When and What Parents Tell Children About Race: An Examination of Race-Related Socialization Among African American Families

Diane Hughes and Lisa Chen

Department of Psychology
New York University

This study examined child, parent, and ecological predictors of African American parent–child communications regarding racial issues. Data were derived from structured interviews with 157 African American parents with children 4 to 14 years old. Three components of racial socialization were explored: teaching about African American culture (Cultural Socialization), preparing children for experiences with prejudice (Preparation for Bias), and promoting out-group mistrust (Promotion of Mistrust). Findings indicated that Cultural Socialization was more frequent than was Preparation for Bias, which was, in turn, more frequent than Promotion of Mistrust. Messages regarding Promotion of Mistrust and Preparation for Bias, but not Cultural Socialization, increased with children's age, with marked differences between parents of 4- to 8-year-olds compared to parents of 9- to 14-year-olds. Dimensions of racial socialization were also associated with parents' reports of race-related socialization they received in their families of origin. Finally, parents' perceptions of racial bias in the workplace were associated with racial socialization, but relations were stronger among parents of 9- to 14-year-olds as compared to parents of 4-to 8-year-olds.

Scholars studying family processes have attended increasingly to cultural variations in child socialization practices and in parents' values and goals in rearing their children. For example, Harwood and colleagues' study of traits and behaviors endorsed by Puerto Rican and American mothers (Harwood, Schoelmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996), Knight and colleagues' study of cooperative orientations among Mexican American children (Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993), and Chao's (1994, 1995) studies of child training among immigrant Chinese families have each highlighted ways in which observed parenting practices are consistent with cultural concepts and with valued socialization outcomes. Underlying this line of research is the recognition that group differences in socialization reflect different systems of cultural meaning as well as groups' adaptations to specific ecological demands and contexts for development.

Among ethnic minority families in the United States, the context for child socialization often includes parents' recognition of group disadvantage, both in terms of systems of social stratification and in terms of negative societal images about minority groups. Accordingly, researchers

have attempted to outline strategies that parents use to help children understand the meaning of their race or ethnicity within the larger sociopolitical structure. Boykin and Toms (1985) argued, for example, that ethnic minority parents must negotiate three socialization agendas to ensure their children's adaptive functioning. These include: (a) cultural socialization (i.e., promoting cultural customs, values, and traditions); (b) minority socialization (i.e., promoting awareness of and preparation to cope with minority status); and (c) mainstream socialization (i.e., promoting goals and values of the dominant culture). Barnes (1980) proposed that parents' emphasis on cultural knowledge and cultural pride helps prepare children to interpret and cope with prejudice, discrimination, and negative group images emanating from the outside world. Spencer (1983) similarly suggested that minority parents' silence about race leaves their children ill-prepared for the social injustices and stereotypes they will inevitably encounter. In recent work, scholars have referred to parents' communications to children about race as ethnic or *racial socialization* (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Stevenson, 1995).

Empirical studies, albeit few in number, suggest that racial socialization may have important influences on minority children's development, especially in terms of their group identity. For example, in Spencer's (1983) seminal work in this area, African American children of mothers who believed teaching children about race was important were more likely to demonstrate pro-Black preferences in forced-choice racial preference tasks. Barnes (1980) also found that parental teaching about race was associated with more favorable in-group

evaluations among African American children, as did Ou and McAdoo (1993) among Chinese American children. Knight et al. (1993), in a study of Mexican American mothers, found that maternal teaching about Mexican culture, ethnic pride, and discrimination was related to various indicators of children's ethnic identity, such as correct labeling, use of ethnic behaviors, and ethnic preferences. Marshall (1995) found that 9- and 10-year-old African American children whose mothers endorsed racial socialization practices were likely to be at a more advanced stage of racial identity development in terms of Cross's widely used framework (Cross, 1987).

Studies examining relations between parental racial socialization practices and other indicators of children's well-being have produced fewer consistent results. Bowman and Howard (1985) found that parental socialization regarding racial barriers was associated with adolescents' higher grades and greater sense of self-efficacy. Stevenson found that African American adolescents' perceptions of the importance of racial socialization were associated with their racial identity development as well as with their socioemotional well-being (Stevenson, 1995; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1995). However, Ogbu's (1974) research among high school students in Stockton, California warns us that the consequences of racial socialization for children may depend upon the nature of the race-related information that is transmitted. In his study, parents' overemphasis on racial barriers and discrimination seemed to undermine children's sense of efficacy and to promote distrust of and anger toward mainstream institutions, leading to maladaptive behaviors. Marshall (1995) also found that children whose mothers reported more racial socialization had lower grades in reading than did children whose mothers reported less.

Notably, studies also indicate considerable variation across and within samples in the frequency and content of racial socialization. In several studies, the large majority of parents report engaging in some form of racial socialization with their children (Biafora, Warheit, Zimmerman, Gilm Aspori, Taylor, & Vega, 1993; Branch & Newcombe, 1986; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). However, Spencer (1983) reported that only half of the African American mothers in her study thought that it was important to teach children about race, and of these, only one third mentioned that it was important to prepare children for possible racial discrimination. In Marshall's (1995) study, only a few African American mothers spontaneously mentioned socialization regarding race when asked about important child rearing goals, but 89% of them indicated that such socialization took place when asked explicitly.

More fundamental than differences across studies is the observation that within any given sample some parents report racial socialization practices whereas others do not. In addition, as Sanders Thompson (1994) noted, the content of parents' race-related messages to children varies widely. Some parents encourage children to understand and value their history, heritage, and culture; some emphasize racial barriers and discrimination; some emphasize cultural pluralism and acceptance; and some bypass any race-related messages in favor of a "color blind" approach.

In light of mounting evidence that racial socialization both contributes to developmental outcomes for minority children and varies widely across families, it is important for researchers to understand factors that shape the frequency and content of such socialization. Yet, surprisingly little information is known in this regard. Only a few studies have examined potential antecedents of racial socialization, and these have focused primarily on sociodemographic variables such as parents' age, ethnicity, gender, and place of residency (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Thornton et al., 1990). Due to the relative immaturity of the literature in the area, it is important for researchers to examine more completely sources of variation in racial socialization that may have theoretical importance in terms of elucidating (a) the mechanisms underlying different sorts of race-related messages to children and (b) the complex interplay between contextual realities and family processes.

One important influence on parents' racial socialization practices is likely to be age-related differences in children's racial knowledge. As children develop, they undergo important cognitive transitions in their understanding of race. Although racial awareness and categorization skills are evident as early as 3 years of age, the understanding that race is immutable over the life course and consistent across situations (racial constancy) is not evidenced among minority children until they are 9 or 10 years of age (Aboud, 1988). Children's sense of ethnic identity emerges even later (Aboud, 1988). In this regard, parents' racial socialization efforts are commonly represented as static and unchanging, but it seems quite likely that their efforts are sensitive to developmental shifts. For instance, parents may be unlikely to engage in conversations with children about race until they believe their children understand the concept, resulting in minimal racial socialization among parents of younger children. In addition, children's information-seeking efforts may increase during periods of transition in their racial knowledge, as they do with other sorts of cognitive or social transitions (Ruble, 1994). As a result, there may be increased racial socialization on the part of parents during middle childhood and adolescence when children are consolidating their racial knowledge and their ethnic group identity. Indeed, in studies involving preschoolers and young children, parents report relatively low levels of socialization regarding racial issues (Kofkin, Katz, & Downey, 1995; Spencer, 1983), whereas in studies of older children the large majority of parents (or children)

report such racial socialization (e.g., Knight et al., 1993; Marshall, 1995). Because existing studies focus on limited age groups, such as preschoolers (Kofkin et al., 1995; Spencer, 1983), elementary school children (Knight et al., 1993; Marshall, 1995), or adolescents (Biafora, Taylor, Warheit, Zimmerman, & Vega, 1993; Stevenson, 1995), within-sample comparisons of racial socialization practices among parents of children differing in age are sorely needed. Identifying how and when parents' racial socialization behaviors change as children get older could provide important information about transactions between developmental processes and parents' behaviors, as well as about the essential elements of minority parents' efforts to help their children learn about ethnicity and race.

A second source of variation in parents' racial socialization practices may be the nature of race-related messages parents received as targets of socialization in their own families of origin. There is increasing evidence, based on studies of attachment models (e.g., Ainsworth & Eichberg, 1991; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985), political and ideological beliefs (Holden, 1997), abusive parenting (e.g., Cicchetti & Carlson, 1989; Kaufman & Zigler, 1988), and other disciplinary practices (e.g., Holden & Zambarano, 1992; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Wu, 1991) that parents' attitudes and behaviors frequently mirror those of their own parents. Several processes that have been hypothesized to account for intergenerational similarity in other aspects of parenting, including observational learning and identification (Crittendon, 1984; Van Ijzendoorn, 1992), may promote similarity across generations in racial socialization practices as well. For example, parents may simply replicate racial socialization messages they received from their own parents in their communications to children about race. Alternatively, parents' own socialization experiences may indirectly influence their current racial socialization practices by influencing their racial attitudes. Although studies have examined the extent to which retrospective accounts of racial socialization are associated with adults' racial attitudes and group identity (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Sanders Thompson, 1994), researchers need to examine the extent to which racial attitudes in adulthood, in turn, influence child socialization. Such information would be quite useful for insights regarding the mechanisms through which racial attitudes and orientations are transmitted from one generation to the next.

A final source of variation in parents' racial socialization practices is likely to be their race-related experiences in social settings that are external to the family. Ecological models have focused on the mechanisms through which child socialization is shaped by the various microsystems in which parents participate (Belsky, 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Settings are characterized by role relationships (i.e., expectations of persons occupying particular social positions) and interpersonal structures (i.e., relationships between people in settings)

that shape the nature of parents' experiences within them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These experiences affect parents themselves and, in turn, their behaviors toward their children. For example, exposure to racial discrimination and prejudice in such settings may increase the likelihood that parents will try to prepare children for similar experiences, with an eye toward facilitating their academic and occupational success. By the same token, parents who experience racial discrimination and prejudice may develop an oppositional identity (Ogbu, 1985), characterized by out-group animosity and distrust, that they, in turn, transmit to children. Information about these sorts of issues is lacking in the existing literature but may elucidate theoretically important linkages between microsocial processes within minority families and macrostructural phenomena.

This Study

This study focused on child, parent, and ecological predictors of racial socialization among African American families. Previous studies have shown that socialization about racial issues is more common in African American families as compared to Anglo or other ethnic minority families (Kofkin et al., 1995; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Thus, it seems especially pertinent to examine the correlates of such socialization within this group. The primary objectives of the study were (a) to describe the nature of racial socialization in terms of its specific dimensions and their interrelations, (b) to examine whether racial socialization is more frequent among parents whose children are at an age when race is more salient and better understood, and (c) to examine the extent to which racial socialization processes are associated with variations in parents' own upbringing and with their race-related experiences in external settings.

In the study, racial socialization was conceived as a broad class of parental behaviors that transmit attitudes, values, and information regarding their racial group memberships and intergroup relationships to children. Three components of racial socialization were explored: teaching about African American history, culture, and heritage (*Cultural Socialization*); preparing children for future encounters with racial discrimination and prejudice (*Preparation for Bias*); and promoting racial mistrust (*Promotion of Mistrust*). These components of racial socialization reflect consistent themes underlying existing conceptualizations, although they do not capture them fully. In particular, important aspects of socialization in minority families that have been described by other scholars but do not contain explicit racial messages, such as mainstream socialization (Boykin & Toms, 1985) or reliance on religion and extended family (Stevenson, 1994), were not included in our conceptualization.

We began by examining the extent to which parents' racial socialization practices were associated with age-

related differences in children's understanding of race. We reasoned that the most important influence on those practices would be the children's readiness to interpret race-related messages. Although we did not have accompanying data from children with which to test this hypothesis directly, we could examine cross-sectional differences in indicators of racial socialization as a function of children's age groups, which corresponded to known shifts in children's racial knowledge. Specifically, we hypothesized that the frequency of reported racial socialization would increase as a function of children's age, with notable differences in levels of racial socialization reported by parents of children younger than 9 years old as compared to parents of children 9 to 14 years old. We also hypothesized that the relation between children's ages and Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust would be stronger than that between children's ages and Cultural Socialization, because communications about intergroup relationships require a basic level of racial knowledge, whereas exposure to cultural heritage does not.

We then examined the extent to which various characteristics of parents were associated with their racial socialization practices. These included a range of demographic variables that are endogenous to child rearing, such as age, gender, educational attainment, and occupational category, as well as race-related messages that parents had received from their own parents (termed *Received Socialization*). Whereas previous studies have reported significant relations between a number of demographic variables and racial socialization (Thornton et al., 1990), the primary hypothesis examined in this study was that one's experience with one's own parents would be an especially important predictor of racial socialization. Parents' own racial socialization experiences may provide working models for appropriate child rearing strategies that they replicate in rearing their own children. Moreover, parents who received more socialization regarding race throughout their own childhood may be more likely to value their cultural heritage, to perceive racial bias, and to emphasize these race-related values and perspectives with their own children. In line with these proposed processes, we expected that there would be a significant relation between one's racial socialization experiences within one's family of origin and reported racial socialization practices with one's own children.

Third, we examined the extent to which parents' race-related experiences in settings external to the family were associated with different aspects of racial socialization. In this regard, we focused our analyses on the racial ecology of the workplace, a primary arena in which African Americans encounter subtle forms of racial bias (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987) as well as racial discrimination in areas such as hiring, wages, unemployment, and job assignment (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). Moreover, the workplace has increas-

ingly been understood as a place where individuals acquire behaviors, experiences, and worldviews that influence their behaviors with children, both in terms of skills imparted and in terms of the affective tone of their interactions (Kohn, 1969; Kohn & Schooler, 1978; Ogbu, 1985). Thus, we examined the extent to which parents' perceived exposure to racial bias in the workplace was associated with their racial socialization practices. We examined two different aspects of workplace racial bias, which corresponded to important distinctions between institutional and interpersonal dimensions of racial bias described in previous writings (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Essed, 1990; Lykes, 1983). The first aspect concerned parents' perceptions of racial inequities in the distribution of valued resources such as salaries, benefits, job assignments, and opportunities for promotion (termed *Institutional Discrimination*). The second aspect concerned parents' perceptions of prejudicial attitudes or racial stereotypes in their daily interpersonal transactions at work (termed *Interpersonal Prejudice*). In this article, we refer to these two dimensions of perceived workplace racial bias as *Race-Related Job Stressors*. We hypothesized that Race-Related Job Stressors would be especially important predictors of Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust. Underlying this hypothesis was the expectation that parents who perceive more racial discrimination or prejudice may try to prepare children for similar encounters. Alternatively, they may develop out-group animosities that they transmit to children, either inadvertently or deliberately.

Finally, we examined whether or not children's age conditioned, or moderated, the extent to which parents translated their own background and contemporary experiences into race-related messages to children. As children develop a fuller understanding of race, parents may be more likely to transform race-related experiences into a specific racial socialization agenda. Accordingly, we hypothesized that there would be a stronger relation between racial socialization and parents' own experiences (both Received Socialization and Race-Related Job Stressors) among parents reporting on children 9 to 14 years old as compared to those reporting on children 4 to 8 years old.

Methods

This study was part of the Employed Parents Project, a study of work and family processes among African American parents living in Chicago conducted by the first author between February and November of 1994. The overarching purpose of the study was to examine interrelations between job experiences and family processes within these families, with a particular focus on child socialization. Participation was limited to dual-earner, married-couple, African American families with a child between 4 and 14 years of age. Data were

derived from structured interviews with either a mother or a father in each of 157 families. The interview protocol covered a range of topics including job experiences, work–family role difficulty, marital behaviors, parenting practices, and racial socialization behaviors.

It may be useful to note here that the questions regarding perceived exposure to workplace racial bias and those regarding parental racial socialization behaviors were embedded in a broad range of questions about job experiences and parenting practices respectively. We anticipated that questions regarding race and race-related experiences might be quite sensitive and difficult for parents. As Delpit (1988) emphasized, dialogues about such issues are often uncomfortable and quickly silenced. Thus, by embedding race-related questions in the broader contexts of work and family, we hoped to lessen the potential for discomfort among respondents, an effort that was successful according to interviewer reports.

Procedures

Respondents were recruited for participation in the following manner. First, data from the 1990 U.S. Census was used to identify community areas in Chicago with high concentrations of African American married couple households with children under 18 years of age. Community areas comprise multiple contiguous census tracts throughout the city of Chicago and were defined by University of Chicago researchers in the mid-1900s (Burgess & Newcombe, 1933). To ensure socioeconomic and occupational diversity within the sample, we categorized community areas into low versus high socioeconomic strata based on the median household income of African Americans in Chicago, according to 1990 Census data. Twelve of these community areas (6 high socioeconomic status [SES] and 6 low SES) were selected randomly for recruitment of eligible respondents.

All of the interviews were conducted by five African American interviewers (one male, four female) who received over 20 hr of training in standardized interviewing procedures. In each of the 12 community areas, interviewers initially canvassed residential blocks using a screening instrument to determine respondent eligibility. Eligibility was limited to married-couple, dual-earner, African American families with at least one child between 4 and 14 years of age. The eligibility criteria facilitated examination of questions that were of theoretical interest to us, although it precluded generalization of findings beyond this sample.

Once a household was deemed eligible, interviewers randomly selected the mother or father as the designated respondent and arranged for a convenient interview time. Prior to each interview, the interviewer read and asked respondents to sign an informed consent procedure, which described the purposes of the study and procedures for maintaining confidentiality. The interviews took approximately 90 min. Participants were

remunerated $30.00 for their participation. At the end of the interview, respondents were asked to identify other eligible families, whom the interviewers then contacted. The final sample of 157 respondents included men and women living in 30 different community areas. The number of completed interviews per community area ranged from 1 to 16, with a median of 5. Although the sample was nonrandom, the use of multiple respondents to seed the sample and the selection of respondents from socioeconomically diverse neighborhoods reduced some of the problems of network homogeneity associated with snowball sampling procedures.

Sample

The African American fathers ($n = 79$) and mothers ($n = 78$) in the sample were all married, employed full time, and had a child between the ages of 4 and 14 years.[1] The large majority of participants were American-born Blacks; only 3% were born outside of the United States. Mothers' ages ranged from 21 to 53 years, with a mean of 37. Fathers' ages ranged from 25 to 63 years, with a mean of 38. Median annual personal income was $10,000 to $24,999 among mothers and $25,000 to $39,999 among fathers; median annual family income was $40,000 to $54,000 per year among families of both fathers and mothers. On average, parents had been working in their present jobs for 6 years. Twenty-three percent of fathers and 29% of mothers were in professional, technical, or managerial occupations; 15% of fathers and 48% of mothers were in clerical and sales occupations; and 62% of fathers and 23% of mothers were in unskilled or semiskilled occupations. About 95% of fathers and mothers had graduated from high school; 15% of fathers and 22% of mothers had completed 4 years of college. Twenty-two percent of parents reported that they worked in settings in which "none" or "few" of their coworkers were African American; 34% reported that they work in racially integrated settings; and 43% reported that "most" or "all" of their coworkers were African American. Most respondents lived in communities with high concentrations of African Americans; 86% of them reported that their neighborhood was "all" or "mostly" African American. As noted previously, participants' answers to child socialization questions were focused on a target child selected randomly by the interviewer. Twenty-nine percent of target children were 4 to 5 years old ($n = 46$), 29% were 6 to 8 years old ($n = 46$), 20% were 9

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[1] Restrictions on the child's age group derived from our expectation that children between 4 and 14 would be the most likely targets for parents' racial socialization efforts. Racial awareness and the ability to categorize by racial group membership is often not present until 3 or 4 years of age (precluding parental discussions of race) whereas teens older than 14 may have already consolidated ethnic identities and orientations (Aboud, 1988).

to 11 years old ($n = 32$), and 21% were 12 to 14 years old ($n = 33$). Fifty percent of target children were girls.

Measures

Racial socialization. Measures of racial socialization were developed for this study. Item content for these measures was derived from stories and events described by a separate sample of African American parents who participated in focus group interviews we had conducted previously (see Hughes & Dumont, 1993, for a complete description of these groups). We generated 16 items to represent the three dimensions of racial socialization that we have described: Cultural Socialization, Preparation for Bias, and Promotion of Mistrust. These dimensions reflect a range of strategies that other scholars have described (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Knight et al., 1993; Thornton et al., 1990) as well as specific behaviors described by focus group participants (e.g., teaching children to mistrust Whites). For each item, parents reported whether or not they had ever engaged in the behavior with the target child ($0 = No$) and, if so, how often in the past year ($1 = Never; 5 = Very Often$).

Initial construct validity for the three dimensions of racial socialization was examined using principal axes factor analysis with varimax rotation. Results supported a priori expectations that the items were represented adequately by the proposed underlying dimensions. Three factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than one. The first factor accounted for 46.8% of the variance and consisted of items concerning discussions of group differences and explanations of racial bias (e.g., Have you ever talked to your child about the fight for equality among Blacks? Have you ever explained something to your child that she/he saw on TV showing poor treatment of Blacks?). Factor 2 explained an additional 12.6% of the variance. It consisted of items related to cultural heritage teaching and awareness (e.g., Have you ever done things with your child to remember events in Black history?). Factor 3 explained 7.0% of the variance and consisted of items concerning racial mistrust (e.g., Have you ever told your child that she/he should not trust Whites?). The factor structure for the complete set of 16 items is shown in Table 1. To increase interpretability and parsimony, the four items in the table with loadings above .50 on more than one factor, or below .50 on all three factors, were not included in any of the three subscales. Accordingly, three unit-weighted scales were developed: Preparation for Bias (seven items; $\alpha = .91$), Cultural Socialization (three items; $\alpha = .84$), and Promotion of Mistrust (two items; $r = .68$).[2]

Child characteristics. The child characteristics examined as predictors of racial socialization were age and gender. Using parents' responses to an open-ended question regarding child's age as of their last birthday, target children were categorized into four age groups: 4 to 5 years, 6 to 8 years, 9 to 11 years, and 12 to 14 years. These age groups were represented in all multivariate analyses by three contrast codes. One contrast code compared parents of children ages 4 to 8 years to parents of children ages 9 to 14 years. For purposes of comparison within these two categories, the two other contrast codes compared parents of children 4 to 5 years old to parents of children 6 to 8 years old, and parents of children 9 to 11 years old to parents of children 12 to 14 years. Contrast codes were utilized in lieu of continuous variables because of the nonlinear nature of hypothesized relations between children's ages and indicators of racial socialization.

Parent characteristics. Parent characteristics included: age, gender, educational attainment, occupational category, and Received Socialization. Age was measured in years on a continuous scale. Educational attainment was an ordinal variable ranging from 1 *(less than 8th grade)* to 9 *(graduate or professional education beyond college)*. Occupational categories were designated using respondents' answers to open-ended occupation and industry questions, which were then coded using three-digit codes from the U.S. Department of Labor's Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Coded occupations were grouped according to three labor market categories suggested by Bowman (1991). *Upper Primary Workers* were those in professional, technical, and managerial occupations; *Lower Primary Workers* were those in clerical and sales occupations; and *Secondary Workers* were those in service, machine trades, processing, structural, and bench work occupations. Thus, labor market category consisted of two dummy variables representing Upper Primary Workers and Lower Primary Workers. Secondary Workers served as the reference group. Received Socialization was measured using three single-item questions regarding the extent to which respondents' parents (a) encouraged racial pride, (b) taught them about Black history and culture, and (c) taught them about racial bias against Blacks. All items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ($1 = almost never; 4 = very often$). The first two of these single items were highly correlated ($r = .70$) and, thus, combined to obtain a two-item measure of *Received Cultural Socialization*. Neither of these items was significantly correlated with the third item concerning teaching about racial bias ($r = .16$ and $r = .17$, respectively). Thus, the single item, termed *Received Bias Socialization*, was retained as an independent indicator.

Race-related job stressors. Measures of Race-Related Job Stressors were developed for this study. As with the items assessing racial socialization, the item

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[2] The complete set of items measuring dimensions of racial socialization and Race-Related Job Stressors are available upon request from the first author.

Table 1. *Endorsement Frequency and Factor Structure of Items Assessing Racial Socialization*

	Endorsement Frequencies in Past Year (% Yes)		Factor Loadings: Factor (Eigenvalues) % Variance		
Variables	Ever	Often or Very Often	1 (7.48) 46.8	2 (2.01) 12.6	3 (1.12) 7.0
Preparation for Bias					
Talked to child re: racism	61.8*	14.1*	.80	.16	.25
Told child people might treat badly due to race	49.7	14.7*	.73	.03	.22
Explained to child something child saw on TV that showed poor treatment of Blacks	69.4*	20.4*	.71	.31	.24
Told child people might try to limit him/her because of race	45.2	13.4*	.70	.07	.38
Talked to child about fight for equality among Blacks	51.6	15.9*	.69	.32	.32
Talked to child about things they mislearned in school[a]	69.4*	24.2*	.54	.51	.04
Told child he/she must be better than White kids to get same rewards	29.9*	13.4*	.53	.13	.42
Talk about race with someone else when child could hear	69.4*	15.3*	.51	.23	.16
Talk to child about racial differences in physical features[a]	59.9*	10.2*	.49	.37	.34
Cultural Socialization					
Read child Black history books	70.1*	21.7*	.20	.86	.13
Read child Black story books	72.6*	25.5*	−.03	.79	.14
Taken child to Black cultural events	67.5*	21.0*	.31	.66	.11
Done things to celebrate Black history[a]	79.6*	24.2*	.53	.58	−.02
Taken to get Black clothes or hairstyles[a]	66.9*	20.4*	.18	.34	.34
Racial Mistrust					
Told child to keep distance from Whites	10.2*	2.5*	.29	.08	.74
Told child to distrust Whites	15.3*	1.9*	.26	.22	.72

[a] Items with loadings above .50 on more than one factor or below .50 on all factors were not included in any of the three racial socialization subscales used in the analyses.
*Proportion is significantly different from .50 at $p < .05$.

was derived from focus group interviews with an independent sample of African American adults (Hughes & Dumont, 1993). Item content also reflected conceptual distinctions between institutional and interpersonal dimensions of racial bias that have been suggested by previous writings (see Hughes & Dodge, in press, for a complete description of the conceptualization and factor structure of items). We asked respondents to rate on a 4-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 4 = *Strongly Agree*) 13 statements regarding the extent to which particular policies or modes of interpersonal interaction characterized their current workplaces. The Institutional Discrimination subscale assessed respondents' perceptions that systems-level transactions in their workplaces, such as the distribution of salaries, benefits, job assignments, and opportunities for promotion, were unfavorably biased against African American workers (5 items; e.g., At my job, Blacks tend to get the least desirable job assignments; $\alpha = .88$). The Interpersonal Prejudice subscale assessed respondents' perceptions of racial bias in daily interpersonal transactions at work. Items assessed issues such as overhearing racial jokes and slurs, assumptions of incompetence, and encounters with stereotypes and prejudice (8 items; e.g., At my job, people have stereotypes about Blacks that affect how they judge me; $\alpha = .91$). Institutional Discrimination and Interpersonal Prejudice were significantly correlated, but were retained in the analyses as

distinct subscales because of theoretical interest in their distinctive effects.

Results

Descriptive Results

Endorsement frequencies for individual racial socialization items are included in Table 1. The findings suggested two important themes. First, at least some race-related socialization took place among most families in the sample, but such behaviors did not take place frequently. The majority of parents reported engaging in 10 of the 16 racial socialization behaviors we assessed at some point in the past year. However, only a small minority of parents reported that they engaged in any particular behavior frequently (i.e., *Often* or *Very Often*). Important exceptions to this general pattern were related to a second important theme. Specifically, certain types of racial socialization behaviors were more common than others. Whereas the majority of parents reported engaging in each of the 5 Cultural Socialization behaviors at some point in the past year, very few parents reported ever engaging in behaviors that promoted racial mistrust. Paired sample *t* tests indicated that parents were significantly more likely to

report socialization regarding cultural history and heritage (Cultural Socialization) than they were to report socialization regarding racial bias (Preparation for Bias; $t(156) = -5.76$, $p < .001$). In turn, parents were more likely to report Preparation for Bias than they were to report socialization of racial mistrust (Promotion of Mistrust; $t(156) = 16.32$; $p < .001$).

Table 2 shows means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for dimensions of racial socialization and the child, parent, and job-related predictors. Not surprisingly, the three dimensions of racial socialization were highly correlated with one another. The correlation between Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust was larger than the correlation between either of these and Cultural Socialization. The bivariate relations between dimensions of racial socialization and child, parent, and job variables were also of interest. Preparation for Bias was significantly associated with the target child's age, parents' age, being an Upper Primary Worker, and more Received Bias Socialization. Similar to this, parents' reports of Cultural Socialization were associated with children's ages and with parents' ages. It was also associated with parent demographic variables including gender, higher educational attainment, being an Upper Primary Worker, and Received Cultural Socialization. Promotion of Mistrust was significantly associated with children's ages but

not parents' ages and with Received Bias Socialization. Moreover, in these bivariate analyses, perceived Institutional Discrimination was significantly and positively correlated with Promotion of Mistrust.

Tests of the Major Hypotheses

To examine the main effects of child characteristics, parent characteristics, and Race-Related Job Stressors on dimensions of racial socialization within a multivariate framework, ordinary least squares regression equations were estimated in which each dimension of racial socialization was regressed onto child characteristics, parent characteristics, and the set of Race-Related Job Stressors. In the equations, child characteristics (gender, age) were entered at Step 1, followed by parent characteristics (age, gender, educational attainment, labor market category, Received Bias Socialization, and Received Cultural Socialization) at Step 2, and the two Race-Related Job Stressors (Institutional Discrimination and Interpersonal Prejudice) at Step 3. To examine the hypothesis concerning moderated effects, we entered multiplicative interactions terms consisting of the contrast code comparing children aged 4 to 8 to children aged 9 to 14 multiplied by each of four predictor variables: (a) Received Bias Socialization, (b) Received

Table 2. *Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations for Major Study Variables*

Variables	M	SD	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13	V14
V1 Age	37.58	7.49	.09	.17*	-.17*	.08	-.02	.32*	-.01	-.03	-.09	-.02	.08	.27**	.24**
V2 Education	1.89	.69		.44**	-.09	-.13	.04	.01	.04	-.10	-.08	-.04	.03	.33**	.11
V3 Upper primary worker	.26	.44			-.38**	-.07	.13	.06	-.09	.02	-.06	-.05	.14	.24**	.21**
V4 Lower primary worker	.32	.47				-.35**	-.16*	-.13	.11	.05	.13	.05	-.04	.15	-.09
V5 Parent gender	1.50	.50					.16*	.01	-.09	.09	.04	.12	.01	-.29**	.10
V6 Child gender	1.50	.50						.02	-.09	.10	-.13	-.10	-.11	-.12	.03
V7 Child age	8.04	2.88							.16*	-.04	-.12	-.07	.27**	.16*	.54**
V8 Received cultural socialization	2.26	.95								.34**	.02	-.06	.12	.22**	.09
V9 Received bias socialization	2.47	.98									-.08	-.17*	.23**	.04	.19*
V10 Institutional discrimination	1.91	.87										.65**	.18*	.08	.02
V11 Interpersonal prejudice	2.16	.85											.06	.07	.06
V12 Promotion of mistrust	.45	.72												.33**	.59**
V13 Cultural socialization	2.38	1.29													.52**
V14 Preparation for bias	1.80	1.28													

Note. V1 = Age[a]; V2 = Education (1 = *Less than 8th grade*, 9 = *More than college*); V3 = Upper Primary Worker (0 = *No*, 1 = *Yes*); V4 = Lower Primary Worker (0 = *No*, 1 = *Yes*); V5 = Parents' Gender (1 = *Male*; 2 = *Female*); V6 = Target Child's Gender (1 = *Male*, 2 = *Female*); V7 = Child's Age[b]; V8 = Received Cultural Socialization (1 = *Low*; 4 = *High*); V9 = Received Bias Socialization (1 = *Low*; 4 = *High*); V10 = Institutional Discrimination (1 = *Low*; 4 = *High*); V11 = Interpersonal Prejudice (1 = *Low*; 4 = *High*); V12 = Promotion of Mistrust (0 = *Low*; 5 = *High*); V13 = Cultural Socialization (0 = *Low*; 5 = *High*); V14 = Preparation for Bias (0 = *Low*; 5 = *High*).
[a]Age is a continuous variable. [b]In these bivariate correlations, child's age is a continuous variable.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

Cultural Socialization, (c) Institutional Discrimination, and (d) Interpersonal Prejudice. All variables involved in the interaction terms were centered around the sample mean to reduce collinearity with main effects. Interaction terms were entered as a set at the final step of each equation. Results are presented in Table 3. The ΔR^2 for each set of variables represents the proportion of variance accounted for by the set at the step at which it was entered into the equation. Values for the unstandardized regression coefficients and their standard errors are shown for the final step and can be interpreted as relations to racial socialization when all other variables in the model are controlled.

Child's age group. Findings relevant to the first hypothesis, that parents' racial socialization practices would be significantly associated with children's ages, are shown in the top rows of Table 3 and depicted graphically in Figure 1.

In general, these findings indicate that parents of older children reported more frequent racial socialization than did parents of younger children. In the full equation for Preparation for Bias, all three coefficients representing children's age groups were statistically significant. Parents reporting on children ages 9 to 14 reported more Preparation for Bias than did parents reporting on children ages 4 to 8. Moreover, within these groups, parents of children ages 6 to 8 reported more Preparation for Bias than did parents of children ages 4 to 5, and parents of children ages 12 to 14 reported more Preparation for Bias than did parents of children ages 9 to 11. In the equation for Cultural Socialization, results show that only the coefficient comparing parents of children ages 12 to 14 to parents of children ages 9 to 11 was statistically significant, such that the former reported significantly more Cultural Socialization than did the latter. For Promotion of Mistrust, group differences were also significant. Here, parents reporting on children ages 9 to 14 reported significantly more Promotion of Mistrust than did those reporting on children ages 4 to 8, and parents reporting on 12- to 14-year-old children reported more Promotion of Mistrust than did those reporting on 9- to 11-year-old children. However, the coefficient comparing parents of 4- to 5-year-old children to parents of 6- to 8-year-old children was not significant. Both groups reported low Promotion of Mistrust.

Parent characteristics. Results relevant to the hypothesis that parents' socialization experiences in their families of origin would be significantly associated with their racial socialization practices with their own children are shown at Step 2 of each equation in Table 3. At this step, indicators of Received Socialization were entered into the regression equation alongside other parent demographics that may be associated both with Received Socialization and with current racial socialization practices. An examination of findings across the three equations indicates that the full set of parent characteristics was significantly associated with all three dimensions of racial socialization, although it explained more variance in Cultural Socialization than in Preparation for Bias or Promotion of Mistrust. However, before describing findings relevant to Received Socialization, we discuss results for the demographic variables.

For Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust, parents' occupation was the only significant predictor within the set of demographic variables. Specifically, only the coefficient for the dummy variable representing Upper Primary Workers was statistically significant when all other variables were controlled, indicating that Upper Primary workers reported more frequent Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust than did the reference group of Secondary Workers. In contrast, a range of demographic variables was significant in predicting Cultural Socialization. In the final equation, parents' age, education, and occupational category were each associated with Cultural Socialization. Older parents reported more Cultural Socialization than did younger parents; those with higher educational attainment reported more Cultural Socialization than did other parents; and Upper Primary Workers and Lower Primary Workers each reported more Cultural Socialization than did the reference group of Secondary Workers.

Turning next to results for Received Socialization, findings supported the hypothesis that these indicators would predict parents' current racial socialization behaviors with their children. Both Received Cultural Socialization and Received Bias Socialization were significantly and positively associated with Preparation for Bias. However, Received Cultural Socialization was significantly associated with parents' own Cultural Socialization practices, whereas Received Bias Socialization was not. In contrast, Received Bias Socialization was significantly associated with parents' Promotion of Mistrust, whereas Received Cultural Socialization was not.

Race-related job stressors. The next hypothesis examined was that exposure to Race-Related Job Stressors in the workplace would be significantly associated with parents' racial socialization practices, such that parents who perceived more racial discrimination and prejudice would report more frequent racial socialization, especially in terms of Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust. The ΔR^2 at Step 3 of each equation shows that in equations estimated for Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust, there were moderate but significant increments in explained variance upon entry of the set of Race-Related Job Stressors. However, these Race-Related Job Stressors were not significantly associated with Cultural Socialization.

Examination of the coefficients for Institutional Discrimination and Interpersonal Prejudice indicates that

Table 3. *Regression of Racial Socialization Indicators on Child Variables, Parent Variables, and Race-Related Job Stressors*

	Final Equation Statistics											
	Preparation for Bias				Cultural Socialization				Promotion of Mistrust			
Variables	ΔR^2	b	se_h	β	ΔR^2	b	se_b	β	ΔR^2	b	se_h	β
Step 1: Child variables	.29**				.06**				.10**			
Age 4–8 vs. 9–14 [a]		.58	.09	.45**		.09	.09	.07		.22	.05	.31**
Age 4–5 vs. 6–8		.47	.11	.29**		.17	.11	.11		.08	.07	.09
Age 9–11 vs. 12–14		.51	.14	.26**		.53	.14	.27**		.20	.09	.18**
Gender (1 = M; 2 = F)		.08	.18	.03		−.21	.18	−.08		−.14	.11	−.10
Step 2: Parent variables	.14**				.33**				.13**			
Age		.01	.01	.04		.03	.01	.19**		−.01	.01	
Gender (1 = M; 2 = F)		−.24	.19	−.09		−.34	.19	−.13		.07	.11	.05
Education		.00	.06	.01		.19	.06	.24**		−.04	.04	−.10
Upper primary worker		.50	.24	.17**		.60	.24	.21**		.27	.14	.17*
Lower primary worker		.07	.22	.02		.68	.22	.26**		.03	.13	.02
Received cultural		.21	.10	.15**		.40	.10	.30**		.09	.06	.12
Received bias		.29	.10	.15**		.05	.10	.04		.14	.06	.20*
Step 3: Racial job stress	.03**				.01				.04*			
Interpersonal prejudice		.23	.13	.14*		.02	.13	.01		.01	.08	.01
Institutional discrimination		.05	.13	.03		.05	.10	.04		.16	.08	.18*
Step 4: Interactions	.02				.03*				.09*			
Age by received cultural		.04	.10	.03		−.06	.09	−.04		.07	.06	.10
Age by received bias		.06	.09	.05		.26	.10	.20*		.09	.06	.12
Age by prejudice		.25	.12	.18**		−.02	.13	−.01		.07	.08	.09
Age by discrimination		−.14	.14	−.09		−.06	.14	−.04		.18	.08	.20*

[a] For each age group, the older group received the value 1, the younger group received the value −1.
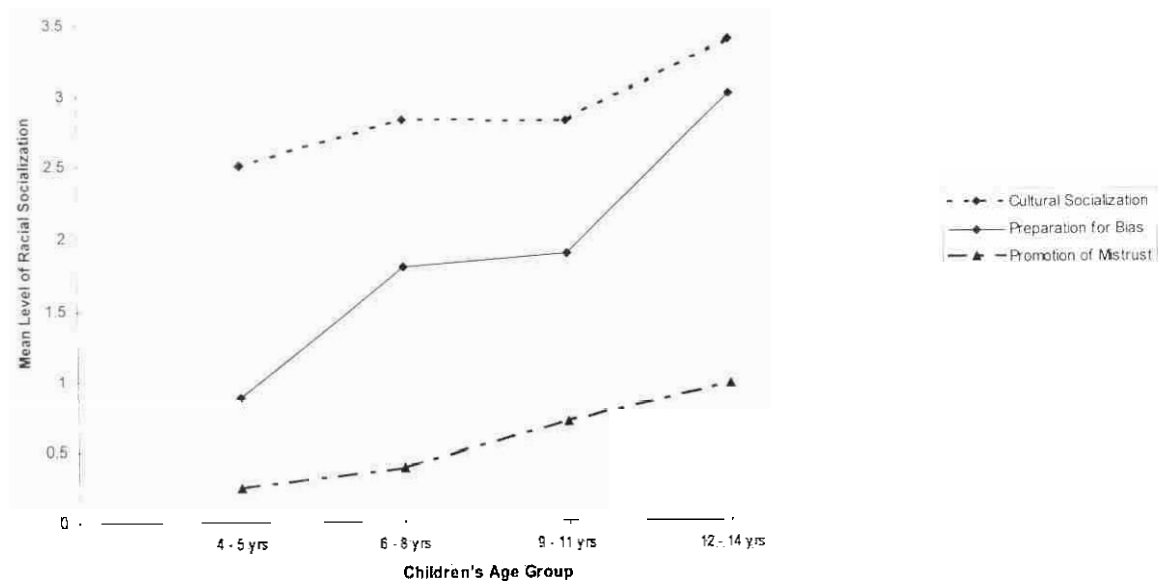
* $p < .10$. * $p < .05$.

Figure 1. **Mean levels of the three dimensions of racial socialization as a function of children's age groups.**

in the equation for Preparation for Bias the coefficient for Interpersonal Prejudice approached significance, whereas the coefficient for Institutional Discrimination was nonsignificant. In contrast, in the equation for Promotion of Mistrust, the coefficient for Institutional Discrimination was significant, whereas the coefficient for Interpersonal Prejudice was not. The moderate size of these relations is due, in part, to the differential relations between Race-Related Job Stressors and racial socialization among parents of

children ages 4 to 8 as compared to parents of children ages 9 to 14.

Moderated effects. The final hypothesis examined in this study was that relations of parents' Received Socialization and current workplace experiences to their current racial socialization practices would be moderated by children's ages. Findings relevant to this hypothesis are presented at the final step of Table 3. Results supported the hypothesis in terms of current workplace experiences, but findings relevant to Received Socialization were relatively weak. We begin with a presentation of the latter findings.

Findings provided only limited support for the hypothesis that relations between parents' prior racial socialization experiences and their current racial socialization practices would be conditioned by children's age group. Neither of the interaction terms involving Received Socialization and children's age group were significant in predicting Preparation for Bias or Promotion of Mistrust. However, the interaction term representing conditional relations between Received Bias Socialization and children's ages was significant in predicting Cultural Socialization. The slope for the relation between Cultural Socialization and Received Bias Socialization was positive among parents reporting on children ages 9 to 14, but negative among parents reporting on children ages 4 to 8. In separate equations, Preparation for Bias was significantly associated with Cultural Socialization among parents of children 9 to 14, $b = .30$, $se_b = .15$, $t(1, 50) = 2.09$, $p < .05$, but was nonsignificant among parents of younger children, $b = -.18$, $se_b = .14$, $t(1, 50) = -1.31$, $p < .05$.

In contrast to findings regarding Received Socialization, findings supported the hypothesis that Race-Related Job Stressors would be more highly associated with racial socialization practices among parents reporting on children ages 9 to 14 as compared to those reporting on children ages 4 to 8. The slope for the relation between Interpersonal Prejudice and Preparation for Bias was virtually flat among parents of children ages 4 to 8, but positive among parents of children ages 9 to 14. In separate equations, the coefficient representing this relation was significant among parents of 9- to 14-year-old children, $b = .48$, $se_b = .20$, $t(1, 50) = 2.44$, $p < .05$, but nonsignificant among parents of children 4 to 8, $b = .24$, $se_b = .18$, $t(1, 50) = 1.05$, ns. Similarly, in the equation for Promotion of Mistrust, the interaction term indicated that there was a positive relation among Institutional Discrimination and Promotion of Mistrust among parents of 9- to 14-year-old children, but no such relation among parents of 4- to 8-year-old children. Again, in separate equations, the coefficient for Institutional Discrimination was significant among parents of 9- to 14-year-old children only, $b = .30$, $se_b = .14$, $t(1, 50) = 2.16$, $p < .05$.

Discussion

This study examined child, parent, and job-related predictors of African American parents' racial socialization practices, with a particular focus on understanding the extent to which age-related phenomenon and parents' own experiences, both in their families of origin and in their workplaces, shaped these practices. Our purpose was to test specific theoretical propositions regarding contextual influences on racial socialization, although the data did not permit us to explore causal processes. We began by exploring the frequency and content of parents' racial socialization practices. Three underlying dimensions of racial socialization were identified including: (a) teaching children cultural history and heritage (Cultural Socialization), (b) teaching children about racial bias and discrimination (Preparation for Bias), and (c) encouraging social distance from and wariness of the dominant Anglo culture (Promotion of Mistrust). Findings indicated that messages about cultural history and heritage were more common than were communications about racial bias and discrimination or messages that might promote intergroup mistrust. Notably, although the majority of parents reported that they engaged in discussions with their children about racial bias or discrimination, these sorts of discussions did not occur very frequently. Moreover, socialization of racial mistrust was quite rare, with only one third of parents indicating they had ever conveyed messages of this type.

The relative infrequency of racial socialization evidenced in this study is most likely a function of our specific conceptualization, which was limited to parent–child communications with explicit race-related content. It is likely that African American parents emphasize mainstream socialization goals with their children, such as academic achievement and moral virtues, more so than they emphasize race-related socialization. Thus, the low level of race-related socialization, per se, evidenced in this study needs to be interpreted within the context of the multitude of socialization goals that African American parents must negotiate. Indeed, in the Marshall (1995) study described earlier, only a few parents spontaneously mentioned race-related socialization when asked about important childrearing goals, but the majority of them indicated that such socialization took place when asked explicitly. Moreover, within African American families, even mainstream socialization messages may be embedded in parents' recognition that being African American may pose challenges to their children's success and optimal development. When interviewers from the National Survey of Black Americans asked respondents to describe the sorts of things they did to help children learn "what it means to be Black," over 22% of them described mainstream socialization activities such as emphasizing academic achievement and hard work (Thornton et al., 1990).

Researchers do not yet know, however, how different dosages of racial socialization influence children, due to the paucity of empirical studies linking parents' reports of racial socialization to outcomes among children. It may be that even infrequent communications about race, such as those evidenced in this study, serve the sorts of protective functions that scholars such as Spencer (1983) and Barnes (1980) have proposed.

The findings of this study also suggest that it may be especially important for future studies to distinguish parental behaviors that alert children to the existence of racial bias, and prepare them to recognize and cope with it, from behaviors that promote intergroup mistrust. Although most of the parents in this sample reported behaviors related to Preparation for Bias, very few of them reported behaviors related to Promotion of Mistrust. Although this finding may be a function of distinctive characteristics of this sample (e.g., relatively well-educated, middle-income, dual-earner families), it is consistent with those from other studies utilizing socioeconomically diverse samples. Thornton et al. (1990) reported that less than 3% of participants in the National Survey of Black Americans, a nationally representative sample of Blacks, instructed their children to maintain their social distance from Whites. In a study of racial socialization among urban lower income African American and Latino families, a similarly small proportion of respondents reported behaviors that may promote racial mistrust (Hughes, 1997). Nevertheless, it will be important to determine the extent to which families in other circumstances consistently report low Promotion of Mistrust in subsequent studies.

In addition to describing dimensions of racial socialization, this study aimed to examine factors that might account for differences in parents' race-related messages to their children. First, we suggested that there may be important variations in parents' race-related socialization as a function of children's age, due to developmental differences in children's understanding about race. Findings were consistent with this proposition. Parents were significantly less likely to socialize younger children regarding racial discrimination, prejudice, or out-group mistrust than they were to socialize older children in this regard. Relations between children's ages and Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust were fairly linear, with parents in each age group reporting more frequent messages of this type than did parents of children in the next youngest age group. However, there was not a consistent age-related trend in parents' Cultural Socialization practices. We interpreted age-related shifts in Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust as evidence that parents are sensitive to developmental shifts in children's racial knowledge. That is, as children's increased understanding of race becomes evident to parents, parents may be more likely to proactively discuss racial issues with them. An alternative explanation, however, is that African American children are

more likely to have first-hand experiences with racial bias as they get older, such that parents' behaviors are a reaction to children's experiences rather than a function of their sensitivity to children's racial understandings. These alternative explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, should be pursued in future studies.

Findings were also consistent with a second hypothesis, which was that parents' racial socialization practices with their children are shaped, in part, by their racial socialization experiences in their own families of origin. Received Cultural Socialization and Received Bias Socialization were each associated with Preparation for Bias. In general, however, only Received Cultural Socialization was associated with parents' current Cultural Socialization practices. In addition, only Received Bias Socialization was associated with parents' Promotion of Mistrust. As suggested earlier, the similarity between parents' recollections of their own experiences and their reports about their practices with their children may result from several processes. One possibility, especially pertinent to discussions of racial bias and out-group mistrust, is that parents are most comfortable engaging in discussions about racial issues with children if they have a working model provided by their own parents. In that conversations about racial bias may be sensitive or painful, parents may need such a working model to guide them. It is also possible that parents internalize their own parents' attitudes based on socialization they received, and that these attitudes, in turn, are manifested in similar socialization behaviors. For example, parents who recall being exposed to different aspects of their culture and heritage may simply replicate this behavior with their own children, either because their prior exposure promoted a stronger ethnic identity or because they replicate with their children activities they engaged in during their own childhood. Although we cannot rule out alternative explanations, that is, that parents' current practices shape their recollections of their prior experiences, or that a third variable such as contextual stability across generations accounts for the findings, this study suggests potentially fruitful directions for future research. An exploration of processes underlying similarity in racial socialization behaviors across generations would provide important information on the origins of particular components of parenting in ethnic minority families.

The final hypothesis examined in this study was that parents' racial socialization practices are partially organized according to their race-related experiences in other settings, particularly the workplace. As we had anticipated, relations between dimensions of parents' perceived racial bias at work and their racial socialization practices were stronger among parents reporting on children 9 to 14 years old than among parents reporting on children 4 to 8 years old. That is, although there were no differences in reported Race-Related Job Stressor among these two groups, parents of children ages 9 to

14 were much more likely to transform experiences of racial bias into messages to children. However, even among parents reporting on older children, relations between Race-Related Job Stressors and racial socialization were modest, albeit significant, relative to other predictors we examined. Spencer (1990) emphasized the difficulty parents may have in sharing information about discrimination and prejudice with children. Although they may believe it is important, they may also be reluctant to bring to children's attention situations in which they themselves may have felt dehumanized or powerless. The modest size of the relation between Race-Related Job Stressors and racial socialization may be a function of these sorts of concerns. It is also possible, however, that parents are only minimally influenced by race-related stressors they experience in the workplace and view them as a routine part of African Americans' daily experiences.

The differential relations between dimensions of Race-Related Job Stressors and different types of racial socialization, at least among parents of older children, may merit further attention. For instance, it may reflect different underlying processes linking external experiences to child rearing practices. Perhaps Promotion of Mistrust is a reactive strategy that originates in parents' enmity toward institutional sources of discrimination (e.g., racial inequities in wages, benefits, job assignments, and opportunities for promotion), which reside in covert policies and practices that they feel powerless to change. As such, it may engender alienation from the dominant culture which, in turn, is transmitted to children. In contrast to institutional discrimination, interpersonal prejudice is inherently based on tangible social interactions with individuals. Therefore, parents may feel more efficacious in responding to it. Thus, in contrast to Promotion of Mistrust, Preparation for Bias may reflect the translation of social experiences into proactive child socialization goals, a process that would include anticipating their own children's exposure to similar social interactions and explicating strategies to enhance children's capacity to interpret and cope with them.

Notably, in contrast to Preparation for Bias and Promotion of Mistrust, Cultural Socialization was unrelated to parents' experiences of race-related stress in the workplace. Rather, it was largely a function of their own racial socialization experiences, as discussed previously, and of their SES. The absence of a relation between Cultural Socialization and Race-Related Job Stressors is consistent with a proactive formulation of racial socialization that other scholars have proposed. For example, Stevenson (1995) suggested that racial socialization emerges primarily from an inherent appreciation of African American culture, rather than from experiences with bias and discrimination. The socioeconomic differential in Cultural Socialization may reflect higher SES parents' greater availability for com-

munication with children and engagement in activities more generally. The behaviors assessed in the measure of Cultural Socialization (e.g., reading books to children, taking children places) may be more common among high SES parents of any race and may reflect more affluent parents' greater tendency to expose children to a broad range of cultural events. It is also possible that we did not assess adequately those cultural socialization behaviors that are more common among lower SES respondents.

It is important to interpret the findings of this study in the context of its methodological limitations. First, similar to other existing studies of parents' racial socialization practices, this study was based on a non-representative, purposively selected sample of African American families living in Chicago, limiting the ability to generalize findings beyond this study. In addition, we focused on a small segment of the Black population—dual-earner African American families with school-age children. Although this focus enabled us to test theoretically important hypotheses, we cannot assume that processes governing interrelations will be similar in other groups. Future studies need to determine the extent to which processes suggested here are generalizable to African American parents in other circumstances. For instance, stressors such as poverty, single parenthood, and homelessness may preclude certain types of racial socialization, regardless of parents' exposure to racial bias, because they leave parents with little time or energy for socialization in general. In addition, race-related socialization practices among African Americans living in predominantly White communities or rural areas may be quite distinct from those observed among this urban sample of African Americans from predominantly Black communities. For example, race may be more (or less) salient among African American parents living in racially homogenous communities. On the one hand, racial heterogeneity may increase the likelihood that African American parents will anticipate their children's exposure to racial bias, thereby increasing the frequency of racial socialization. On the other hand, African American parents living in such communities may downplay race to facilitate their children's integration into community settings. We are currently pursuing an understanding of these additional factors in several ongoing studies.

The findings of this study also need to be interpreted within the context of limitations inherent in the utilization of self-report measures of parenting. Such measures assume that parents are aware of their behaviors with their children and are willing to report them accurately. Thus, self-report measures of racial socialization cannot fully capture the extent or complexity of race-related information that parents transmit to children, especially those that occur by way of are unintended and nonverbal behaviors. For example, Boykin

and Toms (1985) suggested that the intergenerational transmission of racial knowledge occurs through "Black cultural motifs" that are unarticulated but are available to children in the form of "modes, sequences, and styles of behavior" in children's environments. In this regard, we view this study as an initial step in elucidating the construct of racial socialization, but much more work in this area is needed—particularly work using observational or other descriptive methods to provide both depth and texture to researchers' current understandings.

Our reliance on self-report measures of workplace racial bias poses similar issues of interpretation. Although aggregate census data and unobtrusive studies in experimental psychology (e.g., Crosby, Bromely, & Saxe, 1980; Pettigrew & Martin, 1987) document the existence of racial bias in the workplace, very little information is available on the extent to which perceived bias corresponds to objective indicators of such bias. Thus, it is possible that the self-report measures of workplace racial bias reflect the salience of race to parents as much as they reflect the actual work conditions they face. It may simply be that parents who are more conscious of racial bias both perceive it more readily and communicate its existence to their children. Although our examination of multiple dimensions of racial bias at work reduces the likelihood of this explanation to some extent, it does not eliminate it.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study suggested several directions for future research on racial socialization practices among ethnic minority families. For one, the possibility that parents' racial socialization practices are sensitive to age-related shifts in children's racial knowledge is important to explore further, using larger, more representative samples; measures of children's racial knowledge; and longitudinal designs that can capture age-related shifts. This possibility has implications for identifying multidirectional linkages between parenting behavior and children's development and may help explain inconsistencies in findings across studies in the extent of racial socialization parents report. Second, as an extension of the current literature, it will be important for future studies to examine which domains of development are affected by different aspects of racial socialization, under what conditions, and whether effects are positive or negative. It is quite likely that when parents attempt to facilitate cultural pride and to promote an awareness of their history and heritage in children, their children are less vulnerable to external threats to self-esteem and ethnic identity, as other scholars have suggested (Barnes, 1980; Spencer, 1983). Other aspects of racial socialization, such as practices that promote racial mistrust, have received virtually no empirical attention in terms of their consequences for children. It will be especially important in future research for scholars to pursue these sorts of issues.

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