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Section Two

New Developments in the Theories and Measurement of White and Black Racial Attitudes

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Janet Helms in "Toward a Methodology for Measuring and Assessing Racial as Distinguished from Ethnic Identity" proposes (a) theoretical advancements in the Black and White racial identity models, (b) a nontraditional psychometric understanding of the White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS), and (c) assumptive differences in the constructs of racial identity and ethnic identity. Helms has introduced new concepts, such as, "sociorace," "racial assignment," "societally defined racial classification system" and "societally regulated racial group," to argue that one cannot classify people in the U.S. according to genetic origins and phenotypes. Rather, race-defining characteristics are chosen by the White dominant group, the group that holds the political power. Thus, race is sociopolitically defined, and racial identity of an individual is the internalized consequence of imposed societal categories.

Originally Helms had conceptualized racial identity as a linear, hierarchical developmental process. She used the construct of "stages" to describe the respective processes of U.S. Blacks and Whites who progress from negative and hateful attitudes to positive and healthy attitudes towards both the Black and the White racial groups. Helms has now suggested that "ego statuses" be used instead of "stages" when understanding a person's "racial self-conception."

An intrapsychic status process is caused by a person-environment reactivity. But statuses are hypothetical constructs, which cannot be

measured. What can be measured is the individual's information-processing strategy, as related to one's currently predominant status. However, different information-processing strategies may underlie each status. Thus, two individuals governed by the same status may actually express themselves through different information-processing strategies (for example, in the Black Preencounter status, denial by one and individualism in another). One cannot conclude that any single sample of race-related behavior, as indicated by scale responses, reveals all of the statuses that are potentially accessible to a person. That is, because a status has differentiated to some extent in the person's ego does not mean it will govern all of the person's responses on a measure. Helms uses a circular diagram to represent the status profile of a person. The circle is used to emphasize that racial identity statuses are not hierarchical, in the sense that the use of one status does not preclude the use of another.

These ideographic and dynamic aspects of racial identity have challenged Helms to rethink how to use her objective, Likert-type scales. Helms argues that the basic tenets of classical measurement theory (e.g., items need to be linearly related as in the case of internal consistency reliability) are probably not directly applicable to the measurement of racial identity statuses. Helms says that relationships among items may be underrepresented if one uses unadjusted linear methodologies to evaluate such relationships.

Helms says racial identity profiles rather than single scores should be used to describe the individual. She has used the standard error of the difference between two subscale scores to determine by how many points subscale raw scores must differ in order to be significantly different from one another. This method of developing individual profiles is meaningful in comparison to just showing group differences, as has been suggested by research to understand significantly different scores between verbal and performance tests on the WISC-R, and by Sodowsky and collaborators' use of a critical difference score between two subscales to show differences in the worldviews of individual Chinese subjects. Helms gives a norm table that shows the minimum number of points by which each pair of adjacent subscales must differ from each other to demonstrate high difference, very high difference, or no difference. According to Helms, reliance on untransformed raw score comparisons may contribute to misleading conclusions.

Helms has relabeled the Black Racial Identity Attitudes (BRIAS) subscales by using a combination of Atkinson's minority identity development (MID) model and Cross' Black racial identity labels. Helms has also relabeled her Black racial identity model as Black and other People of Color identity, meaning that the Black identity processes

can be applied to "visible racial and ethnic groups" who have internalized reactions to their respective assignments in the sociopolitical power system. What was previously an oppression-driven, race-specific White-and-Black emic model is now generalized to other U.S. racial and ethnic minority groups who have historically not experienced slavery. Prior to Helms, Atkinson had already made the case for an etic or universal minority identity development model (MID), and Sue and Sue had proposed the racial/cultural identity development model. So could this mean that there is now a meeting of two theoretically different models, the MID model and the Black racial identity model?

Helms suggests that identity models be considered racial if they describe reaction to racial oppression, and identity models be considered "ethnic" if the constructs of ethnicity and common cultural socialization as the source interconnectedness among group members are basic to them. Helms adds that in U.S. society, acknowledgement of ethnicity is "largely voluntary," whereas race is not, and ethnicity typically is "permitted" to adapt itself across generations. Therefore, Helms describes her racial identity measures as process measures which, she says, cannot be evaluated by classical measurement theory. On the other hand, she argues, classical measurement theory can be used to construct the content-specific homogeneous constructs of ethnic identity measures. Helms' differentiation of racial and ethnic identity models may not be supported by Bernal, Phinney, Isajiw, Smith, Sodowsky and Kwan, and Derald Wing Sue and Stanley Sue, all of whom refer to the effects of the White group's domination on an ethnic person, and some of whom also refer to different implicit ethnic identity aspects that require internal processing.

Robert T. Carter in "Exploring the Complexity of Racial Identity Attitude Measures" examines the scale constructions of the WRIAS and BRIAS and illuminates (a) various subscales and (b) the use of percentile scores versus raw scores. The objective of Carter's research appears to be to keep pace with Helms' recent theory development of racial identity. Through content analysis, Carter groups 11 factors, factor themes, items, and the factor loadings of the WRIAS into two primary dimensions that he labels Racial Distance/Discomfort and Racial Awareness/Acceptance. Subsequently, Carter reports findings of a cluster analysis. A two-cluster solution for the five White racial identity subscales represented the best fit in terms of proportion of cases in two groups. Thus, Carter argues that Helms' White racial identity constructs of "abandoning racism" and "developing a nonracist White identity" are discernible.

Carter advocates the use of transformed percentile scores from his norm tables presented in this chapter. He reminds us of Helms'

warning that local racial climates might influence the racial identity of subjects and volunteer participants, which may, in fact, explain the low subscale reliabilities of the WRIAS and BRIAS and the varying scale scores across samples. To justify his point, Carter transformed the two clusters' rank-ordered WRIAS subscale mean raw scores into percentiles, using the WRIAS norm table. When considering the rank-ordered raw scores instead of percentile scores, the relative influence of the subscales is less apparent.

Carter also reports a cluster analysis of the BRIAS. A three-cluster solution best fit the data, which, according to Carter, suggests three underlying dimensions to Black racial identity: Pro-White, Racial Confusion, and Racial Pride. These domains approximate Helms' previous understanding of the properties of the BRIAS. At first glance at the raw scores, the three clusters do not appear to be distinct from each other, with Clusters 2 and 3 having the same rankings of mean subscale scores. However, by using percentiles from the BRIAS norm table, the rankings change, suggesting distinct profiles within each cluster. Surprisingly, the pro-White cluster has its strongest influence from Preencounter (anti-Black and pro-White attitudes), followed by Immersion-Emersion (pro-Black and anti-White attitudes). Carter explains that both these subscales involve stereotypical perspectives of Blacks, which might have jointly influenced the cluster.

The first half of the chapter provides updated definitions of the White and Black racial identity attitudes. There is a comprehensive review of empirical research, showing how each subscale of the WRIAS and BRIAS, respectively, has differently predicted psychological, social, and personal attributes across samples and environments in several studies by diverse researchers. This section and its references will be very beneficial for future researchers of racial identity.

Sandra Choney and John Behrens[1] in "Development of the Oklahoma Racial Attitudes Scale Preliminary Form (ORAS-P)" first acknowledge Janet Helms' leadership in urging researchers to investigate the racial orientation of Whites as it may affect White-non-White interactions. Then Choney and Behrens proceed to show that the ORAS-P is different from Helms and Carter's WRIAS in (a) theory and (b) instrument development and analyses. They end by responding to Helms and Carter's conclusion regarding the "factorial complexity" of the WRIAS. Choney and Behrens emphasize that validity is demonstrated by an extensive instrument development process, such as their envisioned

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[1]Choney and Behrens' theoretical collaborators are Wayne Rowe and Donald Atkinson who are referenced in the chapter.

undertaking for the ORAS-P, and that there is a presumption that the WRIAS has a level of validity in Helms and Carter's argument that their measure is factorially complex. Thus one of Choney and Behrens' objectives in presenting the ORAS-P is to demonstrate that its factor structure is not different from that proposed by their theory.

Choney and Behrens explain that Helms' White racial identity development theory uses an "oppression-adaptation" construct which is more appropriate to explain the reactions of U.S. racial and ethnic minorities who experience oppression than to explain White racial attitudes. It provides "developmental interpretations." Finally, it uses the "abstraction" identity.

Calling their own model "pragmatic," Choney and Behrens say that White racial consciousness is characterized by the "significance of being White." The "types" of attitudes that embody the significance of being White reflect ethnocentrism and privilege in White relationships with minorities. Although Helms observes that Phinney fails to distinguish between racial identity and ethnic identity, Choney and Behrens have applied Phinney's ethnic identity concepts to understand White ethnocentrism. Despite such theoretical differences, it appears that the idea of "oppression" may be shared by both White racial consciousness and White racial identity. Also, although Choney and Behrens do not propose a developmental model, they have utilized Phinney's and Marcia's concepts of "achieved" and "unachieved" statuses which have developmental underpinnings.

Choney and Behrens explain attitude change from Bandura's social learning/cognitive theory. When there is dissonance between currently held racial attitudes and recent experiences in the environment, this cognition-environment mismatch may lead to changes in types of racial attitudes. The unique nature of the "dissonant" type is that its experience is available to all types, and it is a necessary transition experience. The central position of dissonance is indicated by a circumplex diagram, which shows that the four "achieved" types are blocked from each other, except when there is movement through dissonance. The racial consciousness in the "avoidant" and "dependent" unachieved types is low because movement between each other does not need a dissonance experience. This stated assumption about dissonance by Choney and Behrens makes their conceptualization about changes in White racial attitudes different from that conceptualized by Helms and Carter. However, it appears the White individual in both models is practicing "adaptation" in attitudes, in one case through a differentiating ego, and in the other through conscious learning.

Thus, we now have two models of White racial attitudes, each accompanied by its own measure. The significant contribution of the two models to multicultural assessment is that their respective instruments permit scientific inquiry and debate, unlike many other multicultural concepts and positions that cannot be measured.

Choney and Behrens state that their objective for constructing the ORAS-P was to provide empirical validation for their proposition of types. They employed the deductive approach, with items designed to measure seven predetermined constructs. Seven administrations of the ORAS-P over a 3-year period permitted the study of individual item performance, univariate and bivariate distribution of subscale scores, and internal consistency reliabilities. Items were modified, substituted, or newly introduced with each administration and analyzed.

Although there are relatively few items per type, with the avoidant type having only three items, the internal consistency reliabilities of the subscales are moderately high. Test-retest reliabilities are similar to those of most trait instruments. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results reported in this chapter indicate relatively strong loadings for a majority of the items and acceptable values for select goodness-of-fit indexes. When the subscales for the four achieved types were collapsed into two bipolar subscales (combined "dominitive"/"integrative" and combined "reactive"/"conflictive"), the CFA fit for the five-factor model was worse than the original seven-factor model. Nonetheless, Choney and Behrens agree that their future item refinement will need to focus on further distinction of dominitive and integrative subscales as well as the reactive and conflictive subscales. The authors' explanation about their CFA methods and understanding of obtained results are useful information for researchers who use factor analytic methods.

Although Choney and Behrens show that interfactor correlations and their directions make conceptual sense, some correlations are moderately high, raising the definitional argument of whether trait instruments are multidimensional or unidimensional or have overarching higher order factors that have not been psychometrically ruled out. The authors may not have empirically shown that their constructs' "unachieved" and "achieved" statuses are the moorings for the various White racial consciousness types. However, given Choney and Behrens' laudable empirical ambitions of "developing" rather than "establishing" the ORAS-P, one expects future refinements to address various questions. While we await new developments, the ORAS-P's initial psychometric properties are promising.