The Relationship Between Racism and Racial Identity for White Americans: A Profile Analysis

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This investigation examined how racial identity profiles, using J. E. Helms's (1996) profile scoring procedure, were related to racist attitudes. One finding showed that participants with an undifferentiated or flat profile scored significantly higher in racist attitudes than participants with other racial identity profiles. Implications for counseling practice and research are discussed.

Esta investigación examina cómo los perfiles de identidad racial se relacionan con las actitudes racistas, utilizando el procedimiento de evaluar perfiles de J. E. Helms (1996). Un resultado encontró que los participantes con un perfil plano o no-diferenciado obtuvieron mejores resultados en las actitudes raciales que los participantes con otros perfiles de identidad racial. Se evalúan también las consecuencias para la práctica de consejería y las investigaciones.

Research on White racial attitudes has found that the expression of overt White racism has generally been on the decline in the last three decades (Duckitt, 1992; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Kovel, 1970). Some researchers have contended that racist beliefs have not actually disappeared but have simply taken on a subtler, more covert form (Jones, 1997). Thus, research seems to indicate that Whites can no longer be considered simply racist or not racist. Perhaps there are varying types of racial attitudes for White Americans.

Many theories of racism propose types or subtypes of racists (Duckitt, 1992; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Kovel, 1970). What the various types of racists share is that each is defined by Whites's outgroup socioracial prejudices (usually) against Blacks. The significance of the idea of racist types is in the proposition that within-group attitudinal and behavioral differences exist within the White socioracial group. That is, Whites are not assumed to be equivalently

racist. If racism is a major mental health problem for its adherents as some authors have argued (Dobbins & Skillings, 2000; Pettigrew, 1981), then identification of subtypes might be useful for determining who requires constructive mental health interventions, as well as what kind of interventions are required. Nevertheless, although many of the relevant racism theories suggest that White racism subtypes develop in response to internalized racial socialization (Dennis, 1981), the virtually exclusive focus on the consequences of such socialization (i.e., how Whites respond to others) rather than the nature of the internalized socialization (e.g., White racial identity development) has made it difficult to identify clinically meaningful subtypes of White socialization. The present study attempts to address the gap in the literature regarding White socialization by examining subtypes of racist attitudes, using racial identity profiles.

Since the introduction of Helms's (1984) White racial identity theory and the development of a measure to assess White racial identity (Helms & Carter, 1990), a number of books and articles devoted to the experience of Whiteness and how Whiteness influences psychological functioning and social beliefs and behaviors have appeared in the literature. When social science research has dealt with Whites's racial experience (e.g., Fine, Weis, Powell, & Wong, 1997; Frankenburg, 1997; McIntosh, 1998; McIntyre, 1997), it has more often than not focused on Whites's attitudes toward other racial groups with less attention given to Whites's psychological orientation to their own racial group.

Helms (1984) asserted that Whites potentially develop each of five *statuses* (formerly called *stages*) by which they interpret and respond to racial cues (also see Helms, 1996). Helms and Carter (1990) developed the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS) to assess the racial identity *schemas* (formerly called *attitudes*). The schemas are as follows: (a) Contact, involving denial of the meaningfulness of race in one's life and in society in general; (b) Disintegration, characterized by confusion about the social rules of White socialization; (c) Reintegration, defined by a belief in the innate superiority of White people and oneself as a member of the White group; (d) Pseudo-Independence, characterized by an intellectualized awareness of the privileges of being a member of the White group; and (e) Autonomy, defined by a nonracist identification with the White group. Helms (1990, 1996) subsequently proposed a sixth schema, Immersion–Emersion, but it was not included in the original WRIAS and, consequently, could not be included in the present study. Immersion–Emersion describes a status in which Whites begin an active exploration of what it means to be White. The challenge of the Immersion–Emersion racial identity status is to develop pride and emotional acceptance of one's race without being racist (Carter, 1995).

A large body of research has been published on the relationship between racial identity schemas and many other psychological and cultural variables. For example, White racial identity schemas have been found to be differen-

tially related to counselor preference (Helms & Carter, 1991), cultural values (Carter & Helms, 1990), process and outcome in counseling dyads (Carter, 1990), multicultural training (Brown, Parham, & Yonker, 1996; Neville et al., 1996), self-reported multicultural counseling competencies (Ottavi, Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1994), and personality traits (Silvestri & Richardson, 2001).

However, only a few researchers have studied White racial identity attitudes in relationship to racism and prejudice (Constantine, 2002; Utsey, McCarthy, Eubanks, & Adrian, 2002). Carter (1990), who conducted the first empirical study of the influence of White racial identity on racism, found that males and females differed significantly in their racial identity attitudes. For females, there was an inverse relationship between Contact attitudes and racists attitudes such that high Contact attitude scores were related to low symbolic racism scores.

Subsequent investigations examining the relationship between White racial identity and racism replicated these findings. Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1992, 1994) also found significant gender differences in racial identity attitudes and a significant relationship between racism and White racial identity in samples of faculty and college students. In Pope-Davis and Ottavi's (1992) study, men were found to have higher levels of Disintegration attitudes than women, and men's Reintegration schema significantly predicted racism in a positive direc-tion. Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1994) found that higher levels of Reintegration attitudes were related to higher levels of racism for both men and women. Silvestri and Richardson (2001) also found a relationship between White ra-cial identity and racist attitudes. Specifically, Reintegration attitudes were found to be significantly and positively related to racism.

Although previous research has clearly established that White racial identity attitudes are differentially related to racism, no studies have yet used racial iden-tity theory to investigate specific types of racists. The results of the gender-group comparisons in the White identity and racism studies provide indirect support for the presence of racism subtypes within samples and are consistent with Carter's (1990) assertion that racial identity is a complex psychological construct that is most useful for understanding racial attitudes; to understand racism by study-ing Whites as an undifferentiated group obscures the variety of ways in which racial attitudes are expressed.

Racial identity research has furthered the understanding of the relationship between White racial identity and various psychological constructs, however, the manner in which racial identity statuses operate together as variables re-lated to racism is still not clear. Studies to date actually provide only a partial picture of what is described in racial identity theory, which describes the iden-tity development of individuals (within samples) rather than Whites as a group (Helms, 1990). Thus, subgroups of individuals within samples may have had similar racial socialization experiences, which, in turn, contributed to similar racial identity manifestations; it is unlikely that all members of a sample have developed the same patterns of racial identity.

Moreover, researchers' (e.g., Behrens, 1997) continued attempts to operationally define racial identity schemas as discrete, orthogonal stages that develop in a linear fashion are an additional shortcoming of some of the empirical literature on racial identity and racism. Helms (1999) asserted that racial identity schemas evolve out of each other and, consequently, may appear in different combinations if assessed at the individual level. Because racial identity theory presupposes individual differences in the interpretation of racial information and experiences, Helms (1996) asserted that profile analysis might be a more useful approach for investigating racial identity and racism.

By using the traditional scoring system, it is not possible to assess the relative dominance of racial identity statuses within an individual participant. Instead, scores are tabulated for each subscale, and the aggregate score for the sample is used in analyses, usually with no effort to transform the raw scores (Carter, 1996). Helms (1996) proposed a new way of scoring the WRIAS that would yield profiles for each individual participant. The new method allows for an inspection of an individual's constellation of racial identity attitudes and a more accurate reflection of the true complexity of one's racial identity schemas. Neville and Lilly (2000) also recognized the importance of examining racial identity schemas in a more complex manner. Their study, while not an investigation of racism, used a different method (cluster analysis) to identify profiles.

The aim of this analysis of White racial identity and racism was to pioneer the use of Helms's (1996) new profile scoring strategy, which uses comparisons of contiguous racial identity subscales to determine whether there are significant differences in respondent's scores, allowing for the generation of distinct groups of profiles. That is, the study was designed to replicate and extend the earlier investigation involving racial identity attitudes and racism (Carter, 1990) to determine whether particular profiles of White racial identity would be related to racism.

method

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 279 White college students from large midwestern universities. Participants for analysis were selected from the data set on the basis of their profiles. (See Procedure section below for a description of the selection process.) The top seven most frequently occurring profiles were chosen because they offered groups of sufficient size for data analysis. The final sample yielded 217 participants. Of these, 111 were male students and 106 were female students. Ages ranged from 16 to 61 years ($M = 20.90$, $SD = 5.70$), and self-reported social class standings were lower class ($n = 6$, 28%), working class ($n = 33$, 15.2%), middle class ($n = 109$, 50.2%), upper middle class ($n = 65$, 30%), and upper class ($n = 4$, 1.8%). In terms of class standing, 114 were freshmen (52.5%), 58 were sophomores (26.7%), 29 were juniors (13.4%), and 16 were seniors (7.4%).

PROCEDURE

The WRIAS (Helms & Carter, 1990), the New Racism Scale (NRS; Jacobsen, 1985), and a personal data sheet were distributed to participants by White undergraduate research assistants as part of a larger research project. Participants were recruited from introductory psychology classes. The instruments were counterbalanced to account for order effects. Participants completed the measures and received a debriefing sheet outlining the goals and hypotheses of the study.

INSTRUMENTS

WRIAS. The WRIAS was developed by Helms and Carter (1990) to measure five attitudes of White racial identity development theorized by Helms (1984). Five subscales measure the attitudes Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independence, and Autonomy. The measure consists of 50 items assessing Whites's racial attitudes using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree,* 5 = *strongly agree*). Each subscale contains 10 items. Scale scores are determined by adding the appropriate items for each attitude subscale, yielding a possible range of scores from 10 to 50 for each subscale. Internal consistency reliability coefficients for the present sample were .57 (Contact), .77 (Disintegration), .78 (Reintegration), .60 (Pseudo-Independence), and .53 (Autonomy).

Validity of the WRIAS has been demonstrated in several studies. White racial identity attitudes have been found to be related to other racial/cultural variables such as racist attitudes (Carter, 1990; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992, 1994; Silvestri & Richardson, 2001), attitudes toward racial situations in organizations (Block, Roberson, & Neuger, 1995), and cognitive processing of racial information (Gushue & Carter, 2000).

NRS. Developed by Jacobsen (1985), the NRS was developed to measure what the authors called subtle or modern racism. The scale includes seven items that measure Whites's attitude toward Blacks in indirect areas of race relations. Sample items include, "It would upset me personally if Blacks moved into my neighborhood" and "Blacks are more likely to make progress in the future by being patient and not pushing so hard for change." Participants are asked to rate the extent to which they agree with each statement. Summing the scores on each of the items creates one total score. Total scores can range from 7 to 26, with higher scores indicating a greater endorsement of racist attitudes. Jacobsen reported an internal consistency reliability of .70. Utsey et al. (2002) also reported a Cronbach's alpha of .70. The internal consistency coefficient for the present sample was .63. Validity of the NRS has been shown in research demonstrating a relationship between the NRS and racial identity attitudes theorized to be connected with racism (Carter, 1990; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Silvestri & Richardson, 2001).

Personal data sheet. Participants completed a personal data sheet, providing demographic information regarding age, sex, race, self-reported social class, and class standing.

CREATION OF THE PROFILES

Racial identity profiles were created after invalid scale scores were eliminated for each participant based on Helms's (1996) procedure. First, WRIAS subscale scores (e.g., Contact, Disintegration) for each participant were calculated. Standard error of difference bands were then calculated to assess the number of points by which each subscale could be considered significantly different from its theoretically adjacent subscale (e.g., Reintegration from Pseudo-Independence). The formula used to calculate the standard error of difference bands (Helms, 1996) was

$$SE_{dif} = SD \sqrt{2 - r_{xx} - r_{yy}} \times 1.96,$$

where *SD* represents the average standard deviation of the subscales in each comparison and r_{xx} and r_{yy} are the reliabilities for each subscale in the comparison. It is also possible to use the standard error of difference bands generated by Helms (1996); however, we derived our own significance intervals using the present sample (see Table 1).

Using the significance bands, we then compared each participant's subscale scores with their adjacent subscale scores (e.g., Contact vs. Disintegration, Disintegration vs. Reintegration) to determine whether the subscale scores in each comparison differed significantly from each other. Three possibilities existed for each comparison: (a) A scale can differ by less than one standard error of difference from its adjacent subscale, (b) two subscale scores can be significantly different by one standard error of difference, or (c) two subscale scores can differ by two standard errors. This process allowed us to assess the strength of endorsement of each racial identity attitude in comparison with other attitudes. If the two subscales in a comparison differed by less than one standard error, the scores were considered to have no significant difference and were

TABLE 1

Point Values for Determining Statistical Significance of White Racial Identity Attitude Scale Subscale Comparisons

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Contact	—	8.11	8.30	8.27	8.18
2. Disintegration		—	7.45	7.88	7.92
3. Reintegration			—	8.06	8.13
4. Pseudo-Independence				—	8.01
5. Autonomy					—

thus labeled "equal." If the difference between racial identity attitude scores in a pair was greater than one standard error, the comparison was considered "high" in the direction of the higher score. If the difference between scores in the pair was two standard errors or greater, it was considered "very high" in the direction of the higher score (Helms, 1996).

Thus, five options for each pair were available. For example, in the comparison between Contact and Disintegration subscale scores, the strengths of endorsement could be (a) very high Contact, (b) high Contact, (c) equal or no significant difference between Contact and Disintegration, (d) high Disintegration, and (e) very high Disintegration. It should be noted that although we only compared subscales with their theoretically adjacent subscales (e.g., Contact with Disintegration, Disintegration with Reintegration), it is also possible to compare each subscale with every other subscale. We decided to use the contiguous subscale method as described in Helms (1996) because we wished to compare our results with those in Helms's (1996) study.

Once each pair of adjacent racial identity attitude scores were labeled according to comparative strength of endorsement, racial identity profiles could be generated for each participant. Generating a profile is accomplished by creating a new variable ("profile") using concatenation, a procedure that calculates all possible combinations of contiguous subscale comparisons. After profiles were calculated for each participant, frequencies of each profile type in the data set were determined. Of the possible 5^5 (or 3,125) combinations, 38 profiles were found in the data set (see Table 2). Of the 38 profiles, 29 occurred in fewer than 5 participants, of which 18 were single participant profiles. To have groups of sufficient size for analyses, we selected the top 7 most frequently occurring profiles. They were as follows:

TABLE 2

Frequencies of White Racial Identity Attitude Scale Profiles

C vs. D	D vs. R	R vs. P	P vs. A	A vs. C	f	%
=	=	=	=	=	73	26.2
C	=	P	=	=	36	12.9
C	=	P*	=	=	36	12.9
=	=	P	=	=	31	11.1
C	=	=	=	=	15	5.4
C*	=	P*	=	=	15	5.4
=	=	=	=	A	11	3.9
=	=	P	=	A	8	2.9
C	=	P*	=	A	7	2.5
C*	=	P	=	=	5	1.8

Note. N = 237. The profiles presented comprise 85% of the total sample. C = Contact; D = Disintegration; R = Reintegration; P = Pseudo-Independence; A = Autonomy. Higher subscales indicated by first letter of subscale names. Symbols are = (within one standard error) and * (at least two standard errors difference.) Profiles of *n* < 5 were not included in this table.

1. A flat or undifferentiated profile ($n = 73$). The flat profile was the most frequently occurring profile in the sample. In the profile, each racial identity status is within one standard error of its adjacent status. Participants with such a profile seem to rely equally on all racial identity schemas and show no particular commitment to any one status. Helms (1996) also found that this was a common pattern.
2. A Contact and Pseudo-Independence (CP) dominant profile ($n = 36$). In the profile, Contact scores were considered high (or within one standard error) in relation to Disintegration scores, and Pseudo-Independence scores were high in relation to Reintegration scores. Other comparisons between subscale scores in this profile were not significant. Participants with such profiles seemed to rely on a combination of Contact and Pseudo-Independence as their dominant racial identity schemas.
3. A "High C/Very High P" profile ($n = 36$). Contact scores were high in relation to Disintegration, and Pseudo-Independence scores were very high in relation to Reintegration scores. The participants appeared to operate from a combined Contact and Pseudo-Independence schema, with Pseudo-Independence attitudes being endorsed more strongly than those in the similar profile CP above.
4. A Pseudo-Independence dominant profile ($n = 31$). Pseudo-Independence was high in relation to Reintegration attitudes, but it was not significantly different from other racial identity attitudes in the participants. People with this profile seemed to operate mainly from a Pseudo-Independence schema.
5. A Contact dominant profile ($n = 15$). Contact scores were high in relation to Disintegration scores, and no other racial identity status was dominant in this profile. People with such a profile rely primarily on the Contact schema to interpret racial information.
6. A "Very High C/Very High P" profile ($n = 15$). Contact scores were very high in relation to Disintegration, and Pseudo-Independence scores were very high in relation to Reintegration scores. The participants appeared to rely on a combination of Contact and Pseudo-independence schemas (to a higher degree than those in the other CP combination profiles).
7. An Autonomy profile ($n = 11$). Autonomy scores were high in relation to Pseudo-Independence scores, and no other racial identity statuses dominated the profile. People who show the profile use the Autonomy schema in interpreting racial information.

results

The total sample size used for analysis was 217 participants who were grouped into seven distinct profiles as described above. Means and standard deviations for the WRIAS and NRS for the overall sample and by profile are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

TABLE 3

**Means and Standard Deviations for the White Racial Identity
Attitude Scale (WRIAS; Helms & Carter, 1990) and the New Racism
Scale (Jacobsen, 1985)**

Variable	Range	M	SD	α
WRIAS				
Contact	17–46	32.50	4.63	.66
Disintegration	10–48	25.23	5.54	.77
Reintegration	13–46	24.94	5.87	.78
Pseudo-Independence	20–49	35.00	4.62	.60
Autonomy	23–48	36.26	4.16	.53
New Racism Scale	7–25	13.96	3.35	.63

Note. N = 279.

Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine if there were differences
on the mean scores of the NRS and WRIAS by select demographic variables.
A multivariate analysis of variance showed that there were no significant dif-
ferences on the WRIAS and NRS by gender (Wilks's $\lambda = .94$), $F(1, 107) = 1.02$,
$p = .42$; socioeconomic status (Wilks's $\lambda = 85$), $F(4, 107) = .70$, $p = .86$; or class
standings (Wilks's $\lambda = .83$), $F(3, 107) = 1.07$, $p = .38$.

A single one-way analysis of variance was used to determine if there were
significant differences between scores on the NRS by racial identity profile
type. The omnibus test was significant, $F(6, 210) = 11.51$, $p < .001$. Post hoc
comparisons were conducted using the Scheffé test. Two profiles (the flat pro-
file and the Autonomy profile) were found to have significantly higher racism
scores than the other profiles (e.g., the Very High CP profile, the CP profile,
and the High C/Very High P profile). No significant differences were found in
other combinations of the profiles.

discussion

This study focused on racism and its relationship to White racial identity profiles,
using a new scoring system of racial identity that was developed by Helms (1996).
The use of profiles follows the recommendation made by Helms and Carter (1990)
that attitudes be conceptualized as profiles rather than as a linear progression of
statuses (formerly called stages). Thus, the approach used in the present investiga-
tion did not rely on mean scale scores as was done in the original study by Carter
(1990). Rather, the new profile method was used to group participants according
to the relationships between scales determined for each person in the sample. By
using the profiles, it was possible to investigate how different profiles or individual
racial identity configurations rather than subscales were related to scores on the
NRS. We attempted to determine whether various types of racial identity status
profiles would be related to modern racism attitudes and beliefs. In general, the

TABLE 4

Means and Standard Deviations for the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS; Helms & Carter, 1990) and the New Racism Scale (NRS; Jacobsen, 1985) by Profile

	Profile															
	Flat (n = 73)		C/P (n = 36)		VHC/P (n = 36)		P (n = 31)		C (n = 15)		VHC/VHP (n = 15)		A (n = 11)		Total (n = 217)	
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
WRIAS																
C	31.67	3.02	34.72	3.22	35.11	2.49	31.90	2.59	33.93	3.81	33.80	3.45	26.46	2.38	33.17	3.90
D	29.49	3.42	23.17	2.74	21.69	2.49	26.23	2.63	23.80	3.75	18.47	3.56	27.46	2.81	25.42	4.67
R	29.59	3.17	23.30	2.25	19.22	2.34	24.48	2.48	25.87	3.25	18.53	3.36	28.18	2.89	25.01	4.94
P	32.22	3.26	36.06	2.14	39.08	2.17	36.26	2.74	31.47	3.02	40.47	3.42	32.46	3.48	35.10	4.13
A	33.29	3.31	37.17	2.34	37.81	3.00	35.55	2.73	34.80	4.71	41.07	2.71	37.64	1.63	35.87	3.79
NRS	15.59	3.03	12.53	2.30	12.61	2.05	14.19	3.23	13.60	2.20	11.13	1.96	16.18	3.57	13.97	3.09

Note. N = 217. Flat = undifferentiated profile, with no significant differences between the adjacent White racial identity statuses; C/P = Contact/Pseudo-Independence; VHC/P = very high Contact/Pseudo-Independence; P = Pseudo-Independence; C = Contact; VHC/VHP = very high Contact/very high Pseudo-Independence; A = Autonomy; D = Disintegration; R = Reintegration.

study did find that particular racial identity status profiles were related to beliefs and attitudes associated with modern or subtle racism.

In a sample of 279 White participants, seven profiles ($N = 217$) were found that offered sufficient group sizes to conduct data analysis. The most frequently occurring profile type in the sample was the flat or undifferentiated type, meaning that no significant differences existed between the adjacent White racial identity statuses. The finding that the flat profile was the most frequent one is a finding that is consistent with Helms's (1996) initial study in which she introduced the profile system. Thus, no one racial identity status dominates in such a person's profile. It should not be assumed that because there is no dominant status or no significant difference between the statuses that each status is equally present in each person or that the profile is not meaningful. The idea that a person's measured profile can be undifferentiated or flat occurs in other psychological measures such as the Strong Interest Inventory (Sackett & Hansen, 1995). It is highly likely that within the flat profile group, individuals may have different types of influences associated with the various statuses. Perhaps it is the most frequently occurring profile because it reflects limited socialization regarding race such that no particular status has emerged as more distinct from any other, as measured by the standard error bands. It is also possible that the undifferentiated profile emerged because the sample comprised young college-age adults. Thus, their psychological resolutions regarding race have not yet fully formed.

In our data analysis, we found that of the seven profile types in the sample, two —the flat type and the Autonomy type—scored higher in racism. That is, one of the profiles with relatively equal endorsement of all racial identity statuses tended to be related to higher racism scores. One way of understanding the flat profile's significant relationship to racism is to refer to social psychological theories of modern racism. Ambivalence theory, for example (Katz & Hass, 2000), holds that Whites simultaneously hold both negative and positive attitudes toward Blacks and that attitudinal ambivalence results in polarized attitudes toward Blacks. Thus, in our sample it might have been that Whites who exhibited the most ambivalence (operationalized as the flat profile) also held the most racist attitudes. Participants, for the most part, who demonstrated more commitment to specific racial identity statuses (as operationalized by profiles with one or more dominant racial identity status) tended to score lower in racism when compared with the less differentiated profile.

Using racial identity theory to understand the findings, one might consider the undifferentiated profile or flat type as the state of development that one has prior to the emergence of any particular status. In this sense, such a profile may represent an early "abandoning racism" phase in which an individual would more than likely be influenced by society's message about race and race relations. Therefore, it seems reasonable that people who were characterized by the flat profile would tend to endorse subtle racist beliefs such as those characterized by the NRS.

The finding that the Autonomy status profile was associated with higher racism scores is contrary to theory. The Autonomy profile should theoretically be related to the least racist attitudes of all the profiles. Studies have not examined the Autonomy status in relation to other statuses, thus, it is possible that the Autonomy status profile is associated with higher racism scores because it is strongly influenced by the less differentiated schemas within the profile. It is also possible that Autonomy, like other statuses, has multiple phases associated with the degree to which racism is rejected. On the other hand, it is also possible that this was a spurious finding. Because the Autonomy profile was only found in 11 of the participants in our sample, perhaps the finding of higher racism scores was related to some characteristic specific to that small group and does not generalize to all people with Autonomy dominant profiles. However, the finding, if replicated in future studies, might require a reexamination of the theory.

Specific comparisons between profile types also showed significant differences. The profiles characterized by combinations of Contact and Pseudo-Independence were associated with lower racism scores. Thus, the finding suggests that people who have blends of Contact and Pseudo-Independence tend not to endorse subtle racism. From a theoretical perspective the relationships make sense. Denial of the significance of race combined with an intellectual acceptance of racial differences would lead one to hold attitudes that would reject common beliefs associated with racism. However, it should be noted that all of the findings in the study indicate that beliefs and attitudes might not be the same as behavior. The study did not assess how the racial identity status profiles were related to both attitudes and behaviors.

Another aim of the study was to replicate the findings of Carter's (1990) study on racial identity and racism. In general, our findings were similar. That is, we found that some White racial identity attitudes did relate significantly to modern or symbolic racism attitudes. We also found that the Contact dominant status profile was associated with lower racism scores. However, we found some differences from Carter's (1990) study in our analyses. First, our data did not show gender differences in racism attitudes. In addition, our sample did not yield large numbers of Disintegration or Reintegration profiles, so we were unable to examine the relationship of such profiles with racism scores. We suspect that the examination of racial identity at the individual level as opposed to the sample mean score level yields a different picture of the relationship between racial identity and racism.

What is clear from the present study is that the complexity associated with racial identity statuses can be best understood through the use of profiles rather than the use of untransformed mean scores (Carter, 1996). A finding of significant differences among profile types offers additional evidence of the importance of configurations and schemas. The use of the profile procedure to examine more closely the range of complexity within a person or group of people

who share a profile constellation offers a richer and potentially more accurate picture of racial identity on the individual level. Moreover, the profile system can be used, as the theory proposed, to understand individual people and to examine the notion of racial identity blends Helms (1984) discussed as important aspects of the theory and of how racial identity might manifest in one's personality structure.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of the investigation should be interpreted with caution. First, although the age range of the participants was wide (ages 16–61), the sample nonetheless consisted of college students. Social desirability could also be a source of possible limitation, particularly because the sample was mostly college students. The study needs to be replicated with larger sample sizes and with participants from a variety of backgrounds and age groups. As noted earlier, the study assessed attitudes and not behaviors and, therefore, its findings may be limited. The instruments used may also have influenced the findings. For instance, the NRS only uses a few items to measure a complex construct and, thus, its use could have limited the study's findings. The WRIAS's psychometric properties have been debated in the literature (Helms, 1996; Leach, Behrens, & LaFleur, 2002). Nevertheless, we contend that the use of the profile system has great potential for advancing the knowledge and understanding of race as a psychological aspect of human functioning.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Because this is the first investigation of its kind, future research should be conducted to attempt to replicate the findings with other samples. Racial identity configurations in different samples may vary according to variables such as geographical location or local racial climate (Helms, 1989). Researchers who have previously used the WRIAS may wish to reanalyze their data sets to determine the particular configuration of profiles present in their data. Also, larger samples should be analyzed to determine the frequencies of different profile types in the population as a whole. The use of alternative methods of generating profiles is also encouraged (e.g., cluster analysis) to validate this new mechanism for examining racial identity.

Furthermore, further research should investigate the relationships between specific profile types and other racial and psychological variables to attempt to further delineate the characteristics of each racial identity status profile. Research could also examine the ways in which different profile types interact with other profile types in terms of, for example, interests and personality.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING PRACTICE

Additional research on possible subtypes of racist individuals will aid in the design and implementation of appropriate interventions and training models for developing awareness of racism. It is possible that some interventions will work better with some subtypes and some interventions with other subtypes. For instance, our study suggests that different content and processes would be warranted in counseling interventions for someone with a flat profile who might endorse racism than would be used for people with combinations of a Contact and Pseudo-Independence profile, who might be less likely to endorse racism. The counseling strategy for people with a single dominant status profile might focus on the core issue that might emerge given the manner in which racial information is processed. In addition, the utilization of individual profiles in assessment and intervention could help practitioners and trainers tailor interventions to the specific needs, strengths, and limitations of each client or student.

Research on racism has shown that today the types and forms of racism have become subtler and harder to detect. Consistent with ambivalence theory, our findings suggest that people who do not have a dominant White racial identity status, and thus may endorse both positive and negative attitudes toward Blacks, may be more likely to endorse racist attitudes. The present study provides tentative but mixed support for subtypes of racist individuals as suggested by theory. It also raises intriguing questions about the Autonomy status that may require further investigation.

references

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