children's collective identity. In M. Bennett & F. Sani (Eds.), *The development of the social self* (pp. 29–76). New York, NY: Psychology Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203391099_chapter_2
- Saulny, S. (2011, March 25). Census data presents rise in multiracial population of youths. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/us/25race.html>
- Schofield, J. W. (2006). The colorblind perspective in school: Causes and consequences. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (6th ed., pp. 271–295). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Sellers, R. M., Chavous, T. M., & Cooke, D. Y. (1998). Racial ideology and racial centrality as predictors of African American college students' academic performance. *Journal of Black Psychology, 24*, 8–27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/00957984980241002>
- Sellers, R. M., Smith, M. A., Shelton, J. N., Rowley, S. A. J., & Chavous, T. M. (1998). Multidimensional model of racial identity: A reconceptualization of African American racial identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 2*, 18–39. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0201_2
- Skinner, O. D., Perkins, K., Wood, D., & Kurtz-Costes, B. (2015). Gender development in African American youth. *The Journal of Black Psychology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0095798415585217>
- Slaughter-Defoe, D. T. (Ed.). (2012). *Racial stereotyping and child development*. New York, NY: Karger. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1159/isbn.978-3-8055-9983-2>
- Syed, M., & Azmitia, M. (2010). Narrative and ethnic identity exploration: A longitudinal account of emerging adults' ethnicity-related experiences. *Developmental Psychology, 46*, 208–219. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0017825>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7–24). Chicago, IL: Nelson Hall.

- Thoits, P. A., & Virshup, L. K. (1997). Me's and we's: Forms and functions of social identities. In R. D. Ashmore & L. J. Jussim (Eds.), *Self and identity: Fundamental issues* (Vol. 1, pp. 106–133). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation, 27*, 237–246. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>
- Turner, K. L., & Brown, C. S. (2007). The centrality of gender and ethnic identities across individuals and contexts. *Social Development, 16*, 700–719. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2007.00403.x>
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Yazedjian, A., & Bámaca-Gómez, M. (2004). Developing the ethnic identity scale using Eriksonian and social identity perspectives. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 4*, 9–38. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S1532706XID0401_2
- Van Ausdale, D., & Feagin, J. R. (1996). Using racial and ethnic concepts: The critical case of very young children. *American Sociological Review, 61*, 779–793. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2096453>
- Verkuyten, M., & Thijs, J. (2001). Ethnic and gender bias among Dutch and Turkish children in late childhood: The role of social context. *Infant and Child Development, 10*, 203–217. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/icd.279>
- Yip, T., Seaton, E. K., & Sellers, R. M. (2006). African American racial identity across the lifespan: Identity status, identity content, and depressive symptoms. *Child Development, 77*, 1504–1517. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00950.x>