

# Developing a Racial-Ethnic Socialization Measure for Multiracial Families

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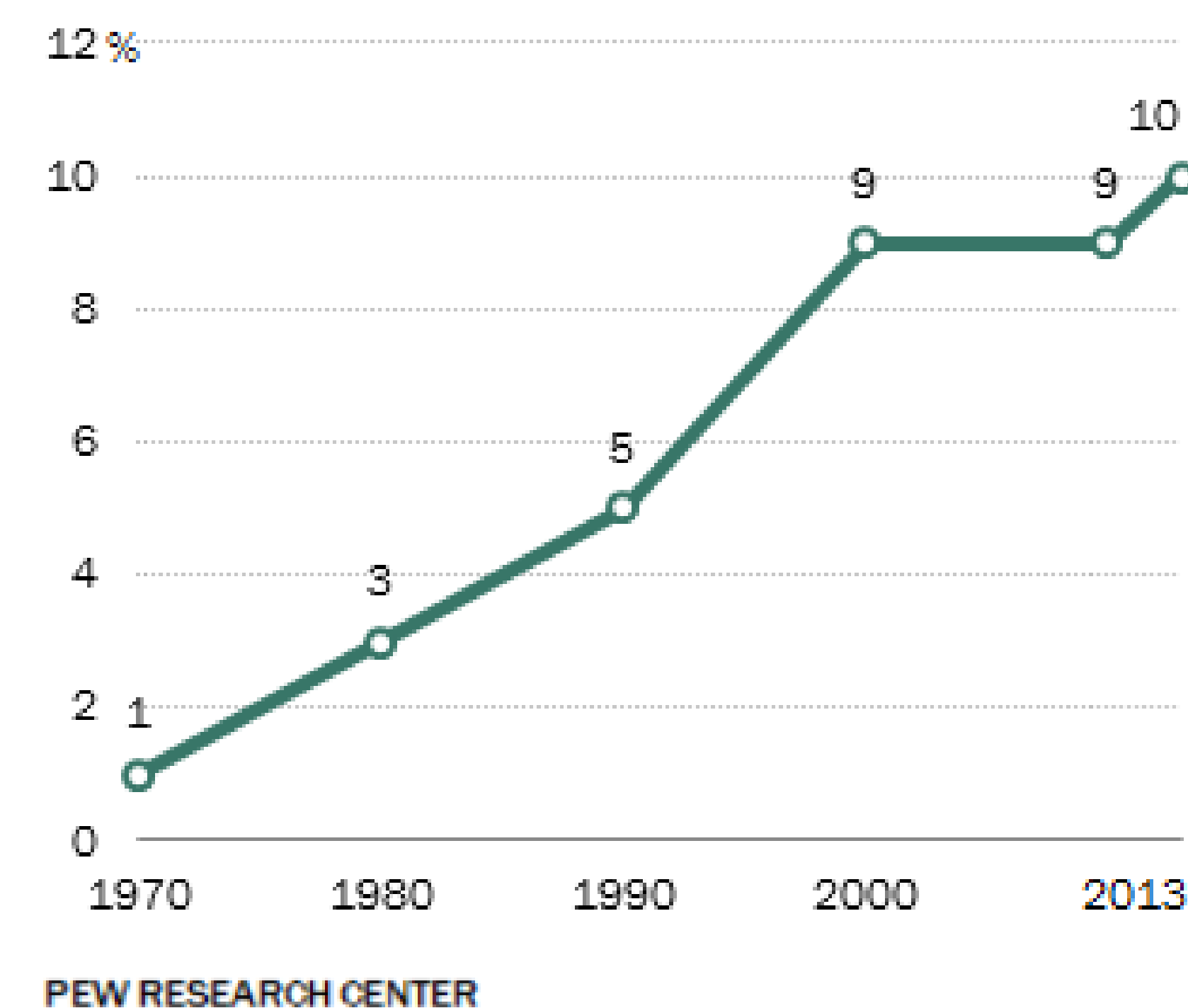


## Introduction

Multiracial children are the largest demographic group in America among individuals under the age of 18 (Saulny, 2011), and yet there is very little research available about their development.

### Multiracial Babies on the Rise

% of children younger than 1 year old who are multiracial, among those living with two parents



Critical Multiracial Theory (Harris, 2016) suggests that the growing population of Multiracial youth face unique racial challenges in the monoracial framework of our society, but there is a dearth of knowledge regarding how they navigate these challenges (Root, 1996). Previous research suggests that parents play an important role in preparing children for racism, instilling pride in their culture, and developing a strong racial-ethnic identity using *racial-ethnic socialization* messages (Hughes et al., 2006).

However, providing appropriate racial-ethnic socialization messages is challenging in multiracial families given the varying racial-ethnic experiences of family members. For example, monoracial parents may not understand multiracial experiences, and White parents have no experience living as a person of color. Thus, it is imperative to identify the racial-ethnic socialization strategies parents of multiracial youth use and how these relate to outcomes such as identity and well-being.

## Purpose

In order to provide a tool for researchers to explore the development of Multiracials, the proposed study aims to develop a new measure of familial racial-ethnic socialization for Multiracial families using qualitative and quantitative methods.

## Research Questions

**Research question 1:** What explicit and implicit messages do parents of Multiracial youth transmit about discrimination, racial-ethnic identity, and culture?

**Research question 2:** How do parents expose Multiracial youth to diverse contexts (e.g., schools, neighborhoods) and people (e.g., friends, role models, extended family, fictional characters)?

## Methodology

### Qualitative Study

#### Step 1

**Recruitment and Data Collection:**  
A diverse sample of 20 Multiracial college students will be recruited.

One to two hour semi-structured interviews will be conducted with each participant.

#### Step 2

**Transcription and Coding:**  
Interviews will be transcribed. Two coders will code two transcripts and create a codebook. One coder will code all data, and a second coder will code 5 transcripts. Interrater reliability will be calculated.

#### Step 3

**Analysis:**  
Thematic analyses will be used to identify themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### Quantitative Study

#### Step 4

**Item Development:**  
Items for the measure will be created based on previous literature and themes discovered in the qualitative study.

#### Step 5

**Recruitment and Data Collection:**  
500 Multiracial college students will be recruited to participate in a 45-minute survey.

#### Step 6

**Analysis:**  
Half of the dataset will be used for exploratory factor analysis to determine which items to retain. With the other half of the dataset, confirmatory factor analysis will be performed to test fit, followed by validity tests.

## Expected Results

Based on a systematic review of existing familial racial-ethnic socialization literature with Multiracial families (Atkin & Yoo, under review), some possible subscales for the measure might be:

- **Cultural socialization messages:** Messages about the traditions, values, language, food, etc. of each of the child's cultures
- **Identity socialization messages:** Messages about the child's racial-ethnic group memberships and racial-ethnic identity labels they can use.
- **Preparation for bias messages:** Messages explaining possible racism the child might experience and advice for how to respond and cope with racial discrimination.
- **Egalitarian socialization messages:** Messages deemphasizing race and promoting colorblindness or appreciation of all cultures.
- **Negative socialization messages:** Messages that teach prejudicial attitudes towards certain racial groups.
- **Exposure to diversity:** Messages about the importance of diversity conveyed through parents' decisions to expose children to diverse contexts and people.
- **No racial-ethnic socialization messages:** Implicit messages that children should not talk about race conveyed by parents ignoring race talk, making jokes, or changing the subject when children bring up race.

## Implications

This measure will be the first racial-ethnic socialization measure appropriate for use with Multiracial families, opening the door for future quantitative studies to investigate how different socialization messages impact multiracial youth and inform interventions that teach parents how to discuss race with their Multiracial children in ways that promote healthy outcomes for this growing population.

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