LINDA M. BURTON, EDUARDO BONILLA-SILVA,
VICTOR RAY, ROSE BUCKELEW, AND
ELIZABETH HORDGE FREEMAN   *Duke University*

Critical Race Theories, Colorism, and the Decade's Research on Families of Color

In the millennium's inaugural decade, 2 inter-related trends influenced research on America's families of color: the need for new knowledge about America's growing ethnic/racial minority and immigrant populations and conceptual advances in critical race theories and perspectives on colorism. Three substantive areas reflecting researchers' interests in these trends emerged as the most frequently studied topics about families of color: inequality and socioeconomic mobility within and across families, interracial romantic pairings, and the racial socialization of children. In this review, we synthesize and critique the decade's scholarly literature on these topics. We devote special attention to advances in knowledge made by family-relevant research that incorporated ways of thinking from critical race theories and the conceptual discourse on colorism.

In this review, we summarize and critique the decade's scholarly literature on families of color in three substantive areas: inequality and socioeconomic mobility within and across families, interracial romantic pairings, and the racial socialization of children. We devote special attention to advances in knowledge made by family-relevant research that incorporated ways of thinking from critical race theories (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Pellar, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado & Stefanicic, 2000) and from the conceptual discourse on colorism (Collins, 2005; Glenn, 2009; Hunter, 2005). Research that integrated critical race theories paid greater attention, than in previous decades, to the roles of racialized systems (e.g., institutional promotion of inequality via racial discrimination) in shaping family structures, processes, and life chances. Studies grounded in perspectives on colorism also considered racialized systems but focused more intently on social inequities circumscribed by skin color gradients within racial and ethnic groups.

Race, ethnicity, and colorism are principal concepts in this review, and we define them accordingly. *Race* involves the assumption that individuals can be divided into groups based on phenotype or genotype and that those groups have meaningful differences (Bonilla-Silva, 2009). According to Nagel (1994, p. 12) race is ''more than an individual characteristic: It is an ongoing phenomenon that is accomplished in interaction with others and that is situated in social contexts.'' *Ethnicity* refers to a subset of people whose members share common national, ancestral, cultural, immigration, or religious characteristics that distinguish them from other groups (Daniel, 2002). Ethnic variation exists within and across racial groups. ''*Colorism* is the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin'' (Burke, 2008, p. 17). The practices of colorism tend to favor lighter skin over darker skin as indicated by a person's appearance as proximal to a White phenotype (Hall, 2005). Hair texture, eye color, and facial features as well as

education and income also affect perceptions of who is considered dark or light skinned (Hunter, 2005). Colorism beliefs and practices operate both within and across racial and ethnic groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2009).

We begin this review with a description of the rationale and strategies we employed to determine which topics about families of color to address. We highlight the roles of two interrelated trends in guiding our focus: the need for new knowledge about America's growing ethnic/racial minority and immigrant populations and conceptual advances made in critical race theories, perspectives on colorism, and the use of these approaches in family-relevant research. Next, we discuss the decade's literature on socioeconomic mobility, interracial pairing, and the racial socialization of children among families of color. We describe the ways in which elements of critical race theories and perspectives on colorism were incorporated in these literatures. We conclude with recommendations for future research.

CRAFTING THE REVIEW: BACKGROUND AND METHOD

The focus of this review was derived from a comprehensive assessment of the decade's expansive scholarly literature on racial/ethnic minority and immigrant families. Narrowing the focus was quite an undertaking given that social scientists produced a massive body of research on families of color in this decade. Much of the decade's research was descriptive in nature and identified similarities and differences in family structures; household compositions; health disparities; parenting practices; and patterns of marriage, cohabitation, and divorce within and across racial/ethnic and immigrant groups. Moreover, most of this work was regularly compiled in handbook chapters, special issues of journals, or in annual literature reviews (see, for examples, Bernal & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2009; Demo, Allen, & Fine, 2000; Quintana et al., 2006). For this reason, we turned our attention to roads less traveled in the extant literature and focused on research concerned with the dynamic features of race, ethnicity, and colorism (e.g., racism, discrimination, intragroup racism) in the lives of families of color. This body of research spanned numerous scholarly disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, economics) and publication outlets and, with the exception of several

noteworthy works (for examples, see Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009; Hughes & Rodriguez, 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; McKown & Quintana, 2008; Trimble, Helms, & Root, 2003), had not been the principal focus of any family science literature reviews within the decade.

Three substantive research areas emerged as the most frequently studied topics about families of color relative to our focus on race, ethnicity, and colorism: inequality and socioeconomic mobility within and across families, interracial romantic pairings, and the racial socialization of children. Scholarly advances in these areas appeared to be driven, in part, by dramatic shifts in the American population's color lines and by prominent scholarly and political discourses on critical race theories and colorism. We briefly discuss these trends below.

Shifts in America's Color Line

The millennium's inaugural decade, concatenated with the three preceding ones, saw the color line of America shift ''from a predominately biracial society with a large White majority and relatively small Black minority to a society composed of multiple racial and ethnic groups'' (Lee & Bean, 2004, p. 222). This shift was characterized by a growth rate for Hispanic and Latino populations that was four times that of the total U.S. population (Landale & Oropesa, 2007; National Research Council, 2006). Notable increases were also seen among Asian American, African American, and Pacific Islander populations but much less so among Whites, American Indians, and Alaska Natives (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Related rises in intermarriage between Whites and Asian Americans, Whites and Latinos, and Whites and African Americans also occurred (Bean & Stevens, 2003). Accompanying these shifts was a growing awareness among some social scientists of what Hunter (2005) described as a once hidden form of within group discrimination: colorism.

The shift of America's color line was shadowed by capricious public concerns about growing numbers of immigrant families of color and progressed alongside a conservative political climate throughout most of the decade. Near the decade's end, the climate was arguably eclipsed by the historic election of Barack Obama as America's first president of color. Some argued that Obama's rise to the presidency, with a

multiracial multiethnic family heritage juxtaposed to the general public's classification of him as African American, marshaled in a postracial age in the United States. A number of race scholars quickly dismissed that supposition, however, noting that issues around race, ethnicity, and colorism involved complex, dynamic, and sometimes relentless processes with challenges that would continue to come to light within an increasingly diverse multiracial society (Bobo & Charles, 2009; Bonilla-Silva & Ray, 2009); Lin & Harris, 2008. For example, as recent post-Obama-election history demonstrated, some interracial couples were still denied the opportunity to legally marry in certain locales within the United States, racial profiling of African Americans by White police officers remained an entrenched practice in some communities, and explicit discrimination practices and violence against Mexican immigrants continued to escalate in isolated regions and in some urban centers around the country (Glover, 2009).

Indeed, demographic changes in the complexion and in the political climate of America were catalysts that prodded social scientists to address the emergent and urgent need for new knowledge about racism and socioeconomic inequalities within and across racial/ethnic minority and immigrant families (see National Research Council, 2006). These changes also challenged scholars to consider whether traditional perspectives about race and ethnicity accommodated the contextual, social, and behavioral realities that were unfolding in a multiracial society (Lamont, 1999; Murry, Smith, & Hill, 2001). For some social scientists, scholarly movements framed by critical race theories and the conceptual discourse on colorism represented an immediate response to those challenges for new knowledge and research practices concerning families of color.

Critical Race Theories

As America's demographic complexion diversified throughout the decade, a progressive, civil rights oriented discourse on critical race theories ensued. This discourse was framed principally by legal scholars (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefanicic, 2000) with substantial contributions also being made by race and stratification theorists (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Feagin, 2006) and feminist family scholars (Collins, 2000; De Reus, Few, & Blume, 2005;

Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Critical race theories represent ways of thinking about and assessing social systems and groups that incorporate recognition of the following principles: (a) race is a central component of social organizations and systems, including families; (b) racism is institutionalized—it is an ingrained feature of racialized social systems; (c) everyone within racialized social systems may contribute to the reproduction of these systems through social practices; and (d) racial and ethnic identities, in addition to ''the rules, practices, and assignments of prestige and power'' associated with them, are not fixed entities, but rather they are socially constructed phenomena that are continually being revised on the basis of a group's own self-interests (Delgado & Stefanicic, p. xvii; also see Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Brown, 2003).

There were, of course, different brands of critical race theories (e.g., racial formation theory [see Omi & Winant, 1994], color-blind racism [see Bonilla-Silva, 2009], and systemic racism [see Feagin, 2006]) that emerged in this discourse. The principles outlined above, however, were inherent to most, although there was considerable variation in the extent to which they were incorporated in the decade's research on families of color. De Reus et al. (2005) reported that, at the writing of their handbook chapter on critical race feminist approaches, principles from critical race theories had not been comprehensively applied in any existing family research. Rather, elements of those principles were found in the family science literature, with more in-depth treatises of the theories appearing in the legal, race, stratification, and immigration literature.

Colorism in the Millennium

Race scholars have long pointed to colorism as a source of internal differentiation and inequality among people of color (Hall, 2005). In the past, those discussions were marginalized in family research, as the assessment of colorism was not deemed an appropriate or standard practice in the analysis of race differences within and across families. Nonetheless, the conceptual discourse about colorism burgeoned during this decade in response to shifting color lines in the American population, interracial couplings and childbearing, and recognition by race and stratification scholars of the global pervasiveness of colorism practices (see Glenn,

2009). This discourse did not lead to formal colorism theories, but it heightened researchers' sensitivities to important racial and ethnic subtexts and processes (e.g., intragroup racism) in family life that required the vigilant attention of family researchers (see Keith, Lincoln, Taylor, & Jackson, 2010).

Description of the Literature

The literature we summarize and critique was not located exclusively in family science journals. Much of it appeared across a large number of published handbooks (Demo et al., 2000; McKown & Quintana, 2008), federally commissioned reports (National Research Council, 2006), annual literature reviews (Landale & Oropesa, 2007), special issues of journals (Arditti, 2006; Quintana et al., 2006), and discipline-specific journals (e.g., *American Sociological Review*).

The empirical studies we discuss represented a broad spectrum of research designs, including surveys that comprised national probability samples (Fu, 2008; Hao, 2007); secondary analysis of census data (Okamoto, 2007); regional, cross-sectional, longitudinal, mixed methods, and interview studies of racial and ethnic groups (Brody, Chen, Murry, Logan, & Zupei, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Telles & Ortiz, 2008); narrative studies of couples (M. R. Hill & Thomas, 2000); and longitudinal ethnographies of racial/ethnic minority and immigrant families (Pattillo, 2007; Pyke & Dang, 2003). The studies were diverse in the racial and ethnic groups they involved and included African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans (e.g., Korean and Japanese Americans), Puerto Ricans, recent immigrants from Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and interracial families. American Indians, Alaska Natives, East Asian Indians, and Pacific Islanders were notably absent in existing studies, with the exception of their nominal mention in research on interracial marriages (Fu), studies of ethnic and racial identities (Trimble et al., 2003), and in the empirical work on racial misclassification (Campbell & Troyer, 2007). In addition, a literature review that is conceptually framed within critical race and colorism perspectives requires explicit attention to the social behaviors of non-Hispanic White families. Thus, we include the emergent literature on Whiteness studies (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2007).

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PROGRESS: THE ROLE OF CRITICAL RACE THEORIES AND THE DISCOURSE ON COLORISM

What aspects of critical race theories and the discourse on colorism mattered for advancing the decade's conceptual and methodological approaches in the study of families of color? Our literature review identified several. First, the scholarly discourse on critical race theories and colorism encouraged difficult dialogues among scholars about race, ethnicity, and skin color gradients that shaped the types of research questions social scientists pursued (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). These questions guided research on aspects of family structures and processes that, in previous decades, were marginally represented in the extant family literature. For example, the decade's research on the inequality and socioeconomic mobility of families of color explored questions about the ways in which race, ethnicity, and colorism contributed to what some scholars characterized as the most extreme form of racial inequality of the decade: wealth accumulation (Hao, 2007; Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). With respect to interracial romantic pairings, studies that adopted critical race perspectives investigated the social and intrapersonal factors involved in mixed race couples' constructions of their racial identities and the navigation of relationship conflicts caused by couples' differential experiences with racial inequalities (Bratter & King, 2008). Moreover, questions about racial socialization in families demonstrated that critical race and colorism lenses were in play as researchers interrogated the meaning of Whiteness and how patterns of privilege and power were transmitted and sustained across generations in White families (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Twine & Gallagher, 2007).

Second, to address these questions, social scientists incorporated elements of critical race and colorism perspectives into the assumptions, conceptual framing, and measurement of variables used in their research. (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009) Below, we discuss the incorporation of those elements focusing on the social construction of race and ethnicity, racialized systems, critical race feminism, and measures of colorism.

Race. Nowadays, few social scientists challenge the view that race is a socially rather than a biologically determined category. Race is regarded not as an intrinsic characteristic of actors, but as a social product. Given its constructed nature, racial identities and differences are not fixed but are instead subject to fluid redefinitions (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Golash-Boza & Darity, 2008). It is not surprising, then, that critical race theories speak of race as a concept that may continually require remaking to meaningfully reflect the personal and public identities and experiences of individuals and families in a multiracial society (see DaCosta, 2007; Lee & Bean, 2004).

Conceptual and methodological discussions about the social construction of race were present in the decade's research on families of color, particularly in studies of the racial socialization of children. Much of that research focused on interracial and African American, Mexican American, and Asian immigrant families and used a broad range of definitions concerning the fluid meanings of race (Campbell & Troyer, 2007; Harris & Sim, 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In the context of that variability, social scientists did not reach a consensus about how the conceptualization of race as a social construction should guide practical measurement approaches to the study of families of color. Some, however, did agree that how researchers constructed race as a variable affected the ways they saw and interpreted racial differences (see Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).

There were at least three ways that race, as a variable, was conceptualized and interpreted in studies on families of color. The first approach acknowledged the importance of race but negated its function as a fundamental category of social stratification by coding it as a binary variable with little or no discussion about its contextual meaning (Trimble et al., 2003). Few of the decade's studies adopted this approach.

The second approach accepted the perspective that race was socially constructed and, in some cases, a contested experience derived from mismatches between one's racial self-identification of race and others' perceptions of one's race. For example, significant methodological strides were made in evaluating this contest in Campbell and Troyer's (2007) study of incongruity between American Indians' construction

of their racial identities and others' perceptions of their self-identifications. The mismatch rendered high levels of psychological distress for American Indians—distress symptoms that were associated with experiences of racism and discrimination.

On another front, the decade's substantive research was very limited in its assessment of the social construction of race and how social and institutional dynamics produced race differences or race effects. Most of the decade's studies fit into this category. These studies primarily involved research on inequality and socioeconomic mobility and interracial romantic pairings using survey data sets with fairly limited measures of the social construction and dynamic features of race, ethnicity, and colorism (e.g., racism).

The third approach acknowledged that race was a social construction that created racial realities with real effects (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). From this perspective, differential outcomes in families were articulated as racial stratification effects rather than race effects. Racial stratification effects were arguably more suitable than race effects in describing the contextual and social realities of families' lives. But, very few of the decade's studies involved data sets with measurable variables that would permit such analyses and interpretations. Nonetheless, the recent work of Penner and Saperstein (2008) provided an exemplary model for assessing racial stratification effects. Their analysis of variability in individuals' racial classifications using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth demonstrated how social position affected the attribution of one's race by self and others over time. For example, results indicated that Whites were less likely to be classified as White in consecutive years if they had been incarcerated, unemployed, or in poverty the prior year. The implications of this finding cut to the heart of standard statistical methods that reported outcomes as a function of race in regression equations. Consistent with the notion of racial stratification effects, this model predicted racial classification as a function of racial stratification—that is, anything that brought respondents closer to or farther from behaviors typically attributed to African Americans helped them move up (or down) racial categories. This analysis drew attention to the need for family researchers to consider the ways in which the social construction, rather than

the statistical reification, of race may influence substantive findings.

Ethnicity. Critical race theories also acknowledge that ethnicity is socially constructed and that it shifts in its definition and meaning over time. Early in the decade, Zinn and Wells (2000) underscored this point, cautioning family researchers against relying too heavily on traditional cultural markers (e.g., *familismo* among Mexican Americans) to anchor an individual or family in a particular ethnic group. They argued that social scientists who used these markers would miss the more complex modes of operation that families in contemporary society devised and used to navigate and assimilate into a social world with ever changing racial and ethnic boundaries (see also Fuligni, Kiang, Witkow, & Baldelomar, 2007; Phinney & Flores, 2002). Similarly, Trimble et al. (2003, p. 242) stated that ''ethnic glossing,'' or the use of superficial references to cultural traits as indicators of ethnicity, may, in fact, be ''poor science.'' They claimed, ''apart from the fact that sweeping references to ethnic groups are gross misinterpretations, their use can violate certain tenets concerning external validity [in studies] and erode any likelihood of an accurate and efficient replication of research results'' (Trimble et al., p. 242).

It is important to note that, historically, perspectives on the social construction of ethnicity emerged largely from the work of Weber (1922/1978) and later Barth (1969), who analyzed the process of group formation, the malleability of group boundaries, and the politics of ethnic identification. Contemporary critical race scholars have incorporated their work and developed a broader perspective on ethnicity that comprised ethnic options. As defined in the classic work of Waters (1990, 1999) ethnic options concern individuals' opportunities or freedom to choose their own ethnic identities versus ones that are socially ascribed to them. The role of families of color in defining and reinforcing ethnic options via the racial socialization of their children was a primary area of interest for family researchers in this decade.

Racialization

According to critical race theories, fully understanding the influences of race and ethnicity on families in a changing demographic and political climate requires a greater appreciation for the underlying processes and mechanisms that drive racial stratification systems and the ways in which families, through internal socialization practices, overtly and covertly support or diminish the proliferation of those systems (Massey, 2007). These processes and mechanisms are inherent to racialization practices. Racialization, or the assignment of racial meaning to real, perceived, or ascribed differences among individuals or groups, produces hierarchies of power and privilege among races. These racial hierarchies constitute the basis for racism, discrimination, and the perpetuation of inequality in a society and within families. Given the changing racial and ethnic composition of America in this decade, it was important that some family researchers considered and measured, rather than assumed or imputed, the underlying effects of American-born racialized systems on family processes and outcomes. It was equally important that researchers be attentive to the racialized systems and practices that immigrants brought with them to the United States.

Let us consider, for example, the case of immigrants to the United States from Latin American countries. With their large, racially mixed populations, many Latin American societies (e.g., Brazil) have developed rules of racial recognition and elaborate color caste systems that sanction differential opportunity and social status based on skin tone gradations and phenotypic characteristics (Telles, 2004). As a result, some Latinos articulate racial/ethnic schemas that vary from those in the United States and challenge their understandings of their position and power in American racial hierarchies. Those challenges are further exacerbated by Americans who, for example, group together Brazilians, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans as either ''Latinos'' or ''Hispanics'' or both. Depending on an individual's nativity and cultural heritage, such groupings may superimpose expectations about racialization experiences on that individual that do not necessarily apply.

Comparably, immigrants from Asia have experienced a particular racialization process in the United States marked by historical moments that witnessed racialized physical comparisons to Blacks and racial constructions of them as lazy, foreign, Communist, and as a model minority (Min, 2006). Although these earlier descriptions were used mainly for Chinese immigrants, similar processes can be found with a variety of immigrant groups from Asia. This

is, in part, because the American racialization process for immigrants from Asia collapses diverse ethnicities into one broad pan-ethnic Asian category. As is true for other ethnic, racial, and immigrant groups, this process does not take into account the tremendous phenotypic and socioeconomic diversity that exists among groups (e.g., Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese) that perhaps affected their life circumstances in different ways in their countries of origin (Min; Rondilla & Spickard, 2007). Thinking about the racialization process of families of color in these ways prompted some researchers to explore the following questions: How do experiences in different racialized systems impact the life course of immigrant families of color? What elements of these systems (e.g., particular forms of discrimination) directly and indirectly influence family functions such as wealth accumulation, mate selection, and the racial socialization of children?

Whiteness studies. A small body of literature on the racialization of Whites also grew in this decade and drew attention to Whites' racial classification and their roles in creating and sustaining racialized systems (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Roediger, 2007). Researchers in the area of Whiteness studies demonstrated that Whiteness, like any other ''race,'' is a historically constructed social category characterized by substantial power and privilege for some Whites, but not for all (McDermott & Samson, 2005; Painter, 2010; Wray, 2006). This discourse on Whiteness began to dismantle the long-standing fallacy that only people of color have race or ethnicity and opened the door for questions to be asked about ways in which race is experienced, processed, and transmitted in White families. Feminist scholars played an important role in this discourse by advancing holistic approaches that decentered Whiteness (but did not remove it from the analysis) to facilitate more contextually inclusive theories about the lived experiences and racialization processes of families of color in America (De Reus et al., 2005). Social psychologists also made important contributions by developing and testing measures of Whiteness and White identity (see Knowles & Peng, 2005).

In addition, critical race theory scholars cautioned researchers not to dismiss the sustained role of Whites in racialization systems. Massey (2007, p. 109) stated that ''despite the reluctance of Whites to accept the continuing reality of racism, there is abundant evidence that high levels of discrimination against minorities persist.'' Bobo and Charles (2009, p. 246) reported that between half and three-quarters of Whites in the U. S. still express some degree of negative stereotyping of Blacks and Latinos. Some family researchers considered these realities as they explored issues of social mobility (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006), interracial romantic pairings (Yancey, 2007), and the racial socialization of children within families (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, in press) across racial and ethnic groups.

Critical Race Feminism

Critical race theories that integrated feminist perspectives also contributed to the advancement of knowledge about families of color. Much of this discourse was anchored in perspectives on intersectionality (see Collins, 2000; Crenshaw et al., 1995). ''Intersectionality references the ability of social phenomena such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, ability, and religion to mutually construct peoples' notions of self and others'' (De Reus et al., 2005, p. 457). What is more, it is concerned with the politics of location in that it directs researchers' attention to how this mutual construction is shaped by social institutions and social interactions in the context of systems of inequality.

Few (2007) provided a tangible articulation of the advantages and challenges of integrating critical race perspectives and Black feminist theory to study the lives of African American families in particular. She pointed out that the integration of these perspectives allowed researchers to consider (a) the roles of power centers in shaping families' life chances, (b) the compatibility of Black and critical race feminist perspectives with mainstream family theories, (c) the opportunities for creating culturally sensitive intervention approaches that take into account the realities of families' lives in racialized systems, and (d) the importance of self-reflexivity throughout the research process. She also provided methodological exemplars of studies and the strategies researchers employed to operationalize key critical race/feminist theoretical concepts such as intersectionality.

The Discourse on Colorism

The discourse on colorism was important for family scientists to consider during this decade because it was, for so many years, marginalized in family research as a clandestine engine that, in part, drove inequality in families' socioeconomic mobility, framed romantic partner options, and shaped the intraracial socialization of children of color. Throughout the decade, several studies highlighted that skin color functioned as epidermic capital, providing lighter skinned individuals with special privileges and advantages (Herring, Keith, & Horton, 2004). In fact, colorism was considered, by some, to be as influential on individuals' and families' life course outcomes as race itself (M. E. Hill, 2000; Wade & Bielitz, 2005). Moreover, many of the racial, ethnic, and immigrant families represented in the decade's research originated from cultures and geographies (e.g., Brazil, China, and the Philippines) known for implicit systems of colorism, such that ignoring these practices would have seriously undermined efforts to advance knowledge on families of color in a multiracial society (Rondilla & Spickard, 2007; Telles, 2004).

Conceptual interests in families and colorism resulted in measurement modifications that greatly improved data collection efforts. Several large surveys, such as the National Survey of American Life (see J. S. Jackson et al., 2004) and the Filipino American Community Epidemiological Survey (FACES; see Kiang & Takeuchi, 2009) asked both respondents and interviewers to rate respondents' skin tone. This was an important development in survey research involving families of color. Coard, Breland, and Raskin (2001) went beyond self-reported skin color and used color wheels to match participants' skin color from multiple distances. Without the participant knowing, they used two researchers to rate participants' facial skin color and achieved good interrater reliability using this technique. In addition, minimally invasive techniques incorporating ordinal scales, pictures, phenotypic spectrums, and reflectance spectrophotometers were incorporated in research to more objectively measure skin tone differences (see Borell, Kiefe, Williams, Diez-Roux, Gordon-Larsen, 2006). Of course, color labels do not have the same meaning for different ethnic and racial groups, as Hunter (2005) reported that ''dark brown'' represented a skin tone that is less dark for

Mexican Americans than for African Americans. Researchers also relied on a combination of self-reported race, social categorization of races, and visual inspections of individuals and families to collect relevant racial/skin color information. In doing so, they investigated the implications of discrepancies between racial self-identification, socially imposed racial categorizations, and skin color for families' economic opportunities (Darity, Dietrich, & Hamilton, 2005).

THE DECADE'S SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH ON FAMILIES OF COLOR

Having now described aspects of critical race perspectives and colorism, we turn our attention to synthesizing and critiquing the decade's literature on inequality and socioeconomic mobility, interracial romantic pairings, and the racial socialization of children. In this section we address the following question: How were aspects of critical race perspectives and colorism featured in the substantive knowledge generated by research in these areas of study?

For the most part, our review of this literature rendered a response to this question that was consistent with De Reus et al.'s (2005) observations. Most of the decade's research incorporated elements of critical race perspectives, rather than comprehensive approaches. Despite this limitation, progress was made, owing, in part, to some researchers' heightened sense of awareness about the philosophies and principles of critical race and colorism perspectives.

Inequality and Socioeconomic Mobility in Families of Color

Corcoran (2001, p. 127) indicated that ''Americans view [socioeconomic] mobility as a race in which contestants compete on an equal basis for success, with the rewards going to the most talented, most enterprising, and hardest working. As long as the race is fair, the resulting inequality is the price of living in an open and mobile society.'' Indeed, upward mobility is a core enterprise in American society, and it ubiquitously captured the attention of social scientists throughout the decade (Bowles, Gintis, & Osbourne, 2005). Much of the research on this topic highlighted similarities and differences in families' income as a function of categorical indicators of race, ethnicity, or skin color and offered speculative acknowledgments

of the effects of undergirding racialized systems that produced these differences. The most consistently reported finding in this literature concerned striking racial differences in family incomes across the life course between African Americans and Whites. From childhood through adulthood, African Americans, particularly those born into poverty, were more likely than Whites to remain in the bottom 10th of the income distribution (Isaacs, 2007). Several studies also demonstrated a strong relationship between skin color and income. Dark skinned Filipino Americans (Kiang & Takeuchi, 2009), Cuban Americans (Espino & Franz, 2002), and African Americans (Goldsmith, Hamilton, & Darity, 2007) were more likely to have lower income and wages than their lighter skinned counterparts and than Whites.

Although research examining families' income inequalities from a race differences vantage point is important, it did not fully inform us about how more dynamic features of race, ethnicity, and colorism influenced the upward mobility realities of many families of color. There were, however, a modest number of studies in the mainstream family literature that addressed these aspects of racial stratification head on. These studies focused primarily on African American and Latino families and examined the relationship among racial and ethnic discrimination, family processes (e.g., nurturant-involved parenting), conduct disorders, depressive symptoms, and the academic achievement of youth (see Brody et al., 2009; DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, in press) and the impact of racialized systems on employment, income, education, and marital relationships (Burton & Tucker, 2009).

During the decade, elements of critical race theories were more firmly entrenched in research on socioeconomic mobility, assimilation patterns, and the educational attainment of immigrant youth. In special issues of journals (see Sawhill & McLanahan, 2006; Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008), social scientists confronted structural issues around race and ethnicity, highlighting the ways in which racialized systems shaped the socioeconomic mobility prospects of Latino and Asian immigrants in particular. Family structures were a part of these discussions, but researchers in this genre primarily emphasized the effects of macrolevel variables (e.g., residential segregation) on mobility outcomes, paying little or no attention to family process variables (e.g., parenting). Consequently, several social scientists issued a call to arms to family researchers, urging them to develop strategies for identifying and conceptualizing the nuanced and hard-to-measure family processes that likely influenced the ways in which race and ethnicity operated inside families to produce certain mobility outcomes (Charles, 2003; Sawhill & McLanahan). These nuanced processes, however, were not as absent from the literature as some declared them to be. Exemplars of family processes were frequently described in the decade's ethnographic studies on race, poverty, and the middle class (see Newman & Massengil, 2006; Portes & Fernandez-Kelly). Ethnographic studies were modestly cited in the mainstream family science literature and mentioned only occasionally in discussions of the macro structural influences on inequality and the social mobility of immigrant families of color.

In reviewing the inequality and socioeconomic mobility literatures, two subtopics emerged as significant in shaping the decade's knowledge about families of color: geography and opportunity and wealth inequality. We briefly summarize the decade's research in these areas below.

Geography and opportunity. Throughout the decade, family researchers appeared to embrace the principle that geography mattered in generating knowledge about inequality, socioeconomic mobility, and families of color. There was some emphasis given to how neighborhoods influenced family income and educational attainment for children and adolescents (Caughy & O'Campo, 2006; Ogbu, 2003). But most of the attention explicitly focused on how geography, namely, residential segregation, influenced the socioeconomic mobility of families (Clark, 2007). The scholarly dialogue about residential segregation was not new: It had been in play for well over a century. That dialogue, however, intensified in this decade, as growing numbers of families of color residing in these neighborhoods increasingly became stark and visible symbols of the persistence of racial inequality in America (see Lin & Harris, 2008; Massey, 2007).

Segregated neighborhoods created by discriminatory housing and other racialized practices had serious implications for families' socioeconomic mobility. These neighborhoods severely limited people's access to good

job opportunities, high quality schools, and economically viable social networks. African American families appeared to be the hardest hit by racialized geographies, evidencing patterns of hypersegregation from more affluent White neighborhoods and, as a result, experiencing limited access to necessary contextual resources for upward mobility. As their numbers grew, Latinos and Asian Americans also demonstrated growing residential segregation and isolation from White neighborhoods, but not to the extent of African Americans (Charles, 2003).

Research also indicated that the decade witnessed a rise in racial/ethnic minority suburbs and, through gentrification, an increase in urban neighborhoods that were racially and ethnically homogeneous, yet socioeconomically diverse. These trends directed scholars' attention to the relevance of intersectionality perspectives in critical race theories (Cole & Omari, 2003). Ethnographic research offered particularly useful insights on intersectionality and exposed multiple race-, ethnicity-, and colorism-based challenges that families of color experienced in their everyday lives (J. L. Jackson, 2001). For example Pattillo's (2007) 3-year ethnographic study of African American middle-class and low-income families in a racially homogeneous neighborhood in Chicago illustrated how more affluent community residents constructed social and resource boundaries that separated them from poor residents who did not conform to the norms and codes of behavior they expected. Similar ethnographic evidence was reported about middle- and low-income Latino and Asian American immigrants residing in racially segregated neighborhoods (Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Pyke & Dang, 2003). These patterns were in line with trends identified in survey data suggesting that growing inequality within America's evolving multicultural society was because of increasing class-based within-group inequality that was grounded in widely shared class differentiation behaviors within and across families of all types and all racial/ethnic groups (Newman & Massengil, 2006; Western, Bloome, & Percheski, 2008).

Wealth inequality. Social realities about wealth inequality undergird the fundamental philosophies of critical race theories and colorism. Measures of wealth paint a portrait of families' access to life chances and potential for mobility by focusing on the resources they have inherited

and accumulated across a lifetime. Wealth is the "stock of resources owned at a particular time and it includes assets (such as bonds, checking and savings accounts, trust funds, homes, and other real estate) minus total liabilities (such as mortgage debt and car and student loans)" (Keister, 2004, p. 6). From social scientists interested in inequality and socioeconomic mobility, the decade saw exponential growth in conceptual and empirical discussions about wealth and families of color. With few notable exceptions, however, this work seldom considered family structure or process variables in its efforts to explain racial and ethnic differences in wealth accumulation and individuals' consequent life chances (Keister). Ironically, family researchers rarely considered wealth in discussions of families' mobility and typically used income as an indicator of families' socioeconomic vitality.

On the basis of our review of the literature, we surmised that research on wealth and families of color did not reach its potential during the decade given that perspectives on wealth, family processes and structure, and critical race theories and colorism were not well integrated across literatures. Nonetheless, noteworthy insights that were useful for developing future studies were gleaned from this research. For example, a modest but influential literature detailed the social privileges and opportunities afforded light-skinned African Americans and Latinos as compared to those with darker skin—circumstances that created wealth disparities for individuals across and within racial and ethnic groups (Goldsmith, Hamilton, & Darity, 2006). Several studies reported how a growing number of minority families were able to accumulate minimal wealth through home ownership only to later lose their homes because of predatory and subprime lending practices that targeted poor and working-class minority neighborhoods (Flippen, 2001). Pyke and Dang (2003), in an ethnography of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants, described how intraracial oppression, referred to as "whitewashing," and internalized racism severely limited families' access to resources (e.g., economic networks) for acquiring wealth (see Zhou, 2004). Moreover, several ethnographic studies of middle-class, working-class, poor, and near-poor African American, Latino, Asian American, and White families poignantly illustrated how nuanced family processes and class differences within racial groups produced differential life course opportunities

for social mobility and wealth accumulation (Lareau, 2003; Newman & Massengill, 2006).

Interracial Romantic Pairings

As we reviewed the literature on families of color we observed that the empirical research on interracial romantic pairings significantly increased throughout the decade. We were not surprised by the heightened prevalence of this literature given the dramatic growth in multiracial/ethnic populations in America and race scholars' and family demographers' corollary interests in intermarriage and race relations. Since the early work of Gordon (1964), intermarriage has been viewed as a bellwether of race relations. In his pioneering and widely cited book, *Assimilation in American Life*, Gordon argued that intermarriage marked the final stage of assimilation to American culture and that rises in intermarriage rates were evidence that social distance, prejudice, and discrimination between racial and ethnic groups were diminishing. There is likely some truth to Gordon's propositions, but we contend that it is one thing to suggest a correlation between rates of intermarriage and declines in racism and discrimination and another to discern what kinds of racial dynamics go on inside interracial pairings. How are race, ethnicity, and colorism negotiated in interracial relationships? What implications do those dynamics have for the biracial and multiracial children produced in these unions?

Much of the decade's research about intermarriage focused on documenting patterns of who was marrying who relative to White and non-White pairings. Indeed, the rates of intermarriage of non-Whites to Whites increased substantially throughout the decade. Lee and Bean (2008) indicated that ''intermarriage soared more than 20-fold over a 40-year period from 150,000 such marriages in 1960 to 3.1 million in 2000. Today, about 13% of American married couples involve someone whose partner is of a different race'' (pp. 562–563).

Overall, Latinos and American Indians were the most likely to marry Whites, followed closely by Asian Americans. African Americans were the least likely to marry Whites, but more likely to cohabit as mixed race couples (Qian & Lichter, 2007). Among Asian Americans, there was interethnic variation, as Japanese and Filipino Americans formed marital unions with Whites at higher rates than Southeast

Asians and Asian Indian Americans (Qian, Blair, & Ruf, 2001). Okamoto (2007) reported that variability in interethnic and interracial marriage among Asian Americans was largely due to the inequalities in socioeconomic status anchored in residential and occupational segregation.

Clearly, documenting patterns of intermarriage was a fundamental part of the decade's storyline on this topic, but it was what undergirded those trends that made the study of intermarriage complex and intriguing, particularly in light of critical race and colorism perspectives. Several scholars cogently debated issues about how the social construction and ''remaking'' of race complicated scientists' abilities to identify interracial marriages (Waters, 2000). For example, in terms of measuring interracial marriage, Qian and Lichter (2007) indicated that estimates were likely distorted because of changes in U.S. Census racial categorization. For the first time, in 2000, the Census allowed individuals to identify as belonging to more than one race, meaning that people could exercise their ''racial and ethnic options.'' This change affected the measurement of interracial marriages, as individuals changed categories from the 1990 Census to 2000 Census. Individuals and families, however, were also renegotiating their racial and ethnic self-identifications in less formal ways in their everyday lives (DaCosta, 2007; Zhou, 2004). How were their day-to-day experiences with race, ethnicity, and colorism influencing their social constructions of race and ethnicity? What implications did those experiences have for group variations in intermarriage patterns? And what did these patterns have to say about race relations and racialized systems?

Broad-based variability in the role of educational attainment in intermarriage muddied interpretations about what increased patterns in interracial unions were really saying about racialized systems and marriage as means of social mobility (Gullickson, 2006; Qian et al., 2001). Qian and Lichter (2007) reported that education functioned differently for specific groups. As education increased, so did intermarriage with Whites for native-born Latinos and Asian Americans. This trend did not hold true for African Americans, as ''[c]learly, race trumped education as a barrier to intermarriage for African Americans'' (Qian & Lichter, p. 87). A number of social scientists viewed these patterns as signaling the effects of unmeasured gender-, race-, and class-based

relationship processes that warranted the conceptual, methodological, and interpretive attention of family process researchers, particularly those who employed an intersectionality lens (Dalmage, 2000; Yancey, 2007).

Inside Interracial Unions

Marriage. What, then, did the decade's research tell us about the stability of interracial unions relative to critical race theories and colorism? Did racism, discrimination, and intragroup racism compromise the success of interracial marriages? Bratter and King's (2008) research suggested that the likelihood of a marital dissolution for an interracial couple was higher than for a same-race union. Among interracial couples, White female/African American male and White female/Asian American male unions were more prone to divorce than non-White female/White male marriages, suggesting that racialized and genderized hierarchies likely played a role in which combination of interracial unions are more sustainable in the long term. The recent work of Zhang and Van Hook (2009) supported these interpretations with caveats explicitly suggesting that racial and ethnic differences in the risk for divorce were at play (e.g., African Americans, regardless of their racial relationship status were likely to divorce) as well as race differences in discrimination experiences that were external to the interracial marriage. Yancey (2007) reported similar findings from his qualitative study of interracial marriages, noting that African American/White unions have considerably more visceral experiences with racism than intermarriages between other ethnic/racial groups and that these experiences created a more stressful context for couples that ultimately impeded marital success (also see Bratter & Eschbach, 2006). Troy, Lewis-Smith, and Laurenceau's (2006) latest work, however, found no differences between interracial and intraracial unions in terms of conflict, relationship efficacy, coping style, and attachment and, in fact, reported that those in interracial pairings experienced significantly higher relationship satisfaction than those in intraracial unions.

With respect to the role of colorism in interracial pairings, few studies addressed this issue. Findings from a small body of research indicated that White Latinos were more likely to marry Whites than non-White Latinos (Qian, 2002).

Hunter's (2005) work on skin color as social capital and as a stratifying agent for women showed that lighter skin predicted higher spousal status for African American women. And Glenn's (2009) recent research indicated that some women have taken the empirical relationship among skin color, perceived physical attractiveness, and marriageability to heart, as she found that the consumption of skin whitening products among women from South Africa, India, Latin America, and South East and East Asia was on the rise despite the extremely dangerous nature of skin lightening creams to their health.

Other romantic pairings. Outside of the focus on intermarriage, several of the decade's studies examined other forms of interracial romantic pairing, including hookups, dating, Internet relationships, and cohabitation. One such study found that Asian female and African American male college students were more likely than their male and female counterparts to engage in hookups with Whites but that their comfort with interracial sexual liaisons did not extend to interracial dating and long-term relationships (McClintock, 2010). Joyner and Kao (2005) found that interracial sexual relationships were less likely to lead to marriage, a finding that is consistent with the trend that interracial couples make up a greater share of cohabiting than marital unions (Batson, Qian, & Lichter, 2006). Studying adolescents, Wang, Kao, and Joyner (2006) found that teens who engaged in interracial dating were less likely to share their romance with parents and the public, a finding that raises questions about the role of racism in parents' approval of their children's interracial relationships and teens' uncertainty about crossing color lines. King and Bratter (2007) illustrated age and race differences in interracial relationships noting that if the first sexual partner of a African American woman was of another racial/ethnic group, she was more likely to marry a partner of that ethnic/racial group. Likewise, a few studies of interracial Internet dating indicated that, for some, interracial preferences were not irresolute or tentative predilections, but rather stable inclinations for partners of other ethnic/racial groups that also reflected their own personal dispositions for racial tolerance (Wilson, McIntosh, & Insana, 2007).

Multiracial children. A corollary outcome of increasing interracial pairings is a rise in the number of biracial and multiracial children born within these unions (Fu, 2008). Social psychologists, race and ethnicity theorists, and child development scholars have contributed to a sizable literature on the racial and ethnic identities of these children. Far fewer studies, however, have explored what being biracial or multiracial means for children's life course opportunities and family experiences (Brinig, 2004; Cheng & Powell, 2007; Waters, 2000). How do racialized systems impact the social mobility of children from interracial unions? Are children in particular types of interracial unions more likely to have stable family lives than others? How do parents socialize their biracial and multiracial children about racism and colorism?

THE RACIAL SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

The decades have been kind to research on the racial socialization of children such that there are several recent, excellent comprehensive literature reviews on this topic (see Hughes & Rodriguez, 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006). As such, our synthesis and critique of this decade's literature in this area is narrowly focused on issues that are relevant to critical race and colorism perspectives. We attend to two issues: the role of demographic changes in shifting the population emphasis in this body of research and the implications of critical race and colorism perspectives for creating new ways of thinking about the racial socialization of children. Our comments are anchored in Peters' (1985) classic definition of racial socialization as ''a set of overt and covert behaviors parents use, over and above those responsibilities shared by all parents, to psychologically prepare children for success in a racially stratified American society'' (p. 562).

Consistent with patterns noted in the research we have already reviewed in this article, the decade's research on racial socialization shifted from a preoccupation with African American children to one which included Latinos (Chavez & French, 2007; Huynh & Fuligni, 2008), Asian American families (Dunham & Wilson, 2007), recent immigrant families of color (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), and, to a less frequent degree, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Filipino Americans, and East Asian Indian Americans (Chesire, 2001). Developmental and family

researchers also were more deeply engaged in the important work of parsing out distinctions in socialization practices manifested in different racial combinations within interracial families (e.g., Asian American/White vs. African American/White), within distinct race and gender configurations (e.g., African American father/White mother vs. African American mother/White father) and the ways these various arrangements affected family outcomes, the intergenerational transmission of racial messages, and resource allocation among siblings during childhood (Cheng & Powell, 2007). In addition, particularly for Chinese American families, the question of how parents' intergenerational experiences with racism and discrimination influenced the ethnic/racial socialization of their children received considerably more attention than in previous decades (Alvarez, Juang, & Liang, 2006; Benner & Kim, 2009).

This decade also witnessed a much broader range of conceptual lenses used in studies of racial socialization practices. A theoretical perspective drawn from social reproduction theory was among those represented in the decade's work in this area. This perspective incorporated elements of intersectionality and spawned a fruitful debate on the primacy of class and race in children's socialization experiences. Lareau's (2003) ethnography of parents' strategies for socializing their children was a leading representative of this perspective.

In *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau (2003) chronicled the ways different socialization practices of middle-class (e.g., concerted cultivation) and lower-class (e.g., natural growth) parents transmitted social capital to children that allowed them to navigate more or less effectively in social institutions such as schools. In this analysis, Lareau argued that race was less important than class in parents' socialization practices. This finding, however, was challenged by evidence from other studies that reported that social class was not a leveler of racial stratification effects in the procurement of social capital—that is, comparable socialization practices across African Americans and Whites did not yield comparable outcomes in a racialized society (Dunham & Wilson, 2007; Royster 2003). Similarly, other studies suggested that as socioeconomic status increased among African Americans, so did the frequency of racial socialization messages to children. Class did not trump race in the prevalence of parents' racial socialization activities:

A large majority of African American parents engaged in some form of racial socialization regardless of class (Crouter, Baril, Davis, & McHale, 2008).

A related conceptual lens used in racial socialization studies centered on the debate about ''acting White,'' the oppositional culture thesis, and children's school performance. Acting White refers to ethnic/racial minorities who ''use language or ways of speaking; display attitudes, behaviors, or preferences; or engage in activities considered to be White cultural norms. The term also has come to be used with respect to indicators of academic performance and success'' (Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005, p. 583). The oppositional culture thesis (see Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) purports that minorities, specifically African American teens, in reaction to the history of slavery, disenfranchisement, and discrimination, have developed a culture in which academic success is not valued because it is perceived as conforming to standard norms of success among White Americans. Within the decade, both perspectives stirred continued controversy about whether minority children were being socialized to act White in an effort to succeed or were supported implicitly by parents and explicitly by peers to perform poorly in school in opposition to White norms.

Overall, the decade's most convincing research indicated little to no support for the oppositional culture thesis (Downey, 2008; Tyson et al., 2005), but empirical findings about acting White and the intraracial stigma and advantages associated with it were inconclusive. In contrast to these findings, a number of studies continued to show large positive influences from racial and ethnic socialization practices on children's academic and social outcomes (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Scott, 2003). Given these findings, the question that ensued was how does racial socialization interact with contextual messages to children about acting White? This paradoxical query was subtly addressed in several studies on interracial and immigrant families (see Brunsma & Rocquemore, 2001; Pyke & Dang, 2003).

Extending Critical Race and Colorism Perspectives to Racial Socialization Research

Although the two perspectives we described above provided some valuable insights into the dynamics of families of color, we respectfully argue that studies of racial socialization could benefit from the further integration of critical race theory. Our review of the literature indicated that the decade's conceptual approaches to racial socialization did not address several important points embedded within larger theoretical perspectives in these approaches. Most importantly, there was also a lack of attention to colorism and how it shapes within-race/ethnic socialization practices of families, specifically immigrants from countries of origin with racialized and color-conscious hierarchies. Extensive evidence in the race and stratification literature suggested that colorism affects both psychological and socioeconomic outcomes, with dark-skinned minorities being more likely to grow up in poverty, more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, and less likely to marry (Hochschild & Weaver, 2007). The pervasive social effects of colorism implied that, within families, racial socialization processes may vary according to children's skin tone, just as they do for birth order, gender, and other individual traits. Family researchers interested in the study of racial socialization would be remiss not to examine the possible effects of colorism in family processes and outcomes in future research.

An associated area of research on racial socialization concerns how Whites learn to experience race. Our review of the decade's literature found that studies of racial socialization assumed that people of color will encounter racism but did not fully examine the socialization processes among Whites that lead them to discriminate. Focusing only on minority racial socialization perpetuates the fallacy that only non-Whites ''have'' race. Researchers in the area of Whiteness studies have shown that Whiteness is a learned response to a very intense process of racial socialization that spans multiple levels of society (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003). For instance, studies of the culture of segregation in the South have shown how a ''racial etiquette'' arose, socializing both African American and White children into their roles in the Jim Crow order (Ritterhouse, 2006). Recently, ethnographic research in this area moved on to show how the socialization for Whiteness and its attendant privileges varies by gender and class (Bettie, 2003). Further, emergent studies of the racial/ethnic identities of White adolescents have interrogated the role of context in shaping color-blind racism ideologies (Grossman &

Charmaraman, 2009). These studies provided loose models that family researchers could consult in studies of how White families socialize and are socialized racially. It appears that the *Journal of Marriage and Family* is attentive to these issues. As the decade came to a close, a study published in the journal used a conceptual model derived from the critical race discourse (e.g., color-blind perspective) to explore the racial socialization of multiracial and transracial adoptees by White parents (Samuels, 2009).

Last, Van Ausdale and Feagin (2002) provided an intriguing model for research on racial socialization that is framed within a critical race perspective. Using ethnographic methods, they followed a diverse selection of 4- to 6-year-olds in a racially integrated elementary school. Their results showed how the children, in the relative absence of adults, developed racial understandings and socialized one another to roles based on skin color, accent, and other racialized markers. This study not only had the merit of taking children's social lives seriously, it also demonstrated that racial understandings and relations of dominance are developed very early in life and deployed for social advantage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The past 10 years have seen a dramatic rise in the numbers of racial/ethnic and immigrant families of color in the United States. This demographic change moved America toward a multicultural society in which families have racial/ethnic options for self-identification and have the benefits and burdens of living in a country in which systemic racism prevails. In the context of this demographic revolution, scholars made substantial progress in developing critical race theories and considering perspectives on colorism to frame the public, policy, and scholarly discourse on race and inequality in American society. In this review, we synthesized and critiqued the decade's scholarly literature on America's families of color, devoting special attention to advances in knowledge made by research that incorporated elements of these perspectives.

We had several goals in mind in conceptually framing this review using critical race and colorism perspectives. Given the massive volume of literature written about families of color during this decade, we sought to distinguish this review from others by taking a conceptual road less traveled in family science. In doing so, we

attempted to provide a brief overview about critical race perspectives and the current discourse on colorism to interested family researchers; encourage researchers to remain vigilant in evaluating how race, ethnicity, and colorism worked in the lives of contemporary families of color; and identify progress made in and opportunities for incorporating critical race and colorism perspectives in current and future research.

With respect to progress made, our review of the decade's literature suggested, as De Reus et al. (2005) indicated, that although social scientists have been increasingly attentive to the potential benefits of incorporating critical race and colorism perspectives in their research on families of color, most have not fully implemented these perspectives in their work. Rather, many scientists used elements of the approaches in their research. The use of elements equates with some progress, but we argue that in a multicultural society that is shifting in numbers and potentially in the distribution of power, researchers must be mindful of the roles that racialized systems and differentiations based on skin color play in families' lives. The use of critical race theories and perspectives on colorism in research fosters that mindfulness.

In the context of that mindfulness we offer several recommendations for future research. First, our assessment of the literature on inequality and social mobility indicated that race and stratification scholars and family scientists should have regular, collaborative conversations about families of color and critical race and colorism perspectives and measures. Clearly, knowledge generation in this area of study would benefit greatly from an infusion of measures into the race and stratification research that capture the hard-to-measure family processes that influence the ways in which race, ethnicity, and colorism operate inside families. Likewise family science could benefit from the use of indicators of residential and wealth inequality used by race and stratification researchers.

Second, in terms of the research on interracial romantic pairings, we once again highlight Few's (2007) call for greater integration or ''fitting'' of critical race perspectives with traditional family theories. An example of that integration might involve combining exchange theory with critical race perspectives to investigate relationship dynamics within interracial couples (Rosenfield, 2005). Previous work using exchange theory suggested that, historically,

women have bartered physical beauty for men's higher status and earnings. Combining this approach with critical race theories could lead to interesting findings concerning the exchange value of race, ethnicity, or skin color in relationships as well as how racialized systems affect that value.

Third, as our previous comments suggest, we believe that research on racial socialization that incorporates critical race and colorism perspectives offers optimal potential for generating new conceptual approaches and insights about families in a multicultural society. For example, theories of racial socialization could be strengthened by fully incorporating the theoretical insights of race and stratification scholars working in the critical race theory and colorism traditions. There are several examples of scholars who have begun this important work by exploring the impact of color-blind racial socialization on adolescent (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009) and on young adult development (Barr & Neville, 2008). We hope, the next decade's research will follow in this tradition and provide family science with more robust understandings of racial socialization that move us toward truly understanding racialized systems effects in addition to race differences.

NOTE

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