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## Group Processes & Intergroup Relations

### The impact of social norms on navigating race in a racially diverse context

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Manuscript Type:	Original Manuscript
Keywords:	colorblindness, race, social norms, racial diversity
Abstract:	<p>To date, research has primarily focused on the colorblind norms and behaviors of majority-White participants in majority-White contexts. Extending this work to more diverse samples and contexts, across four studies we examine whether colorblind norms link to the colorblind behavior of racially diverse participants living in a racially diverse (i.e., heterogeneous) context. Findings suggest that participants living in a racially diverse context did not endorse colorblind beliefs (Study 1) and norms (Study 2) and instead behave in race-conscious ways and overwhelmingly use race in a photo-identification task. Furthermore, in Study 3 we find that colorblind norms are largely activated by the belief that talking about race is prejudiced. When participants were exposed to a social norm that linked talking about race to prejudice, colorblind behavior became more prevalent. Finally, in Study 4, we see that greater diversity of one's context is correlated to less endorsement of colorblindness.</p>

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## RUNNING HEAD: Impact of social norms on navigating race

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## Abstract

To date, research has primarily focused on the colorblind norms and behaviors of majority-White participants in majority-White contexts. Extending this work to more diverse samples and contexts, across four studies we examine whether colorblind norms link to the colorblind behavior of racially diverse participants living in a racially diverse (i.e., heterogeneous) context. Findings suggest that participants living in a racially diverse context did not endorse colorblind beliefs (Study 1) and norms (Study 2) and instead behave in race-conscious ways and overwhelmingly use race in a photo-identification task. Furthermore, in Study 3 we find that colorblind norms are largely activated by the belief that talking about race is prejudiced. When participants were exposed to a social norm that linked talking about race to prejudice, colorblind behavior became more prevalent. Finally, in Study 4, we see that greater diversity of one's context is correlated to less endorsement of colorblindness.

### **The impact of social norms on navigating race in a racially diverse context**

Within the U.S., the social norm of colorblindness prevails. The idea that discussing or mentioning race should be avoided is endorsed by many White individuals (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Plaut, 2010). Despite automatically attending to and encoding race (Cosmides et al., 2003; Ito & Urland, 2003), White individuals within the U.S. may feel social pressure to not “see” race. While colorblindness has been defined in a number of ways in the literature (see Rattan & Ambady, 2013; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010), we focus here on what Neville and colleagues (2013) call *color evasion*—avoiding race in an interaction context with a focus on similarities rather than differences. Engaging in colorblindness in interracial interactions may be a strategic attempt to, at least in part, appear unbiased (Apfelbaum et al., 2008). Indeed, individuals most concerned with appearing prejudiced are more likely to adopt colorblind norms and behaviors (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Goff et al., 2013; Karmali et al., 2019; Pauker et al., 2015). Research evidence suggests that for White individuals in majority-White contexts, adopting colorblind norms appear to be driven by a concern that associates talking about race with being prejudiced (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Pauker et al., 2015). However, colorblind norms may operate differently in racially diverse contexts because talking about race may be decoupled from prejudice, in other words, not talking about race may no longer be strategically motivated. The purpose of the current research is to examine whether norms surrounding talking about race are associated with colorblind behavior in racially diverse contexts.

#### **Colorblind Norms in Racially Diverse Contexts**

Research examining how individuals negotiate race-relevant situations has focused primarily on White participants (cf. Kohatsu et al., 2011; Pauker et al., 2015) in majority-White contexts, such as the Continental U.S. For example, past research on colorblind behavior in interaction contexts (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Norton et al., 2006) has been conducted in

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3 Massachusetts, where White people make up nearly 80% of the population (U.S. Census, 2010).  
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5 The current research answers the call to include more racially diverse samples and contexts in  
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7 research to expand our understanding of the factors that impact intergroup relations (Kitayama,  
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9 2017; Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Population projections for the U.S. forecast that Whites will be  
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11 the numerical minority by 2060, dropping to just 40% of the total population (Colby & Ortman,  
12  
13 2014). Given these shifting population demographics, it is imperative to understand the dynamics  
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15 of intergroup relations in racially diverse contexts.  
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19 For the purposes of this paper, we define racially diverse contexts as having greater racial  
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21 heterogeneity and specifically more equal proportions across many racial groups. Thus, to extend  
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23 the study of intergroup relations beyond White participants in majority-White contexts, we  
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25 examine colorblind norms within two racially diverse contexts where racial minority groups  
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27 consist of at least 51% of the population and include more even distributions among groups.  
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29 Specifically, we examine colorblind norms within two states known for their racial diversity:  
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31 Hawai'i (Studies 1-4) and California (Study 4). In both of these contexts, racial minorities  
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33 account for over 60% of the population and have relatively equal proportions among various  
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35 racial groups.  
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40 Although White people in majority-White contexts adopt colorblind norms and display  
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42 colorblind behavior (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Goff et al., 2013; Norton et al., 2006; Rattan &  
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44 Ambady, 2013), research has demonstrated that racial minority individuals in majority-White  
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46 contexts display more comfort talking about race compared to their White counterparts  
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48 (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). Racial minorities have more expertise with race-related  
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50 discussions and thus may feel more comfortable talking about race in race-related situations.  
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53 Indeed, developmental work indicates that White parents rarely talk to their children about race  
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(Loyd & Gaither, 2018) whereas parents of racial minority children actively talk about race with their children from a young age (Lesane-Brown et al., 2010). Consequently, we expect that in a more racially diverse environment with larger numbers of racial minority individuals, it is possible that race could be more readily used in conversations—making everyone more comfortable with discussing race. Thus, the diversity of the context may foster different social norms that support acknowledging and using race (Neville et al., 2014; Rattan & Ambady, 2013) and this social norm may extend to individuals in a context regardless of their own racial background. The goal of this paper is to empirically investigate whether colorblind norms and corresponding behavior in race-relevant situations persist in racially diverse contexts.

**Colorblind Behavior in Racial Minorities**

One reason for a reduction of colorblind behavior in racially diverse contexts may be that typical racial majority and minority members appear to diverge in how they use race. Many White individuals view colorblindness as an optimal strategy to deal with racial differences. For example, when compared to racial minorities, White individuals are more likely to endorse the *power evasion* dimension of colorblindness whereby they deny racism by focusing on equal opportunities (Awad et al., 2005; Neville et al., 2000; Offermann et al., 2014; Tawa et al., 2016; Worthington et al., 2008). Furthermore, color evasion can negatively impact minority-group members who are on the receiving end of colorblind behavior (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Neville et al., 2013; Plaut, 2010). For racial minority college students, the colorblind behavior of their White peers led to feelings of frustration, pain, and isolation (Lewis et al., 2000) and reduced cognitive functioning (Holoien & Shelton, 2012). Colorblindness can also impact racial minorities in the workplace—the more strongly their White coworkers endorsed colorblindness, the less psychological engagement racial minorities reported at work (Plaut et al., 2009).

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3 Instead of adopting a colorblind approach to race, particularly given potential negative  
4 consequences for doing so, racial minority individuals might adopt other strategies for navigating  
5 race-relevant situations. For example, in stark contrast to color evasion, racial minorities may be  
6 more likely to endorse multicultural approaches to race, such that groups should not only be  
7 acknowledged but valued (Ryan et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2007; Verkuyten, 2005). Extending  
8 these research findings to racially diverse contexts, where the proportion of racial groups are  
9 more evenly dispersed, we may find that the dominant norm may shift from colorblindness  
10 toward one that acknowledges race. Research has found that racial minorities appreciated a  
11 valuing diversity approach (e.g., race-conscious) as opposed to an equality approach (e.g.,  
12 colorblind) when they perceived their context to have a moderate proportion of racial minorities  
13 (Apfelbaum et al., 2016). Thus, the goals of the current research are to examine whether social  
14 norms regarding talking about race impact colorblind behavior in race-relevant interactions  
15 within racially diverse contexts.  
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**The Present Research**

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35 We examine the correspondence of colorblind norms and behavior expressed by Asian  
36 individuals in a racially diverse context. Specifically, in Study 1 we administer a photo  
37 identification task to measure Asian participants' use of racial labeling and the extent to which  
38 their endorsement of colorblindness aligns with their behavior in the task. In Study 2 we aim to  
39 replicate our findings from Study 1 with both White and Asian participants to test the alternative  
40 possibility that these behaviors stem from racial group membership alone, rather than social  
41 norms. Next, in Study 3 we demonstrate that colorblind behaviors are linked to the belief that  
42 talking about race is prejudiced by experimentally manipulating norms that reinforce this belief.  
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3 individuals' endorsement of colorblindness and their perceptions that talking about race is  
4 prejudiced. To do this, we sampled from three locations across the U.S. that differed in their  
5 racial diversity in order to investigate these relationships. Together, these studies help to  
6 illustrate the link between colorblind norms and subsequent behavior in race-related interactions  
7 when in racially diverse contexts.  
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**Study 1**

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17 Despite well-meaning intentions to avoid prejudice, when individuals in majority-White  
18 contexts employ strategic colorblindness, this has negative psychological consequences for  
19 minority individuals (e.g., Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Given that  
20 colorblindness often does not benefit racial minorities, it is possible that in contexts where racial  
21 minorities are better represented, that individuals use different strategies for negotiating race and  
22 diversity (i.e., multiculturalism or polyculturalism; Ryan et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2007) resulting  
23 in colorblind norms and behaviors being less pervasive. The goal of Study 1 was to examine  
24 whether endorsement of colorblindness would extend to corresponding behavior (i.e., talking  
25 about race) using a photo identification task (e.g., Apfelbaum et al., 2008), in Asian individuals  
26 within the racially diverse context of Hawai'i. We sampled individuals who identified as Asian  
27 (i.e., monoracial East or Southeast Asian) because they represent the largest racial group within  
28 this diverse context (Hawai'i's Asian population is about 37%; U.S. Census, 2017). We  
29 anticipate that Asian participants in this diverse context would be more likely to acknowledge  
30 race and their rationale for doing so will emphasize that race is a functional category that helps  
31 them complete the task's objective. We also expect that participants' endorsement of  
32 colorblindness would correspond to their behavior demonstrated in the task.  
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**Method**



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**Participants.** We recruited 118 participants from the University of Hawai‘i’s participant pool. The responses of 26 individuals were removed from the study due to not meeting our race pre-selection criteria (monoracial East or Southeast Asian), and one because their testing session was interrupted by a fire alarm. The final sample included 91 undergraduates who participated in exchange for extra course credit or a \$5 Starbucks gift card. The sample consisted of East or Southeast Asian undergraduates (53 females) who were 18-48 years old ( $M_{\text{age}} = 20.75$  years,  $SD = 5.18$ ). The rationale for why one participant chose (not) to use race was not provided due to experimenter error. A sensitivity power analyses using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009) was conducted with our sample size found that with 80% power and  $\alpha = .05$ , we would be able to detect an effect of  $W = 0.35$  for a chi-square with  $df = 3$ .

**Materials and procedure.** Participants completed a photo identification task to measure their acknowledgement of race (Apfelbaum et al., 2008). An Asian experimenter welcomed the participant into a quiet room located in the lab and asked them to sit in front of  $30.4 \times 6$  in. photographs of faces arranged in three rows of 10. Participants were told that the goal of the task was to identify a target photo randomly selected by the experimenter by asking as few yes-no questions as possible, that the trial would end once they had correctly identified the target photo, and they would be asked to complete four trials in total. Photos differed along a range of perceptual cues but varied systematically by race (Black vs. White), gender (female vs. male), and background color (blue vs. red). Thus, asking questions about race, gender, or background color would facilitate task performance by eliminating roughly half of the photos in the array, respectively. While the participants familiarized themselves with the array, the experimenter turned on the video camera. After completing all trials, participants were asked to explain why they did or did not use race during the task (i.e., “Why did you choose [not] to use racial

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3 labels?”). Participants then moved to a computer cubicle and completed items that assessed  
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5 whether they personally endorsed colorblindness (adapted from Pauker et al., 2015), followed by  
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7 a demographic questionnaire.  
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**Measures.**

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12 **Colorblind behavior.** Trained research assistants blind to the purpose of the study coded  
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14 the video recordings for whether participants used race-related terminology (e.g., “*African-*  
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16 *American,*” “*dark skin,*” “*White,*” “*light complexion,*” etc.) to identify the target photo in each  
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18 trial (coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes). Two raters independently coded each video, and a third  
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20 independent rater resolved discrepancies (Cohen’s  $\kappa = .88$ ). Responses were summed across the  
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22 trials (ranging from 0 = did not mention race in any trial to 4 = mentioned race in every trial) and  
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24 divided by the total number of trials, resulting in an index of the frequency with which race was  
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26 mentioned. We analyzed a) whether a participant used race one or more times (not colorblind  
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28 behavior) compared to whether they *never* used race (colorblind behavior) and b) the frequency  
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30 of acknowledging race across all trials (where higher is *less* colorblind behavior).  
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36 **Rationale for behavior.** Two research assistants independently coded participants’  
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38 rationale for why they did or did not use race during the task. Coding discrepancies were  
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40 resolved independently by a third rater (Cohen’s  $\kappa = .86$ ). Previous research found that  
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42 individuals provide either task- or social-focused reasons for (not) using race during the task (see  
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44 Pauker et al., 2015). Building on this scheme, responses were coded as aligning with one of four  
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46 strategies. For two of the strategies, participants provided task-focused reasoning which  
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48 indicated that race was acknowledged because this dimension was (1) functional and a good  
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50 strategy to use (e.g., “*it was a faster way to identify different pictures,*” “*it helped narrow it*  
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52 *down*”), or (2) perceptually salient and apparent (e.g., “*visually easy to identify,*” “*it’s the most*  
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3 *obvious labels to see*"). For the third strategy, participants provided social-focused reasoning  
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5 which indicated that race was avoided because of (3) social concerns (e.g., "*it didn't seem*  
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7 *appropriate to use racial words,*" "*because I thought it was racist*"). The final strategy consisted  
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9 of (4) idiosyncratic responses (e.g., "*I don't know,*" "*I'm not good at differentiating them*").  
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12 **Personal colorblindness.** Four items modified from Pauker et al. (2015) were used to  
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14 assess whether participants personally endorsed a colorblind approach to race (e.g., "*I am*  
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16 *uncomfortable talking about race,*" "*I bring up race in [my] everyday conversations [reverse*  
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18 *scored]*"). Agreement with the statements was rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very*  
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20 *Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Very Strongly Agree*). Responses were averaged such that higher scores  
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22 indicate greater personal colorblindness ( $\alpha = .69$ ).  
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**Results**

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28 **Colorblind behavior.** The majority of Asian participants did not exhibit colorblind  
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30 behavior: only 14 (15.4%) participants failed to acknowledge race in the task. Conversely, 77  
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32 participants (84.6%) mentioned race in at least one trial. Across all four trials, on average,  
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34 participants acknowledged race 67.6% ( $SD = 37.91$ ) of the time.  
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38 **Rationale for behavior.** As expected, participants who chose to mention race versus not  
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40 provided different rationales for their behavior,  $\chi^2(3) = 48.50, p < .001, V = .73$ . Those that  
41  
42 mentioned race largely use task-focused rationales, whereas the few that did not mention race  
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44 used idiosyncratic rationales followed by social concerns. Overall, functional (45.5%) and  
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46 perceptual (37.8%) reasons were mentioned more by participants than social concerns (7.7%)  
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48 and idiosyncratic (8.9%) reasons (Figure 1).  
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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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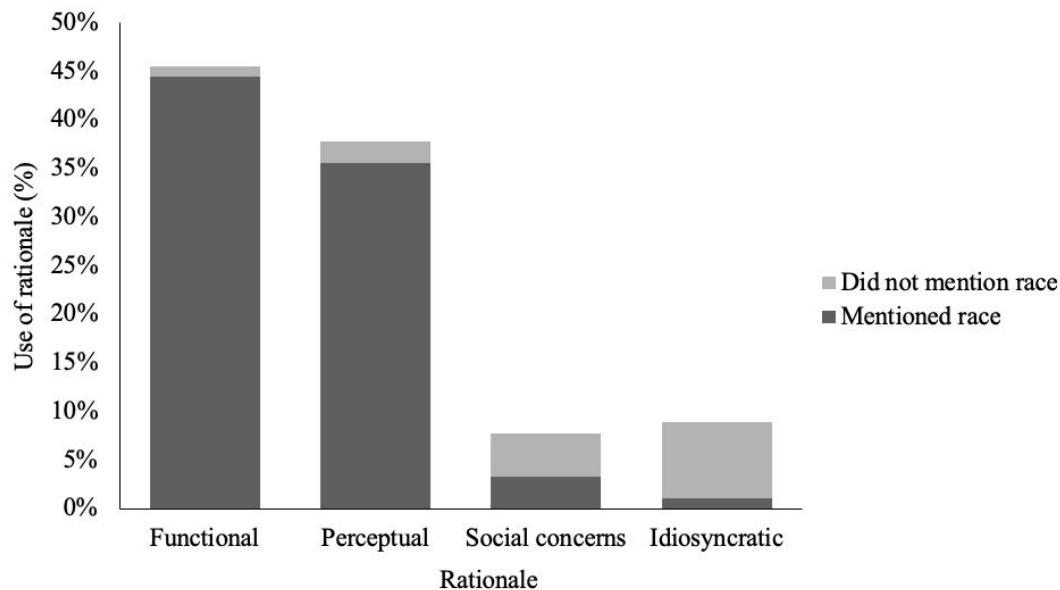


Figure 1. Study 1: Use of Rationale for Mentioning Race (or Not) During the Photo

### Identification Task

**Personal colorblindness.** The frequency with which race was acknowledged was negatively associated with personal colorblindness ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .65$ ),  $r = -.26$ ,  $p = .03$ ; those who were less likely to endorse colorblindness mentioned race more frequently in the photo identification task.

### Discussion

As one of the first studies to examine colorblind behavior in racial minorities living in a racially diverse context, we found that Asian participants overwhelmingly acknowledged race; over 80% mentioned race at least once during the photo-identification task. In addition, task-focused rationales (functional or perceptual) were most frequently provided to justify acknowledging race and social concerns (e.g., concerns about appearing prejudiced) were rarely mentioned. Finally, lower endorsement of colorblindness was related to less colorblind behavior. This pattern of results is consistent with the possibility that in this racially diverse setting, people

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3 may not adopt a colorblind norm and instead adopt alternative social norms that encourage  
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5 acknowledging race.  
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**Study 2**

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10 One alternative explanation for the results of Study 1 is that Asian participants are simply  
11 more comfortable talking about race. Although People of Color and White individuals may both  
12 feel social pressure to adopt colorblind norms (Neville et al., 2013), due to their racial minority  
13 status in the broader context of the U.S., Asian participants may be more comfortable talking  
14 about race (Sue, 2013) and therefore less likely to exhibit colorblind behavior. Past research has  
15 found that racial minority children adhere to social norms (e.g., colorblindness in a majority-  
16 White context), despite their racial identity (Pauker et al., 2015). However, it remains unclear  
17 whether talking about race more openly is driven by the social norms in a context, regardless of a  
18 person's racial identity.  
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31 To examine this possibility, in Study 2 we included White participants for comparison as  
32 the majority of the research conducted to date has focused on this demographic. If the lack of  
33 colorblind behavior in Study 1 was based solely on racial minority group membership, then we  
34 would expect Asian participants to acknowledge race and provide task-focused reasons for doing  
35 so, but we would expect White participants to display colorblind behavior (avoid mentioning  
36 race) and provide social-focused reasons for doing so, replicating research conducted in less  
37 racially diverse contexts. However, if, as hypothesized, this racially diverse context features  
38 social norms that encourage acknowledging race, then *both* White and Asian participants in  
39 Hawai'i should mention race with the same frequency during the photo identification task and  
40 provide similar rationales for doing so.  
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3 Since we anticipate that perceptions of larger social norms may differ in this racially  
4 diverse context, in Study 2 we measured participants' perceptions of colorblind norms in  
5 Hawai'i. We expect that participants will behave in line with perceived social norms, and both  
6 White and Asian participants will endorse similar social norms.  
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**Method**

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15 **Participants.** We aimed to collect 30 participants of each racial background based on  
16 past research that examined colorblind behavior (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Norton et al., 2006).  
17 Sixty-six undergraduates from the University of Hawai'i's participant pool and members of the  
18 community participated in exchange for extra credit in psychology courses or a \$5 Starbucks gift  
19 card. The sample included 34 East or Southeast Asian (24 females,  $M_{\text{age}} = 20.35$  years,  $SD =$   
20 4.66, age range: 17-44 years old) and 32 White (20 females,  $M_{\text{age}} = 30.80$  years,  $SD = 15.40$ , age  
21 range: 18-71 years old) participants<sup>1</sup>. Because of experimenter error, six White participants did  
22 not complete the colorblind norms questionnaire and are not included in the regression analyses.  
23 A sensitivity power analyses using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009) was conducted and determined  
24 we would be able to detect an effect size of  $d = .70$  with 80% power and  $\alpha = .05$  when  
25 conducting comparisons across our two racial groups.  
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40 **Materials and procedure.** Participants completed the measures as outlined in Study 1,  
41 with the following exception; instead of measuring personal colorblindness, four items were used  
42 to assess perceptions of contextual colorblind norms (e.g., "*In Hawai'i, people bring up race in*  
43 *their everyday conversations [reverse scored]*"; adapted from Pauker et al., 2015). Agreement  
44 with the statements was rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very Strongly Disagree*) to 6  
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55 <sup>1</sup> All results remain unchanged when excluding age outliers (+ 3 SD from mean).  
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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 (*Very Strongly Agree*) and responses were averaged together, such that higher scores indicated  
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5 greater perceived colorblind norms ( $\alpha = .60$ ).  
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8 As in Study 1, the photo identification task was completed with an experimenter who  
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10 belonged to the participant's racial ingroup (i.e., Asian participants interacted with an Asian  
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12 experimenter, and White participants with a White experimenter). Video recordings of the photo  
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14 identification task were coded for colorblind behavior (Cohen's  $\kappa = 1.00$ ) and the rationale for  
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16 using race (Cohen's  $\kappa = .78$ ) using the same procedures as Study 1.  
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### 19 Results

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21 **Colorblind behavior.** Replicating the results of Study 1, the majority of participants did  
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23 not exhibit colorblind behavior: only 2 (5.9%) Asian and 6 (18.8%) White participants failed to  
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25 acknowledge race in the photo identification task. In contrast, 32 (94.1%) Asian participants and  
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27 26 (81.3%) White participants asked about race at least once during the photo identification task.  
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29 Averaged across all four trials, Asian participants acknowledged race 77.2% ( $SD = 31.6$ ) of the  
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31 time and White participants acknowledged race 64.1% ( $SD = 39.1$ ) of the time. As anticipated,  
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33 Asian and White participants did not reliably differ in their tendency to mention race,  $t(64) =$   
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35 1.51,  $p = .14$ ,  $d = .37$ .  
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40 **Rationale for behavior.** Replicating Study 1, participants' rationales differed by whether  
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42 they mentioned race or not,  $\chi^2(3) = 10.80$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $V = .41$ . Rationales did not differ by  
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44 participant race,  $\chi^2(3) = 3.57$ ,  $p = .31$ . Those that mentioned race largely used task-focused  
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46 rationales, whereas the few that did not mention race used perceptual rationales followed by  
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48 social concerns and idiosyncratic rationales. Overall, participants used functional (25.8%) and  
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50 perceptual (60.6%) rationales, and less frequently mentioned social concerns (9.0%) or  
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52 idiosyncratic rationales (4.6%) (Figure 2).  
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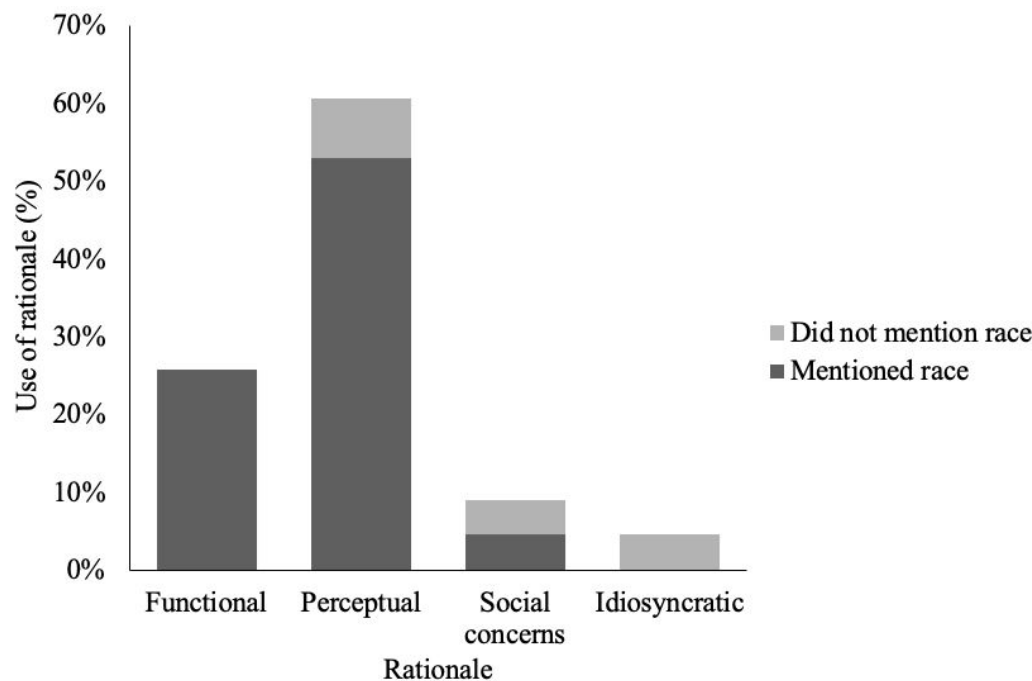


Figure 2. Study 2: Use of Rationale for Mentioning Race (or Not) During the Photo Identification Task Collapsed Across Race

**Colorblind norms.** Somewhat unexpectedly, White participants ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = .50$ ) were more likely to perceive contextual colorblind norms as compared to Asian participants ( $M = 2.66$ ,  $SD = .75$ ),  $t(57) = -3.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.93$ . To examine if colorblind norms or participant race predicted frequency of acknowledging race, we regressed frequency of acknowledging race onto participant race, colorblind norms, and their interaction. Participant race was effect coded as Asian (1) vs. White (-1), and perceived colorblind norms was mean centered. We found an effect for perceived colorblind norms, such that lower perceived colorblind norms were related to greater frequency in use of race,  $b = -.27$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $t = -3.59$ ,  $p < .001$ . We found no effect for participant race,  $b = .002$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = .04$ ,  $p = .96$ . However, these effects were qualified by a significant interaction,  $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $t = 2.80$ ,  $p = .007$ . A simple slopes analyses revealed that for Asian participants, perceived colorblind norms did not influence their use of race,  $b = -$



## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 .06,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .43$ . However, for White participants, perceiving lower colorblind norms  
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5 related to increased frequency in use of race,  $b = -.49$ ,  $SE = .13$ ,  $p < .001$ .  
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**Discussion**

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10 Consistent with the results of Study 1, we find that in this racially diverse context,  
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12 participants overwhelmingly made use of race; over 80% of our participants mentioned race at  
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14 least once during the photo-identification task. Further, the tendency to acknowledge race did not  
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16 differ by race of our participants. Consistent with our prediction that social norms in a racially  
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18 diverse context (rather than racial identity) would sway participants' behavior, both White and  
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20 Asian individuals mentioned race often and to a similar extent. Replicating Study 1, participants  
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22 were more likely to use functional or perceptual rationales, as compared to social concerns or  
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24 idiosyncratic rationales, during the photo identification task, and this did not differ by participant  
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26 race.  
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31 In support of a social norms explanation, participants who perceived less of a colorblind  
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33 norm in Hawai'i were more likely to acknowledge race. However, unexpectedly, the extent to  
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35 which perceived norms were related to participants' behavior differed based on participant race.  
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37 For Asian participants, perceived colorblind norms were not related to whether they  
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39 acknowledged race or not. Yet, for White participants, those who perceived lower colorblind  
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41 norms in Hawai'i, more frequently acknowledged race. As compared with Asian participants, it  
42  
43 may be that White participants are more sensitive to perceived colorblind norms due to relatively  
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45 greater concerns with appearing prejudiced. Given these findings, we aimed to tease apart  
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47 colorblind norms and how they relate to strategies to appear non-prejudiced in Study 3.  
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**Study 3**

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 We provide evidence from diverse samples of participants that lower endorsement of  
4 colorblind norms (Study 1) and lower perception of colorblind norms (Study 2) was associated  
5 with lack of colorblind behavior. In order to directly test whether colorblind norms impact  
6 colorblind behavior we next manipulated social norms that highlight talking about race as  
7 prejudiced to see whether these beliefs also mapped onto people's behavior. Specifically, we  
8 expose participants to one of three conditions: 1) colorblind norms that *explicitly* link talking  
9 about race to prejudice, 2) colorblind norms with no additional information, or 3) a control  
10 condition. We expect that similar to research conducted in the continental U.S. (e.g., Apfelbaum  
11 et al., 2008; Pauker et al., 2015), even in a racially diverse context social norms that link talking  
12 about race to prejudice would trigger colorblind behavior.  
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**Method**

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28 **Participants.** An a priori power analyses to detect effects for a one-way ANOVA with 3  
29 levels (social norm condition: talking about race is prejudiced, colorblind, and control) with  
30 achieved power of 0.80 and effect size of  $f = 0.30$  (which is similar to past effect sizes found in  
31 Norton et al., 2006, and the smallest effect we could detect given our ability to recruit  
32 participants at the time of data collection) indicated we required a sample size of 111 (G\*Power;  
33 Faul et al., 2009). Therefore, we recruited 112 participants (66 female,  $M_{age} = 21.10$ ,  $SD = 6.02$ )  
34 from University of Hawai'i at Manoa's undergraduate student population to participate in  
35 exchange for extra course credit or a \$5 gift card. Since we found that colorblindness  
36 endorsement and the tendency to acknowledge race did not differ by participant race (Study 2),  
37 we recruited only Asian participants for this study.  
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51 **Materials and procedure.** Participants were randomly assigned to one of three  
52 conditions: talking about race is prejudiced norm, colorblind norm, or the control. First,  
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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 participants were led to a computer where they reviewed the instructions alone in a cubicle while  
4  
5 the experimenter set up the game in the experiment room. In all conditions, participants were  
6  
7 given identical instructions on how to play the photo identification game, however in our two  
8  
9 experimental conditions, participants were given an example video of a past participant (a  
10  
11 confederate) playing the game to facilitate their understanding of how the game works. In the  
12  
13 talking about race is prejudiced condition, the participant did not use a race-related question to  
14  
15 identify the target photo. When the experimenter asked “Why did you choose not to use racial  
16  
17 labels in this task?” the ostensible participant responded that they didn’t use race because “here  
18  
19 in Hawai‘i, we don’t use race because it’s racist”. The video was identical in the colorblind  
20  
21 condition, with the exception that the ostensible participant responded that they weren’t sure why  
22  
23 they didn’t use race. The important distinction between these two conditions is that while both  
24  
25 are modeling colorblind behavior, in the talking about race is prejudiced condition, participants  
26  
27 hear an explicit rationale for another person's colorblind behavior that invokes a broader social  
28  
29 norm in Hawai‘i and links talking about race to prejudice. We included a colorblind condition to  
30  
31 examine whether merely modeling of colorblind behavior was enough to shift norms and  
32  
33 behavior. In the control condition, participants were not shown an example video, but were given  
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35 the same instructions as in all other conditions on how to play the game (e.g., “You will be asked  
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37 to guess what photo your partner has with as few yes-no questions as possible”).  
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45 Participants were then led to the experiment room and played four rounds of the photo  
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47 identification task with the experimenter. Video recordings of the photo identification task were  
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49 coded for the frequency with which race was acknowledged (Cohen’s  $\kappa = 1.00$ ) and the rationale  
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51 for using race (Cohen’s  $\kappa = .84$ ) using the same procedures as Study 1. After participants  
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53 completed the task, they were moved to a computer to complete questionnaires. Afterwards, they  
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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 were debriefed about the purpose of the experiment and given information on how colorblind  
4 strategies may be ineffective at improving race-relations.  
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8 The questionnaires consisted of endorsement of colorblindness (Study 1;  $\alpha = .67$ ) and  
9 perceptions of colorblind norms in Hawai'i (Study 2;  $\alpha = .70$ ) and demographic questions.  
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11

## 12 Results

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15 **Colorblind behavior.** Participants demonstrated more colorblind behavior (i.e., they did  
16 not mention race in any of the trials) in the talking about race is prejudiced condition (25  
17 participants were colorblind, 67.6%), as compared to the colorblind condition (18, 48.7%) and  
18 control condition (1, 2.63%),  $\chi^2(2) = 35.17, p < .001, V = .56$ , see Figure 3. The frequency in  
19 which participants acknowledged race averaged across all four trials also differed by condition,  
20  $F(2, 109) = 35.98, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .40$ . Post-hoc comparison using Tukey's correction found that  
21 participants in the talking about race is prejudiced condition acknowledged race less often  
22 (14.2% of trials,  $SD = 26.1$ ) than those in the colorblind condition (35.8%,  $SD = 40.2$ ) and  
23 control condition (75.7%,  $SD = 27.6$ ),  $ts(109) > 5.41, ps < .001$ . There was also a significant  
24 difference for frequency in acknowledging race for participants in the colorblind compared to the  
25 control condition,  $t(109) = 2.92, p = .004$ .  
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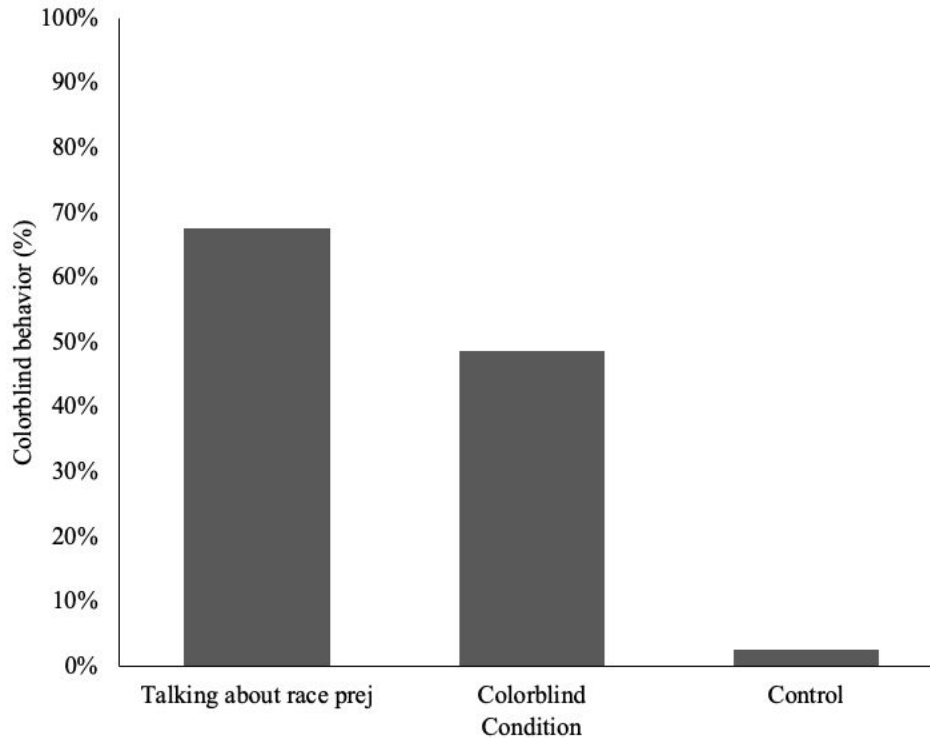


Figure 3. Study 3: Percentage of participants who exhibited colorblind behavior across conditions.

**Rationale for acknowledgment of race.** As expected, participants' rationale for acknowledging race differed across conditions,  $\chi^2(6) = 19.11, p = .004, V = .29$ . Participants in the talking about race is prejudiced condition most frequently mentioned a perceptual (48.7%) rationale for (not) using race, followed by social concerns (27.0%), and a functional (24.3%) rationale. For those in the colorblind norm condition, the most reported rationale was functional (46.0%), followed by perceptual (35.1%), social concerns (10.8%) and idiosyncratic (8.1%). Lastly, replicating our findings from Studies 1 and 2, those in the control condition most often reported a functional (50.0%), and perceptual (47.4%) rationale for acknowledging race, followed by one (2.6%) idiosyncratic response.

**Endorsement of colorblindness.** We conducted a one-way ANOVA comparing endorsement of colorblindness across conditions,  $F(2, 109) = 3.80, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .07$ . Those in

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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the talking about race is prejudiced condition endorsed colorblindness to a greater extent than those in the control condition,  $t(73) = 2.50, p = .01$ . The colorblind condition did not significantly differ from either the talking about race is prejudice or the control condition,  $ps > .19$ . See Table 1 for means and standard deviations. Furthermore, endorsement of colorblindness was significantly related to colorblind behavior,  $r = .31, p < .001$ , such that those who endorsed colorblindness to a greater extent exhibited more colorblind behavior.

**Perception of colorblind norms in Hawai'i.** We found a significant difference in perceptions of colorblind norms in Hawai'i by condition,  $F(2, 109) = 4.21, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .07$ . Those in the talking about race is prejudiced condition perceived others in Hawai'i to endorse colorblindness to greater extent as compared to those in the control condition,  $t(109) = 2.76, p = .007$  (see Table 1). None of the other comparisons were significant,  $ps > .09$ . As expected, perceptions of colorblind norms were also related to colorblind behavior,  $r = .25, p = .008$ , such that those who perceived colorblind norms in Hawai'i were more likely to exhibit colorblind behavior.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for colorblind measures across conditions for Study 3.

Norms	Talking about race prej	Colorblind	Control
CB endorsement	4.69 (1.18) <sup>a</sup>	4.45 (1.10)	4.00 (1.01) <sup>a</sup>
CB norms in HI	2.93 (.77) <sup>b</sup>	2.82 (.79)	2.47 (.54) <sup>b</sup>

*Notes.* Standard deviations are presented in parentheses. Significant comparisons are indicated by shared subscripts.

## Discussion

The results of Study 3 support our hypothesis that race-related social norms influence whether participants acknowledge race. As predicted, when participants were exposed to a

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3 talking about race is prejudiced norm, they exhibited colorblind behavior and tended to avoid  
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5 acknowledging race. This effect was stronger than in the colorblind norm only condition, where  
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7 the talking about race is prejudiced norm was not made salient. Lastly, our findings in the control  
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9 condition replicated the results from Studies 1 and 2 where participants in this diverse context  
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11 overwhelmingly used race and gave functional and perceptual rationales for doing so.  
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15 It is interesting to note that participants overwhelmingly report functional and perceptual  
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17 rationales across all conditions (not only the control condition), which means that many people  
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19 used these types of rationales to also support why they would *not* talk about race. Although the  
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21 talking about race is prejudiced and colorblind conditions impacted behavior, the prevailing  
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23 norm in Hawai'i may be to notice and utilize salient characteristics, such as race, in social  
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25 interactions (as supported by the findings of Studies 1 and 2 and the control condition in this  
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27 study). Therefore, when normative social influence pressured participants to avoid using race (in  
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29 the non-control conditions), their rationales reported that race was no longer functional or  
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31 perceptually useful, in order to justify their colorblind behavior (e.g., "*I feel like I can't really tell*  
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33 *what someone is just by looking at them...*"). These rationales may have helped to solve any  
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35 cognitive dissonance experienced between the highlighted social norms that impacted their  
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37 behavior compared to their actual beliefs. Further research is needed to uncover the process by  
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39 which colorblind norms are internalized.  
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45 Finally, we found that those exposed to a talking about race is prejudiced norm perceived  
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47 others in Hawai'i to also endorse colorblind strategies, and they themselves endorsed  
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49 colorblindness to a greater extent. Together the findings of Study 3 suggest, that introducing an  
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51 explicit colorblind norm that invoked the strategic nature of colorblindness (i.e., highlighting the  
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53 belief that talking about race is prejudiced) shifted participants' use of colorblind behavior.  
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**Study 4**

Our findings in Studies 1-3 demonstrate a strong link between social norms and colorblind behavior; the lack of colorblind endorsement in the diverse context of Hawai‘i was associated with less colorblind behavior. One possibility is that racial diversity in the population guides how people are using race, which in turn shifts social norms away from colorblindness. In Study 4 we examine this possibility by measuring personal endorsement of colorblindness across a few contexts that differ in the population diversity of racial majority (White) and minority (Asian) participants. Building on our previous findings, we anticipate that regardless of their racial identity, participants living in more racially diverse (i.e., heterogeneous) contexts would be less likely to endorse colorblindness, as compared to participants in more racially homogenous contexts. Additionally, if colorblind endorsement is motivated by the belief that talking about race is prejudiced, we expect to see a relationship between endorsement of colorblindness and the belief that talking about race is prejudiced. Such findings would support the potential relationship between population diversity and social norms moving away from colorblindness, extending beyond the context of Hawai‘i.

We recruited White and Asian participants from contexts that varied in their racial diversity: Hawai‘i, California, and Massachusetts. Hawai‘i is the most racially diverse state in the U.S. According to the diversity index (higher scores indicate greater racial heterogeneity and equal proportions across groups; Logan, 2014), Hawai‘i leads in racial diversity on a state-level. Asians (37%), Whites (22%), and Multiracials (20%) each make up almost one-third of the population (U.S. Census, 2017). To extend our research beyond a single context, in Study 4 we included participants living in California. This state ranks second in the U.S. for racial diversity and has racial demographics similar to Hawai‘i (e.g., large Asian population in certain counties,



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3 a majority-minority state; Logan, 2014). Lastly, we recruited participants from Massachusetts  
4 because this state is low in racial diversity (Logan, 2014) and is where the seminal research  
5 demonstrating the link between colorblind norm endorsement and behavior in predominantly  
6 White samples was conducted (i.e., Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Norton et al., 2006). By sampling  
7 participants from these locations, we are able to examine how the racial diversity of one's  
8 context corresponds to people's endorsement of colorblindness.

**Method**

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19 **Participants.** We recruited Asian and White participants from Hawai'i, California, and  
20 Massachusetts. We pre-selected participants from the following California counties to most  
21 closely mimic Hawai'i's population: Orange County, Santa Clara County, Alameda County, San  
22 Francisco County, and San Mateo County. According to the U.S. Census (2017), these counties  
23 were majority-minority, with the largest minority group being Asian. We aimed to collect a  
24 sample of 50 participants per location and race. We collected data from 100 Hawai'i (50 White,  
25 50 Asian; 60 females, 40 males;  $M_{\text{age}} = 45.80$ ,  $SD = 16.80$ ), 102 California (52 White, 50 Asian;  
26 64 females, 38 males;  $M_{\text{age}} = 42.50$ ,  $SD = 15.90$ ), and 104 Massachusetts (52 White, 52 Asian;  
27 67 females, 37 males;  $M_{\text{age}} = 40.20$ ,  $SD = 15.80$ ) participants. A sensitivity power analysis using  
28 G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009) conducted with our sample size found that with 80% power and  $\alpha =$   
29 .05 we would be able to detect an effect size of  $f^2 = .05$  in multiple regression with 7 predictors.  
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31 A survey containing the measures was distributed to participants via a Qualtrics Panel.

**Measures.**

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49 **Diversity index.** We collected participants' zip codes for where they currently resided.  
50 These were later matched to the participant's respective city or county. Using data from the U.S.  
51 Census, a diversity index was calculated such that representation of many and more equal-sized  
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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 racial/ethnic groups would result in a higher score. A score of 0 indicates the lowest diversity,  
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5 with complete homogeneity (i.e., all White or all Asian) and 100 indicates highest diversity, with  
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7 equal distribution amongst many groups (i.e., 25% White, 25% Asian, 25% Black, 25% Pacific  
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9 Islander; Lee et al., 2012).

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12 **Endorsement of colorblindness.** Two items were used to assess colorblindness (Norton  
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14 et al., 2006). Items included: “When I interact with other people, I try not to notice the color of  
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16 their skin” and “If everyone paid less attention to race and skin color, we all would get along  
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18 much better” ( $\alpha = .84$ ). We also measured endorsement of a colorblind approach by presenting  
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20 participants with a passage about colorblindness and asking how much they agreed with a  
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22 colorblind approach as an effective strategy for improving equality ( $\alpha = .86$ ; Richeson &  
23  
24 Nussbaum, 2004; Wolsko et al., 2000). Both measures were anchored from 1 (*strongly disagree*)  
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26 to 6 (*strongly agree*), and highly correlated,  $r = .63$ ,  $p < .001$ , therefore we combined these two  
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28 measures to form an index of endorsement of colorblindness ( $\alpha = .87$ ).  
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33 **Talking about race is prejudiced.** We constructed a measure to capture whether  
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35 participants believed talking about race is prejudiced. Responses were made on a scale of 1  
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37 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). To capture location specific norms, participants in each  
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39 location received instructions to think about how people in either Hawai‘i, in [California county],  
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41 or in Massachusetts would answer these questions. Five items assessed perceptions of whether  
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43 talking about race was perceived as prejudiced. Items included: “Someone who mentions  
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45 someone’s race/ethnicity is racist”, “To be culturally sensitive, it is best not to mention  
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47 someone’s race or ethnicity”, “Talking about race/ethnicity is not offensive” (reverse-coded),  
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52 “People can talk about race/ethnicity without being concerned about appearing prejudiced”  
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(reverse-coded), and “Talking about someone’s race/ethnicity is not prejudiced” (reverse-coded;  $\alpha = .76$ ).

## Results

**Endorsement of colorblindness.** We conducted a general linear model with participant race (Asian = 1 vs. White = -1), racial diversity (continuous; mean-centered), belief that talking about race is prejudiced (continuous), and their interaction terms, as factors on our outcome measure of endorsement of colorblindness. We found no significant effect for race,  $p = .41$ . There was a main effect for diversity,  $b = -.02$ ,  $SE = .004$ , 95% CI [-.03, -.01],  $t(291) = -4.40$ ,  $p < .001$ , such that those who lived in more racially diverse places endorsed colorblindness to a lesser extent. Similarly, the belief that talking about race is prejudiced was significantly related to colorblind endorsement,  $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% CI [.04, .38],  $t(291) = 2.40$ ,  $p = .02$ , such that those who believed that talking about race is prejudiced endorsed colorblindness to a greater extent. None of the interaction terms were significant,  $ps > .05$ . See Table 2 for parameter estimates and Table 3 for correlations among variables.

Table 2. *Parameter estimates for Study 4*

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI	T	Df	p
Intercept	3.90	.07	3.77, 4.03	59.61	291	<.001
Diversity	-.02	.00	-.03, -.001	-4.40	291	<.001
Race	.11	.13	-.15, .37	.83	291	.41
TARP	.21	.09	.04, .38	2.40	291	.02
Diversity X Race	.01	.01	-.006, .03	1.21	291	.23
Diversity X TARP	.01	.01	-.001, .02	1.68	291	.09
Race X TARP	-.34	.17	-.69, .001	-1.96	291	.05
Diversity X Race X TARP	.01	.01	-.01, .03	.54	291	.59

*Note.* TARP = Talking About Race is Prejudice scale

Table 3. *Correlations across variables for Study 4*

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Variable	1	2	3
1. Diversity	-		
2. TARP	-.05	-	
3. Colorblind Endorsement	-.25**	.16*	-

*Note.* TARP = Talking About Race is Prejudice scale

\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .001$

## Discussion

The results from Study 4 support the link between colorblind norm endorsement and population diversity. Across two contexts known for being racially diverse (HI, CA) and one known for being largely homogeneously White (MA), increasing context diversity corresponded to decreased colorblind norm endorsement. Importantly, this pattern emerged regardless of participant race, highlighting the role of social norms in a participant's context, rather than their racial identity. Lastly, we find that the belief that talking about race is prejudiced was significantly related to people's endorsement of colorblind beliefs, which further supports the notion that colorblind norms is linked to lay beliefs that talking about race is prejudiced behavior.

## General Discussion

In four studies we examined the relation between race-related social norms and the tendency to exhibit colorblind behavior in racially diverse contexts. When examining people's actual behaviors, we found that both Asian (Studies 1 & 3) and White (Study 2) individuals living in Hawai'i tended to use race in a photo identification task and endorsed functional and perceptual rationales for doing so. In Study 3, we found that when exposed to a colorblind norm that explicitly tied talking about race to prejudice, participants were less likely to acknowledge race and more likely to mention social concerns about talking about race (i.e., that it is not socially appropriate), as compared to participants exposed to a colorblind norm and control

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3 conditions. Lastly, in Study 4, we provide evidence for the possibility that the endorsement of  
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5 colorblind beliefs is related to the racial diversity in one's environment, and that endorsement of  
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7 colorblindness is linked to their beliefs that talking about race is prejudiced. In Study 4 we found  
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9 a relationship between colorblind endorsement and perceptions that talking about race is  
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11 prejudiced. It may be that colorblind norms are less prevalent in diverse contexts, and  
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13 consequently (due to racial minorities being more comfortable with this topic) race is not  
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15 considered to be a taboo topic of conversation. Together, these studies provide insight into how  
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17 race-related social norms may operate in diverse settings, with diverse participants. Moving  
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19 away from colorblindness, it is possible that as societies grow more racially diverse, social norms  
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21 surrounding race-relations will foster race-conscious norms when it comes intergroup relations.  
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### 26 **Different Contexts, Different Race-Related Norms**

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28 We provide the first evidence that the strategies used to negotiate race-relevant situations  
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30 in racially diverse contexts may diverge from the strategic colorblindness largely adopted in  
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32 racially homogenous contexts across the U.S. (e.g., Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Norton et al., 2006;  
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34 Pauker et al., 2015). Our results from Studies 1 and 2 and from the control condition in Study 3  
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36 indicate that instead of colorblind behavior, in the racially diverse context of Hawai'i, White and  
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38 Asian individuals overwhelmingly acknowledge race. The tendency to use strategies which  
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40 acknowledged race, regardless of participants' race, suggests that the normative precedent in the  
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42 racially diverse context of Hawai'i may encourage individuals to talk about race. Further  
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44 supporting this possibility, in the current research, participants who were more likely to  
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46 acknowledge race were less likely to personally endorse colorblindness (Study 1), perceive a  
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48 colorblind social norm in Hawai'i (Study 2), and consider talking about race to be prejudiced  
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50 behavior (Study 3).  
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## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON NAVIGATING RACE

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3 An interesting point to note is that perception of colorblind norms was not consistently  
4 related to acknowledgment of race. For Asian participants in Study 1 decreased *personal*  
5 endorsement of colorblindness was related to decreased colorblind behavior. However,  
6 perceptions of colorblind norms were only meaningfully related to White participants' (but not  
7 Asian participants') behavior in Study 2 (i.e., if they perceived others followed colorblind norms,  
8 they also adopted the norm). Yet, Asian individuals *are* susceptible to normative social  
9 influence, as demonstrated in Study 3. One possibility is that White individuals' minority status  
10 in Hawai'i may increase pressure to follow social norms and behave accordingly. As  
11 "minorities" in this context, White individuals may more strongly oppose colorblind ideology, as  
12 a function of assimilating to dominant group norms (Plaut et al., 2009). While we believe the  
13 social context is important for shaping individuals' race-related beliefs irrespective of their racial  
14 group membership (see Study 4), it is important to acknowledge that Study 2 may have been  
15 underpowered and thus results should be interpreted with caution. It is clear that further research  
16 is needed to more fully examine how racial identity interacts with social norm endorsement in  
17 diverse contexts.

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38 Regardless, our findings highlight the important role that perceptions of that talking about  
39 race is prejudiced has for colorblindness. In Studies 3 and 4, we begin to examine potential  
40 explanations for why we might see a general lack of colorblind endorsement in this racially  
41 diverse context. Due to a larger racial minority population and comfort with talking about race,  
42 this behavior may not be considered taboo in the same way it may be considered in more  
43 homogenously White contexts. We provide support for this possibility in Study 3 by  
44 demonstrating that when contextual norms sets talking about race to be prejudice behavior,  
45 participants in Hawai'i were less likely to acknowledge race and endorse colorblind norms as  
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3 compared to a control condition. In Study 4 we extend this beyond one racially diverse setting  
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5 and provide evidence that an increase in racial diversity in one's context is related to a decrease  
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7 in colorblind endorsement. Furthermore, those who perceived talking about race as prejudiced  
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9 were more likely to endorse colorblind beliefs. Together the results of these studies provide  
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11 initial evidence that social norms concerning race are susceptible to manipulation, even with  
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13 racial minority participants in diverse contexts. Extending these findings, it may be possible to  
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15 shift people's behavior to begin acknowledging race in more positive ways.  
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**Limitations and Future Research**

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21 Following past research, we used the photo identification task from Apfelbaum et al.  
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23 (2008) and Norton et al. (2006), which depicted Black and White individuals. The original  
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25 studies focused on White participants whose racial ingroup was included in the photo  
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27 identification task. In our research, we focused on the perspective of non-White (Asian)  
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29 participants whose racial ingroup was not included in the task. That Asian participants only  
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31 viewed outgroup members might provide a more stringent test of our hypotheses. Given that  
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33 Asian participants in Studies 1-3 did not hesitate to acknowledge race when examining two  
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35 outgroup targets, we anticipate our results would be maintained with the inclusion of ingroup  
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37 targets.  
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42 Building on this limitation, another potential issue is that none of our behavioral  
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44 experiments included an outgroup experimenter. It is plausible that the presence of an outgroup  
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46 experimenter may exacerbate anxiety in the task and promote more colorblind behavior  
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48 (Apfelbaum et al., 2008). Future research should address this gap to gain a better understanding  
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50 of how social norms influence face-to-face *interracial* interactions in diverse settings.  
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Lastly, it is important to note that while we found a significant relationship between endorsement of colorblind beliefs and the racial diversity of one's context in Study 4, we primarily tested these hypotheses about colorblind behavior in the context of Hawai'i. It is possible that other cultural factors explain people's behaviors surrounding race in Hawai'i. For example it differs from other states in many ways, including having a recent history of colonization, being geographic isolated, having unique demographics, and only gaining statehood within the past 60 years. Despite this concern, we did find a relationship between endorsement of colorblindness and beliefs that talking about race is prejudiced within our California sample, as well as evidence that increased contextual diversity was related to less endorsement of colorblindness. However, future research should directly test whether colorblind behaviors differ across diverse samples of participants from a variety of diverse contexts to verify the generalizability of these results.

### 31 **Conclusion**

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Despite the projected growth in racial diversity within the U.S. (Colby & Ortman, 2014), little research has investigated the dynamics of intergroup relations amongst racial minorities in racially diverse contexts. As suggested by our findings, it is possible that different social norms operate (e.g., talking about race is not prejudiced) in racially diverse contexts, in turn allowing people to feel comfortable talking about race in more functional ways. If people in racially diverse contexts feel no hesitancy to mention race, it may be that their concerns about appearing prejudiced are mitigated in some other way. Furthermore, by reinforcing norms that encourage the use of race, racially diverse contexts may support conversations that are necessary to address inequities. The failure to acknowledge race only reinforces racial hierarchies that contribute to the continued unfair treatment of historically disadvantaged groups and perpetuation of racial



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3 bias in society (Dovidio et al., 2015; common sense). Explicit mention and labeling of race may  
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5 be necessary to achieve equity (Plaut et al., 2018), therefore understanding contexts in which  
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7 acknowledging race is not linked to negative outcomes, such as appearing prejudice, is vital for  
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9 progress in race-relations. Armed with insights of what “works” to promote social harmony in  
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11 diverse contexts, we may be able to develop interventions for use in other contexts that ease the  
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13 tensions typical of interracial interactions (i.e., Richeson & Shelton, 2007), and eventually foster  
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15 more positive intergroup relations for our increasingly diverse society.  
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