

FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION AND THESIS/DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

TO THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRS:

If the candidate passes the final examination, the following report should be filed immediately with the Graduate Studies Office of the School of Science and Engineering.

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(name)

has stood and passed the final examination, and the thesis/dissertation has been approved by the committee. Therefore, he/she is recommended for the degree of M.S. to be conferred on May 18, 2018.

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Date of Examination
OR

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Committee Members:

[Signature]

[Signature]

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SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE USE, RACIAL IDENTITY, RACIAL SOCIALIZATION AND
THE AFRICAN IGENERATION: A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

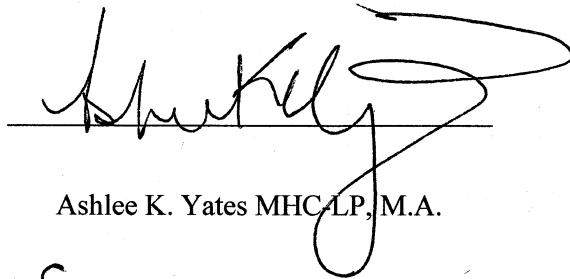
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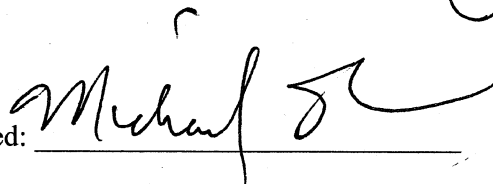
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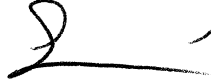
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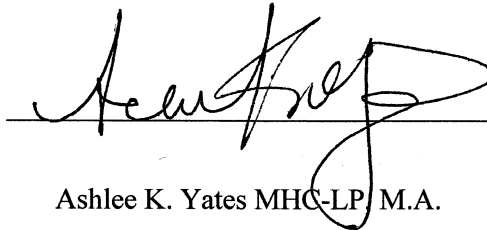
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Abstract

Future racial socialization (FRS) is a future-oriented concept that speaks to how adolescents intend to racially socialize their own children. This future-oriented parenting decision has been associated with the existing racial socialization messages that adolescents receive from their own caregivers prior to becoming parents themselves. Research has posited that parental racial socialization is arguably one of the most important developmental processes for African American youth (Hughes, 2006), and has been largely conceptualized as a process between parents and children. However, a new force called Social Networking Sites (SNS) has entered our ecological world over the last 20 years; possibly catalyzing a shift to occur in the racial socialization processes of adolescents, especially the African American adolescents of today known as being a part of the Generation Z or as the **iGeneration** (approximately born 1995-2012). It is important to understand how SNS are altering the adolescent development processes so that we can understand its benefits and risks. This study is a secondary data analysis of archived data that examines the relation of Parental Racial Socialization to Future Racial Socialization (FRS) as moderated by SNS and Racial Identity (RI), in African American Adolescents. In the current study, the participants are 300 African American high school students in a large southern urban city. The students ranged in age from 13 to 19 years old and attended a predominately (98%) African American high school in the United States. Findings demonstrate that racial identity plays a significant role in the relation between PRS (cultural socialization type) and FRS, and when specifically examining African American girls, racial centrality (a subcomponent of racial identity) and SNS play a significant role in moderating the relation between two types of PRS and FRS.

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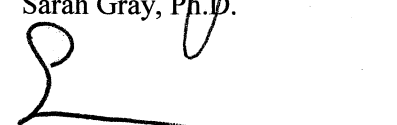
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Future racial socialization (FRS) is a future-oriented concept that speaks to how adolescents intend to racially socialize their own children. In other words, FRS explores how adolescents today think about raising their future child(ren) about race relations in the world. Research has shown African American adolescents create and develop images of their future self and accompanying expectations from various sources, especially family (Cunningham, Corprew, & Becker, 2009.; Gill & Reynolds, 1999; Hughes, 2009; Israelashivili, 1997; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002; Spencer, 2006); however these findings precede the peak of the phenomenon that is social networking sites (SNS). The FRS concept is of particular relevance for today's adolescents, generation Z, also known as the iGeneration. The **iGeneration** (approximately born 1995-2012) is a generation characterized by their being born into an era of social media and the internet (Schneider, 2015). This generation is developing in a world where their racial identity and how they view their future selves is not only shaped by their parents but by social media use. There is a dearth of research available exploring how social media is influencing the development of racial identity or how it is influencing the iGeneration's views on future racial socialization (FRS). This point is especially salient for African American adolescents.

Traditionally, for African American youth, tools to navigate a racialized society and racial discrimination (such as racial socialization messaging) have been typically

implemented by parents; however, today's iGeneration are also exposed to anti-Black racialized messaging (Gin et al., 2017) and pro-Black cultural pride messaging (Carney, 2017; Graham, & Smith, 2016), via online platforms. Racial socialization messaging plays an integral role in shaping African American adolescents' racial identity and their concept of their future-self (Hughes, 2009). Today's iGeneration is partially responsible for transmitting racialized messaging to the next generation (older generations play a role in this process due to the multi-generational aspect of child-rearing in Black families (Pearson, Hunter, Ensminger, & Kellam, 1990)) and it is imperative that we begin to understand the phenomenon of SNS's influence through the lens of the iGeneration (the most indulged in the social networking sites (SNS) as future generations will be born with a digital footprint. Unfortunately, although the iGeneration plays an integral role in transmitting racialized messaging to the next generation, the future racial socialization (FRS) they plan to implement is unclear and understudied. The racial socialization messages that the African American iGeneration transmit to the next (their children) are associated with specific outcomes for the future generation such as academic achievement, self-esteem, psychological well-being, and mature ethnic identity. However, no peer-reviewed scholarly research has yet to explore how the phenomenon of social media (messages outside of home) interacts with parental racial socialization (messages in home) to shape African American adolescents' racial identity and the way they intend to socialize racially the next generation (future racial socialization). It is pivotal that we begin to examine FRS and the constructs that may shape it, so that the field of psychology can offer practitioners, policy makers, parents, and social media content-producers a glimpse into how the next generation of African American youth

may be socialized by today's iGeneration and allow opportunity for stakeholders to think of interventions as it pertains to future racial socialization and its outcomes.

The African American iGeneration

African American i-Geners are well-versed in social media also known as SNS (social networking sites). SNS and social media will be referred to interchangeably in the current study. African American i-Geners are often identified as the population with the highest usage rates of SNS in the United States (Smith, 2014). For example, a 2015 Pew study found that 34% of African American youth reported going online constantly compared to 19% of White teens, and African American adolescents were found to be the largest teen group of smart-phone holders with higher access to cellular phones than laptops or desktops than their non-Black peers (Lenhart, 2015). In fact, according to the Common Sense Census (Rideout, 2015) national report on Tween and Teen social media use "on any given day, Black teens spend about an hour more using SNS (2:59 a day, compared with 1:54 among whites and 2:00 among Hispanics)." High SNS usage among African American youth also makes them the first African American generation to have the ability to easily and frequently access national and international news, as Facebook and Instagram users receive news updates just by chance of being logged on to their respective devices (Gotfried, 2016). In other words, African American youth, even without intent, may be more frequently exposed to news than their non-African American peers. This frequent exposure to news is of importance, in the world of racial socialization, as empirical research has demonstrated that news coverage in America disproportionately portrays African Americans as criminal suspects instead of victims (Dixon, 2006), and that exposure to such news coverage can affect future decision

making (Hurley, Jensen, Weaver, & Dixon, 2015). This global access to news and information is more speedily accessible than that of any prior African American generation. Also distinctive to this African American iGeneration experience is what some research has identified as the encountering of hostile anti-Black messaging on social media (Gin et al., 2017). This is the process of being exposed to content online that relays messages of Black individuals being inferior and/or undeserving of equal treatment compared to their non-Black peers. Subsequently, African American i-Geners have been at the forefront of creating their own online safe spaces consisting of pro-black messaging (Carney, 2017; Graham & Smith, 2016) such as through the platform #BlackTwitter (a searchable hashtag on Twitter that creates an in-group community by way of hashtag) found on Twitter specifically for those that identify with a Black identity. In other words, many African American adolescents are being exposed to online racialized messaging that may or may not align with the messaging they are receiving from parents and/or caregivers. This messaging may be filtered via usage of #BlackTwitter and other social media sites. A question remains, however, how is exposure to these social media messages associated with messages adolescents receive at home?

Messages transmitted in home

African American youth develop in a context where their racial identity is a part of their system of development which most research has agreed is primarily molded by the messages their parents and/or caregivers relay to them in childhood and adolescence (Hughes, 2006). African American parenting is distinct and unique to their sociocultural group given their history and position as a disadvantaged racial minority in the larger

social structure (e.g., Boykin & Toms, 1985; McHale, 2006). African American parents face the challenging task of rearing their children to have a positive self-concept, racial identity, and personal identity because of racism, negative media images, and stereotypes (Thomas & Speight, 1999). An integral part of how African American parents raise their children involves racial socialization, a process that has been argued to be among the most important processes in African American child development, (Hughes, 2006).

Parental Racial Socialization (PRS) in the Home

Parental racial socialization is the process of developmentally shaping a child's way of being through racialized messaging shared with them or observed by them (Hughes et al., 2006). A framework from Hughes et al. (2006) describes this process for African American adolescents as receiving four primary types of messaging: cultural pride messaging (i.e., "Black is beautiful"), preparation for mistrust messaging (i.e., "You can't trust White people"), preparation for bias messaging (i.e., "You have to work 10x harder because you are Black"), and egalitarian messaging (i.e., no racialized messaging at home or "All races are equal"). A wealth of literature has come to investigate parental racial socialization (PRS) messaging and its effects on African American adolescent outcomes: *egalitarian messages* have been associated with low ethnic pride (Hughes, 2006); low school self-esteem (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002) and high academic curiosity (Neblett et al., 2006); *cultural pride messages* have been associated with high academic achievement (Wang & Huguley, 2012), increased self-efficacy and discrimination buffering (Neblett et al., 2006); *mistrust messages* have been associated with low academic persistence (Neblett et. al, 2006) and *bias messaging* has been associated with negative public regard (the belief that others view your racial/ethnic

group negatively) (Rivas-Drake, Way & Hughes, 2009), low academic persistence (Neblet et. al, 2006) and discrepant data on racial centrality (how central one's racial membership is to them) levels (Hughes, D., Hagelskamp, C., Way, N., & Foust, M. D., 2009; McHale et al., 2006). However, very little research has yet to examine to what extent today's African American adolescents envision racially socializing their own kids, a process characterized as anticipated racial socialization and referred to as Future Racial Socialization (FRS) in this study. FRS is the eventual messaging an individual intends to use to socialize their child/ren about race and race relations (Lesane-Brown, C., Brown, T., Caldwell, C., & Sellers, R., 2005). FRS is a process that is a product of one's own racial identity.

Racial Identity (RI) in the Home

Research has examined parents' racial orientations and experiences and shows that factors such as their experiences of discrimination and their racial identity are positively related to their socialization practices (Hughes & Chen, 1997; McHale et al., 2006; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Racial identity is *how an individual conceptualizes what their racial group membership means to them* and in this study it is conceptualized using racial centrality (how central one's racial membership is to them), public racial regard (how one believes their racial group is perceived), and private racial regard (how one perceives their own racial group) (Hughes, 2003; Scottham & Smalls, 2009; Sellers, R., Smith, M., Shelton, J., Rowley, S., & Chavous, T., 1998). Multiple studies (Rowley, 1998; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998; Sellers, Chavous & Cooke, 1998) have demonstrated that racial centrality influences GPA, positive self-esteem, and regard for same-race group members for African American high schoolers and college students. Research has