

Abstract

On June 6, 2020 there were mass anti-racism protests around the world in response to the police killing of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man in the United States. Protestors in Germany connected the events in the U.S. to the shootings in Halle targeting a Jewish synagogue in October 2019 and the mass shooting and killing of nine people in Hanau targeting people of Turkish heritage in February 2020. These violent acts prompted statements by politicians, activists, and educators for the need to more explicitly name and address ongoing racism in contemporary German society, as well as to affirm diverse heritage identities. Add to this the current COVID-19 pandemic that is accentuating ethnic, racial, and class-based inequities in terms of exposure to health risk and death, diminished educational opportunities, and increased harassment.

These crises highlight the necessity to better understand how young people experience and are affected by inequity and racism and how parents and schools contribute to how young people perceive, understand, and cope with these experiences. How is being a black adolescent in the US the same or different as being a black adolescent in Germany? Are experiences of discrimination similar or different for ethnic, racial, and religious minorities in the US and Germany? More broadly, what do we know about race-based discrimination, parent racial socialization, and school approaches to diversity in Europe and how does that contrast to what we know in the US? If race is a taboo topic in Europe, is it relevant to study such issues with young people? By comparing and contrasting what we know in two countries/continents regarding adolescent experiences of racism, how their parents engage (or not) in racial socialization, and how schools approach issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion, we gain more insight into possible protective factors to reduce harmful effects of inequity and racism for adolescents living in different parts of the world.