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Learning How to Talk about Race:
Cross-Cultural Comparisons in Race-Related Social Norms

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Abstract

The present research examines American and Chilean children's performance in a race-relevant categorization task, demonstrating that American children aged 9-10 avoid mentioning race, even though this avoidance negatively impacts performance. Alternatively, Chilean children refer to race openly, reflecting differing societal norms towards race and demonstrating that American children's self-modulation of behavior results from internalization of societal norms. In another study, ratings of the children's nonverbal behavior show that older American children in the race-relevant task evidence more negative nonverbal behavior than their Chilean peers or same-aged American children in a race-neutral task, suggesting that self-modulation is anxiety producing. This indicates that American children have internalized a colorblind perspective towards race relations, potentially negatively impacting interracial interactions (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008).

Learning How to Talk about Race: Cross-Cultural Comparison in Race-Related Social Norms

Race Identification and Categorization in Children

Psychologists have studied children's ability to identify race and classify individuals based on racial group membership for decades. Allport (1958) was one of the first scholars to systematically examine the phenomenon of prejudice in children, suggesting that fundamental and adaptive cognitive processes contribute to the development and maintenance of prejudice. Allport explained that the human mind must think with the aid of categories in order to classify and sort the large amount of information encountered daily. These categories in turn form "clusters" of information that guide our daily lives, and any new information we encounter is assimilated into already existing clusters.

Allport (1958) argued that one of the most fundamental types of categorization is social categorization, defined as the ability to separate individuals into distinct groups based on group membership (i.e. gender). Allport proposed that as early as 5 years of age, children can understand that they are members of various groups, and soon after children begin to develop in-group loyalties (Allport, 1958). He also argued that by age 6, children have already gone through an initial period of curiosity and interest in racial differences. Thus, by this point, they have already learned that humans are clustered into racial groups, and many are already beginning to make these classifications themselves.

Two separate experimental tasks have been commonly used in order to identify the age at which children develop the ability to categorize by race: the "doll task" and the picture sorting task. First, in the "doll task" children are shown several dolls that vary in skin color (most commonly White and Black), and are then asked a series of questions about the dolls, such as "Which doll looks like you?" and "Which doll is the good doll?"

When Clark (1955) first employed this task, he asked children to choose among four dolls that varied in skin color in response to certain requests, including “give me the white doll” and “give me the Negro doll.” By the age of three, 75% of African American participants accurately responded to the requests, indicating that race consciousness had already emerged. The percentage that accurately identified the dolls continued to increase with age, until it reached nearly 100% by age seven. Since Clark’s initial investigation, other studies have utilized the same procedure in a variety of populations, indicating that the pattern is similar with White children and other minority groups, as well (Fishbein, 2002).

The second task commonly used to measure children’s ability to categorize by race involves sorting pictures according to experimenter-defined criteria. In 1938, Horowitz and Horowitz utilized this picture sorting task with a sample of White children, in first through tenth grades. The children were shown a series of five pictures, three of which were the same on two criteria (for example, sex and gender) and two that differed on one criterion, and were asked which picture did not belong. For example, a series might include three white boys, one black boy, and one white girl. By manipulating ethnicity, sex, age, and socioeconomic status in different ways, the authors were able to reach a conclusion about which category was the most salient. They ultimately found that ethnicity was by far the most dominant social category, followed by sex (Horowitz & Horowitz, 1938). In 56% of trials, the participants indicated that the person of a different race did not belong, while they only stated that the person of a different gender did not belong 15% of time.

Unfortunately, only White participants were included in this investigation, making it impossible to determine if a similar pattern exists in minority children. Furthermore, the authors did not systematically examine age as a variable, yielding it impossible to

determine at what age this primacy of race emerges. Nonetheless, the study suggested that children not only can categorize by race, but also that race is an especially salient social category to children.

In 1995, Brown addressed some of the limitations of Horowitz and Horowitz's original study, utilizing the same technique with 3- to 9 year olds, systematically varying the array of photos by sex, ethnicity (Asian Indian and White), and age, and systematically varying the age of the participants. Other possible sorting categories were also present. The author found that by age 5, race was already emerging as a criterion for sorting, used by one-third of five-year-olds. In the groups aged six and up, ethnicity was clearly the most dominant sorting technique, used by over two-thirds of the children. Thus, Brown supported the findings of Horowitz and Horowitz—that race is a salient social categorization for children—while demonstrating that racial categorization extends beyond the White/Black dichotomy.

Overall, research that has utilized the doll task and picture sorting tasks has demonstrated that there appears to be succinct stages in the development of racial awareness and identification (Fishbein, 2002). Between the ages of 3 and 4, children have little awareness of racial and ethnic differences, but between the ages of 4 and 6, most White and Black children show accurate ethnic awareness. However, children in the same age-range (4-6 years) from other minority groups do not demonstrate this awareness with the same level of consistency until they are older. By the time that they are 10-years-old, all children, regardless of group membership, show accurate ethnic and racial identification.

Self-Presentation and Self-Modulation of Behavior

Like adults, children are sensitive to the presence of an audience and to the social norms of their context (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005). These social norms dictate what attitudes, values, and behaviors are appropriate in specific situations. Throughout primary school, as the salience of social evaluation concerns increases due to experience with peers, children become attuned to these social evaluations and start to modulate their behavior to create favorable evaluations (Banerjee, 2002). Thus, as children approach the end of primary school, they become aware of social norms and start to engage in self-presentation strategies to abide by these norms.

Self-presentation is defined as the attempt to shape others' impression of the self by altering one's own behavior (Banerjee, 2002). Thus, self-presentation relies on the awareness that one can alter the manner in which he is evaluated by others and an understanding that an individual can influence the course of social interactions. Children begin to exhibit this type of self-presentational behavior by the end of primary school. Similarly, conformity, defined as the act of behaving in accordance with social rules or norms, varies according to age. Conformity is one aspect of self-modulation, as it relates to altering behavior based on the social context. Costanzo and Shaw (1996) examined conformity in children in an experimental task where children were shown a standard line and comparison lines of varying lengths. The children in the manipulation condition were then exposed to the erroneous responses of their peers, while the control participants were not. The results indicated that conformity was lowest for the 7-9 year olds, reached a maximum in 11-13 year olds, and decreased in both the 15-17 year olds and 19-21 year olds, indicating that children in the 11-13 year old range were highly influenced by the behavior of their peers (Costanzo & Shaw, 1966). Thus, the Costanzo and Shaw's findings

suggested that self-modulation reaches its peak in pubescence, corresponding with 11-13 years of age.

Rutland et al. (2005) also examined the concept of self-modulation in children, but focused on the effect of an audience on children's behavior. In their study, White, British children, who were separated in three age groups (6-8 year-old, 10-12 year-old, and 14-16 year-old) participants were given a personal normative belief measure, an explicit intergroup bias measure, and an implicit intergroup bias measure. Participants were then placed in two groups: high public self-focus and low public self-focus. In the high public self-focus condition, children were told that they would be videotaped while completing the measures, while in the low public self-focus condition, they were told that they would not be recorded because the video camera was not functioning. The results of the study show that beginning at an early age, children's understanding of social norms and self-presentation affect their explicit racial intergroup attitudes. Even children under ten years old suppressed their explicit in-group bias when under high public-self focus. These results seem to conflict with the findings of Costanzo and Shaw, in which children aged 7-9 had the lowest conformity scores. However, there are important differences in the studies that could explain this difference. Specifically, Costanzo and Shaw dealt solely with conformity, while Rutland and colleagues addressed race. It is possible that societal influences to appear unbiased are so strong that they encourage even younger children to modulate their behavior, while the same aged children might not do so in a task that was not race-related.

Furthermore, the suppression of out-group prejudice depended on the degree to which children had internalized societal norms regarding discrimination and prejudice. In

addition, the authors found that children's suppression of prejudice was dependent on the societal norms to which they are exposed. Therefore, children are not likely to modulate their prejudice when it is within the societal norms to tolerate a certain type of prejudice (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005).

While examining suppression of bias in a race-relevant task, Monteiro, de Franca and Rodrigues (2008) found a similar pattern in their study, which examined the influence of social norms on distribution of resources. In this study, which took place in Portugal, White students, aged 6-7 and 9-10, were asked to distribute nine 1-Euro coins between two children. They were instructed to put the coins into one of two allegedly locked lockboxes, which were each marked with the target's picture. In the interviewer-present condition, the interviewer watched as the children distributed the coins, while in the interviewer-absent condition the interviewer left the room (Monteiro, de Franca, & Rodrigues, 2008).

The younger group of children, 6- and 7-year-olds, displayed more intergroup bias overall than the older children, and this did not vary based on the presence of the interviewer. However, the older group of children displayed significantly less intergroup bias (distributed the coins more evenly) when the interviewer was present than in her absence.

The results of the studies by Monteiro and colleagues and Rutland et al. appear to contradict each other. However, an alternative explanation of these findings is that the norm against open discussion of race is particularly salient in the United States. This could potentially cause children to alter their behavior beginning at an earlier age. This reasoning would explain why the younger group in the Rutland study behaves in a manner similar to that of the older group in the Monteiro et al. study, as both groups modify their behavior

based on their belief that they are being observed (i.e. behave in a less prejudiced manner when they think they are being monitored). Alternatively, the older group in the Rutland study controls the expression of explicit prejudice regardless of being observed, revealing that they have truly internalized the norm.

Overall, as children become concerned with others' evaluations, they may begin to attend to the norm that it is socially unacceptable to express discriminatory behaviors based on race or ethnicity in a similar manner as adults, demonstrating that they have internalized that blatant or straightforward discrimination is not acceptable. However, modulation of a child's behavior may depend on the strength of the societal norm regarding race in the child's environment.

Constructs of Race and Ethnicity

Overview: race and ethnicity. Race and ethnicity are social constructs of great significance in our society. They refer to similar, but slightly different, factors. While race is predominantly defined by physical traits, ethnicity relates more to cultural characteristics (Healey, 1997). Socially, race is a broad concept that reflects inequality and power. As a result of this definition, the concept of race can clearly overlap with that of ethnicity, which refers to a common origin or culture resulting from shared activities and identity based on some mixture of language, religion, race, or ancestry (Kvernmo, 2006).

The category of ethnicity includes several different subgroups; one such subgroup is indigenous populations. Indigenous people are defined by their residence in or attachment to geographically distinct traditional habitats, ancestral territories, and natural resources. Further, indigenous groups maintain cultural and social identities and social, economic, and political institutions, separate from mainstream or dominant society. Indigenous groups

descend from population groups present in a given area prior to modern states or territories were created, and the self-identify as being part of a distinct indigenous cultural group and the display of the desire to preserve that cultural identity (Kvernmo, 2006).

Race and ethnicity are interrelated terms that can be difficult to differentiate. For example, Ragin and Hein (1993) suggest that their work focuses on the category of ethnicity, but that their arguments also apply to the larger category of race and ethnicity as well. Fenton (1999) echoes this idea, stating that in many, if not most, cases ideas of racial and ethnic differences can be found side by side.

Furthermore, ethnic and racial prejudices share a number of important characteristics. For example, prejudice based on both race and ethnicity is less malleable than prejudice based on other characteristics, such as being overweight. The constructs of race and ethnicity are more visible and harder to conceal, as opposed to, for example, sexual orientation. Finally, both readily allow for social separation. For example, people may discriminate against women, but it is impossible to fully cease contact with them, while this is not the case for racial and ethnic prejudice (Levy, West, Ramirez, & Pachankis, 2004).

Mapuches in Chile. The racial composition of Chile has been largely determined by centuries of migrations, spanning thousands of years, which began with the first native people who arrived in waves from the north and concluded with the arrival of non-native people, primarily Europeans, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Castillo-Feliu, 2000). Since that time, there has been a massive mixing of ethnic groups. This blending of races, or *mestizaje*, has produced a group of biracial people, who are part indigenous (Mapuche) and part European (Castillo-Feliu, 2000). This blending was more equally

balanced than in the majority of the colonized world. In many ways, the *mestizaje* of indigenous people with European conquerors resulted in a homogenous population (Skidmore & Smith, 2001). The dominant group in Chile is truly biracial, with the ancestry of the majority of the population including both Mapuche and European heritage (Valenzuela, 1994). However, since the time of the conquest, the inhabitants have wished to downplay the extent to which the Spanish *conquistadores* mixed with the native indigenous populations, and thus the extent to which the population is biracial (Skidmore & Smith, 2001).

Barr-Melej (2001) explains that as early as the late 19th century, Palacios, a Chilean author and historian, introduced the concept of the *raza chilena*, or Chilean race. Palacios argued that the Chilean race had a genetic makeup that was superior to other European and Latin American groups, because the Chilean race also included the noble blood of the indigenous people. Accompanying this theory, he defined the “nationals,” the majority Chilean population, as being mestizos (Barr-Melej, 2001). Thus, as early as the 19th century, many Chilean thinkers already acknowledged that the majority of the Chilean people were biracial.

The predominant minority group in Chile is the indigenous group, the Mapuches. It is estimated that Mapuches constitute 4 to 5% of the Chilean population, although some groups suggest that percentage might be as high as 10% (Sznajder, 2003). Today, Mapuches are primarily found in three locations. A large number (360,000-537,000) of indigenous Mapuches live on their own land in the center-south of Chile (Sznajder, 2003). However, in recent decades, a large number of Mapuche people have immigrated to the metropolitan areas of Chile, in search of better economic opportunities (Sznajder, 2003).

About 100,000 to 150,000 Mapuches now live in these urban areas. Finally, over 15,000 Mapuches are believed to live in rural areas, but outside of organized communities (Sznajder, 2003).

The Mapuches' long and fierce resistance to absorption by Europeans conquerors defines the history of the Mapuche people since colonization. Historically, the Mapuches have been one of the most, if not the most, successful indigenous groups in their attempts to maintain their independence (Sznajder, 2003). Nonetheless, the Mapuches were ultimately defeated in 1881, at which time their land was seized and the majority were forced into *reducciones*, similar to the reservations that Native Americans were confined to in the United States (McFall & Morales, 2000). Since the loss of their land, the main collective preoccupations of the Mapuche people have related to integration into Chilean society, and the loss of ethnic identity that can, and frequently does, accompany this inclusion (Sznajder, 2003).

Beginning during the conquest, Mapuches have been the target of discriminatory behavior. During the military confrontation, Chilean propaganda portrayed Mapuches as being savages, cruel, lazy, drunken, and slothful. It was argued that the indigenous people were inherently and biologically inferior to those of Spanish descent (Sznajder, 2003). This stereotype continues today. Since the arrival of Europeans, the Mapuche people have been degenerated and pauperized, resulting in both their own others' identification of them as a marginalized minority (Sznajder, 2003).

The ongoing contact between the Mapuches and the dominant Chilean society has left the indigenous people with a markedly subordinate status. The extreme poverty that the majority of Mapuche people live in is largely the result of decades of abuse, neglect,

racist government policies, and the loss of land and resources (Pastrana, Williamson, & Gomez, 2004). Furthermore, even though mainstream Chilean society views itself as harmonious and tolerant, the experiences of the Mapuche people continue to be marked by discrimination and prejudice (Merino, Mellor, Saiz, & Quilaqueo, 2008). This discrimination permeates all areas of life for indigenous people. For example, one study revealed that more than 85% of non-Mapuches exhibit prejudice and negative stereotyping toward Mapuches in regular discourse (Merino et al., 2008). Furthermore, 89% of indigenous people report being the object of discrimination at some point (Merino et al., 2008).

In Chile, the definition of an Indigenous or Mapuche person does not depend solely on phenotypical features. Rather, cultural characteristics are a central component of group classification. Thus, those who are considered “native” not only have native American features, but also have indigenous last names, wear traditional clothing, speak a native language, or reside in a native community (Valenzuela, 1994). As a result, ethnicity and race in Chile are more fluid concepts than in the United States; it is possible for a person of indigenous ancestry to assimilate fully into Chilean society, take a Spanish surname, and move to an urban area, and then be considered “chileno.”

Furthermore, the distinction between indigenous people (*morenos*) and Chilenos (*blancos*) is an aspect of normal life of which people are highly cognizant. Experiments using IATs to examine implicit attitudes and prejudice have shown that Chileans responded substantially faster when pictures of Chilenos were paired with pleasant words and pictures of *morenos* were paired with unpleasant words than vice versa. In addition, Chileans also showed a strong explicit preference for *blancos* over *morenos*, measured by both feeling thermometers and semantic differential scales. Taken together, the results of

both implicit and explicit measures indicate a strong preference for *blancos* over *morenos* in Chilean society (Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald, & Swanson, 2002). Thus, the preference for Chilenos versus indigenous people continues to be present and openly accepted in Chilean society.

Similarities between Mapuches and African Americans. The experiences of African Americans in the United States can be characterized by the search for freedom and equality. Slavery began in the United States soon after the settlement of Virginia in 1607 and continued until the Thirteenth Amendment was passed in 1865. After emancipation, discrimination continued legally for decades. Not until 1954 was segregation in education banned; however, even after the Supreme Court ruled to officially desegregate schools, the movement toward integration and equality progressed slowly.¹ Clearly, African Americans have historically been the target of racism and prejudice, and have occupied a subordinate role in society.

Groups that have been the target of discrimination often share a number of common experiences. Fishbein (2002) discussed a number of similarities in the experiences of four stigmatized groups in the United States: women, deaf people, mentally challenged individuals, and African Americans. He pointed out that all four groups have always held a subordinate position in society, were initially viewed as inherently incomplete or inferior, and that the themes of discrimination and prejudice against these groups are long lasting.

¹ This discussion of African Americans in American society is limited, as it is presumed that the majority of readers are somewhat familiar with Black history in the United States. For a more profound discussion of the history and role of African Americans in the United States, see Fenton, S. (1999). *Ethnicity: Racism, class and culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, and Healey, J. F. (1997). *Race, ethnicity, and gender in the United States*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

In addition, the dominant society has attempted to control all of these groups and has used presumed inferiority as a justification for their unjust actions and attempted to use “scientific” evidence to justify their behavior (Fishbein, 2002).

Fishbein also suggested that the shared characteristics of these groups that have historically been the targets of discrimination display American cultural norms and influences that contribute to the development of prejudice. However, he took this conclusion one step further, stating that the more basic influence at play was the psychological underpinnings of prejudice and discrimination that transcends circumstances. This certainly seems to be the case for the Mapuche people of Chile, as the experiences of discriminated groups in the United States are also shared by the indigenous people of Chile. Similar to the groups discussed by Fishbein, the Mapuche people have been marginalized, seen as inherently inferior, and “science” has been used as a justification for the prejudice expressed towards them.

The experiences of African Americans and Mapuches share other commonalities, as well. For example, both societies maintain the conception that they are not actually discriminatory, but rather tolerant and harmonious. Merino et al. (2008) specifically compare the everyday, systematic racism faced by the Mapuche people to that of Black women in the United States, determining that there are numerous characteristics common to the experience of both groups. For example, although culture is a central component involved in labeling Mapuches, much of the discriminatory behavior and discourse relates to skin color, indicating the great importance of color in the experience of Mapuches, as is also the case for African Americans in the United States (Merino et al., 2008). Finally, both the Mapuches and African Americans have been the target of legal and *de jure* racism and

racist policies, but the current experiences of both groups are primarily marked by covert, rather than overt, racism (Merino et al., 2008).

However, there is at least one important distinction in the experiences of Mapuches in Chile and African Americans in the United States. While it is now commonly believed that openly discussing race is not acceptable in the United States, this same phenomenon does not exist in Chile. For example, Uhlman et al. (2002) examined the implicit and explicit preferences of Hispanics in the United States and Latin America, using both implicit and explicit measures. Both groups of Hispanics demonstrated a preference for *blancos* over *morenos* on an implicit measure. However, in the United States, participants did not reveal an explicit preference for one racial subgroup over the other, while in Chile participants demonstrated their preference explicitly as well as implicitly. This indicates that Americans are more highly motivated to suppress their preference for lighter-skinned individuals than Chileans. As a result, it seems likely that Americans are more likely to engage in self-presentational behaviors designed to minimize expression of racial preference.

Summary

In summary, research has demonstrated that children older than the age of six are able to accurately identify an individual's race and classify individuals by racial group membership, while by approximately nine years of age, children have internalized the norms of their cultures, and are capable of modulating their behavior in order to comply with these norms. Thus, if cultural norms dictate that members should not openly discuss race, children older than 9 would be expected to attend to this norm and modulate their behavior, as to comply with their societal standards. However, children under 9, who have not yet internalized these norms, would continue to discuss race openly. On the other hand,

if societal standards suggest that discussing race is acceptable, between the ages of 6 and 9, as well as children older than 9, should refer to race openly.

In order to examine this theory further, I conducted a follow-up experiment to a study published in 2008 by Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, and Norton, with the goal of advancing the work done by these authors. While the original study included only American participants, this project introduces a cross-cultural comparison, with the goal of demonstrating that Chilean children's performance in a race-relevant categorization task varies from that of American children, due to the differing social norms. I hypothesized that during a categorization task, in which acknowledgment of race facilitates performance, children will use race as a qualifier differentially based on their age and cultural group membership. As a result, I expected that;

- a) older Chilean children would use race significantly more often than American children in the same age group;
- b) younger American children would refer to race significantly more often than older American children;
- c) there would be no significant difference in race reference between the younger American and older Chilean groups;
- d) Chilean children in the older group would not refer to color more than their same-age American peers in the race-neutral control condition.

Furthermore, because the categorization task was designed so that mention of race or color (depending on condition) would be beneficial to performance, I hypothesized performance would vary differentially based on group membership, such that;

- a) Older American children in the race-relevant condition would perform significantly worse than older Chilean children in the same condition;
- b) Older American children in the race-relevant condition would perform significantly worse than older American children in the race-neutral condition
- c) Older American children in the race-relevant condition would be out-performed by younger American children in the race-relevant condition;
- d) Older American children in the race-neutral condition, older Chilean children in the race-relevant condition, and younger American children in the race-relevant condition would all perform equally well.

Methods

In Study 1, data collected by Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, & Norton, published in 2008, will be compared to novel data collected by this author. The data collected by Apfelbaum and colleagues regards American children, while the cross-cultural comparisons are new and unique to this project. In order to facilitate comparison, the methods of both studies will be discussed in this section.

Participants

Participants were recruited in two different environments: a suburban community outside of Boston, Massachusetts, and a community in the outskirts of Santiago, Chile. In the Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, and Norton study (2008) in the United States, participants were from three public elementary schools. In this study, the sample included two contiguous age groups: 8-9 year-olds, who composed the younger group, and 10-11 year-olds, who belonged to the older group. Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental condition of race-relevant or the control, race-neutral condition. In Chile, all

participants attended the same public school. In Chile, only older participants were included, who ranged in age from 11-13 years old, and all participated in the race-relevant task.

The mean age of the younger American children in the race-relevant experimental condition² was 9.39 years, $SD = 0.41$. The two older U.S. groups, race-relevant ($M = 10.712$, $SD = 0.3524$) and race-neutral ($M = 10.79$, $SD = 0.42$), did not differ significantly in age, $t(48) = 0.712$, $p = 0.48$. The Chilean group was slightly older ($M = 11.35$, $SD = .61$) than the American older experimental group. This difference was significant, $t(27) = 4.826$, $p < .001$. The age difference was caused by limited accessibility to child participants, in which only slightly older children were available to participate. However, because it has been shown that these children have also internalized societal norms, I do not believe this will have a significant influence on the findings. In both locations, participants were primarily from the dominant racial group.

Measures

In the experiment conducted by Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, and Norton (2008) and that conducted in Chile by this author, an experimental task resembling a popular children's board game was utilized. Children first viewed an array of photos. In the U.S. race-relevant task, the photos differed systematically along four different dimensions. The controlled differences included: race (Black/White), gender (male/female), background color (red/blue), and weight (fat/thin). In the race-neutral task, all the pictures were of White individuals. In order to recreate the fourth dimension, a small, colored oval

² At times in the remainder of this paper, participants who were assigned to the race-relevant task will be referred to as the experimental group while children in the race-neutral condition will be referred to as the control group.

sticker was placed on the bottom left corner of the picture. The photo was either off-white or dark brown. The color of the dark brown sticker was a composite of the skin color of the African American individuals in the race-relevant task, while the off-white color was a composite of the skin color of the White individuals pictured in the race-relevant task. In the Chile race-relevant task, the photos also differed on four dimensions: race (Mapuche/Chileno), gender (male/female), background color (red/blue), and age (young/old). A race-neutral condition was not included in Chile, because the American control condition had already demonstrated that the children would refer to the sticker color and because I was primarily interested in how Chilean children would discuss race.

The participant's objective was to determine which picture in the array matched the picture the experimenter had concealed in his or her hand, using only questions that could be answered with "yes" or "no." Thus, the participant wanted to use the least number of questions possible. The participants differed in both age (younger or older) and type of task (race-relevant or race-neutral), in addition to environment (Chile or the United States). The primary outcome of interest was performance, measured continuously by the number of questions asked, and mention of race, measured nominally by reference to race in questions (yes or no).

Procedure

In the American schools, informed consent forms were sent to the parents of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. In Chile, permission for participation was obtained from the school, following the local ethical guidelines. After permission was received and participants provided their verbal assent, they completed the task in a quiet, separate area (classroom or office) where there were minimal distractions. Prior to participation, the children were

only told that they would be completing a short game. After completing the task, participants were given a small gift (pencil, eraser, etc.) to thank them for their participation.

Children were given time to examine the pictures laid out on the table in front of them while the experimenter turned on the video camera. After the children looked at the pictures, the experimenter randomly chose a copy of one of the pictures, which was then concealed from the participant. The participants were instructed that their goal was to determine which picture the experimenter had chosen, using only questions that could be answered with “yes” or “no” to gain information about the individual in the picture. It was explicitly stated twice that the objective was to use the fewest number of questions possible to determine which picture the experimenter had picked, making it clear to participants that the objective was performance efficiency. Participants in Chile received the exact same directions as those in Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers and Norton’s study. Experimenters competent in the native language of participants conducted the interview in the participants’ primary language.

Participants were instructed that they could ask about any manner in which the individuals in the pictures differed, so long as the question could be answered with “yes” or “no.” In the United States, two experimenters were present, one of who had concealed the pictured and answered the participants’ questions, and the other who was the child’s “teammate.” The children were told that they could ask their teammate for assistance if they were unsure of how to phrase a question. As a result, this experimenter could help the participants rephrase their question if it was not in the yes/no form. In Chile, there was

only one experimenter present, who replied to the participants' questions and helped the participants in reconstructing questions, if necessary.

While the vast majority of the children completed the task twice, participants were given the option of only playing once, if they so desired. After playing the game, the children completed a questionnaire that focused on their beliefs about race. Finally, the participants responded to debriefing questions, which included a manipulation check in which the children were asked if they had noticed that the individuals pictured were different races.

Results

A one-way ANOVA was conducted in order to compare the mean number of questions asked by group, yielding strongly significant results, $F(3,100) = 15.198, p < .0001$ (see Figure 1). The Chile experimental group was included in this test, even though participants saw fewer photographs, because the subjects pictured varied systematically on the same number of categories. Bonferroni's correction method was utilized in order to correct for the increase in the Type I error rate resulting from multiple tests. The mean difference in questions asked between the Chile old experimental group and the U.S. young experimental group was significant, mean difference = -1.71, $p = .001$. The difference between the Chilean and American old experimental group was also significant, difference = -2.62, $p < .001$. Finally, the difference between the U.S. old control and U.S. old experimental was significant, difference = -2.12, $p < .001$. Thus, the children in Chile, who were all in the older race-relevant task, outperformed both younger and older children American children who completed the same race-relevant task. However, the older Chilean children in the race-relevant task did not outperform the older American children in the

race-neutral task, signifying that Chilean children are not solely superior at the categorization task used, but rather that the differential performance is related to the presence or absence of race relevance in the task.

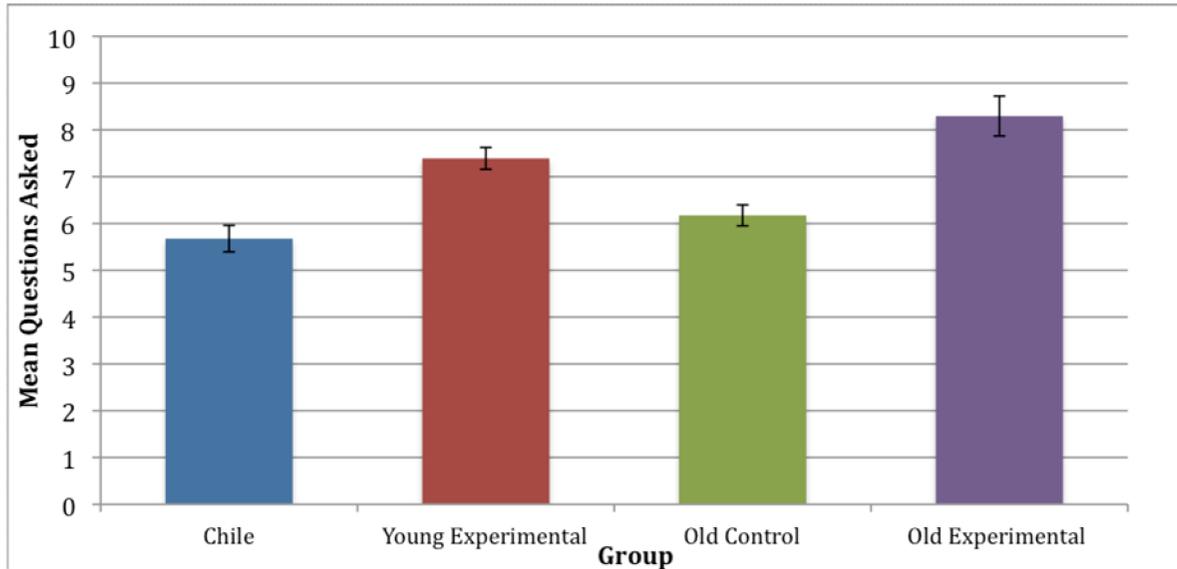


Figure 1: Mean questions asked, by condition, with standard error.

As Table 1 shows, comparisons were also made regarding the frequency participants in each condition referred to race during the categorization task. Results were coded using two separate definitions of mentioning race. In the specific definition, in order to be considered a mention of race, the participant must have made an explicit reference to race. The chi square revealed significant differences across groups, $\chi^2(2) = 8.091, p = .018$. Broader mentions of race, such as either an American or Chilean child asking “Does the person have dark skin?” were examined, revealing significant differences were still present across the groups $\chi^2(2) = 7.355, p = .025$.

In order to determine exactly what accounted for this difference, a chi square test of contrast was conducted. For the broad definition of race, it was hypothesized that Chilean and young American experimental groups mention race equally, while the older American

race-relevant group would mention race significantly less. The chi square test of contrast supported this hypothesis, $\chi^2(1) = 3.977$, $p = .0455$, $\Phi = .222$. Thus, both the Chilean race-relevant group and the young American race-relevant group referred to race, defined broadly, more frequently than older American children in the same condition. A chi square contrast was also run to compare the occurrence of a specific reference to race by the Chilean and the younger American experimental groups to the older American experimental group. Our prediction that the Chilean and younger groups would refer to race more often was also supported, $\chi^2(1) = 12.44$, $p = .0004$, $\Phi = .392$. Finally, a chi square contrast was conducted to compare the mention of color or race between all four conditions, with the expectation that the older American group would refer to race less than the younger experimental group and the older Chilean experimental group, and less than the older American control group would refer to color. This expectation was also supported, $\chi^2(1) = 7.325$, $p = .0068$, $\Phi = .265$.

	Mentioned race (specific definition)		Mentioned race (broad definition)		Mentioned race (broad definition) or dot color	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
US young experimental	34.78%	65.22%	73.91%	26.09%	73.91%	26.09%
US old control	-	-	-	-	78.26%	21.74%
US old experimental	7.41%	92.59%	37.04%	62.96%	37.04%	62.96%
Chile old experimental	38.71%	61.29%	45.165	54.84%	45.165	54.84%

Table 1: Frequency race was mentioned, by condition.

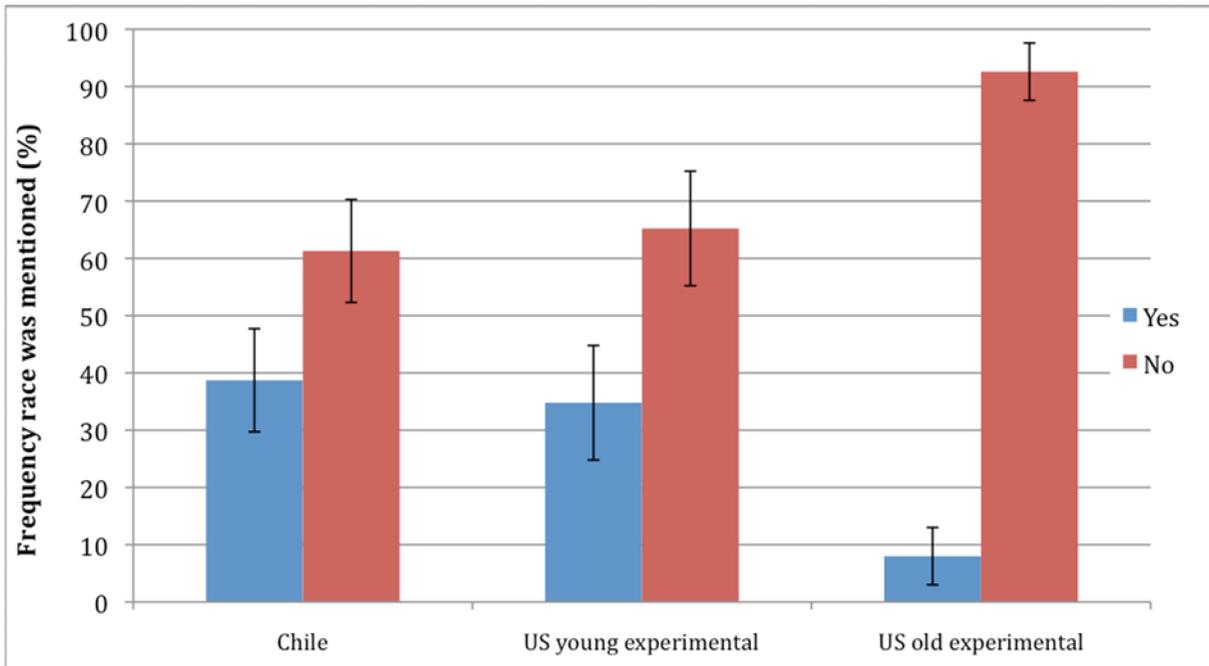


Figure 2: Frequency race was mentioned (specific definition) by condition

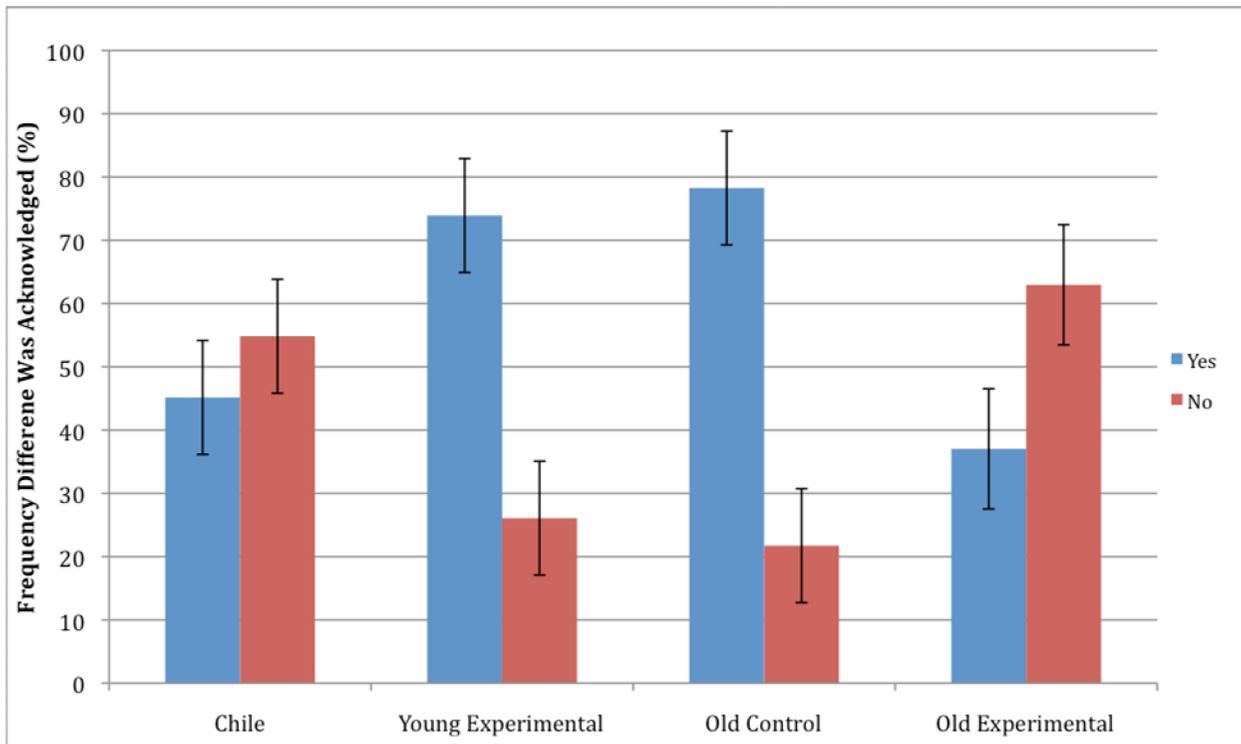


Figure 3: Frequency race was mentioned (broad definition) by condition.

Discussion

The results of this experiment indicate that Chilean and American children refer to race differently. As anticipated, Chilean children between 10 and 13 are much more likely to refer to race in a race-relevant task than American children in the same age range. Supporting the conclusion that internalization of societal norms explains the difference between mentioning race in older Chileans and older American children, there is no difference in the frequency of race mention between older Chilean and younger American children. Taken together, this indicates that at approximately 10 years of age, American children begin to attend to the societal norm that openly discussing race is not acceptable, and as a result modulate their behavior accordingly.

The cross-cultural comparison in this study allows us to address some of the limitations of previous research. By demonstrating that Chilean children continue to refer to race openly, it is effectively shown that the cessation of race references is not some type of universal phenomenon. Rather, this study illustrates that the modulation of behavior in a race-relevant task is due to societal norms. In Chile, where it is socially acceptable to refer to race, children continue to mention race; however, in the United States, where social norms dictate that it is not acceptable to discuss race, children cease to do so at around 10 years of age. While some research indicates that children have the ability to regulate their behavior before the age of 10, they appear to implement their knowledge of social norms regarding race at this age.

Although these findings are meaningful, it is important to consider some of the potential limitations in this study. In the experimental task in Chile, the only experimenter present was an American. Although the experimenter was competent in the language, it is possible that the presence of an American had some impact on the Chilean children's

performance. However, this seems extremely unlikely, as it would be hypothesized that any anxiety regarding the presence of the American experimenter would hinder the Chilean children's performance. However, they performed equally as well as their American counterparts in the race-neutral condition, as indicated by the number of questions asked, indicating that the American experimenter did not hinder the performance of the Chilean children.

Another limitation to consider is that the Chilean children included in this study were significantly older than their American counterparts. While this difference in age is significant statistically, it is difficult to determine if it is significant developmentally. While it seems feasible that their age may have enhanced their performance, in terms of questions asked, it seems unlikely to have an impact on race references. Nonetheless, future research should attempt to correct this issue by including experimental groups of the exact same age.

Finally, the number of photos included in the picture array differed between the American and Chilean groups. As discussed earlier, this is unlikely to have an impact on the questions asked because the individuals pictured varied systematically on the same number of traits. Nonetheless, it is possible that this could have had an impact on the questions asked. However, it would not have an impact on the mention of race, and so does not affect my conclusions.

Study 2

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal behavior includes facial expression, gaze, bodily contact, spatial behavior, gestures, and posture (Mehrabian, 2007). Taken together, these nonverbal behaviors play

an important role in nonverbal communication, which occurs when one individual influences another, either intentionally or unintentionally, through nonverbal means, such as those discussed above (Argyle, 1988). Furthermore, nonverbal communication can accomplish a variety of different functions, including expressing emotions, communicating interpersonal attitudes, accompanying and supporting speech, self-presentation, and rituals.

The Social Context of Nonverbal Communication

A great deal of information can be conveyed through these types of nonverbal behaviors; however, it is impossible to understand nonverbal communication and behavior without also considering the context (Philippot, Feldman, & Coats, 1999). This is because the information conveyed through nonverbal behavior can be ambiguous and does not always coincide with the intent or internal state of the individual who displays the behavior (Philippot et al., 1999). For example, a gesture as simple as a smile can convey very different emotions based on the context. It may indicate contentment, but it could also signify anxiety or contempt (Philippot et al., 1999). An outsider can only attempt to detangle the issue of determining the meaning of the display, the smile, by also considering the social context.

As a result, the context in which nonverbal communication occurs must also be considered, in addition to the display itself. The social context includes the situational context, social relationships, and cultural variations. Each of these factors is one aspect of the social context, and thus all contribute to determining meaning any nonverbal display (Philippot et al., 1999).

Emotion Recognition

Understanding nonverbal behaviors and being able to interpret nonverbal communication is essential in emotion recognition. The ability to accurately identify emotion is an important, although often overlooked, skill. We utilize this ability in our daily interactions with others, frequently without realizing that we are doing so. For example, when communicating with others, we frequently look towards their emotional response in order to determine our own.

Classic research demonstrated that intended emotion was recognized at above chance rates across cultures, suggesting humans' ability to identify emotion is strong. Some authors have gone so far as to suggest that emotional expressions may be a "universal language" that can be understood by most everyone. However, recent work has examined this phenomenon further, exposing small differences in how emotions are displayed and recognized across cultures. This work has suggested that basic emotion is recognized across cultures at rates better than chance, but that there might be some cultural differences in the expression of emotion. Elfenbein and Ambady (2003) explained that this expression of emotion is largely universal, but there are subtle differences across cultures that can at times be challenging in cross-cultural communication. The results of their meta-analysis of 97 studies supported this observation. The meta-analysis replicated earlier findings that people can understand the intended emotional state in posed expressions with accuracy greater than chance and also supported an in-group advantage in understanding emotion, in which participants more accurately recognize emotions of others from their same group than other groups.

While many of the previously mentioned studies focus on recognition of basic emotions, such as happiness and sadness, the ability to identify emotion extends to more

complex emotions, such as anxiety. For example, a meta-analysis of 46 studies relating to state anxiety demonstrated that state anxiety could be accurately recognized by outside observers (Harrigan, Wilson, & Rosenthal, 2004). In these studies, outsiders, such as undergraduate raters, clinicians, and teachers, evaluated the level of anxiety of individuals who had reported their own level of anxiety using a variety of measures. All of the studies included some type of objective measure of the anxiety of the individuals in question, such as self-report questionnaires and physiological measures. Thus, there was a manner in which to determine the outsiders' accuracy in identifying the state anxiety experienced by the individual being rated. The relatively large effect size ($r = .39$) suggests that outside raters are, in fact, able to recognize state anxiety quite accurately in a variety of settings.

Behavior Ratings From Thin Slices

Impressively, complex emotions can be recognized with great accuracy even from small clips of prerecorded interactions. For example, Ambady and Rosenthal (1993) had judges rate teachers' personality traits after viewing three 10-second silent video clips. These ratings were then compared with the ratings of students who had interacted with the professors for an entire semester. The judges' ratings were reliable not only when compared to each other, but also were surprisingly reliable when compared to the ratings of students who had interacted with the professor during an entire semester. This signifies that based just on 30 second clips judges were able to quite accurately predict the ratings of students who had been in the professors' classes. Furthermore, the authors also compared the ratings of the judges who had viewed 10-second clips to the ratings from clips that were 5 seconds and 2 seconds in duration and found that the accuracy of judgments did not differ significantly based on the length of the clip. This surprising result

demonstrates that judgments made from these short segments, or “thin-slices,” are a relatively accurate means of judging the characteristics of individuals (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993).

This conclusion is strengthened further by the findings of a meta-analysis of 38 articles analyzing the accuracy of predictions on objective outcomes (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992). The results demonstrated that studies using longer clips (4 to 5 minutes) did not provide greater predictive accuracy than studies using 30-second clips.

Summary

In this study, undergraduate raters viewed thin-slices of the Study 1 interviews. The raters analyzed the earlier child participants’ nonverbal behavior. The basic assumption underlying this follow-up study was that self-modulation would be associated with increased anxiety. Though surprisingly little research has examined this phenomenon, the following hypotheses were guided by this assumption.

It was expected that because the older American children were actively self-modulating their behavior, they would show significantly greater nonverbal anxiety than that of the older American control group and the Chilean experimental group. We anticipated that there would be no significant difference in the nonverbal affect of the older American control group, the Chilean experimental group, and the younger American experimental group.

Methods

Raters

Raters included 12 undergraduate research assistants, who completed the ratings as part of a course taken for credit. All raters were full-time students at Tufts University, in Boston, Massachusetts. Six males and 6 females were included.

Measures

In order to assess children's nonverbal displays of emotion, six behaviors were rated: to what extent the child appeared friendly, relaxed, distracted, anxious, engaged and comfortable. Raters used a ten-point Likert scale, where one indicated "not at all" and nine corresponded to "extremely."

Procedure

All of the raters received identical instructions. They were encouraged to base their ratings on their immediate reactions and trust their instincts while making their assessments. Raters were also instructed to consider each segment individually.

Raters viewed the video recordings of the children in Study 1 completing the categorization task. They first viewed the beginning 30 seconds of the recording, starting after the child had received the directions. Once they had viewed the segment, they rated the nonverbal behavior for that clip. They then viewed the last 30 seconds of the categorization task, and rated those 30 seconds independently from the first 30 seconds. Raters viewed the clips without any sound, in order to ensure that they were focusing on the nonverbal behavior and were not distracted by the change of language.

Results

Due to the high correlation between the two 30 second clips, the first 30 second rating and second 30 second rating for each rater was combined into an average rating for each video clip. The correlations for these ratings were as follows: friendly $r(94) = .743, p <$

.001; relaxed $r(94) = .750, p < .001$; engaged $r(94) = .769, p < .001$; distracted $r(94) = .671, p < .001$; anxious $r(94) = .793, p < .001$; comfortable $r(94) = .760, p < .001$.

In order to assess the interrater reliability, Cronbach's alpha was examined for each of the six individual behaviors included. One rater was eliminated because his ratings differed greatly from those of the other participants. With this rater excluded, the interrater reliabilities were as follows: friendly (.819), relaxed (.635), engaged (.784), distracted (.607), anxious (.702), and comfortable (.627).

Furthermore, the behaviors correlated in the anticipated direction. Friendly correlated positively with relaxed, $r(94) = .534, p < .001$, engaged, $r(94) = .515, p < .001$, and comfortable, $r(94) = .614, p < .001$, and negatively with distracted, $r(94) = -.402, p < .001$ and anxious, $r(94) = -.474, p < .001$, as would be expected. That the correlations occurred in the expected directions supported our belief that the ratings were reliable and reflective of true differences.

The relatively high interrater reliability and bivariate correlations indicated that a factor analysis was appropriate in this situation. The factor analysis demonstrated that there were two components, which explained 78.20% of the data. These two factors were friendly, relaxed, engaged, and comfortable, termed "positive nonverbal behavior" and distracted and anxious, called "negative nonverbal behavior." Cronbach's alpha was then examined for each factor across raters, positive nonverbal reliability = .748, negative nonverbal reliability = .686. Based on the results of the factor analysis and the relatively high interrater reliabilities, it was determined that the means of the groups' nonverbal behaviors could be compared.

One-way ANOVAs were analyzed in order to assess the relationship between nonverbal displays of emotion and condition. The one-way ANOVA for positive nonverbal behavior yielded a nonsignificant result, $F(3,90) = .948, p = .421$. However, the ANOVA for negative nonverbal behavior revealed a strongly significant difference, $F(3,90) = 7.941, p < .001$. Follow-up tests were conducted in order to determine where the differences were, using Bonferroni's correction in order to adjust for the number of tests conducted. This revealed that there were significant differences between the negative nonverbal behavior of the older Chilean experimental condition and the older American experimental condition, mean difference = $-.48669, p < .001$. There was also a significant difference between the negative nonverbal behavior of the older American control group and older American experimental group, mean difference = $-.43880, p = .001$. None of the other comparisons yielded significant results. These results indicate that older American children in the race-relevant task demonstrated significantly more negative nonverbal behavior than both older Chilean children in the race-relevant condition and older American children in the race-neutral condition; however, there were no significant differences between the older and younger American children in the race-relevant task.

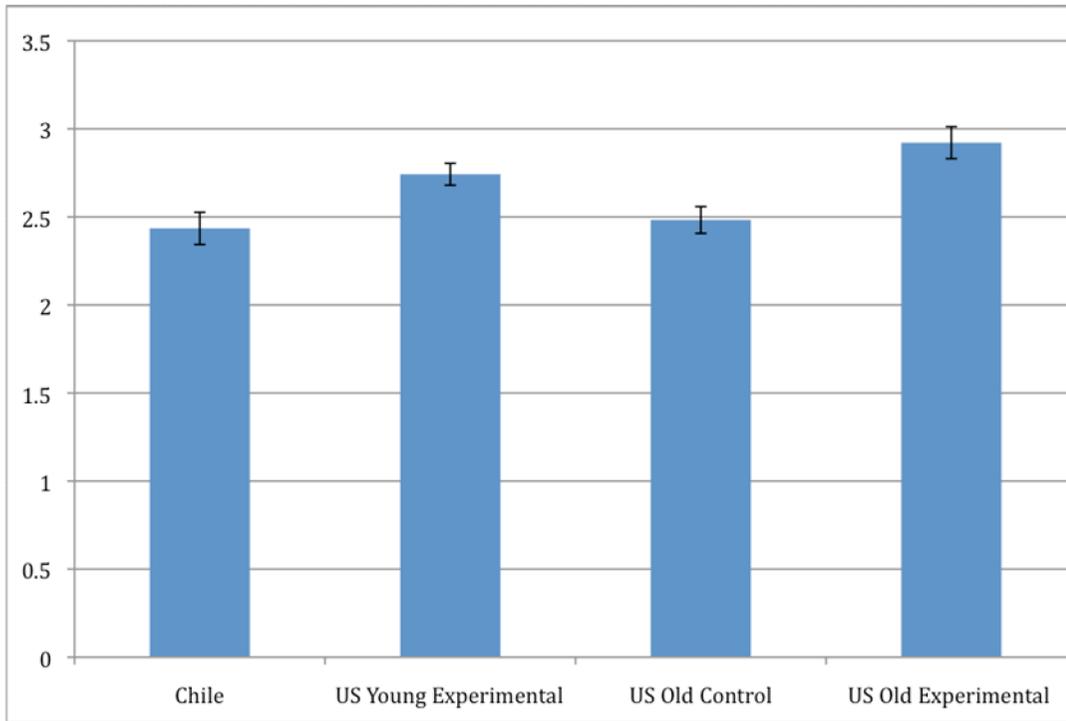


Figure 4. Negative nonverbal communication by condition, with standard error

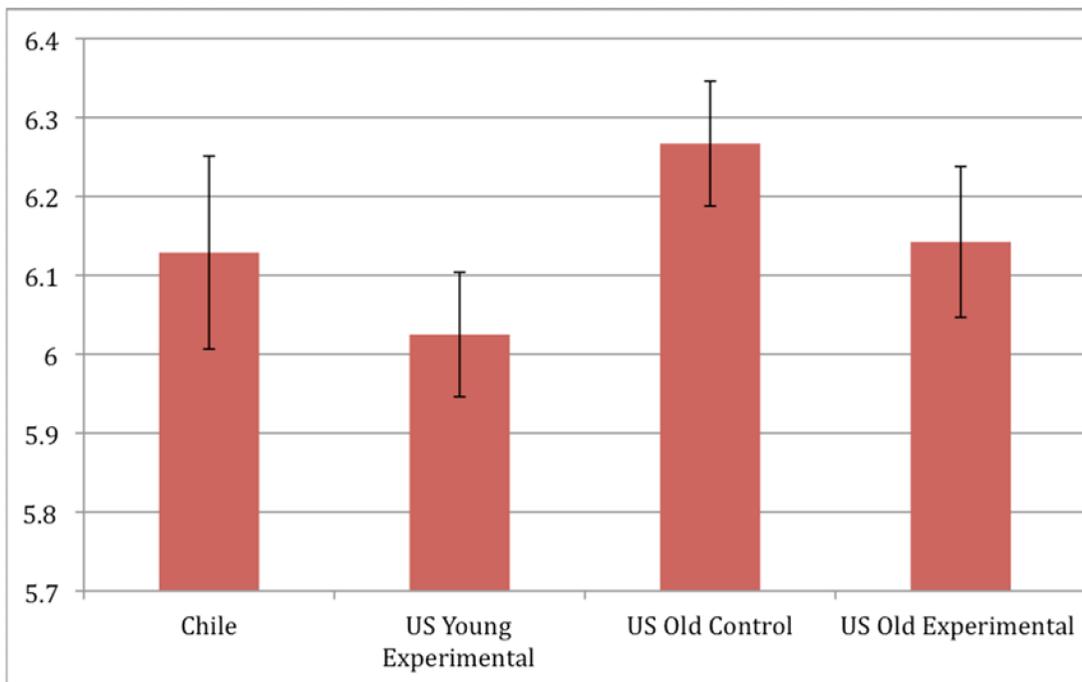


Figure 5. Positive nonverbal communication by condition, with standard error.

Discussion

Based on the results of this study, the race-relevant categorization task was significantly more anxiety provoking in older American children (10-11 years old) than for Chilean children in the same age range or younger American children. As anticipated, there was no significant difference between the nonverbal behavior ratings of older Chilean children compared to either younger American children or older American children in a race-neutral task. Thus, the hypotheses presented in this study were in fact supported by the results.

These results suggest that discussing race is significantly more anxiety producing for American children, whether or not they modulate their behavior. These results question the impact of the social norm that race should not be mentioned on children. It appears that asking children to ignore race, to which they clearly attend, can cause unnecessary stress in children. Perhaps, then, instead of asking American children to ignore something they see, it would be more beneficial to teach them to discuss race in an appropriate manner.

It is important to recognize the potential limitations of this study. Most notably, only American raters were included. It is possible that these raters were able to better identify anxiety in American children than in the Chilean children. This could potentially cause the ratings of American children to be more accurate than those of Chilean children. As a result, future research should use raters representative of the same culture as the participants, in order to eliminate this potential confound. While the difference in culture between participants and raters might have had some impact on ratings of nonverbal behavior, it is unclear if this impact would be great enough to account for the significant differences evident in the study.

Conclusions

Study 1 demonstrated that children do, in fact, attend to societal norms regarding race and modify their behavior accordingly, based on the social norms of their culture, while Study 2 showed that attending to these societal norms affects children emotionally. These results seem to suggest that the American children around 10 years old have internalized the “colorblind” perspective regarding race discussion.

The colorblind perspective is one of two primary models advocated for reducing prejudice in the United States. Proponents of the colorblind perspective argue that racial categories do not matter and should not be considered in processes such as job applications and college admissions. The primary tenet of this theory is that social categories should be dismantled, so that everyone is treated as an individual (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). The majority of social psychological research has approached prejudice reduction from a color-blind perspective (Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). However, this research has demonstrated some of the pitfalls of a colorblind perspective, showing negative effects in interracial interactions, as well as a negative impact on individuals of color. On the other hand, the multicultural perspective contends that group differences and memberships should not just be considered and acknowledged, but also celebrated. According to this perspective, ignoring ethnic group differences undermines non-white individuals’ cultural heritage and as a result is detrimental to their general wellbeing (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

Study 2 questions whether the colorblind ideology is the best way to approach race relations with children, due to the significantly greater amount of negative nonverbal behavior evidenced by the older group of American children. Other research has also

questioned the desirability of the colorblind perspective, focusing on its effects on both individual functioning and interracial interactions.

Norton and colleagues (2006) found that the incongruity between trying to appear colorblind—even despite automatically noticing race—complicated strategic efforts to appear unbiased. This, in turn, created a tension between efforts to achieve colorblindness and actual success at doing so, which was associated with negative outcomes in interracial interactions. The authors found that when White participants were paired with a Black interaction partner, the tendency to avoid race was negatively correlated with both perceived friendliness and attempted eye contact, suggesting that attempts to appear colorblind by avoiding the topic of race was associated with less friendly negative nonverbal behaviors (Norton, Sommers, Apfelbaum, Pura, & Ariely, 2006).

Apfelbaum, Sommers, and Norton (2008) discuss the idea of strategic colorblindness, or the avoidance of acknowledging racial differences in an effort to avoid the appearance of being racially biased. In an experimental task where a White participant interacted with either a Black or White confederate, the authors found that individuals who implemented strategic colorblindness in interracial interactions were judged to be less friendly. While strategic colorblindness was most likely used as a strategy to ensure positive social outcomes, it actually had the opposite effect in interracial interactions, suggesting that colorblindness is not, in fact, an effective strategy. In a follow up study using Stroop interference to gauge functioning, Apfelbaum, Sommers and Norton found that avoidance of race acknowledgment was associated with Stroop interference, suggesting that the avoidance of race was associated with a diminished capacity for executive functions. Apfelbaum and colleagues offer one explanation for these findings,

arguing that implementing a colorblind strategy depleted the cognitive resources needed to exhibit positive nonverbal behavior and affiliative behavior (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008).

Thus, a great deal of research has demonstrated the potential negative effects of utilizing a colorblind perspective in interracial interactions in experimental settings. However, other research has examined the impact of the colorblind perspective on the daily lives of individuals of color. For example, Lewis, Chesler and Forman (2000) investigated the impact of the colorblind perspective on the lives of minority students in a predominantly White university through a variety of small structured interviews. The authors found that the predominant perspective was colorblind, which was associated with students of color feeling that they were required to “blend in,” and thus forfeit aspects of their culture. However, despite this, the students also felt stereotyped, both academically and behaviorally. Further, the authors suggest that instead of creating opportunities for open discussion of race, the colorblind perspective led to White students’ expression of both socially structured and personal ignorance, which in turn often reinforced racial boundaries by supporting a feeling of difference and distance. Furthermore, it was found that White students often appeared uncomfortable or awkward and fearful during interracial interactions, potentially because they did not understand how to interact with members of other races. Taken together, the authors suggest that these factors lead to a lack of dialogue across individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, further hindering potential progress (Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000).

Thus, while prior research has demonstrated the possible negative repercussions of using the colorblind perspective for minority group members and interracial interactions,

this study extends upon this research by demonstrating the negative impact on majority group members, as well.

In conclusion, the results presented in this paper first show that American children older than 10 have internalized societal norms regarding race, and modify their behavior accordingly, adopting what could be described as a colorblind perspective towards race, as demonstrated by their avoidance of mentioning race, even though doing so would positively impact their performance. In the second study, it is shown that self-modulation of race discussion is associated with greater anxiety, as the older American children in the race-relevant task demonstrated significantly more negative nonverbal behavior than Chilean children of the same age, in the same condition. Thus, the results presented here demonstrate the possible negative repercussions associated with the predominance of the colorblind perspective in American society. As a result, I suggest that instead of teaching our children to ignore a characteristic that they obviously notice, it would be far more beneficial to teach them how to discuss the topic of race in appropriate manners. Doing so could have a number of positive implications, including reduced negative nonverbal behavior in interracial interactions. A reduction of negative behaviors in these situations could promote continued interracial interactions, which in turn could lessen discrimination and increase intercultural understanding by promoting ongoing, positive relationships between individuals of different racial backgrounds.

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