

RACE & ETHNICITY IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Key Considerations based on Public Health
Critical Race Praxis (PHCRP)

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DISCLOSURES

- None to declare.



OVERVIEW

- Clarify the relationship between race & racism
- Introduce the relational dimension of ethnicity
- Challenge the presumption of objectivity
- Discuss key implications





Having committed ourselves to race, we ever pursue ways to create meaning out of it.

“Race is a social construct”

- What race is NOT – essentially biological
- Left unanswered: what race IS



Race is...

a vast group[s] of people loosely bound together by historically contingent, socially significant elements of their morphology and/or ancestry.

- Haney Lopez, 1999



3 PHCRP POINTS

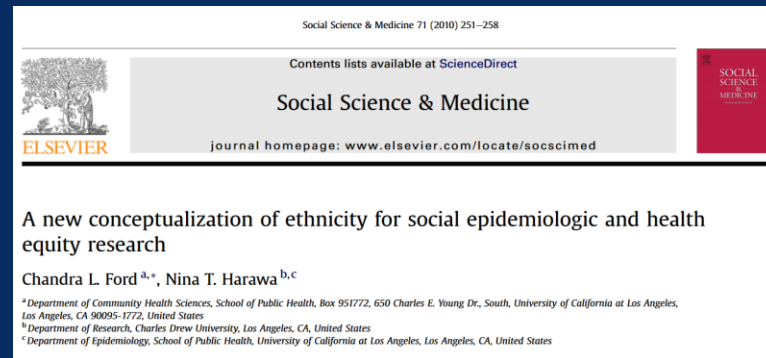
- ❑ Racism undergirds the very structure of society and therefore is a fundamental cause of health inequities.
- ❑ Race & ethnicity are social constructs that emerge out of a society's historical and contemporary socio-political structures.
- ❑ Racial and ethnic groupings do not exist outside of racism nor are they antecedent to it. They are products of racialization, i.e., the myriad of processes and mechanisms by which structural forces:
 1. organize people into hierarchized groups based on the power interests of a dominant group;
 2. imbue the groups with meanings derived from racializing frames established by a dominant group based on its interests; and,
 3. exert social and political power to maintain the boundaries between the dominant and other Racialized groups

Racism: antecedent to race (and the relational dimension of ethnicity)



2-DIMENSIONAL ETHNICITY CONSTRUCT

- 2 dimensions
 - Attributional
 - Relational



- Racism: the relational link between race and ethnicity
 - Intersectional relationship between race and ethnicity
 - Ethnically identified groups experience racism
 - Ethnicity does not exist outside of racism
- **Goal:** Given its social construction, how to manipulate it to isolate

Ford & Harawa, *Soc Sci Med*, 2010



RELATIONAL DIMENSION OF ETHNICITY: SELECTED FINDINGS

Original Report:
Public Health

CONCEPTUALIZING ETHNICITY: HOW DIMENSIONS OF ETHNICITY AFFECT DISPARITIES IN HEALTH OUTCOMES AMONG LATINXS IN THE UNITED STATES

Whitney N. Laster Pirtle, PhD¹; Zulema Valdez, PhD¹;
Kathryn P. Daniels, PhD²; Maria D. Duenas, MA¹;
Denise Castro, MA³

Conceptualizing Ethnicity Among Latinxs - Laster Pirtle et al

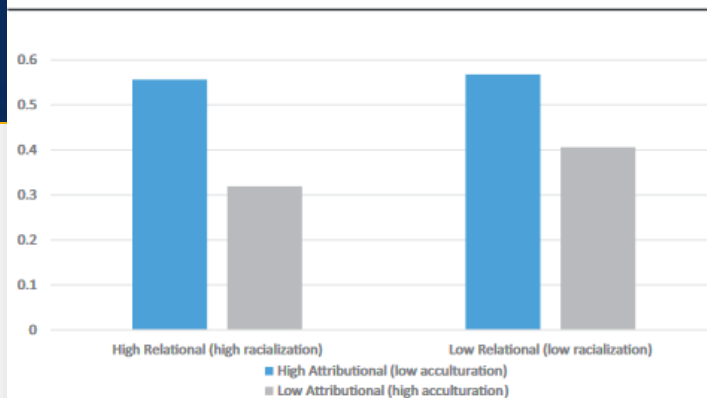


Figure 2. Predicted probability of excellent/very good health among Latinxs for attributional and relational ideal types

Our analysis reveals that attributional and relational dimensions of ethnicity condition health differently, highlighting nuances that are not reflected in the broader definition of ethnicity.

Ford & Laster Pirtle Am J Epidemiology *In press*



That science is systematic enhances its reliability, but it does not make it bias-free.

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Lack of clarity on race, ethnicity & racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rely on extant PHCRP antiracism lexicon¹ and racism glossaries².
An ironic lack of rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess race, ethnicity and racism-related constructs using approaches validated in the appropriate population(s)
Extensive measurement of race & ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Account for potential harms of measures ▪ Compare novel methods with those previously critiqued as racist
Racism & white supremacy in epidemiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversify the profession to incorporate fresh perspectives ▪ Acknowledge the limits of one's own expertise

Ford & Laster Pirtle Am J Epidemiology *In press*



IMPLICATIONS



THANK YOU.

