**Effects of Color-evasive Pedagogy on White Adolescent Interpretations of History**

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Schools are a central fixture in many American children’s lives. From middle childhood to adolescence, the influence of parents and other caretakers tends to decrease as they interact more with peers, teachers, and other adults in their communities (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Bradshaw, 2014). By high school, individuals begin solidifying their beliefs through the lenses of social identities like race (Williamson et al., 2020**). For example, analysts have investigated the role teachers play in Black students’ self-esteem, academic evaluations, and interpretations of history** (Bañales et. al 2020; Francis & Darity 2021; Pena-Shaff et. al 2019; Brown 2007; Hughes 2009). Other studies extend these issues to Latino, Asian American, and multi-racial individuals (see, e.g., Brega & Coleman, 1999; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Stone 2017).

Interactions between teachers and white American students remain largely absent from these inquiries due to the seemingly invisible and white-centering logic of color-evasive ideology, which posits that race does not matter, modern-day racism is the consequence of a few prejudiced people, and racism is a relic of the past (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Lewis, 2004). In the United States, "race" is a dynamic social construction contingent on the country's unique history of white domination and the marginalization of African American, Asian American, Latinx, and Indigenous peoples (Ifekwunigwe, 2020). Because of their dominant position in the United States' contemporary racial order, white individuals have an ego-protective incentive to practice color-evasiveness (Plaut et al., 2018). It allows white individuals to enjoy both the material and psychological wages of whiteness while attributing racial inequalities to personal shortcomings (Du Bois, 1920; Roediger, **Year**). Few scholars have examined how white youth reproduce, rework, or contest such beliefs as they interact with their teacher’s pedagogical approaches. This paper specifically focuses on white adolescents’ interpretations of history in color-evasive environments.

Past studies on race and school contexts often recruit parents and teachers to report students' racial practices (e.g. interracial friendships, standing up to racism, etc.) and racial beliefs (Onyekwuluje, 2000; Hagerman, 2017). Shifting the focus of this scholarship from parents to their children's perceptions can illuminate aspects of behaviors and beliefs that are often obstructed from their parents' view. During adolescence in particular, individuals increase their autonomy and elevate the importance of relationships with those outside of their families (Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Smetana et al., 2015). Therefore, it is possible that messages transmitted by teachers would grow in relevance during high school. By equipping child-centered methods to understand teacher-student interactions, analysts can more easily develop existing theories about the reproduction of dominant racial ideologies and better inform anti-racist teaching strategies and school policies (Rogers, 2021).

To be sure, schools provide a limited view into the lives of adolescents and their interactions with teachers. Past analyses have revealed that the socializing roles of parents, the media, and peer networks, to name a few, are not easily separable from each other (Vitrup, 2011). Likewise, studying adolescence alone ignores earlier life experiences that shape individuals' views and identities. As such, policies and practices intended to disrupt color-evasiveness must also target earlier stages of development (Hagerman, 2020). Like students, instructors’ beliefs about race are also complicated. All individuals create racial narratives from a variety of sources, from their education to mandated curricula as well as personal experiences **with race and racism**. Finally, since white adolescents are socialized differently, conclusions cannot be generalized to white teenagers overall; factors like geographic region, class, sexual orientation, and gender also shape perceptions and beliefs about race and racism (Grossman, 2009; Ghavami & Mistry, 2019; Hatchell, 2004). Despite these limitations, the whiteness cannot be discounted; as mentioned previously, white individuals disproportionately benefit from society’s allocation of privileges which ultimately shapes their narratives about race.

This paper begins with a review of racial and ethnic socialization (**RES**), particularly among white adolescents, and directs it towards a discussion of how pedagogy exists as race-making and socializing practice. Synthesis of psychological, sociological, and educational scholarship reveals that teachers have a limited effect on white adolescents’ interpretations of history. Many white instructors and white students share similar framings of racial groups’ roles in American development and national identity. Since color-evasive ideology pervades discussions both inside and outside of classrooms, white students tend to maintain their pre-instructional beliefs. Furthermore, the effect of teachers on white youth may be confounded with those from those of other socializing agents. **Anti-racist and culturally relevant pedagogies can disrupt the crystallization of color-evasiveness but are more successful earlier in youth’s development**. Future studies can navigate the complexities of ideological formation by gathering more information about these lives of white adolescent participants outside of school contexts and by acknowledging their active role in ideological formation.

**Racial Socialization and the White Habitus**

Population geneticists contend that human variation does not satisfy discrete biological “races,” yet race remains socially real (Graves, 2003; Keita et al., 2004) Today, racialized practices and social relations continue to shape Americans' life outcomes across areas of housing, wealth accumulation, health, and education (see, e.g., Akbar et al., 2019; Trent et al., 2019; Wight, 2020). While significant associations exist between race and educational outcomes, for instance, like graduation rates, grades, discipline, and educational attainment, they do not reflect racial groups' inherent characteristics. Consequently, the "main effect" of race, as well as other racial measures, are sensitive to the social structure of American schools and society broadly.

Children learn about race before their school years through racial and ethnic socialization (RES), “a social, cognitive, and developmental process through which individuals transmit, negotiate and acquire beliefs, values, social norms and behaviors to engage appropriately with society” (Loyd & Gaither, 2018, p. 55). Early RES literature illuminated the central role Black parents and caregivers play in their children’s self-esteem, racial pride, and preparation for bias (Peters & Massey, 1983; Richardson, 1981; Spencer, 1983; Tatum, 1987). **Outside of families, school contexts also mediate Black students’ development of racial beliefs and identities by exposing them to racial inequality and racial messages, both in formal and informal instruction** (Watford et al., 2021)**. These include race-based social inclusion and exclusion (Hitti et al. 2014) in peer groups, evaluations from teachers** (Andrews & Gutwein, 2017; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Redding, 2019)**, and discussions of Black history, to name a few.**

RES scholarship has recently investigated how white children understand race in family and school contexts. Throughout their lives, but especially during their children’s preschool and elementary school years, White parents tend avoid conversations about race and racism or communicate to their children that such issues should not be discussed (Bartoli et al., 2016; Pahlke et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2010; Vittrup, 2016). Despite their parents’ avoidance of “race talk,” white children still form racial attitudes and beliefs about racial inequality and racism based on perceptions and implicit messages.

The *white habitus* explains how the totality of these messages constitute "racialized process of socialization" that develops white individuals’ beliefs, perceptions, tastes, and behaviors (Bonilla-Silva 2018, p. 73). The strength of the white habitus persists despite historical efforts to racially integrate neighborhoods, social networks, and schools (Burke, 2012). As early as 6 months in age, individuals can distinguish between different faces by race (Paulker et al., 2019; Spencer, 2008). By middle childhood, the socializing and racializing work of the white habitus leads white individuals to prefer peers or toys based on race (Clark & Clark, 1939; Aboud, 1988; van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Stokes-Guinan, 2011). In the contemporary United States, primary white school-aged children learn to shift from explicit attitudes on race to subtler ones once they learn that they are less socially acceptable (Sinclair el al., 2005; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Finally, white adolescents crystallize these racial identities and display greater coherency while discussing matters of racism, diversity, and racial privilege (Hagerman, 2020). During this time, individuals gain the ability to discuss and think about race in an abstract and more complicated way (Williams et al., 2020). Adolescence is a critical period for the study of racial ideologies since they are constructed in relation to the position of racial identities one holds.

Colorblind or color-evasive ideology is one ideology acquired by many white individuals throughout socialization and frames the United States as a post-racial society. Bonilla-Silva (2018) theorizes four "frames" of color-evasiveness: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Abstract liberalism describes messages justifying racial inequality with the vague language of equal opportunity, individual freedom, and meritocracy. For example, some individuals use abstract liberalism to argue against school integration policies (e.g. bussing, redistricting) by framing them as violations of parent choice. The second frame, naturalization, explains racial inequality as “just the way things are.” One instance of naturalization appears in messages explaining peer network segregation, like students’ preferred tables in a school cafeteria, as natural occurrences (Tatum, 2017). Often, these arguments ignore the underlying socialization processes that make white students exclude students of color. The third fame, cultural racism, levies stereotypes about communities of color to justify persistent inequality. One such case of this frame arises in Hagerman's (2020, 184) interview with an adolescent girl who claimed that “even a poor black kid could… move up,” but their success would be hampered by their parents’ supposedly inferior financial habits.

As previous examples regarding school choice and peer networks suggest, color-evasive messages circulate schools on an everyday basis. Compared to informal interactions between peers, teachers, and school staff, racial ideologies can arise most clearly in teacher’s pedagogical approaches. Pedagogy, or the process by which educational material is taught, often invokes ideological frames along dimensions of race, class, and gender (Murphy, 2008; Apple, 2004). In this article, I focus specifically on racial messages transmitted by teachers through their pedagogical approaches to history.

**Race and Education**

At the time of this article’s writing, American political discourse has intensified around the teaching of race and racism in public schools. Some have mobilized in response to the perception that American children are indoctrinated by certain racial frameworks, like critical race theory. This backlash occurs after a period of racial reckoning following the deaths of George Floyd, Breona Taylor, and other Black individuals at the hands of police, which has since exposed racialized practices across society. Recently, several state legislatures have passed laws banning teachers from discussing “divisive concepts” such as identities of race, gender, and sexual orientation (“Alabama House approves bill banning ‘divisive concepts’”)., **often explicitly regarding the teaching of American history**. These developments, however, are nothing new. Debates over school curricula have long invoked relations of power, ultimately deciding which ideological knowledge will become school knowledge (Wills, 2019; Thomas, 2015).

How matters of race are discussed in classrooms depends largely on the racial identities of their teachers. Today, more than three-quarters of high school teachers are white, yet students of color constitute more than half of total enrollment in American public schools (Pew Research, 2018). As demographic changes in both classrooms and the country increases the salience of race, racial inequality, and racism in schools, teachers’ interpretive frames of these issues still dictate how these matters are examined. Most teachers report discussing racial inequality and racism with students but rarely do so in practice (Epstein, 2009; Vitrup, 2016). For example, recent studies reveal that around 70 percent of teachers ascribe to color-evasiveness, a figure comparable to the overall adult population (Vitrup, 2016; Hazelbaker & Mistry, 2021). Moreover, little variation exists in the use of color-evasive messages between white, Black, and Latinx teachers. Therefore, given the prevalence of color-evasive messages in classrooms, it is worth considering how white adolescents perceive them (Festritzer, 2011). Teachers may equip color-evasive frames during formal instruction, for example, while teaching units about history. Their ideology can also appear in differential treatment and appraisals of students. In both formal and informal interactions with teachers, white adolescents are exposed to racial ideological positions that they can reproduce, rework, or contest.

The prevalence of color-evasive ideology means that discussions about racial identity, racism, and racial often exist subtly in teachers’ pedagogical approaches (Thomas, 2015). Literature about the effect of pedagogy on white adolescents’ interpretations of history can be grouped into two categories: their views on the role and significance of different racial groups in American development and formulation of a national collective identity through concepts like citizenship.

**Interpreting Historical Significance**

As mentioned previously, many teachers report discussing race in their classrooms yet seldom do so in practice. This principle appears prominently in teachers’ portrayal of European-Americans as the leaders, inventors, and nation builders and marginalized or simplistic images of other racial/ethnic groups. For example, excluding Sacagawea in the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804, many teachers omit individual Indigenous people from American post-colonial history (**Martel, 2018; Peck, 2010**). As a result, white adolescents tend to discuss American Indians using past-tense phrases like “lived in teepees,” “some lived in longhouses,” or “they fished and grew plants or had different religions” (Epstein 2009, p. 61). This assumption draws upon Cook-Lynn’s (2001) theory of “anti-Indianism,” which describes that which treats American Indians and their tribes as if they no longer exist. Hatchell’s (2004) analysis of historical pedagogy in Australia also points to the effect of anti-Indianism on white adolescents. Despite white adolescents’ sympathy towards these groups after learning about European violence and colonialization, victimization alone prevents individuals from viewing Indigenous people as important historical actors, which in turn leads to confusion once introduced to contemporary claims by Indigenous groups to sovereignty, land, and resources. [**include Canadian source]**

Like the teaching of Native American history, white adolescents are also exposed to pedagogical approaches that strip other racialized communities of their agency and contemporary relevance. For example, teachers often exclude details about lynchings and other racial violence throughout history, especially in Asian American and Latinx communities (Brown & Brown, 2010; Salinas et al., 2016).Their lessons about civil rights leaders also introduced abstract liberalist interpretations that dilute messages of leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Cesar Chávez (Carlson, 2003; Epstein, 2009). Specifically, textbook sections about Martin Luther King Jr. ignore the leader’s most radical critiques of systemic racism and capitalism as well as the violence he faced in both life and death (Alridge 2006). These ideas transpired in letters the eleventh graders were asked to write to Martin Luther King Jr.’s children as an activity in their Civil Rights unit. One letter follows:

I wanted to know how you felt after your father’s birthday passed. I know it was hard when your father passed away. Just know we will always keep your father’s dream in our hearts. I’m glad your father’s dream came true. (Epstein, 2009, p. 75)

Similar messages that simplified MLK Jr.’s message (e.g. “he was important for everyone being equal”) reveal the consequences of pedagogy obscuring the Civil Rights Movement’s structural goals and abstracting the “dream” to matters of morality or personal prejudice. The two eleventh grade history teachers in the school argued that Civil Rights leaders “stood up for people’s rights and everyone was listening” (p. 72) despite the opposition by many white Americans in the country at the time (“Public Opinion on Civil Rights: Reflections on the Civil Rights Act of 1964”). Individuals in the Civil Rights era who supported segregation, in the eyes of white adolescents, “treated blacks mean” (p. 75). At first glance, depictions by teachers and white depictions of racism as an issue of the past contradicts the belief of many that racial discrimination still exists. However, these two ideas, that Black community developed the country but are contemporarily irrelevant, are central to the reproduction of color-evasive ideology.

While several frames of color-evasive racism can be evoked in these contexts, minimization and naturalization of racism appear most prominently. In Wills’s (2019) analysis of essays written in a high school classroom’s Civil Rights, they found that these interpretive frames lead students to discard the relevance of racism entirely. During one lesson, the teacher argued that racism arose from ‘segregation within [one’s] own color’ and that ‘race is really a difference of culture and society’ (2019, pp. 20-21). The belief that race is a cultural production, reflecting a set of values and beliefs, successfully challenged the students’ biological construction of race but did not interrogate race’s relationship to social and cultural power (Levstik 2000). As a result, “only a few” of the 65 essays written on the topic of “social change” during the Civil Rights Movement mentioned race or racism explicitly (p. 30). Those that did include content about race either discussed racial discri**mination (e.g. segregation in Birmingham, Alabama) or argued that the Civil Rights Movement was simply about ‘blacks [wanting] to prove that they were equal to the white man.” Unfortunately, Wills’s analysis did not differentiate between essays written by white students and those from other racial identities. This limitation points to the necessity of studies incorporating the racial identity and its relevance to historical interpretations. However, one can assume that a large majority of the white students mirrored the teacher’s avoidance of racism since the “handful” of color-conscious essays at most represents a small fraction of the total white students (n = 29). Moreover, nearly none of the color-conscious essays adopted a critical approach to the Jim Crow era’s system of discrimination or interrogated how segregation privileged white individuals.**

The teacher and students’ downplaying of racism mirrors During Black History month, for example, one teacher in Epstein’s (2009) study opposed several Black students’ suggestion that the class learn about Jesse Jackson. He argued that Jackson’s association with Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam was too controversial, and that Black history month should focus on more “positive” leaders (p. 56). This comment is in keeping with national data revealing that Black students experience less respectful and “open-classroom” environments than their white peers (Knowles 2018). After silencing further critiques and comments made by Black students about their Black history month lessons, several of the white students became upset with their Black classmates. One responded:

When black history comes around, it’s nothing but problems. Black kids are mean to the white kids, like it was us who were the slave owners… But when civil rights come around, blacks get angry… That was in the past. Blacks think it affects them but it doesn’t (pp.79-80).

Versions of refrains like “The past is the past” and “I was not a slave owner” also appear prominently in interviews with white adults and college students when asked about racial inequality today (Bonilla-Silva 2018). Ultimately, these phrases serve color-evasiveness by concealing and naturalizing persistent racial inequality. White adolescents, like their teachers, can reduce racism to the consequence of a few prejudiced people, thus ignoring its structural and historical significance. Consequently, this logic normalizes manifestations of racism like residential segregation: “there has always been segregation because you are always going to have racist people…” (Epstein 2009, p. 79). Collectively, the use of simplified heroes and victimization while discussing Indigenous and Black history can undermine more comprehensive understandings of their roles in historical as well as contemporary contexts. In the case of Latinx, Asian American, and Native American activism, the minimization of racism frame more easily erases these movements altogether.

While color-evasive pedagogy appears to affect white students’ characterizations of racial groups’ roles in history, does it also affect their beliefs about race relations? Color-evasive teachers and textbooks often send “mixed messages” about the relationships between racial groups throughout American history (e.g. cooperation and conflict) that disguise power imbalances (Espstein, 2009). This perspective seeks to balance “positive” examples of racial cooperation with “negative” facts about enslavement, dissent, segregation, and persistent racial inequality (Levstik, 2000)**.** However, as mentioned previously, white adolescents already diminish the salience of people of color in their interpretations of history. As a result, white students rarely characterize dynamics between racial groups unless asked directly (Hewitt, 1986; Landsman, 2009). In Epstein’s study, for example, white teenagers often focused on the “positives,” like Indigenous peoples’ assistance to European colonists (e.g. “showed settlers how to hunt” p.63) and multi-racial coalitions during the Civil Rights Movement. In other words, white students seemed to ignore the teacher’s “negative” statements about colonization and racial violence. Wills’s (2019) analysis of essays written in a unit about white-Black segregation during the Civil Rights era similarly reveals the limitations of pedagogical frames on white students’ interpretations. During one lesson, a teacher argued that racism arose from ‘segregation within [one’s] own color’ and that ‘race is really a difference of culture and society’ (2019, pp. 20-21). The belief that race is a cultural production, reflecting a set of values and beliefs, successfully challenged the teacher’s students’ biological construction of race but did not interrogate race’s relationship to social and cultural power (Levstik, 2000). “Only a few” of the 65 essays written on the topic of “social change” mentioned race or racism explicitly (p. 30). Those that did include content about race either discussed racial discrimination (e.g. segregation in Birmingham, Alabama) or Civil Rights Movement was simply about ‘blacks [wanting] to prove that they were equal to the white man.” Unfortunately, Wills’s analysis did not differentiate between the essays written by white and non-white students. However, the “handful” of color-conscious essays still represent a small fraction of the total white students (n = 29) in the study. The fact that the majority of the students minimized the role of race in the Civil Rights unit still points to the fact that race relations were low salience compared to individual accomplishments. However, it is hard to deduce the contribution of the teachers’ approaches to their white students’ interpretations due to the lack of data collection before instruction.

**Constructing National Identity**

Given the silencing role of color-evasive pedagogy on historical narratives about people of color, it is possible that it also influences white adolescents’ construction of national identity **[I could just connect the concept of history informing ideas about national identity]**. National identity is one example of collective identity, a “sense [indicating] a joint awareness and recognition that members of a group share the same social identity” (David & Bar-Tal, 2009, p. 356). As discussed earlier, teachers and white students tend to understand American development as the product European American contributions, often including examples like the founding fathers and white presidents. Indigenous, Black, Latinx, and Asian American communities are often excluded from white Americans’ constructions of national identity despite their accomplishments (**see, e.g.,** ) and established presence in the United States. as well as the “American creed” of inclusion and equality (Myrdal 1944). These erasures infiltrate mostly clearly through white adolescents’ constructions of the citizenship.

Citizenship is a social construct that draws upon one’s cognitive, social, and affective attachments to their national identity. The liberalist and hegemonic conception of citizenship emphasizes its “set of rights, duties, and identities linking citizens to the nation-state” (Banks, 2014, p. 3). Supporters of this definition argue that “primordial” and racial/ethnic attachments prevent total assimilation and allegiance to one’s country. However, others argue that liberalist conceptions of citizenship ignores its historically-contingent arrangement of social, political, and civic meanings, specifically the United States’s dominant (white) group’s hegemony over which subjects enjoys the benefits of citizenship (see, e.g., Chavez…). Although the United States has always been a multicultural and multiracial nation, it has experienced a rise of immigration since the Immigration Act of 1965 from places previously restricted including Asia, Latin America, and Africa. These demographic changes, alongside movements on college campuses and educational spheres to reform \_\_, led to greater critiques of the aforementioned subjective meanings of citizenship, how it ideologically reflects who socially belongs to a collective identity, and how they are placed within the social structure **(?).**

The advocacy and scholarship by part resulting from student and civil rights movements, however, have yet to disrupt liberalist notions of citizenship in mainstream discourse. Students today are still socialized to view entitlements to national identity through a color-evasive lens, particularly in high school classrooms. For instance, Levstik’s (2000) study of adolescents and history teachers explored how they negotiate national identity’s membership through discursive divides (e.g. we vs. them). During instruction, they found both groups instinctively using the first-person plural to delineate often-white historic actors from marginalized racial/ethnic groups. Teachers, for instance, described the colonial period and American Revolution as the time when “we began” (p. 288), ignoring the fact that civilizations have inhabited the geographic United States for several thousand years. When asked to explain the origins of Thanksgiving, one white student responded: “We was making a bond with Native Americans; that’s good because that’s a tradition that goes on forever” (p. 289). **Both the teachers and white teenagers displayed a collective identity with the Europeans while** Native Americans were included nor completely detached from the American collective. This outcome mirrors the broader status of Indigenous groups; while subjected to the state control, Native Americans are still barred from some of the social, political, and cultural rights of citizenship (**cite**). As teachers enforce discursive divides between Indigenous people **and the European colonists, many white adolescents learn how to conceal differential access to citizenship while naturalizing whiteness as a criterion to social citizenship.**

Besides Indigenous peoples, teachers can exclude other racialized groups from national identity through their retelling of history. Bettie’s (2014) ethnography of a high school history course exhibits the unique marginalization of Mexican American narratives in a community with a sizeable Latinx population. References to Mexicans and Mexican Americans were confined to events like the Alamo and the U.S.-Mexican War in which the teacher quickly summarized, “we won Mexico” (p.177). In response to the question, “When was the Declaration of Independence signed?” a Mexican American student commented, “I don’t know. *We* weren’t there” (p. 178). A white teenager added: “Yeah, I wasn’t born yet.” The white teacher, dismissing both boys’ comments, fired back: “Yeah, well you need to know these dates anyway, don’t you.” Like the white student before him, the teacher overlooked the first student’s attempt to highlight the exclusion of Mexican American’s racialized history (Urrieta, 2004). The second student’s comment reveals how the reproduction of this marginalization can occur subtly and unintentionally. Ultimately, the teacher’s pedagogical approach that minimizes and separates Mexican and Mexican American history from the overall historical narrative. **national identity played out again in the white student’s report, suggesting that pedagogy can have a reinforcing role on constructions of national identity.**

white adolescents downplay the relevance of racial and ethnic group membership while discussing citizenship (Myers & Zaman, 2009).

Similar to the treatment of Indigenous groups in American history, white adolescents often neutralize the exclusion of Mexican Americans national belonging through their explanations of history. Consequently, current classroom discussions are unprepared to disrupt narratives, symbols, and media imagery casting Latinos as threats or “eternal foreigners” (Chavez, 2013) **add more citations**.

In contrast to the separation of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American groups from national identity European ethnic groups are often historicized with optimistic and assimilationist narratives in high school classrooms. Such interpretations, encapsulated through the “melting pot” symbol, constructs American identity as one benefiting from the incorporation of various racial/ethnic groups into the (white) mainstream under the condition that immigrants discard their “primordial” attachments (**cite**). These interpretations stem from progressive era reforms seeking to assimilate European immigrants, especially school age children, by mandating citizenship courses and condemning the practice of non-English languages (Moretti, 2015). **Before Europeans, boarding schools**.

Today, white adolescents, many of whom descend from the late-nineteenth century European immigrants, celebrate the groups’ contributions, affirming that they “made this country what it is today” (Epstein, 2008, pp. 73–74). However, these narratives ignore the nature of European immigrants’ oppression before they were recognized as “white," as well as **the persistent barriers endured by “non-white” Americans,** introduces a paradox about teaching national identity. How can the “melting pot” be an appropriate symbol for national identity when many who enter the United States have faced resistance to assimilation?

Ultimately, assimilation narratives reinforce the color-evasive frame of abstract liberalism by teaching white adolescents that each group can succeed after the success of European immigrants. The “melting pot” narrative also equips the minimization of racism frame to downplay the salience of racism in the construction of national identity. Finally, to maintain the perception of marginalized racial groups’ non-assimilability, cultural racism imposes anti-Indianisms and the eternal foreigners stereotypes. These frames are supported by both discursive divides and . Ultimately, they lead white adolescents to construct boundaries of national identity that ignore the

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Analyzing the transfer of interpretive frames from teachers to students is a complicated process. Many of the studies mentioned in this article omit white adolescent’s pre-instructional beliefs. By doing so, they are unable to discuss how students’ interpretive frames change or remain the same throughout the school year, thus preventing accurate measures pedagogical effects. Due to the prevalence of color-evasive ideology outside of schools, for example, in student’s homes, media consumption, and peer contacts, white adolescents likely experience several contexts of color-evasive ideology before instruction. By drawing upon and controlling for students’ lives outside of classrooms (see, e.g., (Epstein, 2008), future studies can paint a more comprehensive portrait of racial ideology acquisition.

A second powerful limitation of the material covered thus far is secondary or nonexistent position of student’s voices. Often, teachers’ practices or interpretations of history and contemporary issues receive the primary focus of studies (see, e.g.,). However, the effect of pedagogy is as important as how it is received by teachers. While teacher-centered analyses can help develop a portrait of the type of racial messages teacher’s transmit, it cannot be assumed that they are fully absorbed by their students. For example, past studies have shown that students of color tend to view , or in some cases wholly contest whiteness-centered pedagogy, as was the case of Black students in Epstein’s (2009) ethnography. White students’ interactions with pedagogy are similarly complicated; the extent to which they reproduce, rework, or contest racial narratives depends to some extent on their prior racial socialization. Therefore, the salience of teacher’s approaches on white adolescent worldviews are best can be best understood in context when their students are part of the picture.

The final limitation I emphasize is the lack of sufficient discussion and data about teacher and students’ racial identities. As mentioned previously, race is socially constructed identity, its significance drawing upon inequal treatment by racial structures and practices rather than essentialist attributes. Moreover, how individuals experience their racialization varies based a number of factors [NAME A FEW]. Still, the ways in which individuals are socialized to racial identity greatly affects their experiences of the world, and common threads can be uncovered on a large scale. Future studies can ground the differential access to power that racial identity introduces to classrooms, especially in the interpretive frames teachers of different racial identities incorporate.

**Conclusion**

The studies discussed in this article reveal that classrooms across the country incorporate color-evasive framings of history. Both white American adolescents and white teachers tend to minimize the role of racial minorities in history, from the treatment of Indigenous people as if they no longer exist, to their omissions of Latinx and Asian-American history. Many groups, especially Black Americans, are casted as victims and irrelevant to the development of American society. Teachers and students alike also dilute the messages from social transformations like the Civil Right Movement to individual-centered critiques of prejudice rather than structural ones of racism.

The marginalization of non-white groups in historical significance also transpires in students and teachers’ formulation of American identity. Discursive divides between we (white individuals) and them (individuals from other racial groups) has a visible effect on white adolescents’ interpretations of American identity. They, like their teachers, come to understand history through a European American perspective and celebrate the assimilation of European immigrants into the American collective. At the same time the white-centering construct of American identity also helps teachers subtly marginalize individuals from other racial groups using cultural stereotypes like the perpetual foreigner as well as messages of abstract liberalism, “if \_\_ can make it, why can’t \_\_.”

To understand how racial ideologies are reproduced, future studies into pedagogical effects must incorporate a more comprehensive view of students’ lives. White adolescents are influenced by their previous experiences of racial socialization and the white habitus. They also play an active role in their historical learning. Therefore, evaluations of white adolescents’ beliefs before, during, and after instruction can help produce textured analyses of white students’ interactions with racial messages, rather than assuming that they are simply reproduced. Ultimately, a push a youth-centered direction for futures studies will help unlock more accurate estimations of how teachers influence the interpretations of white adolescents on American history