



Editorial

Race-reimagining educational psychology research: Investigating constructs through the lens of race and culture



A B S T R A C T

Despite increasing racial and cultural diversity in the United States and many other industrialized countries, less than 2% of research published in top-tier educational psychology journals authentically examines the experiences of racial and cultural minorities. Through this special issue, we not only aim to increase representation of these populations in our research, but we also strive to promote greater integrity in how racial and cultural constructs are managed in the theories, methods, analyses, and interpretations of educational psychology research. In this introduction article, we define and discuss race-reimagining in educational psychology. Further, we briefly review the historical and contemporary issues in conventional psychological research that necessitate race-reimagining and underscore its appeal. Subsequently, we introduce each article in the special issue and speak to how its respective race-reimagining qualities inform as well as extend traditional educational psychology constructs. Finally, we point to special guest commentary by Paul Schutz and conclude with implications for race-reimagined research broadly.

1. Introduction

Despite increasing racial and cultural diversity in the United States and many industrialized countries around the world, research that authentically examines the experiences and perspectives of people from historically marginalized ethnic groups represents less than 2% of published articles in top-tier educational psychology journals since the turn of the century (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). Consequently, there is a need to acknowledge race and culture as significant yet under-explored and under-conceptualized constructs in educational psychology research. Empirical studies that boast a “diverse” sample but simply employ race as a categorical moderator or control variable have set a low standard for cogently integrating race and culture into psychological research, and these studies often fail to contribute a rich understanding of the role racialized experiences play in individual psychological processes. Similarly, studies that simply compare racial groups on key learning outcomes can limit a sophisticated consideration of race, perpetuate perceived deficiencies among disenfranchised people groups, and propagate dangerous cultural superiority assumptions for predominant groups (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Urdan & Bruchmann, 2018; Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, & Wyatt, 1993).

Beyond simply growing the quantity of race-based research in educational psychology, the focus of this current special issue centers on promoting greater integrity in how we conceptualize race and culture in our theories, methods, analyses, and interpretations. Our field must advance in examining the complex influences of race, culture, and sociocultural factors on psychological functioning within educational contexts. Given the important role race has played in the academic experiences and outcomes of disenfranchised students, particularly in light of the sordid racial history of American education, educational psychologists would be wise to transition away from practices that simply treat race as a categorical variable and engage more thoughtfully around ways to underscore the latent and multidimensional facets of race.

In this special issue, we feature seven research studies that position

race (or ethnicity) as a complex socio-historical construct. These studies move beyond reducing race to superficial social categorizations, instead teasing out the racialized experiences (e.g., the cumulative weight of microaggressions), sociocultural elements (e.g., racial identity), nuanced social values (e.g., communalism), and socio-political histories (e.g., immigration policy and status) that are often overlooked or assumed to operate in monolithic ways in the vast majority of educational psychology research. Here, contributors to this special issue foreground the conceptual framework of DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) and their articulation of “race-reimagining” and “race-focusing” in educational psychology, which we define and discuss in the following section. We (as editors) also briefly review the historical and contemporary issues in conventional psychological research that necessitate race-reimagining and underscore its appeal as a promising avenue of progress in educational psychology research. Subsequently, we introduce each article in the special issue and speak to how its race-reimagining and race-focusing qualities leverage interpretative power in order to inform as well as extend traditional educational psychology constructs. Finally, we introduce commentary and analysis of this special issue by Schutz (2020).

1.1. What is race-reimagining in educational psychology and why is it necessary?

Many educational psychologists may proclaim to have little interest in race and culture specifically, instead appealing more to “basic” psychological processes across all people. However, this notion holds several dangerous misconceptions. Not only does this line of thinking elevate mainstream populations as normative while “othering” cultural minorities, but it also assumes that cultural variation in psychological processes has little power to meaningfully contribute to our understanding of basic human behavior. Ultimately, this perpetuates the pattern we often see in educational psychology research today: culturally narrow research samples (i.e., predominantly white middle-class university students), yet boasting our constructs and measures have

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generalizability across all people. Despite broad scientific agreement regarding negligible genetic differences between racial groups and that race itself is socially constructed (Jorde & Wooding, 2004; Massey, 2007; Omi & Winant, 1994), human proclivity toward categorization and power acquisition for self and kin has historically afforded race real social meaning and produced tangible consequences that continue into the present. Unfortunately, race has been levied as a mechanism for establishing systems of power and oppression worldwide and particularly in the United States. Therefore, despite the genetic invariance of race, its impact on social, economic, and educational outcomes for racial minorities cannot be considered inconsequential (Ossorio & Duster, 2005). Therefore, our research must begin to mature beyond both colorblind notions and deficiency narratives for minoritized cultural groups; instead, investigate and honor cultural nuance.

In their seminal article, DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) urged the field to develop an understanding of race and culture that extends beyond social identifiers of diverse people groups and toward examining race and culture as a set of rich socio-historical experiences that can provide deep and nuanced meaning to the constructs educational psychologists consider central in teaching and learning. Toward this end, DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) made the distinction between *race-focused* and *race-reimagined* constructs:

“*Race-focused* constructs (e.g., racial identity, racial socialization, stereotype threat, etc.) are centered around issues of race and are developed from racial categorizations and racial categorization theories (Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005), whereas *Race-reimagined* constructs are traditional constructs (e.g., self-efficacy, self-regulation, achievement motivation, etc.) that are reconceptualized to include racially influenced, sociocultural perspectives (e.g. history, context, multiple identities, etc.)” (p. 244)

Race-focused constructs provide value to our research in reminding us that race is more than just a static social marker, but a dynamic intermingling of social experiences (e.g., socialization, threat, opportunities, stigma) that color the ways individuals think and behave in the world, particularly in schools and classrooms. When researchers only use race as a categorical variable to predict statistical variance in their outcomes of choice, these complex social experiences become either hidden or oversimplified, which usually veils our understanding of key psychological processes at work. Therefore, “race-focusing” cautions us to be intentional in how we attune, theoretically or operationally, to the racialized experiences and self-perceptions of the people who participate in our research. As an example, Wang and Huguley (2012) found that African American parents’ racial socialization practices buffered negative school-based discrimination effects on their adolescents’ grade point averages and educational aspirations. In contrast to the dozens of studies that underscore achievement disparities between African American children and their peers, race-focused studies, as seen above, work toward unveiling the racialized stressors and supports that play a role in unpacking achievement trends among disenfranchised populations.

Race-reimagined research runs parallel to race-focused research, but differs in subtle yet essential ways. Race-reimagining begins with the psychological construct in question (e.g., sense of belonging, self-efficacy) and infuses sociocultural values to reimage what the construct actually means for a specific cultural group. For example, Matthews (2018) found that while Wigfield and Eccles (1992) notion of attainment value has proved robust over many studies and samples, its meaning may also be uniquely nuanced as an ethic of social and academic resilience for Black American adolescents struggling to resist stigma within the context of a historically underperforming urban high school. Therefore, race-reimagining encourages us to “see” the psychological construct through the eyes of the group we are studying in order to understand both the generalizable and culturally-nuanced elements of that construct. This approach runs counter to much of educational psychology research that assumes a rigid and culturally-neutral

conceptualization of a psychological construct and then tests participants to see how well they measure on it.

Although psychologists are in the business of studying human thinking, we must acknowledge that individual psychology does not happen in a vacuum. People are cultural beings, and thus their culture (histories, values, experiences) shapes their psychology (motivations, cognitions, behaviors, emotions). If we do not attune to the cultural experiences of the people we study, then by default we privilege the histories, values, and experiences of the researcher and their interpretation of participants’ behavior. For researchers who are disconnected from the experiences of the people they study, a deference toward their own cultural values provides the impetus to explain the discrepant thinking and behavior of other people as deficient or misguided. This problem is exacerbated when the disconnected social experiences between researchers and participants are not only cultural, but also racialized. Over time, white middle-class values and virtues implicitly become the default and dominant lens through which all other groups are compared.

It is important to note that these patterns of practice did not come to fruition arbitrarily; rather, they have deep historical roots in the traditions of psychological science and educational practice. The early evolution of educational psychology revolved around developing psychological assessments created for the primary purpose of detecting differences, deficiencies, and giftedness between individuals (e.g., identifying students in need of educational support, evaluating army recruits during World Wars I & II, screening new immigrants entering the United States). Regardless of the original intentions behind these instruments, their fundamental design to unearth individual differences, particularly within the context of racial strife and division, has facilitated the weaponizing of these instruments to further oppress racial and cultural minorities. Within the United States specifically, psychological science gave advent to the invention and standardization of “mental testing,” which ultimately became a tool used to classify children. For example, Stanford psychologist Lewis Terman developed the now well-known Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, which he ultimately used to support a successful research career on the topic of giftedness. However, through his work, Terman also concluded that there was a higher incidence of “feeble-minded” children among non-White and immigrant populations; he believed this feeble-mindedness to be incurable through education and thus argued public schools should not waste education resources on such children (Omori, 2018). Similarly, Berkeley psychologist Arthur Jensen attributed Black-White achievement differences to the genetic and intellectual inferiority of non-Whites (Jencks & Phillips, 1998) and elevated this work into public discourse through *Hernstein and Murray’s The Bell Curve* (1994).

Although social science discourse has begun to pivot away from explicit degradation of minoritized groups, inflexible top-down theories and methodologies have been slower to evolve in psychological research specifically, which has sustained innocuous forms of racism and systematic oppression across the discipline. For example, conceptions of the term *normal* in education and psychology legitimize psychological processes among White middle-class populations as the standard: who comprise nearly 80% of research participants (e.g., American university study pools) despite making up less than 20% of the world’s population (Graham, 1992; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Psychological research on minoritized groups is often rendered as second-class research, critiqued as social advocacy work, and relegated to less prestigious journals or niche special issues on culture. On the other hand, research that does include diverse populations published in high-impact educational psychology journals too often reverts to reductionist patterns (e.g., simple proxies, group comparisons) that essentialize minoritized groups and suggest the individuals therein experience their world in uniformity, which ultimately reinforces static stereotypes. Further, these studies tend to ignore the cultural and racialized experiences (i.e., values, beliefs, histories) that shape individual cognition, motivation, and social interactions. Altogether, these issues

suggest our grasp of race, culture, teaching, and learning requires a reimagining, particularly in light of the ways race has been “controlled for,” crudely measured, or undertheorized in psychological research.

1.2. Building interpretive power in educational psychology

Race-reimagining in educational psychology is advantageous beyond simply increasing the representation of disenfranchised people groups and authentically honoring their experiences in our research. As important as these reasons may be, race-reimagining also helps build *interpretive power* within our research (Brady, Fryberg, & Shoda, 2018), which ultimately supports greater precision in theory building, closer attention to nuance, culturally appropriate applications of psychological interventions in education, and stronger research-to-practice links.

The concept of interpretive power originated in the education literature as a teacher’s ability to understand students’ diverse cultural ways of knowing (Nickerson & Masarik, 2010; Rosebery, Warren, & Tucker-Raymond, 2016). However, psychologists (Brady et al., 2018) have recently adopted and adapted interpretive power as a researcher’s ability not only to locate cultural variation through their work, but also to use their theoretical and methodological skills to make meaning of cultural variation and not dismiss it as deficient or non-normative. Brady et al. (2018) noted:

“All data include variation. While some variations are random noise, others reflect meaningful differences arising from individuals’ cultural experiences. How psychologists make sense of variation depends upon their interpretive power. When researchers do not attend to culture, they dismiss culturally derived variations as errant and misunderstand the people showing these variations... When researchers cultivate interpretive power, their knowledge of cultural influences becomes a tool that guides their empirical approach and interpretation.” (p. 11407)

Inattention to how race and culture shape the experiences, and thus psychology, of the people we study ultimately has a narrowing effect on theory and our understanding of human behavior. Conversely, research that leverages interpretive power has the potential to cultivate theory that appreciates how culture impacts motivation, cognition, behavior, and emotion, particularly in schools and varied educational settings. Interpretive power not only necessitates the representation of historically marginalized people groups in our research, but also our thoughtfulness in how the theories, methods, and analyses we use impact the potential of what we have to learn from minoritized populations. Altogether, leveraging interpretive power can serve as an asset for educational psychology research.

Race-focusing and race-reimagining (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014) help build interpretive power in educational psychology in several important ways. Race-focused constructs are fundamentally grounded in racial or cultural theories (e.g., stereotype threat, ethnic identity development, racial microaggressions) and therefore ensure that race and/or culture are centralized in the research questions, study design, and lenses through which the data are analyzed and the results interpreted. An example of the interpretive power that race-focused constructs can leverage is seen through one experiment by Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady (1999). These researchers found Asian American female undergraduates performed better than their expected score on a math exam when their racial identity was primed through the positive stereotype that Asian students excel in mathematics. However, they performed worse on the same math exam when their gender identity was primed through the negative stereotype that female students generally underperform in mathematics. Beyond simply using a racial categorical variable to predict variance in achievement outcomes, this study’s design adhered to a racialized theoretical framework (i.e., stereotype threat) that allowed the researchers to interpret their findings in light of sociocultural histories around gender and race in mathematics performance. Through this, they were also able to ascertain the participants’

perceptions of their racialized and gendered experiences. In other words, they were able to learn something about the experiences of people versus only learning about variance explained (i.e., R^2) in a construct. At the time this study was published, these findings made a powerful contribution to our current understanding of stereotype threat theory. As a result, several interventions following this study have begun to employ more culturally-sensitive techniques, such as providing racially congruent role models to provide messages that challenge pervasive stereotypes (Marx & Roman, 2002; Marx, Ko, & Friedman, 2009).

Similar yet distinct from race-focused research, race-reimagined research centers on traditional educational psychology constructs that infuse sociocultural or racialized perspectives. For example, López (2017) interrogated the teacher expectancy literature and illustrated how teacher expectancies of Latinx children’s reading abilities ultimately became self-fulfilling prophecies. However, she also found these expectations were culturally biased. In other words, Latinx children were more likely to underachieve in reading when their teachers had low expectations for their reading abilities, but these expectations did not exist in a vacuum; instead, López identified a link between expectations and teachers’ inferiority biases against Latinx children, suggesting teacher bias may have played a role in lower student achievement (López, 2017). Conversely, López was able to show how teachers’ critical consciousness in combination with high expectations for their children represented a productive belief system that predicted increased reading achievement and ethnic identity development for Latinx children. Through this work, López (2017) infused critical consciousness theory (Darder, 2012; Gorski, 2013) into the literature on teacher expectations, providing a critical and cultural reimagining to a long-standing psychological phenomenon (i.e., teacher expectancies as self-fulfilling prophecies) that traditionally has been understood and interpreted through a culture-free lens. Compelling research-to-practice links can be developed through this work by not only encouraging teachers to hold higher expectations for their students (which has become a rhetorical mantra), but to support teachers in building critical conscious awareness that will help them reflect on and interrogate their biases.

Race-focused and race-reimagined research can also leverage interpretive power through methodological and analytical choices. Historically, educational psychologists have struggled to adequately conceptualize and measure culture, which has led to an overreliance on one-dimensional markers (race, national origin, socioeconomic status) as proxies for culture. Further, our propensity to value hypothesis testing over hypothesis generation in psychology can hamper culturally-conscious research designs. Through acknowledging that many marginalized populations have been understudied and thus significant gaps linger in our understanding of such groups, hypothesis generation and grounded research should be considered just as valuable as hypothesis testing. In the current special issue, King and McInerney (2019) illustrate this through a culturally-conscious research design involving a series of studies using both bottom-up (i.e., theory generating) and top-down (i.e., theory-testing) approaches to assess cultural nuances in goal theory among Filipino secondary students. However, there is also a need for culturally-conscious data analysis and interpretation, specifically in quantitative studies. Though regression-based techniques are ubiquitous in psychological research, other analytical approaches also exist for modeling error, non-normality, and nuance. For example, in this special issue, Bergey, Ranellucci, and Kaplan (2019) used a non-traditional descriptive technique, multi-dimensional scaling, to visualize similarity and variation in how Latino male teachers perceived the cost and barriers to entering the teaching profession in the New York City public school system.

Altogether, the authors’ contributions to this special issue represent a rich variety of mixed methods, qualitative techniques, and unconventional quantitative designs for the purpose of operationalizing racial and cultural experiences into their respective studies. We believe

the nature of this work to be essential and timely, given how educational psychologists often pay nominal homage to the role of race, culture, and context in understanding human behavior, while struggling to authentically integrate these issues into the methods of the discipline. In order to develop research questions and designs that authentically acknowledge the significance of race and culture, educational psychologists can begin by thoughtfully critiquing the assumption of homogeneity of psychological processes across people (i.e., the same behaviors reflect the same processes for all people). In doing so, this also begins to challenge the notion that any one group establishes normative psychological processes (Brady et al., 2018), de-centering white middle-class norms as the standard for group comparisons.

1.3. *The current special issue*

As educational psychologists whose research is centered on minoritized youth, we have been inspired by DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) to take up the challenge of race-reimagining in our own work (see López, 2017; Matthews, 2018; Matthews & López, 2019). However, we've also witnessed the growing number of like-minded scholars engaged in this brand of work as the beginning of a transformational movement within educational psychology, which has ultimately led to our proposal for this special issue. As readers will discover, the various scholars whose work is featured here approach and reimage traditional educational psychology constructs in novel and nuanced ways that center race and culture to better reflect how these constructs shape the psychology of minoritized teachers and students in education.

In the article by Gray, McElveen, Green, and Bryant (2020), the authors seek to race-reimage the concept of "relevance" for adolescents in STEM. Over recent years, the prevalence of relevance interventions has proliferated (Brown, Smith, Thoman, Allen, & Muragishi, 2015; Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006; Harackiewicz, Rozek, Hulleman, & Hyde, 2012; Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009), illustrating how brief messages provided to students regarding the importance of the content they are learning can have an impact on their educational goals and motivation. However, Gray et al. (2020) expand on this work by drawing on the Afro-centric concepts of cultural continuity and communalism to illustrate how they are valuable relevance mechanisms for STEM engagement among Black and Latinx adolescents specifically. In a research-practice partnership, Gray et al. (2020) worked alongside STEM teachers to create curricular materials that promote communal learning opportunities, or ways that students can understand how the science they are learning serves their community, serves humanity, and serves one another. Experience sampling methods, classroom observations, as well as teacher and student interviews corroborated that teachers' presentations of communal learning opportunities in their classrooms over six weeks predicted student behavioral engagement. This work is valuable in bridging student motivation and teacher education, as well as highlighting the contextual and cultural caveats of motivation among historically disenfranchised adolescents.

King and McNerney (2019) used top-down (etic) and bottom-up (emic) approaches to race-reimage goal theory among Filipino students and to uncover "culturally-relevant goals" within this well-established framework in educational psychology. Through four distinct sub-studies (i.e., one qualitative, one cross-sectional, one longitudinal, and one replication), these researchers were able to code Filipino adolescents' naturally-articulated goals that supported their academic effort, factor-analyze those goals to establish psychometric validity and distinctiveness between the various goals, and evaluate the predictive validity of the goals for student engagement and achievement. Finally, they were able to replicate the predictive validity of their findings with a fourth study using a different sample of Filipino adolescents. Ultimately, they were able to establish family-support goals (i.e., the desire to help the family) as a common yet psychologically distinct goal for Filipino adolescents compared to achievement goals (e.g., mastery-approach) or social goals (e.g., social approval). Further, through their longitudinal

predictive study and replication with a second sample, they were able to demonstrate family-support goals as a primary and pronounced predictor of students' learning outcomes compared to mastery-approach goals. The value of this work is multifaceted. Not only does it reveal cultural nuance to a well-established motivation framework (i.e., goal theory), but it also does so while using a culturally sensitive methodological approach: first allowing students to articulate their personal goals, then cross-validating those student-generated responses through psychometric analyses and comparison to a-priori achievement and social goals.

Bergey et al. (2019) applied both race-focused and race-reimagined perspectives to derive a culturalized understanding of Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) for Latino male preservice teachers in New York City. In their study on the perceived costs and barriers of a teaching career in New York City, the authors examined the intersection of racial identity and gender (i.e., Latino males). This intersection is noteworthy given the teaching profession in American education and New York City is largely white and female, despite over forty percent of NYC students being Latinx. The authors also applied race-reimagining to EVT among Latino preservice teachers to examine how barriers that are particularly salient for minoritized teachers inform their perceived costs of committing to the teaching profession. Some of these culturalized costs and barriers included differences in cultural norms between mainstream curricula in teacher preparation programs and their own racially contextualized knowledge, explicit racism, microaggressions, and discrimination. Further, issues of work demand, the lower social status of teachers, and low morale also contributed to these teachers' perceived value and planned persistence as New York City public school teachers. Ultimately, the authors provide a nuanced discussion of the unique challenges faced by a group of underrepresented teachers that allow for a culturally-informed understanding of Expectancy-Value Theory.

The research by DeCuir-Gunby, Allen, and Boone (2019) also applied both race-focused concepts and race-reimagined constructs. However, in contrast to Bergey et al. (2019) examination of underrepresented preservice teachers, DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2019) assessed colorblind racial ideology, racial stigmatizing, and emotion regulation among White preservice teachers. By applying these race-focused concepts, the authors provide us with an analysis of how White preservice teachers process racialized issues and how difficulties in emotion regulation can deleteriously inform their beliefs about other racial groups, particularly when confronted with racialized situations. It is noteworthy to point out how similar research (López, 2017; Matthews & López, 2019) highlights the importance of ensuring preservice and in-service teachers are provided with multicultural curricula to mitigate biases and develop critical awareness, described as a deep understanding of power, stratification, and sociohistorical

influences on marginalized students' trajectories. This study adds to our understanding of the kind of knowledge all preservice and inservice teachers should possess when educating minoritized youth.

Fong, Alejandro, Krou, Segovia, and Johnston-Ashton (2019) argue that the concept of school belonging has traditionally been framed from colonial perspectives, positioning Indigenous community college students as having to assimilate to institutional norms and values in order to experience belonging in a majority culture and at their college. These authors race-reimagined school belonging first through measurement invariance testing to ascertain the unique ways Indigenous community college students conceptualized belonging based on their own social values. They then utilized multilevel modeling to illustrate how perceived belonging predicted GPA and goal pursuits. Through their analyses, Fong et al. (2019) not only underscore Indigenous students' perceptions of belonging that overlap with existing theory and literature (Brayboy, 2005; Holm, Pearson, & Chavis, 2003) but also reveal unique qualities of belonging for this distinct and understudied cultural group. Notably, campus support, family-friendly support, and self-community values emerged as distinct and prominent predictors of GPA and degree attainment for Indigenous community college students. This

work challenges colorblind notions of school belonging that neglect cultural identity by identifying and authenticating unique psychological processes for a historically marginalized people group in American education and how those processes affect their behavior.

Villanueva, Di Stefano, Gelles, Osoria, and Benson (2019) examined academic mentoring of graduate and faculty women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through applying the racially-focused concepts of intersectionality, tokenism, power, and stratification to their analysis. These concepts are often missing from mentoring research but, as found by the authors, play a salient role in the experiences of a pervasively underrepresented group in STEM. To extend our understanding of the ways intersectional identities manifest themselves not only consciously but also unconsciously (i.e., physiologically), the authors used electrodermal sensors to capture physiological arousal during interviews focused on equity in terms of achievement, race, and gender. The authors found the directionality of shifts in responses after the introduction of the definition of tokenism—a social identity that moves between visibility and invisibility depending on the particular context (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)—was contingent on the identities of the respondents. For example, the authors found that physiological responses (i.e., heightened awareness) decreased for White women when asked to discuss issues of race/equity in academic mentoring while these arousal values increased for multiracial women when discussing gender equity. The findings from the study suggest that each individual has a position in society that can determine the nature and quality of relations they form with others (e.g., Villaverde, 2007); in this case, with their academic mentors. Thus, their intersectional identities (e.g., institutional, discourse, social) were found by the authors to be interwoven with the diverse perspectives, experiences, and unconscious reactions to academic mentoring. These findings are consistent with the literature suggesting that intersectional identities are prominent among minoritized STEM students and faculty experiences, yet provide a more nuanced understanding of the unconscious reactions that minoritized STEM students and faculty endure during these academic mentoring relationships.

Seo, Shen, and Benner (2019) reviewed and retested the paradox of positive self-concept and low achievement among Black and Latinx youth. The debate of this paradox is mature, reaching its height in the 1990s through scholarly discussions around the selective devaluation hypothesis (i.e., lower value placed in schoolwork protects their self-concept; Crocker & Major, 1989; Steele, 1992) and the external attribution hypothesis (i.e., external attribution of poor achievement protects their self-concept; Aronson & Inzlicht, 2004; van Laar, 2000). In general, these hypotheses have led to conclusions that students of color are unmotivated compared to white students. However, Seo et al. (2019) race-reimagined this work by bringing a sociocultural perspective to this debate and by harkening to a key explanatory variable, the perceptions of school fairness by students of color. The authors provide three alternative hypotheses to counteract the predominant deficit-based narratives regarding pervasive underachievement for youth of color. Overall, these authors found empirical support in contradiction to the selective devaluation hypothesis and the external attribution hypothesis. Their alternative hypotheses, and race-reimagined contributions to this discourse, bring to light potential barriers (e.g., racial discrimination, social stress, microaggressions) that can thwart the positive effect of self-concept on achievement. They also call attention to the sociopolitical reality that Black and Latinx students disproportionately attend low-resourced schools, whereby their self-concept may be propped while their achievement can lag behind white students from more affluent communities and schools. They also suggest Black and Latinx students, who know their respective group is often negatively evaluated in society, may build positive self-concepts as a psychological stance to challenge and resist such social stigma. In this way, the development of their self-concept can exist altogether unrelated to their actual achievement.

Finally, we conclude this special issue with commentary and

analysis by Schutz (2020), one of the original authors of the seminal race-reimagining article (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). Schutz's work focuses on emotions in education, teacher identity development, race and ethnicity in educational contexts, and research methods and methodologies. Schutz discusses the evolution of his work in foregrounding race and culture in educational psychology research, as well as the initial development and challenges writing the DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) article and publishing it in one of the top educational psychology journals, *Educational Psychologist*. He also situates each article in this special issue within the race-focused and race-reimagining landscape. Finally, he discusses four interrelated challenges that educational psychologists must acknowledge and address in order to move the field forward in underscoring race and culture within the discipline.

2. Conclusion

Despite the ascendance of globalism, technology, and progressivism, we continue to live in a racialized society. Recent events in the United States since 2010 (e.g., the Charlottesville Riots, Southern Border Immigration Policies, the Resurgence of White Nationalism, Racially-Charged Police Shootings) have revealed persistent and deep ideological divides rooted in racism that many once believed to be relegated to the distant past. In a similar vein, European nations such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands have struggled to manage sociopolitical backlash against African and Arab immigration, resulting in stigma and socially unjust education opportunities for their immigrants. In the United Kingdom, Black and Asian Britons are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, and experience worse housing, health, and schooling conditions compared to White Britons (Ford, 2008; Minorities at Risk Project, 2006). Altogether, it is clear race remains a central conduit that guides how we think about, behave toward, and relate to one another. Considering current global events and the cultural tensions these events reveal, social scholars and scientists are now increasingly called upon by government, media, and the lay public to provide insight into how to process and face these pervasive challenges across social structures within individual nations as well as internationally.

Despite the challenges of our current sociopolitical climate, these issues also present valuable opportunities for learning, interpersonal growth, racial reconciliation, and the pursuit of a more socially just society. Educational psychologists, as leaders in the study of human learning, psychosocial development, and motivation, have unique potential to make powerful contributions to public and scholarly discourse regarding these issues. However, if we continue in old paradigms that subvert and simplify the significance of race and culture, we forfeit our opportunities to participate in these pivotal conversations – much less lead them – and become complicit in the exclusionary practices of disenfranchised groups and their misrepresentation in our science. Further, within our immediate sphere of influence, we forfeit the value of our scientific contributions for the students, their teachers, and school leaders most impacted by unjust social conditions.

For these reasons, we view race focusing and reimagining as one fruitful approach toward elevating the integrity and impact of educational psychology research broadly, as it increases the representation of marginalized voices and offers a path toward reconciling the rifts between our science and the disenfranchised students, families, and school personnel that our work serves. If we do not attend to the unique and often cultural experiences that influence psychological processes across diverse people, then we prioritize the meaning-making systems of the researcher above those of the participants. One way or another, psychology will always be interpreted through a cultural lens; however, the central question remains, “Who's cultural lens will be privileged?”

Consider for a moment a motivation research lab, looking to conduct their next study in the under-resourced school district neighboring their university's affluent town. Well-trained and conscientious, they will be thoughtful about the theoretical framework they adopt and the

psychometrically-sound questionnaire they use. However, what is the true value of their theoretical framework (e.g., Expectancy-Value Theory, Goal Theory) if those researchers are obtuse to the specific cultural and sociopolitical dimensions that play a role in the motivated behavior of the students in that school district? Despite the generalizability of the findings their questionnaire may produce, would such a study have interpretive power to provide thoughtful recommendations tailored to address the unique needs and challenges of the participants involved? Conceptually, would the researchers assume that the motivation of the marginalized children in the neighboring community functions in the same ways as children who have been afforded vastly superior privileges (e.g., their own children who attend the university's cooperative school)? Operationally, was the questionnaire the researchers used validated on the same type of students who attend the neighboring school district, or was it developed from a study pool of white middle-class freshmen and sophomores at the university?

This thought experiment is not meant to disparage any specific motivation theory, questionnaires, or white middle-class freshmen and sophomores. It is, however, meant to challenge our long-standing assumptions and methodological traditions that can inoculate us from learning about the people we wish to study and – more importantly – serve. Although adopting a well-established theoretical lens is simply good practice in educational psychology and social science broadly, if the theory is culturally-neutral when the researcher intends to study a culturally-nuanced sample, then that theoretical lens may no longer be sufficient and may require reimagining. While we strive for measures that demonstrate strong psychometric properties, we also must ask ourselves certain questions: were those measures created with marginalized populations in mind, or were they validated on a much more privileged population? Further, are the measures being misappropriated in ways that simply reinforce the marginality of those who are silenced? If so, they may require reimagining. As evidenced through this special issue, we are witnessing a growing number of educational psychologists who understand the need for reimagining and are thinking creatively yet rigorously about ways to broaden our scope. However, much more is needed, and we hope this special issue reignites our field's engagement of powerful and high-quality research on race and culture in educational psychology.

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