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Gendered Racial Socialization in Black Families:
Mothers' Beliefs, Approaches, and Advocacy

By

Alea Rhys Holman

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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Committee in charge:
Professor Na'ilah Suad Nasir, Chair
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Abstract

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Professor Na'ilah Suad Nasir, Chair

The purpose of this study was to explore Black mothers' beliefs about socializing their children to negotiate gendered and racial contexts. Sixteen Black mothers were individually interviewed about their gendered racial socialization beliefs and experiences. The process of gendered racial socialization is defined as the ways by which parents socialize their sons and daughters to issues of race. To understand how and why mothers socialize their adolescents to racial issues, the research questions of interest were: (1) What are similarities and differences among mothers' beliefs regarding socializing their sons and daughters to issues of race? (2a) What informs mothers' decisions to prepare children for bias or not? (2b) Do mothers consider preparation for bias messages to be beneficial or harmful to children's well being? (3a) What types of racialized experiences do children encounter that prompt mothers' racial socialization efforts? and (3b) In what ways do mothers respond to these incidents?

Guided by grounded theory, the findings indicate that mothers had some gender-neutral concerns, yet they also had distinct concerns for their sons and daughters. Specific concerns for sons included physical safety and fair treatment, and concerns for daughters included acceptance of their physical beauty. Mothers' gender-neutral concerns included sons' and daughters' sense of self-worth and racial pride. The findings also suggest two primary approaches to discussions of racial bias with children: proactive and moderate. Whereas mothers with a proactive approach prepared children for bias because they believed that awareness of discrimination was beneficial to children's well being, mothers with a reactive approach chose not to give preparatory messages in order to avoid the psychological consequences of children knowing that they are in a stigmatized group. Additionally, results show that mothers' racial socialization messages were prompted by children's encounters with peer-related, teacher-related, and police-related racialized experiences. Furthermore, mothers' responses to these incidents took the form of direct communication with children and advocacy on children's behalf.

As most of the research on racial socialization examines the frequency of messages and practices, the current study extends the literature by gathering more contextual and process-oriented data to help explain how and why mothers discuss race with their sons and daughters. This work is important because it sheds light on the factors contributing to mothers' racial socialization decisions. Complementing research that examines what parents do, the present study analyzes why parents make particular parenting choices. Instead of viewing racial socialization as static and unidirectional, the methodological and analytical approaches used in this study reposition the processes of racial socialization as dynamic and interdependent. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Black parenting, family processes, and adolescent development.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Carmen Holman and John Holman.
The dedication, love, and compassion you give to Jonathan and me are why I study parenting.
I could not have accomplished this without you. Thank you for always supporting me.

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Introduction

Learning and development occur through socialization. As a result of socialization processes, people are "taught the skills, behavior patterns, values, and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up" (Maccoby, 2007). Learning what it means to be Black in a society that negatively stereotypes Blackness is a developmental task that draws upon individuals' capacities to adapt to challenging circumstances with resilience and strength. To be resilient is to be "able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions" (McKean, 2005). There are many pathways through which Black youth develop the psychological resources that help them manage difficult life circumstances. A major pathway, perhaps the most influential, is the role of parents in Black children's self-development (Peters, 2002). Researchers argue that Black parents, as compared to parents who have experienced different social histories, not only have to negotiate their children's development of strong self-identities, but they must do so in a society where being Black is often stigmatized and devalued (Peters, 1985).

Racial socialization is the term used to describe what parents tell their children about race and how they convey these messages (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006). The study of racial socialization examines personal factors that influence how and what parents communicate to their children about race, and how parents' racial socialization beliefs and practices impact children's identities and behaviors (Hughes et al., 2006). Racial socialization is a means by which Black parents equip their children with psychological resources that support a strong self-identity and protective coping skills (Hughes et al., 2006). Thus far, research on racial socialization primarily examines the types of messages parents give and how these messages correlate with child outcomes. Though there have been variations of survey items used to assess parental racial socialization from adolescents' and parents' perspectives, syntheses of the literature (Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006) have identified five prominent types of messages from parents to children about race: (1) knowledge about Black culture that children should take pride in, (2) the importance of treating everyone fairly, (3) preparation for bias, such as the reality of negative stereotypes and unfair treatment, (4) wariness of other racial groups, and (5) promotion of self-development and personal achievement.

Most Black parents engage in racial socialization, and the degree to which they endorse certain messages depends on parents' experiences of discrimination as well as their attitudes about being Black (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Studies show that parents with higher socioeconomic status and more years of education are more likely to give messages about racial discrimination and Black culture (Hughes et al., 2006). The content of parents' messages also varies as a function of the child's age and gender, with older children and boys receiving more messages about racial bias than younger children and girls (Hughes et al., 2008; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Research shows that girls receive more messages about racial pride than boys (Bowman & Howard, 1985). However, girls and boys are equally likely to get messages about self-pride (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Racial socialization messages are also associated with the quality of parent-child relationships (McHale et al., 2006; Smalls, 2009).

The predominant research methods used to study racial socialization can explain how strongly parents endorse particular messages about race to their children and how messages correlate with child and parent variables. However, these methods cannot capture why and how parents make racial socialization decisions. There is little written about how the contexts children encounter prompt parents' messages (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Other gaps in the literature are insights into why parents decide to make their children aware of bias in particular ways, as well as how parents' advocacy efforts on children's behalf constitute racial socialization experiences. Additionally, although gender differences are found regarding parent's messages to boys and girls, scholars have only speculated as to why girls and boys would be receiving different

messages (Hill & Zimmerman, 1995; Staples & Johnson, 1993).

The present study fills these gaps in the literature by asking mothers about their perceptions of what girls and boys need to know about being Black. Insight into mothers' experiences and socialization decisions help shed light on the differential provision of messages based on gender. This study also examines racial socialization processes that have received little attention in the literature, including parents' decision-making about preparing children for bias, their responses to children's out-of-home experiences, and their advocacy for children's fair treatment. These are aspects of racial socialization processes that require more investigation.

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine Black mothers' reasoning about their racial socialization efforts. Qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, allow for an understanding of what prompts racial socialization messages from mother to child. For example, the present study examines the roles of mothers' concerns and aspirations for their children in shaping their approaches to racial socialization. This study extends theories of racial socialization by documenting the ways racial socialization functions as an interdependent, developmental, and contextual process (Hughes & Johnson, 2001), not simply a transmission of messages from parent to child. This study also builds upon the literature on the gender differences in racial socialization (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thomas & Speight, 1999; McHale et al., 2006) by examining the reasons why mothers consciously impart similar or different messages to their sons and daughters.

Although this study focuses on mothers, of course it is important to acknowledge the distinct role that fathers serve as socializing agents. The present study is limited to mothers because research has shown that girls and boys perceive that their maternal caregivers provide higher levels of racial socialization than their male caregivers (Brown, Linver, & Evans, 2010; McHale et al., 2006). Whereas mothers and fathers in individual families vary in their childrearing efforts, mothers generally spend more time with their children and do most of the caregiving (Fagot, Rodgers, & Leinbach, 2000). The sample was further narrowed to mothers of adolescents because research shows that adolescence is a period during which young people have an increased capacity to understand racial issues (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). Additionally, studies found that parents of older children are more likely to discuss discrimination and intergroup relations with their children than are parents of younger children (Hughes et al., 2008); and older adolescents perceive more discriminatory incidents than younger adolescents (Fisher et al., 2000; Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008). To be clear, the term "children" is used throughout the dissertation to refer to mothers' sons and daughters, regardless of age. Furthermore, the sample was limited to Black mothers who identified as middle-income. This is a relatively understudied population in the Black family literature (Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Lareau, 2002), and parents' with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to report racial socialization practices than parents with lower incomes and less education (Hughes et al., 2006).

Though the scope of this study is limited to the perspectives of Black mothers with mid-range incomes, racial socialization has been studied among Black mothers and fathers with varying income levels. Therefore, Chapter 1 is a review of the literature that examines the roles of maternal and paternal racial socialization, and the socialization differences between families at different income levels. The literature review begins by describing the evidence of how children initially develop conceptions of race and racial bias. This section includes research that explores children's experiences of and reactions to being discriminated against. Next, the processes and contributing factors associated with racial identity development will be detailed. Following an examination of individual child factors related to racial understanding, the literature review more closely explores socialization processes within Black families, emphasizing research on racial and gender socialization in Black families. Finally, the review includes evidence of how different socialization messages relate to young people's psychological, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

Chapter 2 explains the methods used to locate the sample and collect and analyze data, as well as the limitations to the present study. Presented in Chapter 3, the first analytical chapter describes mothers' perceptions of how boys and girls require different messages due to the distinct challenges they face in society. This chapter also examines the gender-neutral racial socialization goals mothers strive for, including children's self and racial pride. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of mothers' beliefs about whether to prepare their children for bias by discussing the pervasiveness of racism. Whereas most mothers endorse a proactive approach to discussing racism with their children, a few mothers reported that they consciously refrain from telling their children that they will be targets of discrimination. Mothers' differential practices and decision-making processes are explicated.

In Chapter 5, specific racial socialization moments are analyzed to determine the processes by which maternal racial socialization commonly develops. This chapter examines circumstances that catalyze mothers' racial socialization efforts, such as peer rejection and teacher conflict, and the ways mothers responded directly to children and as advocates in the racially salient contexts. Also included are mothers' impressions of what they learned through these experiences and reflections on how they may have responded differently. Chapter 6 details the theoretical and practical contributions of the present study, concluding with future directions for research.

Chapter I
Review of the Literature
Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on racial socialization in Black families. The first section examines research on how children come to understand racial differences. Children's experiences of discrimination and racial identity development are explored. Next is a review of Black family processes, including gender role socialization. Then, attention is given to the ways boys and girls are differentially exposed to and impacted by parents' racial socialization messages. By analyzing the findings and methodological approaches within the racial socialization literature, this review sets the stage for the significance of the present study.

Part I: Learning Race

Children's developing conceptions of race and racial bias. Humans have a natural capacity to categorize. Categorization allows for cognitive efficiency in learning and making inferences. Children and adults use categorical labels to make inferences about a person based on his or her phenotypic categories (Hirschfeld, 2008). Developmentally, race is one of the earliest emerging social categories. The burgeoning field of neuroscience has shown that a person's race, gender, and age can be identified in milliseconds (Fiske, 2010). In a glance, the brain activates stereotypes, prejudices, and impulses. (Fiske, 2010). "Neuroscience has discovered racial prejudice rooted in brain areas that emerged early in primate evolution and that still govern our instincts today" (Marsh, Mendoza-Denton, & Smith, 2010, p. 4). Given the brain's reliance on categories for knowledge, young children are predisposed to grouping and relying on stereotypical interpretations of individual differences (Hirschfeld, 2008). When it comes to racial categories, children are never colorblind—they recognize race as a fixed, biological construct (Hirschfeld, 2008). Children notice racial differences and try to make sense of them (Fiske, 2010).

Children naturally develop stereotypic knowledge because they are curious about the social world and the cognitive structures of the brain prime them for categorizing social groups (Hirschfeld, 2008). Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) spent nearly a year in a racially and ethnically diverse day care center to examine how preschool children use racial-ethnic awareness and knowledge in their social relationships. By observing 58 preschool-age children in an urban setting, the researchers sought to understand how children learn norms and make meaning through their experiences of interacting with adults and peers. They found that children as young as three years old "often hold a solid and applied understanding of the dynamics of race" (p. 2). Yet, parents and caregivers, particularly White adults, often dismissed children's use of racial or ethnic terminology and denied that enactments of race and racism could exist among young children. Moreover, parents and caregivers in this study almost always insisted that the children did not learn racist talk and behavior from them.

> People usually resist the notion that they might be perpetrators of prejudice. Their resistance often rests on the fundamental assumption that prejudice and racism are all-or-none qualities, where one is either racist or not. Yet this assumption leaves no room for the possibility that one might sincerely hold egalitarian goals and simultaneously be at risk for perpetrating racism. (Marsh et al., 2010, p. 5)

Van Ausdale and Feagin (2010) asserted, "When adults indulge in such denial, they neglect children's present, active reality and fail to understand how children's actions also create and re-create society" (p. 3).

Complementing social neuroscience research about how unconsciously prejudice operates, research has also revealed how more recently evolved brain areas regulate our automatic impulses (Marsh et al., 2010).

Recent research shows that our prejudices are not inevitable; they are actually quite

malleable, shaped by an ever-changing mix of cultural beliefs and social circumstances. While we may be hardwired to harbor prejudices against those who seem different or unfamiliar to us, it's possible to override our worst impulses and reduce these prejudices. Doing so requires more than just individual good intentions; it requires broad social efforts to challenge stereotypes and get people to work together across group lines. (Fiske, 2010, p. 7)

One theoretical assertion regarding how to challenge stereotypes and encourage intergroup relationships is the contact hypothesis, which states that contact between members of different racial groups can reduce prejudices (Amir, 1969). However, Pettigrew and Tropp's (2000) research on school integration evidenced that simply placing students together is insufficient (Fiske, 2010). To reduce prejudice beliefs among children, authority figures must support cross-group relationships. Such adult support includes actively helping children share common goals on which they must cooperate to succeed, and ensuring that all children are treated as equals and have positive interactions with one another. "Social relationships with people from many types of groups reduce prejudice, decrease social anxiety, and help generate positive experiences between groups. As such, these relationships are a key factor in shaping our prejudices, our reactions to stigma, and our academic achievement" (Mendoza-Denton, 2010, p. 30). Therefore, ethical and antiracist social engineering can and should be employed to disrupt our natural tendency toward bias and stereotypes.

Given the hierarchy of America's racially stratified society, the consequences of stereotypic knowledge on White children's sense of self is fundamentally different than its consequences on Black children's sense of self. White children naturally learn that they belong to the race that has more power, wealth, and control in society, which provides a sense of security (Bronson & Merryman, 2009). In contrast, Black children learn that they belong to the race with less status, power, and wealth. The consequences of belonging to a negatively stereotyped group include vulnerability to low teacher expectations and stereotype threat (McKown & Weinstein, 2003).

Unreflective acceptance and internalization of negative racial stereotypes can be detrimental to a child's sense of self and achievement (McAdoo, 2002). The impact of stereotypes on performance has been repeatedly evidenced in studies on stereotype threat (Steele, 1997; 2010). Stereotype threat theory posits that perceptions of low expectations may hinder individual performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). For example, several studies conducted by Steele and Aronson indicate that Black students underachieve relative to their actual intellectual ability in situations where Black students perceive intellectual ability as a salient factor. Stereotype threat theory suggests that when Black students are told they will be taking a test of intellectual ability, the stereotype of African Americans as unintelligent is activated in their minds, and consequently, students perform below their actual ability.

Parents have a major role in shaping children's attitudes about race and racial stereotypes. "Instead of trying to ignore race, research suggests that parents should be more proactive. They can tell their kids it's okay to recognize and talk about racial differences while still communicating that it's wrong to hold racial prejudices" (Briscoe-Smith, 2010, p. 61). Parents' active engagement of their children in conversations and activities regarding racial knowledge can greatly impact their children's sense of self, interaction with others, and subsequent achievement outcomes. Bowman and Howard (1985) found that "when African American parents did not teach their children anything about race, those kids felt less prepared to handle racial discrimination, and in general they felt like they had less control over their lives or environments" (p. 60). On the other hand, Briscoe-Smith's research with 67 racially and ethnically diverse families with children under age 7 found that parents (White and non-White) who talked about race had children who were better able to identify racism when they saw it and were also more likely to have positive views about ethnic minorities. Having an awareness of discrimination and bias can help children appreciate the group nature of racial prejudice and

avoid acceptance of stereotypes as truth. The present study contributes to an understanding of why mothers choose to prepare their children for bias, as well as reasons why some mothers avoid talking to their children about discrimination.

Children's experiences of racial discrimination. The above-mentioned neuroscience and psychological research provides evidence that children indeed recognize racial differences and act based on their understandings of what those racial differences mean. Developmental and social psychologist Christia Spears Brown (2008) investigated how children develop their awareness of discrimination and which factors lead to an attribution of discrimination. She asserted that when a child encounters a negative outcome or negative treatment, there are three major ways in which the child will likely interpret the experience: (1) an instance of nondiscrimination that is accurately interpreted as nondiscrimination, (2) an instance of discrimination that goes undetected, or (3) an instance of discrimination that is detected. Several factors influence whether a child interprets a situation as discriminatory. Situational factors (i.e., ambiguous vs. unambiguous discrimination), individual characteristics (i.e., the child's ability to use social comparisons, moral reasoning, the understanding of multiple and hierarchical classification, and the understanding of others' cognitions), and certain socializing factors (such as parents' discussions of race) might affect children's and adolescents' perceptions of discrimination (Brown, 2008).

Children's perceptions of discrimination have been associated with positive and negative outcomes (Brown, 2008). Whereas some research found that attributing negative feedback to discrimination instead of personal inferiority increases resilience and motivation (Steele, 1997), other studies concluded that perceiving discrimination is related to increased anger and depressive symptoms among children (Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). The evidence that both positive and negative outcomes can result from perceiving discrimination exemplifies the delicate negotiation required by people who are commonly discriminated against. If one has an unjust experience based on race, that person may have angry or depressive feelings in response. However, attributing those feelings to an unjust and biased system and/or individual, and not a reflection of personal inferiority, is the emotional task children and adults must contend with. Mothers in the present study discussed their negotiation of the pros and cons of making their children vigilant to discrimination.

Perceptions and awareness of racial bias is common among children (Brown, Alabi, Huyuh, & Masten, 2011). A study of 350 Black, White, and Latino elementary school students revealed that, in 4th grade, Black and Latino students were more aware of racial bias than White students (Brown et al., 2011). The most salient instances of bias included being excluded from an activity or being verbally harassed because of their ethnic group membership. African American and Latino students also identified several salient experiences of bias in the public sphere, such as being served later at a restaurant compared to White families (Brown et al., 2011).

Children of marginalized racial groups have greater awareness of discrimination than youth from non-marginalized groups (Dulin-Keita, Hannon, Fernandez, & Cockerham, 2011). Based on data from 175 Black, White, and Latino children aged 7-12, researchers found that Black children were best able to define the concept of race accurately, and Latino children reported the highest frequency of racial discrimination experiences (Dulin-Keita et al., 2011). At some time, nearly all children are likely to feel that they have been treated unfairly because of their racial or ethnic minority group membership (Dulin-Keita et al., 2011). However, children and adolescents who have greater knowledge of stereotyping and discrimination, and who have parents who discuss discrimination with them, are likely to perceive more discrimination than others (Brown, 2008).

Complementing research on the prevalence of discrimination awareness among elementary school-aged children, research shows that teenage African Americans also commonly report being stereotyped and discriminated against. In a multiethnic sample of 177 teenagers, researchers found

that African American adolescents thought people perceived them as unintelligent and threatening (Fisher et al., 2000). African American adolescents also thought racial bias contributed to harassment by police and unfair discipline in school (Fisher et al., 2000). Based on data from 13-17 year olds who completed the National Survey of African Life, which surveyed 810 African American youth and 360 Caribbean Black youth, the majority of respondents reported experiencing a recent incident of racial discrimination (Seaton et al., 2008). Eighty-seven percent of African American youth and 90 percent of Caribbean Black youth reported at least one discriminatory incident in the previous year (Seaton et al.). The most commonly reported incident was "People act as if they are better than you are." Of the youth surveyed, boys perceived more discrimination than girls, and older adolescents (age 17) perceived more discrimination than their younger counterparts (Seaton et al., 2008). These findings support the assertion that racial discrimination is pervasive and normative for youth of color (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). However, the gender differences found suggest that Black males and females do not equally perceive discrimination in all settings. Many factors, including differential messages from parents about racial pride and racial barriers, may contribute to the difference in girls' and boys' perceptions of discrimination (Seaton et al., 2008). The present study explored mothers' perceptions of how girls and boys differentially experience discrimination, as well as mothers' gender-specific messages about discrimination awareness.

Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) studied 548 African American adolescents in grades 7-10 to understand how racial discrimination experiences, parent racial socialization practices, and academic achievement outcomes were interrelated among the sample. Neblett et al. found experiences of racial discrimination to be associated with a decrease in academic curiosity, persistence, and self-reported grades. They also found that parental messages emphasizing the awareness of racial inequalities were associated with higher school grades (Neblett et al., 2006). Therefore, messages about racial inequalities may counteract Black adolescents' discouraging experiences with discrimination. Additionally, self-worth messages may allow children to perceive the world much more optimistically (Neblett et al., 2006).

It is apparent that African American children and adolescents commonly perceive that they have been discrimination against. African American parents have the challenging task of preparing their children to accurately detect discrimination, and also preparing them to not be overwhelmed or debilitated by the pervasiveness of racism and racial discrimination (Smalls, 2009).

Racial identity development. Parents help children through distressful, discriminatory experiences by supporting their racial identity development. Positive racial identity attitudes may protect Black adolescents against the discrimination they experience as they seek to perform well in school (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; Wong et al., 2003). In a study of how ethnic discrimination and ethnic identification relate to African American adolescents' adjustment, Wong et al. (2003) found that a strong, positive identification with being African American reduced the negative association between experiences of racial discrimination and academic self-concepts and school achievement. As the researchers found in their sample of 629 adolescents, "for African Americans, connection to one's ethnic group acts as a promotive and protective factor by compensating for and buffering against the impact of perceived discrimination" (Wong et al., 2003, p. 1223). Without a sense of pride in one's ethnic heritage, mere identification with a negatively stigmatized racial or cultural group may hinder youths' self-beliefs because they are ill-prepared to persevere in spite of stereotypes and discrimination. Black children and adolescents require explicit and implicit guidance to adapt to negative views and racial discrimination (McAdoo, 2002).

Identity is an organized system of beliefs about the self that characterize an individual's behavior in salient social settings (Murray & Mandara, 2002). Although many factors affect identity development, Bandura (1986) asserted that people first view themselves based on inferences from significant others, including family members, peers, and teachers. With maturation, people gain

increased self-awareness of their true beliefs and attributes. During racial identity development, individuals progress in their understanding of race, membership in a racial group, and the consequences of that membership (Murry & Mandara, 2002). Racial identity is defined as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular group" (Helms, 1990, p. 3).

As the aforementioned study suggested, the resilience that results from a positive Black identity could potentially protect against the negative consequences of racial prejudice and discrimination (Wong et al., 2003). Oyserman et al.'s (2003) developmental model of racial-ethnic self-schemas further supports the importance of children's development of strong, positive racial identities. The researchers conceptualized racial-ethnic minority identity as a potentially schematic component of self-concept, or a racial-ethnic self-schema. They described four types of racial-ethnic schemas and investigated how schemas differentially related to how a child reacts to negative stereotypes, including their choice to engage or disengage from school. Racial minorities who held racial-ethnic schemas that only focused on positive connections with the in-group, or those that only focused on positive connections with the larger community, had increased risk of vulnerability to negative stereotypes and disengagement from school. Oyserman et al. suggested that children who only identified with their in-group membership attributed negative feedback to bias and subsequently devalued and disengaged from domains that transmit negative feedback, such as academic domains. Furthermore, children who only identified with their connection to the larger community lacked positive racial schemas. However, the racial-ethnic schemas that protected children from the negative consequences of stereotypes were those that focused on both positive connections to the in-group and on connections with larger society. Children with schemas focused on positive in-group connections and positive connections with larger society could identify and respond to bias while remaining engaged in the larger society (Oyserman et al., 2003).

How do Black children develop strong, positive racial identities? According to psychologist William Cross's (1991) revised nigrescence model, racial identity development progresses in four stages. Most relevant to children and adolescents are the first two stages (Tatum, 1997). Children are initially in the pre-encounter stage, during which their racial group membership is not of personal significance. Children in the pre-encounter stage may uncritically accept the values of White culture, seek acceptance from Whites, have negative perceptions of Black people, or view themselves negatively as a result of their race (Cross, 1991; Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002). Next, the encounter stage is catalyzed by events that make individuals personally aware of racism, motivating them to reexamine their racial group orientation (Vandiver et al., 2002). Once racial group membership is made salient, individuals often enter into the immersion-emersion stage, characterized by an interest in surrounding one's self with Black people and learning more about Black history and culture. Individuals in the immersion-emersion stage may also manifest anti-White attitudes (Vandiver et al., 2002). The last stage, internalization, signifies an individual's self-acceptance of their racial group membership (Cross, 1991). People cycle through the stages of racial identity development across the life course as they encounter different events that highlight the saliency of their racial group membership (Tatum, 1997).

Complementing the stage model of racial identity development, scholars also proposed a multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI), which emphasized the varying beliefs and attitudes associated with being Black (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). This model defined African American racial identity as both the importance of race in an individual's self-perception and the meaning of being a member of this racial group. The multidimensional model integrated theories of identity with qualitative findings regarding African Americans' lived experiences.

The MMRI is based on four major assumptions (Sellers et al., 1998). First, the model assumes

that identities are largely stable, but also mutable and influenced by situations. The model also assumes that an individual's multiple identities are hierarchical (i.e., people place varying significance on their multiple identities, such as race, gender, and occupational identity). Additionally, the MMRI considers a person's own construction of his or her identity to be the most valid indicator of identity. Therefore, the MMRI privileges individuals' subjective meanings of being Black. Working from a phenomenological approach, the MMRI does not make claims about healthy and unhealthy identities. Additionally, unlike Cross's stage model, the MMRI does not make claims about a person's identity within a developmental sequence. Rather, the MMRI describes an individual's racial identity status at a given point in time. The MMRI acknowledges that the significance and meaning that one places on race can change overtime (Sellers et al., 1998).

Based on these assumptions, there are four dimensions of the MMRI, including salience, centrality, regard, and ideology (Sellers et al., 1998). Racial salience and the centrality of identity are the two dimensions that refer to the significance individuals place on race as it relates to their self-definitions. The two dimensions that refer to the meaning individuals ascribe to being Black are the regard (positive or negative) for one's racial group and the ideology one associates with the identity (i.e., perceptions of how Blacks should act). Using the MMRI, researchers can examine the complexity and heterogeneity of meanings individuals ascribe to being Black (Sellers et al., 1998).

Researchers have argued and evidenced that African American parents play a crucial role in Black children's development of racial identity attitudes (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2009; Stevenson, 1995).

> The family serves at least two important functions in the African American child's early development. First, it fosters the development of a personal frame of reference for self-identity, self-worth, achievement, group identity, and other behaviors in society. Second, it provides comfort and affection, which lessen the negative and other deleterious consequences of racism. (Murray & Mandara, 2002, p. 84)

African American parents who discuss race with their children contribute to their children's stronger racial and ethnic identities and more positive attitudes about African Americans when compared to children whose parents do not discuss race (Branch & Newcombe, 1986; Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

As the literature on children's developing conceptions of race evidences, the way the brain operates underlies children's recognition of race and racial differences (Hirschfeld, 2008; Marsh et al., 2010). However, adults can influence children's application of stereotypes by teaching them to be conscious of bias and inhibit it (Fiske, 2010; Mendoza-Denton, 2010). Researchers assert that children need to be presented with information about the nature and scope of racial inequality (Bronson & Merryman, 2009; Hirschfeld, 2008). Although there is evidence to the contrary (e.g., Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009), most studies suggest that being aware of racial discrimination confers positive effects on African American children by preparing them to face the challenges of racial discrimination and persevere in spite of bias (McAdoo, 2002; Murray & Mandara, 2002).

Part II: Black Family Socialization

In our recent history, many aspects of Black culture, including parenting, have been disregarded (Billingsley, 1968). In a 1963 study of ethnic groups in New York, Glazer and Moynihan concluded that, "The Negro is only an American, and nothing else. He has no values and culture to guard and protect" (p. 50). In order to disrupt the deficit discourse on Black families, Boykin and Toms (1985) presented a revisionist framework of Black child socialization. Boykin and Toms sought to conceptualize Black children's successful socialization as more than simply "how well these children approximate a Euro-American social-cultural frame of reference" (p. 37). The authors posited that Blacks experience what DuBois (1903) termed "twoness—an American; a Negro; two souls; two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 4).

According to Boykin and Toms' (1985) triple quandary framework, not only do Blacks have to negotiate mainstream American and Black cultural values, they also have to contend with their minority status, which confers experiences of oppression and racism. In terms of Black child socialization, Boykin and Toms categorize the American portion of DuBois' "twoness" as parents' mainstream socialization agenda, arguing that Black parents' values, practices, and outlooks are influenced by mainstream American society, which preferences individuality and competition. Boykin and Toms categorize the "Negro" portion of DuBois' "twoness" as parents' Black cultural socialization agenda, which includes values and outlooks consistent with West African cultural ethos, such as spirituality and communalism. The third element of the triple quandary framework is Black parents' minority socialization agenda, which includes practices and tasks that help develop children's adaptive reactions, coping styles, and adjustment techniques when responding to racism and discrimination (Boykin & Toms, 1985). As African American parents face the triple quandary of negotiating mainstream, Black cultural, and minority realms of experience, they must decide what messages to give to their children and how certain messages may affect their children's self-perceptions and actions.

It is important to acknowledge that race has many different levels of meaning for African American individuals and families (Boyd-Franklin, 2003). There may be conflicting images of what it means to be Black that are not represented in this literature review. In their presentation of a multidimensional model of racial identity, Sellers et al. (1998) explained, "the fact that the experiences of African Americans are heterogeneous has resulted in variability in the significance and qualitative meaning that they attribute to being a member of the Black racial group" (p. 19). Some Black people may place little significance on race, whereas others may consider being Black as a key aspect of their self-concept. Even those who place great significance on being Black may differ in their conceptions of what being Black means (Sellers et al., 1998).

Yet, the societal context for Black families in the United States is common in some powerful ways, particularly given the shared history of African heritage and the degrading forces of slavery in this country (Boyd-Franklin, 2003). The large percentage of Black people who report discriminatory experiences (Seaton et al., 2008), and the health, employment, and housing disparities that persist (Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997), reveal that individual and structural oppression continue to operate based on race. The present study identified commonalities and discrepancies among Black mothers regarding their set of racially based beliefs, particularly in regards to what they want their children to understand about being Black.

The heterogeneity of Black people is partially influenced by social class. Like race, class is a complex construct that holds various meanings for individuals, particularly in the African American community.

> For many African Americans, class or socioeconomic level do not foreordain value system: For example, a family classified as "poor" based on income may have "middle-class" values. Also, a "culture of poverty"—coping mechanisms necessary for survival "on the streets"— may exist in families. (Boyd-Franklin, 2003, p. 260)

The social realities of race and class, and the meanings attached to them, contribute to the lived experiences of Black families. Although social class differences are beyond the scope of the current study, the next section describes research that has examined the impact of social class on Black parenting.

Social class diversity among Black families. This section includes a review of research on the role of social class in Black families' childrearing efforts. Evidence that social class is more influential than race in family socialization practices will be explored. Also, evidence of the distinct experiences of Black middle-class families will be examined, highlighting unique experiences at the intersection of race and class for this population. Additionally, research on the different childrearing

beliefs and practices within the Black middle-class are detailed. The present study contributes to these lines of research by highlighting Black middle-class families' racial socialization experiences and analyzing the varied approaches to racial socialization among a group of middle-class Black mothers.

Social class as more impactful on childrearing than race. In an ethnographic study of 12 families (six White, five Black, and one interracial) with a nine or 10-year-old child, Lareau (2003) found that family social class status was the key discriminating factor among differential parenting practices. Compared to Black and White working-class and poor families, Black and White middle-class families were observed to be alike in many ways, particularly in regards to how middle-class parents taught their children to interact with adults in social institutions. The researcher found that the education and white-collar professional experiences of middle-class parents, regardless of race, conferred knowledge and values that were likely to be assets to children's ability to maintain a middle-class status or increase their social mobility once they entered adulthood.

Lareau (2003) labeled the childrearing logic of middle-class parents as *concerted cultivation*, and she described the approach of working-class and poor parents as the *accomplishment of natural growth*. Concerted cultivation included parents' engagement of children in discussions about their opinions and feelings, as well as parents' enrollment of children into several organized activities outside of school. Parents conducted these activities to cultivate children's cognitive and social skills. Lareau argued that concerted cultivation transmitted a sense of entitlement to middle-class children. That is, middle-class children "acted as though they had a right to pursue their own individual preferences and to actively manage interactions in institutional settings" (p. 6). Another component of concerted cultivation was middle-class parents' assertiveness at their children's schools. However, getting involved at school was not always parents' immediate response. For example, middle-class parents often watched, hesitated, and strategized before deciding to intervene (Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

In contrast, working-class and poor parents drew stricter boundaries between children and adults, resulting in fewer conversations between parents and children as compared to middle-class families. Additionally, because of economic constraints, working-class children were engaged in fewer organized activities outside the home. Therefore, children from poor or working-class families often organized their own play with siblings, cousins, or other children in the neighborhood. Furthermore, unlike middle-class parents, working-class and poor parents were more likely to defer to school authorities rather than to assert their own agenda (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Based on the working-class and poor parents' comparatively limited involvement in their children's leisure time and decreased likelihood of intervening in their children's schools, Lareau (2003) characterized these parents' socialization efforts as the accomplishment of natural growth because children were given more responsibility to carry out their lives as compared to children from middle-class families.

Although the approaches of both middle-class and working-class or poor parents have benefits and burdens, Lareau (2003) asserted that concerted cultivation is more highly valued by social institutions, thereby giving middle-class children an advantage in the work world and future institutional interactions. The advantages, or cultural capital, conferred by concerted cultivation may include increased verbal abilities, abstract thinking, and confidence in adult interactions. Yet, it is unclear how the different childrearing strategies ultimately impacted children because families were only intensively observed for a month.

Although Lareau (2003) argued that, in her study, a middle-class Black boy had much more in common with a middle-class White boy than he did with Black boys from families with lower incomes, she also acknowledged that race played a notable role in the lives of Black children. Namely, experiences of racial bias were confined to Black children, regardless of social class status. Yet, racially discriminatory experiences and parents' promotion of their children's positive racial identities were not areas of focus in her research. The ethnography was specifically focused on how

children spent their time, how parents used language and discipline in the home, and how parents intervened in institutions. The scope of the study resulted in observations of similarities amongst families of the same social class status.

Some researchers have more closely examined the unique experiences of Black middle-class families, including investigations of how the intersections of race and social class affect children's academic experiences and parents' experiences with schools (Vincent, Rollock, Ball, & Gillborn, 2012). This body of research does not contradict Lareau's (2003) assertion that middle-class parenting confers societal advantages to children. However, the findings do complicate Lareau's argument that there is little difference between Black and White middle-class family socialization by showing that the degree to which children can prosper from these concerted cultivation experiences is tempered by the disparate treatment social institutions, such as schools, give Black families compared to White families (Vincent et al., 2012).

Intersections of race and class for Black middle-class families. Blacks with middle-class status face a distinct set of challenges that arise from being a racial minority in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools (Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, & Ball, 2011). With increased incomes, families can afford to live in more affluent neighborhoods and send their children to better-resourced schools. Given the historical and systematic disenfranchisement of Blacks, which led to the concentration of Black people in poverty, more affluent communities are often dominated by Whites (Massey, 1990). Blacks who obtain higher incomes are sometimes able to enter into historically White-only spaces (Massey, 1990). Although entry into these spaces benefits middle-class families by providing opportunities for increased social mobility, financial prosperity, and school choice, many middle-class Black families are also faced with the consequences of being one of few Blacks in their schools and communities (Lacy, 2007; Rollock et al., 2011).

In a study of how 62 Black Caribbean middle-class parents in the United Kingdom navigated public terrain, most respondents highlighted the "isolation and pain of being the only or one of few black children in the pupil population" (Rollock et al., 2011, p. 1082). Reflecting on their childhood experiences, school represented "a site where they came to learn exactly how they were viewed by white peers and school staff" (p. 1082). Speaking of her White peers, one respondent reflected, "They really and truly did not know that you were the same" (Rollock et al., 2011, p. 1083). The researchers characterized this respondent's experience as "the regime of Othering" that positioned the respondent as an object of her White peers' and teachers' curious inspection (Rollock et al., 2011, p. 1083).

In a study of the role of intergroup contact on White children's attitudes about race, researchers found that White children with little intergroup contact (i.e., those attending racially homogeneous schools) were less likely to view racial exclusion as wrong (Killen, Kelly, Richardson, Crystal, & Ruck, 2010). These children were also more likely to affirm stereotypes as a valid reason for racial discomfort as compared to White children who had higher levels of intergroup contact (Killen et al., 2010). The results complement findings that Black children who are regularly in predominantly White environments, (where White children have little intergroup contact), may be at increased risk of being negatively stereotyped, excluded, and mistreated based on race.

Furthermore, research has shown that Black children from more affluent families are more likely to have interracial interactions than Black children from less affluent families (Neblett, White, Ford, Philip, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2008). Therefore, more affluent parents are more likely to discuss race with their children (Neblett et al., 2008). In all, by examining the intersection of race and class in particular situations and interactions, the similarities and differences of Black middle-class parents' experiences are more accurately defined (Vincent et al., 2012.).

Distinctions among Black middle-class identities. There are different enactments of childrearing among Blacks in the same social class category. Lacy (2007) examined the different ways

middle-class Blacks constructed their identities by interviewing and observing 30 Black middle-class couples in three different suburban communities. One community was middle class and majority-White, one was middle class and predominantly Black, and the third was majority-Black and upper-middle class, (with a median family income of $117,000). Bringing complexity to arguments that either race or class is the foremost influence on Black middle-class identity construction, Lacy concluded "being black and middle-class is a distinct but fluid identity, one that overlaps in some ways with white middle class, in others with the black lower classes" (p. 220). She rejected the perspective that class alone can explain the meaning of being Black and middle class for two reasons. First, the class perspective does not attend to the racial discrimination middle-class Blacks experience. Second, the class perspective cannot explain why middle-class Blacks continue to nurture their racial identities and those of their children.

Lacy (2007) also argued that to understand Black middle-class experiences, it is important to acknowledge the different degrees of wealth among core middle-class Blacks and upper-middle-class Blacks because "not all middle-class blacks reap the same benefits from their seemingly enviable position" (p. 220). She found that parents' feelings of financial constraint influenced their childrearing strategies. Whereas upper-middle-class parents "lavish their children with luxuries," core middle-class parents spent their money more conservatively (p. 221). For example, in order to protect and reproduce middle-class status for their children, core middle-class parents were cautious about spending money on their children. They chose not to send their children to private schools to avoid jeopardizing their savings. These parents valued work as a *moral obligation* and they required their children to used their own money to buy what they wanted. "For them, conceptions of status involve defining the black middle class in relation to those who shirk their work obligations, those who, thanks to 'this welfare business,' feel free to 'just sit home and not do anything'" (p. 117). This finding indicates one way in which some people in the Black core middle class see themselves in relation to Blacks with lower incomes.

Compared to core middle-class parents, parents with more wealth (i.e., upper-middle-class parents) more readily spent money on educational and luxury resources for children. As opposed to viewing work as a moral obligation, they described work as a *pathway to economic independence*, and they admired people who did not need to work to maintain their very rich lifestyles. Consequently, upper-middle-class parents sacrificed their own desires to "help their children to develop a taste for the finer things in life, including foreign travel and elite private schooling, experiences rarely extended to the lower classes" (p. 144). It is important to note that while Lacy differentiates between core and upper-middle class, the upper-middle-class families did not define themselves in this way. Yet, they constructed qualitatively different status identities compared to less wealthy, middle-class Blacks, including different perceptions of work ethic and differential willingness to sacrifice their own desires to spend for their children (Lacy, 2007).

There is heterogeneity among the parenting practices of the Black middle class. Whereas some research has shown that social class is a more influential determinant of family socialization processes than race (Lareau, 2003; Lareau & Weininger, 2003), other research highlighted the unique intersections of race and class on Black parents' childrearing efforts (Lacy, 2007; Rollock et al., 2011; Vincent et al., 2012). The following section details research about the role of race in Black parents' socialization of children.

Racial socialization. African American parents face the challenging task of socializing their children to be competent and self-assured within an often oppressive, racist, and hostile society (Thomas & King, 2007). Racial socialization is broadly defined as adults' transmission of information about race and ethnicity to children (Hughes et al., 2006). The study of racial socialization arose from interest in how African American parents discuss social inequalities with their children and the efforts parents put forth to address youths' racial discrimination experiences

(Hughes et al., 2006). Racial socialization also evolved out of a study of normative processes in Black families (Peters, 2002). Parents' racial socialization practices are most often intended to prepare their children for encounters with racial bias and to enable them to maintain positive self-beliefs despite prejudice (Hughes et al., 2006). Parents' practices also aim to teach youths to negotiate diverse cultural contexts (Hughes et al., 2006).

   Content of racial socialization messages. Researchers have produced a growing body of empirical evidence of racial socialization among Black parents. Surveys are the primary method used to examine the prevalence, frequency, and content of racial socialization messages that parents transmit to their children. The messages parents most commonly report as part of their racial socialization agenda are messages about the importance of racial pride and appreciating diversity (Hughes et al., 2006).

   Researchers have identified various themes of messages that parents transmit to their children about race (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Demo & Hughes, 1990). For example, Boykin and Toms categorized these messages as mainstream, Black cultural, or minority. In a qualitative study of 15 African American mothers with a 5- or 6-year-old child, Coard et al. (2004) identified four salient themes of race-related messages that parents reported giving to their young children. Coard et al. categorized parents' messages as racism preparation (emphasizing racial barriers), racial pride (emphasizing racial/ethnic pride and commitment), racial equality (emphasizing egalitarian values and multiethnic co-existence), and racial achievement (emphasizing the necessity to work hard and excel).

   Additionally, in a study examining 2,107 Black adults from a sample obtained through the 1979-1980 National Survey of Black Americans (Jackson & Gurin, 1987), Demo and Hughes (1990) categorized the messages that respondents remembered receiving from their parents as integrative/assertive messages, cautious/defensive messages, or individualistic/universalistic messages. Integrative/assertive messages described messages that promote positive group-orientation attitudes and racial pride, including the importance of Black heritage, acceptance of being Black, and the importance of getting along with Whites. Cautious/defensive messages described messages that encouraged social distance and awareness of White prejudice. Individualistic/universalistic messages included messages that promoted hard work and good citizenship without racial emphasis, (e.g., all are equal, take a positive attitude toward self, work hard, excel). The studies by Coard et al. (2004) and Demo and Hughes are just two examples of how racial socialization messages have been categorized (see Coard & Sellers, 2005; Lesane-Brown, 2006 for more examples).

   In an attempt to integrate the various ways that racial socialization messages have been operationalized, Lesane-Brown (2006) and Hughes et al. (2006) each presented syntheses of the most commonly identified racial socialization messages. In her review, Lesane-Brown organized racial socialization messages into five major themes: (a) racial pride and cultural teaching, (b) racial barrier awareness and coping, and mistrust of Whites, (c) equality among racial groups, (d) self-development and personal achievement, and (e) other messages.

   Hughes et al. (2006) identified four similar themes of racial socialization messages: (a) cultural socialization, or the promotion of cultural knowledge and pride; (b) preparation for bias, including emphasis on discrimination and coping strategies; (c) the promotion of mistrust in interracial interactions; and (d) the promotion of egalitarian characteristics, including messages about hard work and individual self-worth.

   In their reviews, both sets of authors argue "because variance exists between studies regarding the types of messages parents transmit and the appropriate label to be used for each message category, integration of the content of racial socialization messages found across studies is needed" (Lesane-Brown, 2006, p. 409). As Coard and Sellers (2005) highlighted, "although there are

consistent themes with regard to the content of racial socialization messages that have been assessed across studies, there is also considerable variation as well. Thus, to date there is no consensus in regard to a taxonomy of racial socialization messages" (pp. 269-70). The consistent themes across most studies include messages about racial pride, preparation for bias or racial barrier awareness, mistrust in interracial interactions, and egalitarian values, including emphasis on self-development, personal achievement, and hard work. The lack of consensus in regards to racial socialization messages is based on the inconsistent inclusion of "other messages" in researchers' investigations. Presently, the less studied "other messages" include messages about spirituality and religious coping, extended family caring, and physical attributions such as skin color.

Individual and family factors related to racial socialization. The frequency and content of racial socialization practices are influenced by the personal characteristics of parents and children. For example, parents' racial identity attitudes and experiences of discrimination are related to their racial socialization attitudes (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Specifically, parents with greater attachment to their racial group report more cultural socialization practices (Hughes, 2003). Also, parents who believe they have experienced discrimination report giving more preparation for bias messages (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Findings suggest that mothers are more likely to be involved in the racial socialization process than fathers (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Frabutt, Walker, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 2002). Furthermore, parents with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to report racial socialization practices than lower income, less-educated parents (Hughes et al., 2006).

The child's age also appears to influence what messages parents transmit. As children age, parents' racial socialization messages may change to meet children's growing cognitive capabilities (Hughes & Chen, 1997) and their experiences with discrimination (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Hughes et al. (2008) found that parents of older children (i.e., early adolescence and older) are more likely to discuss discrimination and intergroup relations with their children than are parents of younger children. The authors asserted that this pattern reflects parents' choice to discuss the more complex concepts of discrimination and intergroup relations once children have developed a sophisticated understanding of race as a social category. However, as research has demonstrated, even very young children are capable of understanding and enacting race (Hirschfeld, 2008; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). The present study examines the reasons why some mothers choose to delay discussions about race until their children are older.

Researchers have also examined how family factors, such as communication patterns and the quality of parent-child relationships, relate to racial socialization practices. McHale et al. (2006) asserted "to the extent that racial socialization practices evolve in the context of emotionally involved and engaged parenting, they may be related to the level of warmth in the parent-child relationship" (p. 1388). In their study of 162 two-parent African American families, researchers found that parental warmth was linked to cultural socialization and bias preparation for mothers and fathers, and these links were evident when parent education and age and offspring age and gender were controlled. The results suggested that parents' racial socialization be conceptualized as an element of positive parenting. In a study of 66 African American mothers and their early adolescent sons and daughters, Frabutt et al. (2002) concluded that the frequency with which mothers explained or modeled proactive responses to discrimination related to parental involvement, child monitoring, and positive communication.

Measurement. Racial socialization has been operationalized in several ways. Most studies have relied on quantitative data gathered through self-reported survey responses. Oftentimes, the survey items developed by researchers were generated based on qualitative data gathered through interviews and focus groups. For example, several studies (Hughes, 2003; Hughes, et al., 2008; Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust 2009; McHale et al., 2006) relied on survey items that were derived from

a sample of African American parents who participated in focus group interviews (Hughes & DuMont, 1993). The construct validity of these items was initially investigated in a study of 157 African American parents with children ages 4-14 years old (Hughes & Chen, 1997). The researchers generated items to represent three dimensions of racial socialization. For each item, parents reported whether they had ever engaged in the behavior with the target child, and if so, how often in the past year they engaged in the behavior on a 5-point scale ranging from never to very often. Using principal axes factor analysis with varimax rotation, the three emerging factors indicated subscales for preparation for bias (7 items, α=.91), cultural socialization (3 items, α=.84), and promotion of mistrust (2 items, α=.68). Though these items, and adaptations of them, have been used in several studies and have been found to have validity and reliability, the use of these items limits the racial socialization construct to three dimensions.

Studies by Caughy and colleagues (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, & Lohrfink, 2006) sought to examine racial socialization without solely relying on self-reported data. Instead, they developed an observational measure for racial socialization features of the home environment (Caughy, Randolph, O'Campo, 2002). The Africentric Home Environment Inventory (AHEI) was used to complement existing racial socialization and environmental process measures. The 10-binary-item scale includes items such as the presence of Black artwork in the home, the presence of African American children's books, and the presence of pictures of family members.

Nevertheless, the most used method of data collection is solicitation of participants' self-report. Several studies have examined adults' or adolescents' retrospective accounts of how they were socialized to issues of race. For example, Demo & Hughes (1990) examined adults' open-ended responses to questions about how they perceived their socialization experiences as children. Stevenson (1994) developed and validated the Scale for Racial Socialization of Adolescents (SORS-A) to assess the degree of acceptance of race-related messages received during childhood in four domains of interest within African American culture. The SORS-A consists of 45 items that are scored along a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The items were generated based on a review of the literature on African American family functioning strengths and the literature on racial socialization, with particular emphasis on capturing the multidimensionality of racial socialization. Factor analysis revealed a four-factor model, which resulted in four subscales, including spiritual and religious coping, extended family caring, cultural pride reinforcement, and racism awareness teaching. This scale strengthens the literature by including less often studied domains of racial socialization, namely spiritual and religious coping and extended family caring.

Of the studies that used self-report surveys to examine parents' perspectives on racial socialization, most are interested in how often parents give particular messages. Researchers argue that asking parents to report how often they discuss certain topics with their children results in a more accurate representation of their racial socialization practices (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). In addition to the previously mentioned subscales developed by Hughes and Chen (1997), another example of a scale that was developed to measure the frequency of parents' racial socialization practices is the Parents' Experiences of Racial Socialization Scale (PERS) developed by Stevenson (1999). Though unpublished, the PERS has been used in a number of studies (e.g., Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, & Lohrfink, 2006; Friend, Hunter, & Fletcher, 2011). The PERS is a 40-item scale that measures how often parents communicate specific messages to their children based on parents' responses to four subscales, including cultural survival, spiritual coping, preparation for bias, and pride development. Parents are asked to respond to a 3-point Likert-type scale of *never, a few times,* or *lots of times*.

Researchers have also argued for the importance of examining parents' beliefs and attitudes about racial socialization as variables distinctive from parents' practices (Hughes et al., 2008). Hughes et al. (2008) conducted an innovative study that compared parents' beliefs, parents' practices, and children's perceptions of racial socialization. However, like most studies examining racial socialization, Hughes et al.'s (2008) examination was limited by the narrow conceptualization of racial socialization. That is, most studies of racial socialization have only examined four or fewer components of the construct, including cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism. Stevenson (1994) attempted to expand on the construct's components by including measures of spiritual and religious coping and extended family coping.

In all, the research community has attempted various ways of defining and operationalizing racial socialization. There are strengths and limitations to each methodology. Though the proposed study has limitations that are inherent in a non-representative sample, the study seeks to address many of the limitations that are found in the research literature. Foremost, a multiple case study investigation is intended to deepen our understanding of how racial socialization operates as a family process. While most studies limit parental racial socialization to four or fewer components, this study allows mothers to describe any messages that they perceive as part of their racial socialization experiences.

Also unique to the present study is an exploration of how the child's gender relates to parents' provision of racial socialization messages. One study that attempted to examine gender differences among Black parents' racial socialization practices did so by distributing an open-ended questionnaire that asked, "What are specific racial messages taught to African American boys/girls?" (Thomas & Speight, 1999). The present study delves further into this line of inquiry by using an interview format to solicit mothers' stories about the different socialization experiences they have had with their sons and daughters. Bussey and Bandura (1999) explained gender-based socialization differences as the attitudes and behaviors parents reinforce for girls versus boys. Gender differences in socialization are often unintended and unrecognized by parents because they are embedded within cultural norms (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009). More and more, researchers are investigating if parents differentially socialize boys and girls to aspects of race and ethnicity.

Gender socialization. Gender and race are inextricably linked in the lived experiences and identity construction of Black youth. Like race, gender is socially constructed and reproduced throughout social contexts (Hill & Sprague, 1999). The initial context in which gender norms are passed on to children is the family (Hill & Sprague, 1999). In a historical review of theories of gender socialization, Fagot et al. (2000) noted that theorists sought to explain differences in gender role development by examining the parenting process. Early theories were largely rooted in Freud's conception of the family, consisting of a nurturing, loving mother and a rule-enforcing father. Years later, Piaget's theory of cognitive development shifted emphasis from parental socialization to children's own construction of gender roles (Fagot et al., 2000). Fagot and colleagues asserted that a child's capacities and the surrounding environment interact dynamically to contribute to a child's understanding of herself/himself as a gendered person. Differential treatment by sex begins at birth, although infants show little, if any, sex-typed behavior (Fagot et al., 2000). Although parents are not the sole source of information that a child uses to construct theories about gender, the ways parents react to the child and organize the family greatly contribute to the child's understanding of gender differences (Fagot et al., 2000).

The impact of racism on gender role constructions. When considering family processes and child development, it is essential to explore the link between structural forces and family patterns of socialization (Hill, 2001). Sociologist Shirley A. Hill (2001) posited that historical and contemporary racism have been the major forces shaping the child socialization patterns in African American families. Racial exclusion has led to the retention of African-centered values and to forced economic

deprivation. African heritage and American experiences of oppression have shaped more flexible and adaptive gender roles in Black culture as compared to White culture (Hill & Sprague, 1999).

Afrocentric scholars contend that minimal gender role distinctions among Blacks originated from African cultural heritage, where the status of women was elevated by economic roles, female-centered kin networks, and shared child rearing (Hill, 2001). Another explanation rooted in African philosophical systems is that Black culture is characterized by synthesis and unity, as opposed to Euro-American cultural emphasis on dualism and mutually exclusive dichotomies (Lewis, 1975). In addition to these cultural explanations for less gender role distinctions among Blacks compared to Whites, the structural impact of racism and racial inequality has made it nearly impossible for many Black people to create sharp divisions between male and female roles or to divide family labor into gendered categories of economic and domestic work (Hill, 2001).

Staples and Johnson (1993) asserted that structural constraints forced men out of the labor market, leaving Black men unable to fill the traditionally masculine role of provider because of unemployment and low wages. Similarly, Lewis (1975) explained that Black men found their public roles destroyed. She asserted that allowing Black men to function in the public sphere would have put them in direct competition with the oppressor group. Thus, Black men were either excluded from the job market or expected to function in low-level service jobs. Lewis suggested that legal codes during and after slavery were directed against Black men because men were seen as the major threat to the existing system of oppression. Increasingly, Black women were thrust into the role of the family provider, though they continued to function in their traditional roles as household caretakers. The same structural forces that have broadened the roles of Black women may have diminished the roles of Black men (Hill, 2001). Traditional definitions of masculinity have not been challenged as thoroughly as those of femininity (Hill, 2001). Overall, Lewis explained, historical and structural forces have differentially shaped expectations and opportunities for Black women and men in society.

Harris's (1996) study of 1,740 middle-class Black and White adults, affirmed that gender roles continue to be considered more flexible among Blacks than Whites. Black men and women were equally likely to see masculine traits as self-descriptive, whereas White men saw masculine traits as more self-descriptive than did White women. White and Black women perceived feminine traits as more self-descriptive than did males, but this tendency was slightly stronger for Whites than for Blacks. Most of the variation between the gender-role identity scores of Blacks and Whites was accounted for by the tendency of Black women to score significantly higher than White women on the masculinity measure. Harris found that not only is masculine behavior—considered solely appropriate for men in White culture—displayed by both sexes in Black culture; but feminine behavior—associated with women in White culture—is characteristic of both men and women in Black culture. It seems that gender socialization in Black families is neutral; that is, both Black boys and girls are being reared to value assertiveness, willfulness, and independence (Lewis, 1975).

Gender-neutral vs. gender-specific socialization. Though researchers have noted that Black women often combined economic and family roles, no empirical evidence existed to explain whether these behaviors expressed ideological convictions or if these behaviors were solely the result of economic necessity (Hill, 2005). In a quest to fill this gap in the research literature, Hill (2002) analyzed interviews with 35 Black mothers and fathers of different social classes to determine their ideological commitment to gender-neutral child socialization. She described her conceptual framework as multiracial feminism, which emphasizes how race and class shape the gender ideologies and behaviors of parents. She found that Black parents did teach children gender role equality. However, social class status (defined in this study as education level) and patterns of social mobility mediated the degree to which parents employed gender-neutral socialization (Hill, 2002).

Hill (2002) interviewed a nonrandom sample of 25 African American mothers and 10 African American fathers about the gender socialization of their children. Hill distinguished class differences as more educated (i.e., had at least some college) or less educated (i.e., had a high school diploma or less), and constructed typologies of parents as either securely middle class, newly middle class, or economically disadvantaged (Hill, 2005). These class distinctions influenced parents' thinking about gender, with increasing ideological support for gender equality as parents ascend the class hierarchy (Hill, 2002). Securely middle class parents (i.e., more educated parents who came from middle-class families) had the strongest support for gender equality in socializing their children, and they also had the broadest support for gender equality at home and in the workplace (Hill, 2002). Less educated, low-income parents had the narrowest view of gender equality. They espoused equality for daughters in the workplace, but traditional gender roles at home. Also, they supported daughters' career aspirations, but were resistant to the notion of their sons' engagement in feminine-typed behaviors. First-generation, middle-class parents (i.e., educated parents who came from poor and/or disadvantaged families) were usually more ambivalent in their support for gender equality. Hill (2002) argued that their ambivalence was due to recent class mobility and status anxiety. This transitional status also coincided with higher levels of religiosity and homophobia, which compelled parents to embrace Euro-American gender ideologies (Hill, 2002).

Comparative studies of gender socialization among Black and White families, as well as studies comparing gender socialization practices among Black families of different socioeconomic levels, help frame how gender can operate in Black families. The present study is constructed to understand how and why Black families differentially socialize their sons and daughters to issues of race.

Child-rearing strategies are based on parental perceptions of the opportunities, risks, and barriers their children may confront in society (Hill, 2001). Hill (2001) asserted that, understanding that their sons face many obstacles and even dangers in expressing masculinity, parents might develop higher expectations for daughters than for sons and be more tolerant and self-indulgent with sons. Based on interview data, Hill and Zimmerman (1995) reported that low-income Black mothers of chronically ill sons saw their children as more fragile and helpless than did the mothers of daughters. Thus, mothers of sons were more protective of their children. The authors hypothesized that the mothers' overprotection of sons may reflect a growing concern over the survival of Black males, thereby discouraging parenting that would subject African American boys to even greater risks (Hill & Zimmerman, 1995). The barriers commonly faced by Black men may contribute to the possibility that parents have lower expectations for sons. Staples and Johnson (1993) also asserted that Black parents might have higher expectations for their daughters because they view them as having a greater opportunity to survive and succeed in mainstream society.

The current study contributes to and complicates these findings by asking mothers how they decided what messages to send to their daughters and sons about being Black. This study explored if mothers do indeed consider their sons more vulnerable than their daughters, and how mothers' perceptions of their children's vulnerability influences what messages they choose to give and how they choose to frame these messages. Though social class has been found to be a significant factor in African American families' gender socialization beliefs and practices, it is not a variable of interest in the present study. The sample is limited to families in the middle-income range to explore how this specific population socializes children to race in gender-specific ways. In all, this research project explored how children's gender moderates mothers' racial socialization beliefs and practices.

Gendered racial socialization. Few studies have investigated how gender influences the racial socialization of African American youth. Though Black parents have similar role expectations for their sons and daughters (Lewis, 1975), parental perceptions of the different experiences that boys versus girls will encounter in the larger society likely impact the provision of differential racial socialization messages (Hill, 2001). Most studies on gendered racial socialization examined the

adolescent's perspective. One of the few studies that investigated gender differences in socialization from the parent's perspective is a mixed methods study of 104 Black parents (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Researchers found that parents give different messages to their children according to gender. Boys were more likely to be given messages on negative stereotypes and coping strategies for overcoming or dealing with racism. Girls were encouraged to pursue a good education and given messages about racial pride, maintaining independence (esp. financially) in case of abandonment from partners, and accepting their physical beauty. However, parents gave an equal percentage of messages about self-pride to boys and girls (Thomas & Speight, 1999). A study relying on adolescents' self-report found that girls received more messages about developing racial pride and boys received more messages emphasizing racial barriers and discrimination (Bowman & Howard, 1985).

Brown, Linver, & Evans (2010) examined the role of gender (both caregiver and adolescent) in racial socialization practices. The sample consisted of 218 African American high school students. Consistent with previous research (McHale et al., 2006), girls and boys perceived that their maternal caregivers provided higher levels of racial socialization than their male caregivers (Brown et al., 2010). Female adolescents reported receiving higher levels of racial and ethnic socialization than males. The authors proposed that their findings might be explained based on Staples and Johnson's (1993) assertion that parents invest more in the racial and ethnic socialization of their daughters because they believe that daughters have more opportunities for and likelihood of success. Other theoretical explanations for their findings are that girls may be more likely to pick up on these socialization messages, that girls are eliciting more socialization from their parents, or that parents perceive adolescent girls as more open to racial and ethnic socialization and therefore respond with higher levels of socialization messages (Brown et al., 2010). The current study adds to these findings by asking mothers if and how their sons and daughters elicit messages about being Black.

Thomas and King (2007) conducted a mixed methods study of 36 African American mother-daughter dyads to examine the specific socialization messages given to African American daughters by their mothers. Data were collected from mothers and daughters to examine the consistency of perceived message transmission among the dyads. The majority of mothers' responses focused on teaching their daughters self-determination and assertiveness, and focused on helping daughters develop self-pride. Mothers also emphasized the importance of spirituality and religious beliefs, respecting others, and recognizing equality. Messages reported by mothers also focused on male-female relationships and emphasized racial pride and cultural heritage and legacy. Most of the daughters' responses were similar to messages reported by the mothers. Though none of the mothers suggested that they instruct their daughters on the importance of education as a part of messages about race and gender, daughters identified messages about education as part of their mothers' racial socialization practices. Overall, the study suggests that, with the exception of messages about education, daughters experienced and processed gendered racial socialization messages as their mothers intended, with particular importance given to messages of self-determination and self-pride (Thomas & King, 2007).

A study of two-parent African American families concluded that mothers' racial socialization practices (i.e., their provision of cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages) differed based on their children's age (McHale et al., 2006). Specifically, mothers were engaged in more racial socialization with their older adolescent children compared to their younger children. In contrast, fathers' racial socialization practices differed based on the gender of their children. Fathers were more likely to provide cultural socialization messages to their sons than their daughters (McHale et al.).

Though some studies have not identified any differences in parents' provision of racial socialization messages based on the child's gender (e.g., Hughes & Chen, 1997; Harris-Britt et al.,

2007; Frabutt et al., 2002), there are theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence that suggest a child's gender impacts the messages parents transmit about race.

   Measurement. Researchers have used a variety of methods to assess gendered racial socialization messages conveyed in Black families. Mixed methods studies included surveys and supplemental interview questions (Thomas & King, 2007; Thomas & Speight, 1999). For example, Thomas and King's examination of mother-daughter dyads included mothers' responses to the Parent Experiences of Racial Socialization scale (PERS; Stevenson, 1999), and daughters' responses to the Teenage Experiences of Racial Socialization scale (TERS; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Similar to the previously described PERS, the TERS is a 40-item scale that assesses adolescents' perceptions of racial socialization messages from parents. Adolescents are asked to respond to a 3-point Likert-type scale of *never, a few times,* or *lots of times.* The five subscales include cultural coping with antagonism, cultural pride reinforcement, cultural appreciation of legacy, cultural alertness to discrimination, and cultural endorsement of the mainstream, along with a total score, adaptive racial socialization experience. The subscales and total scale reliability coefficients were moderate for the study. In addition to the TERS, daughters were given the open-ended question: "What are the specific messages that your mother gives you on being an African American woman/girl?" In addition to the PERS, mothers were asked: "What are the specific messages that you teach you daughter(s) on race and gender?"

   Bowman & Howard's (1985) investigation of gendered racial socialization messages relied on interview data from 377 African Americans ages 14-24. The two questions and related probes used to examine race-related socialization themes transmitted by parents included: (1) "When you were a child, were there things your parents, or the people who raised you, did or told you to help you know what it is to be Black? (If yes) What are the most important things they taught you? (2) Are there any (other) things your parents or the people who raised you told you about how to get along with White people? (If yes) What are the most important things they taught you?"

   Two other studies on gendered racial socialization messages were based on the samples' responses to surveys (Brown et al., 2010; McHale et al., 2006). McHale et al. had parents respond to two subscales developed by Hughes and Chen (1997). The adapted subscales assessed cultural socialization (5 items) and preparation for bias (7 items) using a 6-point rating scale ranging from *never* to *very often* to describe parents' frequency of socialization practices. Brown et al. (2010) assessed racial socialization using the Adolescent Racial and Ethnic Socialization Scale (ARESS; Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007). The ARESS is unique because it assesses racial socialization and ethnic socialization as distinct multidimensional processes. The scale highlights the explicit (e.g., verbal directives) and implicit (e.g., modeled behaviors, exposure to opportunities, and interactive experiences) racial and ethnic socialization messages transmitted to African American youth. The scale developers defined racial socialization as parental strategies that convey explicit and implicit messages regarding intergroup relationships. Ethnic socialization was defined as the explicit and implicit messages regarding intragroup messages about what it means to be African American.

   Researchers have utilized quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches to understand how racial socialization messages differ based on the child's gender. Qualitative approaches allow for an exhaustive list of racial socialization messages to be gathered, whereas quantitative approaches limit the types of messages that parents or adolescents can report. The present study utilized qualitative data to provide more detail regarding mothers' beliefs about socializing their sons and daughters to issues related to being Black. The available research that suggests a child's gender impacts the messages parents transmit about race has compelled researchers to investigate how certain messages differentially impact boys and girls. The present study contributes to this line of inquiry by asking mothers what outcomes they intended to achieve for their sons and daughters by giving specific racial socialization messages.

Part III: Outcomes of Racial Socialization

Many studies have investigated the potential consequences of racial socialization for youths' well being and adjustment. However, few have tried to tease apart how messages differentially affect boys and girls. This review begins with an examination of the effects of racial socialization on youth outcomes, followed by evidence of how gender moderates youth outcomes.

Considering that the goal of many racial socialization practices is to promote cultural pride and knowledge, the most commonly investigated outcome of racial socialization is youths' racial identity attitudes (Hughes et al., 2006). Researchers have consistently found that racial socialization is associated with multiple dimensions of youths' racial identity, including knowledge about group history and traditions, in-group orientations, ethnic affirmation, and racial pride (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009).

As was evidenced in the study by Demo and Hughes (1990), certain messages about race result in more positive racial attitudes than other messages. For example, adults who received messages about the equality of all races (i.e., integrative/assertive messages) identified more closely with Black people, history, and culture than did adults who received messages about the importance of hard work (i.e., individualistic/universalistic messages) or those who received messages about not trusting Whites (i.e., cautious/defensive messages; Demo & Hughes).

In addition to racial attitudes, other psychological outcomes that have been studied in relationship to racial socialization include youths' self-esteem (Thomas & King, 2007), locus of control (McHale et al. 2006), anxiety (Bannon et al., 2009), and depressive symptoms (Stevenson et al, 1997). Overall, parental endorsement of cultural pride messages predicted more positive self-beliefs and less negative outcomes, such as anxiety and depression.

Other studies show that specific racial socialization messages are related to behavioral outcomes. For instance, cultural socialization is found to be associated with fewer behavior problems (Demo & Hughes, 1990). In contrast, attitudes of racial mistrust have been associated with antisocial behavior and violence (Biafora, et al., 1993). Additionally, there are mixed results regarding the effects of preparation for bias messages on youth outcomes. "Findings regarding the potential protective properties of preparation for bias are tempered by findings that less favorable outcomes are evident when youths develop expectations for discrimination and mistrust of other groups" (Hughes et al., 2006, p. 764). The present study analyzes mothers' perceptions of how preparation for bias messages impact their children's attitudes about self and others.

One study sought to understand how different types of messages about ethnicity and race influence youths' adjustment across multiple domains, including anti-social behavior, academic efficacy, and academic engagement (Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009). The sample consisted of 466 White and 339 African American early adolescents in grades 4-6. The researchers hypothesized that self-esteem and positive evaluations of one's ethnic-racial group (i.e., ethnic affirmation) would moderate the relationship between racial socialization messages and adjustment outcomes. The results indicated that preparation for bias messages predicted lower self-esteem and ethnic affirmation, which in turn predicted increased reports of anti-social behavior. Cultural socialization was found to be more strongly associated with academic than with behavioral outcomes (Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009). The researchers proposed two possible pathways through which cultural socialization positively impacts academic efficacy and engagement. First, they suggested that cultural socialization may increase early adolescents' resistance to negative stereotypes about their group's academic potential, thereby allowing them to more fully engage in academic pursuits. They also suggested that cultural socialization might facilitate youths' ability to comfortably navigate diverse school settings, which may generally promote academic efficacy and engagement (Hughes, Witherspoon, et al).

Although there is growing evidence that parental racial socialization practices are related to subsequent outcomes in youth and adults, there has only been one study to date that attempted to understand parents' beliefs regarding how their racial socialization messages impact their children. The study by Hughes et al. (2008) investigated how 210 Black, Latino, Chinese, and White parents compared in terms of the racial socialization messages that they give, as well as the beliefs and goals that underlie why certain racial socialization messages are important. In terms of giving preparation for bias messages, African American mothers "view discrimination as inevitable and seek to arm children with tools for coping with potentially damaging psychological aftermath" (p. 260). Black mothers explained that, by preparing adolescents to expect discrimination, they help bolster their children's psychological resources, such as determination and optimism. Black parents also said that they give messages about discrimination to protect their adolescents' emotions "in the moment" when a child has experienced a racially biased event (Hughes et al., 2008).

This dissertation project extends Hughes et al.'s (2008) findings by assessing mothers' perceptions of how discussions about discrimination impact their children's self-concepts and behaviors. Furthermore, this project examined mothers' perceptions of how and why they tailor their racial socialization messages to affect differential outcomes for their daughters as compared to their sons.

Gender as a moderator of outcomes. A few studies have explored how being a boy or a girl can differentially influence the impact of racial socialization on the child's subsequent outcomes. In an investigation of how racial socialization may influence African American adolescents' self-esteem and depressive symptoms, researchers found that adolescents' global endorsement of the importance of racial socialization was associated with enhanced self-esteem among girls and diminished self-esteem among boys (Stevenson et al., 1997). Interestingly, boys with higher global ethnic-racial socialization scores (as measured by the SORS-A) reported more frequent sad mood and greater hopelessness than did their counterparts; whereas girls with higher global ethnic-racial socialization reported less frequent sad mood and less hopelessness (Stevenson et al., 1997). The authors challenged researchers to determine under what conditions and contextual experiences the promise of African culture and the reality of its suppressed legacy is beneficial or burdensome (Stevenson et al., 1997).

One study examined how ethnic-racial socialization messages differentially influence identity outcomes among girls versus boys (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009). Adolescents' ethnic-racial identities were the outcomes of interest in a study of 170 6th graders and their mothers. The findings suggested that adolescents who reported that their mothers more often communicated to them the importance of ethnic pride, history, and heritage also reported more favorable views of their ethnic-racial group, though the finding was more pronounced among girls than among boys. The authors interpreted this finding as support for the theory that girls are more sensitive to cultural socialization messages overall. That is, girls are more attuned to the cultural socialization messages their mothers give and the messages are more strongly associated with their feelings of affirmation and belonging than they are for boys (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009). The researchers concluded that girls and boys appeared to be differentially attuned to mothers' messages, with girls being more sensitive to messages about culture, history, and heritage, and boys being more sensitive to messages about discrimination (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009).

Two studies investigated how academic achievement outcomes are differentially related to racial socialization messages depending on the adolescent's gender. In a sample of 218 African American high school students, adolescents' gender moderated the association between cultural socialization (i.e., African American cultural values and heritage) and academic grades (Brown, Linver, Evans, & DeGennaro, 2009). For boys, higher grades were associated with mothers' and fathers' provision of African American cultural values. For girls, more messages about African American heritage were

related to lower grades. The authors suggested that socialization about African American heritage might result in hypersensitivity to issues of race and may create anxiety, especially for girls. Another suggested explanation of their findings is that African American boys experience the school context in different ways than girls. Therefore, boys may rely on more racial socialization messages provided at home considering the negative perspectives that teachers and schools often have of African American males. Messages they receive from caregivers are important to counter the negative feedback they may receive from educational institutions (Brown et al., 2009).

The second study that examined academic achievement outcomes focused on the impact of preparation for bias messages. In an investigation of 132 African American 5th grade boys and girls and their mothers, researchers found that gender significantly moderated the association between preparation for bias messages and academic achievement (Friend et al., 2011). For boys, as the frequency of preparation for bias messages increased, GPA also increased. For girls, as the frequency of preparation for bias messages increased, GPA decreased. The authors drew on similar theories as Brown et al. (2009) to explain their findings. Friend, Hunter, and Fletcher (2011) proposed that, due to boys' experiences of discrimination in schools and overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline practices, African American boys who receive higher levels of preparation for bias messages may be better prepared to understand and cope with the racism they encounter. In contrast, girls who receive higher levels of preparation for bias messages may be made more aware of the racism that exists in the context of their schools and subsequently disengage.

A future direction for research is exploration of how gender influences the ways African American children cope with the racism they encounter (Friend et al., 2011). Though research evidence is scant, present findings indicate important distinctions between how boys and girls are impacted by racial socialization messages. In terms of academic outcomes, the studies by Brown et al. (2009) and Friend et al. (2011) suggest that preparation for bias is more important and beneficial for boys than girls. To extend our understanding of why boys and girls appear to respond differently to similar messages, this study explored the differential needs of Black boys and girls based on mothers' perceptions.

Measurement. Stevenson et al.'s (1997) study relating racial socialization to depressive symptoms and self-esteem relied on adolescents' responses to the Scale of Racial Socialization of Adolescents (SORS-A; Stevenson, 1994) to measure their experiences of racial socialization. The SORS-A is composed of four subscales (spiritual and religion, extended family caring, cultural pride reinforcement, and racism awareness teaching). The sum of the four subscales resulted in a global racial socialization score. Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al.'s (2009) study relating racial socialization to ethnic-racial identity attitudes relied on adolescents' responses to a 3-point frequency scale about their perceptions of parents' emphasis on cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages. In the study relating high school students' experiences of racial socialization to their academic grades (Brown et al., 2009), the researchers measured racial socialization as adolescents' reports of message frequency based on responses to the Adolescent Racial and Ethnic Socialization Scale (ARESS). The ARESS defines racial socialization as racial barrier awareness, coping with racism and discrimination, and the promotion of cross-racial relationships. The ARESS defines ethnic socialization as African American cultural values, African American cultural embeddedness, African American history, and the promotion of ethnic pride.

The study by Friend et al. (2011) measured racial socialization based on parents' responses to the Parents Experiences of Racial Socialization Scale (PERS; Stevenson, 1999). The study only focused on two subscales of the PERS, including the preparation for bias and pride development subscales. They justified their scale choices because those dimensions are most frequently associated with academic achievement in the existing racial socialization literature (Friend et al., 2011). There are several scales being used in the literature, each of which measures different aspects of racial

socialization from either the adolescent or parent perspective. It is important to gather qualitative data in order to more fully understand the reasons for the quantitative findings of these studies. The present study provides an analysis of possible reasons why racial socialization messages impact girls and boys differently, with mothers as the information source.

Part IV: Measuring Racial Socialization

Throughout this review, attention has been given to the various ways racial socialization and gendered racial socialization have been operationalized. To summarize, these areas of research have been explored in three types of samples, including parents, adolescents, and young adults. Most of the research questions seek to understand parents' racial socialization beliefs (e.g., Peters, 2002) and practices (e.g., Coard et al., 2004), and adolescents' or adults' recall of racial socialization experiences (e.g., Lesane-Brown, Brown, Caldwell, & Sellers, 2005) and their beliefs about racial socialization (e.g., Stevenson et al., 1996). Most studies rely on self-report surveys to measure African Americans' endorsement of racial socialization beliefs and/or the frequency of racial socialization practices. Several studies used qualitative data to enrich the quantitative findings (e.g., Hughes et al., 2008; Thomas & Speight, 1999). To complement parent-report measures, Caughy, Randolph, and O'Campo (2002) utilized observational data to understand racial socialization features of African American preschool children's home environments.

Several surveys have been developed to tap different aspects of racial socialization. The commonly used items developed by Hughes and Chen (1997) focus on four aspects of racial socialization, including cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism. The PERS (Stevenson, 1999) and SORS-A (Stevenson, 1994) scales included spiritual coping as a component of racial socialization. The TERS (Stevenson et al., 2002) scale measured cultural coping with antagonism and cultural endorsement of the mainstream as potential racial socialization messages. The ARESS (Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007) differentiated racial socialization and ethnic socialization, and included items that assessed the promotion of cross-racial relationships. ARESS developers defined racial socialization as intergroup messages and ethnic socialization as intragroup messages.

Overall, the evolving body of literature includes a variety of methodologies to assess racial socialization in Black families. Most studies have been retrospective and cross-sectional (Coard & Sellers, 2005). These common study methods are efficient for assessing the beliefs of large samples in order to determine generalizable information about African American racial socialization processes. However, the reasons for the quantitative findings are not well understood. The present study seeks to provide qualitative data that will address this limitation in the literature. By interviewing mothers about their perceptions of what messages their children require and how their sons and daughters respond to particular messages, the findings of this study can strengthen the theoretical implications of previous findings. The present study identifies underexplored themes that can later be assessed in larger samples.

Chapter Summary

As the literature on children's developing conceptions of race evidences, the way the brain operates underlies children's recognition of race and racial differences (Hirschfeld, 2008; Marsh et al., 2010). However, adults can influence children's application of stereotypes by teaching them to be conscious of bias and inhibit it (Fiske, 2010; Mendoza-Denton, 2010). Researchers assert that children need to be presented with information about the nature and scope of racial inequality (Bronson & Merryman, 2009; Hirschfeld, 2008). Although there is evidence to the contrary (e.g., Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009), most studies suggest that being aware of racial discrimination confers positive effects on African American children by preparing them to face the challenges of racial discrimination and persevere in spite of bias (McAdoo, 2002). Black men and women are subjected to different racial barriers (Hill, 2001), leading parents to give distinct messages to their

sons and daughters (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Parents are racially socializing their children in reaction to children's lived experiences (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

Chapter II
Methodology
Introduction

     This chapter outlines the research questions and design that guided the study. It explains how the participants were selected, the demographics of the sample, and the rationale for the interview procedure. It also details the iterative process of data analysis that informed the study's findings. This chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations of this study.

Research Questions

     The aim of this study was to explore African American mothers' beliefs about socializing their children to negotiate gendered and racial contexts. Of interest were what messages mothers deemed important, why they believed them to be important, and how they conveyed these messages to children. In regards to answering the questions of why and how, the researcher sought mothers' perspectives on what informed their decisions about racial socialization, and the types of contexts and interactions that sparked racial socialization between mother and child. Furthermore, the study examined how mothers framed messages for their sons and daughters and why parents chose to frame messages in particular ways. The following research questions were addressed through an interview-based research design.

     1.   What are similarities and differences among mothers' beliefs regarding socializing their sons and daughters to issues of race?

     2.   What informs mothers' decisions to prepare children for bias or not? Do mothers consider preparation for bias messages to be beneficial or harmful to children's well being?

     3.   What types of racialized experiences do children encounter that prompt mothers' racial socialization efforts? In what ways do mothers respond to these incidents?

Research Design

     Participants. The researcher individually interviewed 22 mothers. Initial recruitment efforts included outreach to African American parenting groups and professional organizations serving African Americans. The sample was also located based on snowball sampling, the practice of asking interviewees to recommend other interviewees, thereby increasing the number of respondents (Weiss, 1994). Participants accepted into the study were mothers of Black children from the California Bay Area.

     The present study examines the beliefs and experiences of Black mothers who identified as middle-income and had Black children between 13-18 years old. Middle-income was defined as annual household incomes ranging from $45,000-$80,000, based on the 2010 median family income data for California (US Dept. of Justice, 2011). Data from 16 of the 22 mothers are included in the present analysis. Participants were excluded from the present analysis because they did not identify as Black (though their children did; n=3), they did not identify as middle-income (n=1), or they did not have at least one child between the ages of 13 and 18 (n=1). Also, one interview was excluded because both the mother and father participated in the interview. Although the data from the excluded interviews are rich and informative, there were major differences in these mothers' experiences that necessitate separate analysis at a later date. Also of note is that three of the mothers that are included in the analysis identified as Afro-Latina. Based on their responses, these mothers had very similar experiences to the mothers who identified as Black/African American, presumably because they are phenotypically Black and they have lived in the United States throughout adolescence and adulthood. Because there were no major discrepancies in their experiences, these mothers' data were included in the analysis.

     Each mother completed a demographic questionnaire that asked her to report information such as her race and ethnicity, income status, and education level (see Appendix B). The average age of

participants was 43, and mothers ranged in age from 35 to 53 years old. Each mother had at least some college education, with the majority of mothers having at least a 4-year college degree (n=7) or a master's degree (n=5). All of the mothers were employed: full-time (n=12), part-time (n=2), or self-employed (n=2). The average household size for the sample was 4, ranging from 2-5. The average household family income was between $60,000 to $70,000 per year. Most mothers were married (n=10), five were divorced, and one was never married. Table 1 displays the sample's demographic information using pseudonyms that will be referenced in the analytic chapters. Tables 2 and 3 give more information about the age and gender of the mothers' children.

Table 1

Participants' Pseudonyms and Ages, and Children's Gender and Ages

	Mothers (age)	**Boys/Girls (age)**
Mothers of Daughters only	1. Diana (36)	G (16) G (12) G (9)
	2. Lillian (43)	G (20) G (19) G (15) G (13)
	3. Sabrina (48)	G (15)
	4. Carolyn (35)	G (15) G (13)
	5. Alice (36)	G (16) G (7)
	6. Trish (37)	G (15)
Mothers of Sons only	7. Grace (53)	B (21) B (18) B (16)
	8. Paula (44)	B (17)
Mothers of Daughters and Sons	9. Elise (42)	B (20) G (17)
	10. Olivia (44)	G (15) G (14) B (9)
	11. Natalie (41)	B (27) G (17) B (15)
	12. Mary (53)	B (25) G (21) B (15)
	13. Kim (51)	G (19) B (14) B (10)
	14. Renee (46)	G (16) G (15) B (10)
	15. Barbara (41)	G (19) B (14) G (11) G (10)
	16. Francine (51)	B (23) G (20) B (17) G (16)

Table 2

Gender of Mothers' Children

Mothers with only daughter(s)	Mothers with only son(s)	Mothers with daughter(s) & son(s)	*Total number of mothers*
6	2	8	*16*

Table 3

Ages and Gender of Mothers' Children

	5-12 years old	13-18 years old	19+ years old	*Total*
Sons	3	8	5	16
Daughters	5	15	6	26
Total	8	23	11	*42*

Of the mothers sampled, there are slightly more mothers of daughters than sons. However, half the mothers in the sample had both a son and daughter, which allows for comparative analysis based on child's gender. Also, regardless of whether mothers had sons, daughters, or both, each interviewee was asked her opinion about whether certain messages are more important for boys compared to girls.

Procedure. Interviewees participated in one 90-120 minute semi-structured interview at a convenient time and location. All of the interviews were conducted in person. Interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview in advance, and they were encouraged to reflect on their children's experiences of racial discrimination and their racial socialization experiences prior to sitting for the interview. The researcher anticipated that priming respondents for the interview would facilitate a more fruitful conversation. The purpose of the interviews was to generate open-ended responses from mothers about their children's temperamental and behavioral characteristics, their experiences discussing race with their children, their approach to racial socialization, and their parenting goals and intentions.

Interviewees were encouraged to share detailed examples of racial socialization experiences with their children. Based on Yin's (2002) case study logic, Small (2009) argued that in-depth interview-based studies should be considered multiple case studies as opposed to small sample studies. The objective of studies using case study logic is saturation, not representativeness. For studies that seek to ask how or why questions about processes unknown prior to starting the study, case study logic is most effective (Small, 2009). Through an iterative process of data collection, analysis, and construct development, interviews were conducted as needed to clarify answers to the research questions. The researcher reached the goal of saturation by conducting interviews until little new or surprising information was yielded. Each case provided an increasingly accurate understating of the phenomena of interest. The first case yielded a set of findings and questions that informed the next cases (Small, 2009). Based on this data collection format, the set of research questions were slightly adjusted throughout the data collection process to better inform answers to interesting phenomena that arose from the previous interviews. For example, mothers' reflections on how children's development impacts racial socialization efforts, particularly as children began entering into romantic relationships, motivated the researcher to include targeted questions about adolescents' dating preferences and decision-making autonomy in subsequent interviews.

Consent forms explaining the potential risks and benefits to interviewees were obtained from all participants. Interviewees were informed that they may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time, though no participants utilized these options. Participants did not receive payment. The raw data of interviews are the quotations spoken by the respondents (Patton, 2002). Therefore, to record each interview as fully and fairly as possible, each interview was audio recorded, with permission from the interviewee. The interviewer explained that the tape recorder was there so that none of what the respondent said was missed. All respondents agreed to be audio taped, and

the recordings were transcribed. All transcripts and recordings were assigned a number that corresponds with the interviewee and names have been stored separately to maintain confidentiality. All procedures for this study were approved by the UC Berkeley IRB (2011-10-3672).

Development of the interview protocol. Open-ended responses allowed the researcher to understand the world as seen by the respondents. The interview permitted the researcher to find out about things that cannot be directly observed, including feelings, thoughts, and intentions. This research project combined two approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews, including the standardized open-ended interview and the general interview guide approach (Patton, 2002). The standardized open-ended interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged to take each respondent through the same sequence and ask each respondent the same questions. Using a standardized open-ended interview guide was beneficial because the interviews were highly focused and interviewee time was used efficiently. Also, the standardized interview guide facilitated analysis by making responses easy to find and compare. In contrast, the general interview guide approach allowed the interviewer to freely build a conversation within a particular subject area and to word questions spontaneously. The researcher permitted flexibility during the interview so that topics or issues that were not anticipated could be pursued. This combined strategy offered the interviewer flexibility in probing and in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth, or to pose questions about new areas of inquiry that were not originally anticipated (Patton, 2002).

The structure of the interview protocol begins with general questions about the interviewees' children to facilitate rapport between the interviewer and interviewee and to gain a picture of each child's character. Next, the interviewer asked more specific questions about the interviewees' experiences with discussing race with their children and the factors that guided their socialization decisions. The researcher tailored questions for maximum clarity and relevance (see Appendix A). The researcher worked to ensure that each question was open-ended, neutral, singular (asking one, direct question), and clear. Patton (2002) explained that truly open-ended questions allow the respondent to take whatever direction and use whatever words they want to express their ideas. Also, truly open-ended questions avoid soliciting a dichotomous response. Of the few yes/no questions that are in the protocol, a series of probes and follow-up questions are included to facilitate the respondents' expression of experiences, feelings, and opinions.

The first question about racial socialization experiences presupposed that Black children have experienced racism at some point in their lives. The presupposition form of the open-ended question implies that racist experiences are common and focuses more on the details of the experience rather than whether such incidents have occurred. Patton (2002) explained that presupposing that the respondent does have something to say enhances the quality of the descriptions received. Therefore, instead of asking, "Has your child experienced a racist event?" the researcher stated, "Please tell me about an experience when your child has experienced racism (at school or in another setting)." Considering that much of the interview asked respondents to tell stories of actual events that have occurred, detail-oriented probes helped to create a full picture of the experience being reported. As needed, the interviewer used elaboration and clarification probes to flesh out ambiguous responses (Patton, 2002).

Positionality of the researcher. My identity as a Black woman was advantageous for my ability to engage Black women in discussions about race. Many of the mothers stated that they were willing to participate in the interview to support my work as a Black female scholar. Our shared racial and gender identities likely contributed to mothers' comfort with sharing their personal beliefs and stressful experiences with me. Due to our shared identities, I may have been afforded greater access to mothers' otherwise private thoughts compared to someone who they perceived as having vastly divergent experiences (Schuman & Converse, 1971). My racial and gender identities, as well as my

training as a psychologist, contributed to my ability to be empathetic during the interviews (Lambart & Barley, 2001). As an empathic listener, I created a safe space for mothers to honestly reflect on their parenting experiences (Gair, 2011). Also, not being a parent myself, mothers were positioned as experts in their experiences. I presented myself as a curious researcher and practitioner who sought to learn from their experiences in order to support other Black families.

Data analysis. The data analysis process was iterative and relied on advice from researchers with expertise in parenting and family socialization, African American identity, and qualitative research methods. Analysis followed a multiphase interpretive approach (Tolman & Bydon-Miller, 2001) to ensure rigor. The first phase involved open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of the three initial interviews to establish that the interviews were providing information of interest and to help refine interview questions. The next phase consisted of a reflexive interpretive process (Schatzman, 1991) to identify conceptual themes and disconfirming evidence in the data (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

Guided by grounded theory, the researcher sought full understanding of individual cases before those cases were combined thematically (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As thematic constructs emerged during analysis, the researcher constantly returned to the interview transcripts, staying grounded in the individual cases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process of open coding included an examination of the first three transcripts. The coding process revealed thematic variations and similarities across mothers' beliefs about the importance of racial socialization and their children's experiences of discrimination. Categories were determined based on the extent to which the data in a certain category held together in a meaningful way (internal homogeneity) and the extent to which differences among categories were clear (external homogeneity; Patton, 2002).

The coding system developed by the primary researcher was explained to a fellow doctoral student who was experienced in qualitative research and coding. The primary researcher and research assistant independently coded four of the transcripts based on the initial classification system, and they participated in a consensus building process. The consensus building process included noting points of agreement and disagreement and eventually agreeing upon a common classification system that best described the data. Based on this revised coding scheme, the primary researcher coded all of the transcripts. The coding system produced from the consensus building process included three broad conceptual themes in mothers' gendered racial socialization beliefs (concerns for sons, concerns for daughters, gender-neutral concerns), two themes in mothers' racial socialization aspirations (self-pride, racial pride), two themes in mothers' approaches to preparation for bias (proactive, moderate), three themes in children's racialized experiences (peer-related, teacher-related, police-related), and two themes in mothers' responses to children's racialized experiences (direct communication with child, advocacy on child's behalf). A qualitative data analysis computer program, Hyperresearch, was used to determine the frequency of these themes among the sample.

Limitations. Given that these mothers volunteered their time to discuss their racial socialization experiences, they may have been more engaged in their racial socialization efforts than mothers who did not volunteer to participate. Therefore, the experiences of these mothers cannot be considered representative of middle-income Black mothers. Additionally, the small sample size prohibits the generalizability of responses to larger populations. Furthermore, recruiting interviewees through purposeful and snowball sampling limited the sample to mothers who may be more reflective about their racial socialization beliefs than is common. The sampling methods may have reduced the heterogeneity of reported experiences.

This study was formulated to assess mothers' perspectives. Therefore, the study lacks the child's point of view. The research design does not afford an understanding of whether mothers' experiences were similarly perceived by children. It is possible that what mothers perceived to be

racially salient experiences for children might not be the same experiences that children would identify as salient (Coard & Sellers, 2005). It is important to explore this possibility in future research. Also limiting is that this study was heavily reliant on mothers' memories of past events, which could very well be subject to distortion or omission. The findings from this research can contribute to longitudinal and observational study designs that examine mothers' and children's racial socialization processes and perspectives in real-time.

Limiting the sample to middle-income Black mothers excluded important and likely illuminating information from fathers, other relatives, parents in different social classes, and parents of Black children who are not Black themselves. The theories generated from the present study can be complicated by future research with more diverse samples.

Chapter Summary

The present study examined the gendered racial socialization beliefs of 16 middle-income Black mothers from the California Bay Area. Half of the mothers in the sample had at least one son and one daughter. Employing in-depth semi-structured interviews, the researcher sought information about how racial socialization is gender-based, whether mothers endorse preparation for bias messages and why, and how children's experiences outside of home initiate racial socialization messages from mothers. Although the study is limited by sample size and sample selection criteria, the findings broaden the conceptualization of mothers' roles in children's racial awareness and identity development.

Chapter III
The Impact of Racism on Children:
Mothers' Gendered Racial Socialization Beliefs

Introduction

Historically, Black men and women have experienced distinct social realities. During the enslavement of Africans, oppressors attempted to destroy any sense of family and to deconstruct the meaning of manhood among Africans (Nobles, 2006). After slavery, Black men were systematically pushed out of White male dominated commerce spaces, limiting Black men's ability to assume the role of sole provider for the household (Staples & Johnson, 1993). Consequently, Black women were positioned to get work outside the home to help support their families (Lewis, 1975). Compared to other races, Black families experienced less sharp gender divisions between economic and domestic work (Hill, 2001). The structural and racist forces that broadened the roles for Black women may have diminished the roles of Black men (Hill, 2001). The differential treatment of Black men and women continues to be evident, as Black boys in particular perceive that they are feared in society and believe that they are stereotyped as threats (Nasir, 2012). Black boys and girls are aware of the negative stereotypes that persist about Black people, and they find these stereotypes significant to their life experiences (McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Nasir, 2012). The pervasiveness of racism and the associated gender dynamics are social realities that Black mothers traverse as they raise children (Hill, 2001).

Research shows that Black boys and girls get different messages from their parents regarding race and self. Studies reveal that boys are more likely to be given messages on negative stereotypes and coping strategies for dealing with racism, and girls are more likely to get messages about education, racial pride, maintaining independence, and accepting physical beauty (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Scholars theorize that, because boys are more fervidly stereotyped and targeted, mothers are likely to be overprotective of boys and have lesser expectations for sons' advancement in society compared to daughters (Hill, 2001; Staples & Johnson, 1993).

Furthermore, studies have found that children's perceptions of racial socialization messages have differential impact on boys and girls. One study found that, among Black adolescents who endorsed racial socialization, girls experienced enhanced self-esteem and decreased sadness and hopelessness, whereas boys' self-esteem diminished and they experienced greater sadness and hopelessness (Stevenson et al., 1997). Another study showed that girls were more sensitive to cultural socialization messages than boys, and boys were more sensitive to parents' messages about discrimination than girls (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009).

Although boys and girls may get different messages from parents and may internalize these messages differently, there are also some messages that parents give regardless of gender, including messages about self-pride (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Messages about self-pride and racial pride are found to be favorable for boys and girls, predicting more positive self-beliefs (McHale et al., 2006), less anxiety (Bannon et al., 1993) and depression (Stevenson et al., 1997), and fewer behavior problems (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009).

Cultural socialization includes messages about racial or ethnic heritage and history, cultural customs and traditions, and racial pride (Hughes et al., 2006). Cultural socialization is prevalent among Black families (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Findings show that cultural socialization messages are among the first things parents mention in response to open-ended questions about their child rearing practices (Hughes et al., 2006). In addition to parents' emphasis on racial pride, studies have also examined parents' messages about self-pride and personal development as important aspects of racial socialization (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Marshall, 1995; Sanders Thompson,

1994; Thomas & King, 2007). Though we know that messages about Black pride and self-pride are common aspects of racial socialization, more information is need to understand why mothers decide to share these messages with their children.

Mothers' perceptions of the distinct social realities for their sons and daughters may play an important role in how they engage in racial socialization. We know mothers give different messages to boys and girls (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thomas & Speight, 1999), and that these messages are likely given in response to mothers' perception of the social reality for their children (Richardson, 1981; Hill, 2001). Authors speculate as to why mothers have been found to differentially socialize their sons and daughters to racial issues (Hill & Zimmerman, 1995; Staples & Johnson, 1993), but have yet to directly ask mothers about their reasoning. The current study examines mothers' perceptions of the different social realities facing their sons and daughters. This study also fills a gap in the literature by investigating the specific content of messages about self-pride and racial pride, as well as why mothers believe these messages to be important.

The present study contributes to the literature by examining how mothers interpret children's needs given their perceptions of the distinct social realities for boys and girls. This study supports literature on gender differences in racial socialization by examining the beliefs mothers have about differential experiences of boys and girls. Different from prior studies of gendered racial socialization, this study focuses not simply on what mothers say to children, but also on how they experience their role as socializing agents, including the fears, worries, and concerns that factor into their decisions about how to socialize children to race. This study is unique because it considers the emotional impact of racial socialization on mothers as they work to raise their children. By asking mothers about their experiences, the data reveal the unique stresses affecting Black mothers as they help children navigate racial terrain. The qualitative nature of the study allowed mothers to express concerns about socializing children to race that are understudied in the literature, including messages about romantic attraction and interracial relationships. Furthermore, the study identifies specific themes in the self-worth messages and Black pride messages that mothers give and explores why mothers deem these messages to be important.

Overview of Findings

Mothers perceived boys and girls as confronting different challenges due to the stigma associated with Black people. All mothers (n=16) believed that Black males have more racial barriers to confront than Black females, and therefore messages about discrimination were deemed more crucial for boys than girls. This finding is congruent with research findings that boys are given more preparation for bias messages than girls (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Also consistent with prior research, each mother expressed that girls were more susceptible to negative self-image and feelings of unattractiveness than boys, and therefore messages about beauty were deemed more important for girls than boys (Thomas & King, 2007). However, mothers had similar concerns for sons and daughters in regards to their romantic interests and the potential risks of interracial relationships.

Despite perceptions that Black males and females confront gender-specific race-based challenges, mothers believed that it was equally important for their sons and daughters to develop pride in themselves and their racial group. Though there is prior evidence that self-worth messages are universally given to boys and girls (Thomas & Speight, 1999), research shows that girls report receiving more racial pride messages than boys (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Yet, in this sample, mothers reported that they attempted to give both their sons and daughters messages about racial pride and self-worth.

This chapter presents mothers' beliefs about how boys and girls are differentially and similarly impacted by racism. First, mothers' perceptions of the impact of racism on boys are detailed, including mothers' beliefs that: (1) Black men face more obstacles in society than Black women, (2)

as they age, boys begin to be treated as threats, (3) the physical safety of boys is at risk in society, (4) boys experience pervasive racism at school, such as disparate discipline practices and academic expectations, and (5) preparation for bias messages are more crucial for boys. Following an analysis of mothers' concerns for sons, mothers' perceptions of the impact of racism on daughters are explored. Namely, mothers discussed their efforts to protect girls' self-esteem and feelings of desirability by emphasizing girls' acceptance of their physical beauty, including skin color and hair texture. Next, the chapter presents mothers' beliefs about the impact of racism on both girls' and boys' romantic attraction and relationships. Lastly, mothers' gender-neutral racial socialization goals are examined, including mothers' aspirations for girls and boys to develop strong senses of self-worth and racial pride. Regarding the encouragement of self-worth, mothers emphasized the importance of having personal pride, being grounded, and acknowledging one's purposefulness. Regarding the encouragement of Black pride, mothers' emphasized children's connectedness with and commitment to their racial group.

The Impact of Racism on Boys

Of the 16 mothers in the study, 10 had sons. All 10 mothers expressed a distinct set of worries for their sons. Namely, mothers worried that their sons were perceived as threatening and intimidating. Based on society's fear of Black boys and men, mothers believed their sons were at risk of being targeted by police and other authority figures, including teachers. Even the six mothers who only had daughters agreed that Black boys experienced more frequent and severe discrimination than girls due to the negative stereotypes associated with Black men. There was consensus across the sample that boys were more likely targets of discrimination than girls. Concerns for boys were informed by mothers' observations of how people responded to Black boys, and by the vicarious experiences of their fathers, brothers, and husbands.

"It's harder to be a Black man in America than to be a Black woman." Each mother was asked if she thought girls required different messages about being Black compared to boys. In response, each mother affirmed "it's harder to be a Black man in America than to be a Black woman." Mothers noted the work place, school, and police interactions as settings where Black boys and men are especially vulnerable to mistreatment. Mothers believed the underlying reason for Black men's more severe discriminatory experiences is society's fear of Black men. Paula, the mother of a 17-year-old son, said, "I don't think White people fear Black women the same way as they fear a Black man." Sabrina, the mother of a 15-year-old daughter, perceived that Black girls and women receive more leniency in society compared to boys and men. She said, "Right now, society is against the Black males. It's very hard. And especially if a male messes up and goes to jail, he's tore up. The police are so much harder on the brothers now versus a female."

Based on their own experiences at work and what they have witnessed happen to Black men in their lives, mothers believed that navigating predominantly White work environments was an easier task for Black women because they were relatively inconspicuous compared to Black men. Grace, who works in the tech industry and is the mother of three teenage boys, explained,

> In the real world, the work world, a Black woman will go further than a Black man because Black men are intimidating to the White masses. I can ease my way into some positions, and they don't even realize it because I'm so unassuming. They're just like, "Well, how'd she get here?!"

Grace's career experiences have led her to conclude that Black men are perceived as intimidating, and thus White employers put up barriers to their advancement. In contrast, Black women are less intimidating, and therefore they are not barred from advancing.

Carolyn, a mother of two teenage daughters, had similar impressions that Black girls and women are "tolerated" in predominantly White spaces, whereas Black boys and men are "seen as

capable of different things." Carolyn's experiences working in public schools elucidate the discrepancy between how Black women and men are perceived. She said,

> When mothers come up [to the school], they might be really mad, but they're not perceived as the angry Black woman to where they should be feared. But when an angry Black man comes, it's "Oh, I'm afraid. He might hurt me."

Although Black women and men may be expressing the same emotion, people's reactions to them are very different. In Carolyn's experience, when a Black man expresses anger, people become fearful and feel threatened; a woman with the same emotional display is not perceived as a threat.

Shift in societal perceptions: From cute to threatening. As boys started progressing in age and stature, nine mothers of sons said they became aware that their sons incurred negative reactions from people around them, presumably due to people's fear that their sons posed a danger. The one mother who did not mention this had a 10-year-old son who was small in stature and had yet to be perceived as an adolescent. Francine, a mother of two sons and two daughters, said that around the time her sons turned 12 years old, they went from being seen as "cute little Black kids" to being "looked at as threats." Francine said, "From the time that they hit puberty, a Black boy is now a threat to society." Francine believed that her preparation for bias messages became incredibly important when her sons started to develop more adult-like features because "they don't know they are a threat. Most of them don't know they're looked at as differently now."

Olivia, the mother of two teenage daughters and a nine-year-old son, explained,

> At a certain age for boys, everybody gets a little harder on them. When they're little like this, it's, "oh, he's so imaginative." And then the next thing you know…I'm aware of that. Everybody tells me that about boys. There is something that happens when they just get a little older and things aren't as cute anymore.

Though her son had yet to transition out of his cute, childlike appearance, Olivia anticipated that he would be less favorably perceived as he got older.

Francine and Grace described incidents when they were with their teenage sons and saw women tense up or lock their car doors as their sons approached. In Francine's example, she was standing in line at the grocery store and a White woman in front of her was visibly scared as Francine's son came towards her. Francine said that her son did not notice. She explained, "I didn't want to say anything to him, like, 'You just scared the crap out of this lady walking up to me.' I didn't want to tell him that, but I just noticed it myself." Francine decided to not tell her son because she wanted to shield him from the negative reaction that this woman had toward him. In Grace's example, her son did notice that an Asian woman locked her car doors as he walked through a parking lot. He told Grace that he was offended because he thought this woman locked her doors "just because I'm Black." Grace told her son, "You're a big Black man. I might have clicked my doors too." Grace's response to her son confirmed that his physical stature and race made him seem menacing to others, including other Black people. Her comment substantiated her son's impression that he was negatively stereotyped as dangerous because he was Black.

Mothers' concerns for sons' safety. Mothers of sons are concerned that being perceived as threatening may elicit grave consequences for their sons, such as being incarcerated, physically injured, or killed. Since her son's transition from childhood to adolescence, Kim became especially worried about his safety. She said, "I fear like crazy now that my son is 14, and him being out and the police just waiting to pull him over. That is my deepest fear." Francine had similar fears, saying, "They just profile them. Whenever I'm coming home from work, I'm always worried. Like if I see the cops jacking up some kids, I'm like, 'Oh God, please don't let it by my kid.' So you always have that worry."

Francine's worries were amplified for her 17-year-old son because of what she had seen happen to his close friends. There was a dearth of activities for young people in the community

where Francine's family lived. Consequently, young people "just kind of hang out…and that's when you start getting in trouble." She said her son had already dealt with friends being arrested and killed. An incident that led to one friend's arrest was chilling because it was an attempted robbery and the victim had a heart attack and died. Francine said, "It could have easily been my son in that car. You teach them everything and you try to teach them what's right from what's wrong, but you can't be with them all the time." Mothers had serious concerns about their sons' well being as they got older and became more subjected to police harassment and peer influence.

Consistent with the other mothers in this study, Renee agreed that her son was more vulnerable to discrimination and mistreatment than her daughters. However, Renee did not always feel this way. She originally believed that her daughters were more in need of protection. Renee, a public school employee, said she always had her daughters with her at the same school where she worked during their elementary school years because she wanted to make sure they were safe. As the baby of the family and the only boy, Renee wanted her son to be independent; therefore, "I didn't want him with me all the time, like how I did with them [her daughters]." She felt like having her son so close would be "too babying." However, her son's experiences at school, including low teacher expectations and racist bullying from peers, completely shifted her opinion. As early as kindergarten, Renee's son was beat up and spit on by children at his predominantly Latino public school, and the children told him that they treated him that way because he was Black. Renee said, "I kind of wish I could go back from the beginning and just have him here; give him the same thing as my daughters."

Based on the ease with which her daughters have progressed in school and the comparatively more difficult experiences of her son, Renee came to believe that boys are subjected to racism "as soon as they come out of the womb. My God, you think you got to be more protective of the girls…" As Barbara explained, "there are different levels of safety." Whereas Renee was initially most concerned about her daughters' physical safety, she and other mothers came to realize that their sons' "emotional and spiritual safety were at risk" when they went to school. The following section examines mothers' perceptions of how racism plays out at school for boys. Chapter 5 further details these negative school experiences and discusses how mothers chose to advocate on their children's behalf.

Racism at school.

Disparate discipline practices. Similar to their impressions of workplace and police interactions, mothers believed the gendered hierarchy operates in schools as well. As students at a predominantly White private school, Paula perceived that her son and other Black boys at the school were more likely targets of disciplinary action compared to Black girls. As the following quote illustrates, Paula believed that Black boys get stereotyped more often than Black girls, making the threshold for discipline lower for boys than girls. Referencing her observations at her son's school, Paula said,

> A Black guy can be by himself and still be stereotyped. But I don't think people really pay that much attention to a Black female by herself. Maybe a group of girls, you're looking to see what they're getting into, but if there's a Black girl walking, it's no big deal.

Mothers believed that, compared to girls, boys are more likely to stand out and be noticed because people perceived boys to be threatening, regardless of their actual behavior.

Similar to Paula's observations, other mothers perceived that their sons faced unique challenges at school. Mothers noticed that Black boys tended to be constructed as behavior problems, excluded from the classroom, and punished via humiliation. When Kim's elementary school-aged son was accused of sticking woodchips in the water fountain during recess, the recess supervisor walked him to several administrators' offices to report his alleged offense. Kim was livid, telling the supervisor, "'You did not need to cart my son around and humiliate him over and over and over.' But this is that attitude of what they do to Black boys." Due to this experience, Kim formed the impression

that, even at young ages, Black boys are treated as delinquents in need of correction rather than children in need of guidance. There is a growing body of research on racialized interactions in schools that are consistent with Kim's impression that Black boys are inequitably targeted for disciplinarily action (Ferguson, 2000; Monroe, 2005; Noguera, 2003).

Five mothers commented on the disappointment and indignation they felt when they visited their children's schools and "there was always Black boys in the halls." These mothers were frustrated by the regular sight of Black boys being disciplined by being sent out of the classroom. Olivia said, as early as nine o'clock in the morning, she would find Black boys sitting in the hallways at her son's elementary school. She reflected, "They are out of the class already. You're sitting outside, so then you are missing the lesson. This year I went to help with a field trip, and sure enough, Black boys are sitting outside. I don't want that to be my son." Similarly frustrated with these discipline patterns, Kim decided to confront the principal of her son's high school about Black boys being sent out of class. She told the principal, "I get tired of walking in this office and who's sitting outside the door: the Black boys. There needs to be a conscious recognition of how you're operating and then put some kind of process, system, something in place to actively and proactively counter that." In all, mothers of sons observed that Black boys were inequitably targeted and disciplined in school.

Disparate academic expectations. In addition to seemingly unjust discipline, mothers also reported that their sons were held to low, disparate expectations compared to their classmates. Grace questioned whether her three sons were getting the same educational experiences as other students at their ethnically diverse high school. Grace said, "I know it's a good school, and I know you can get a good education. But whether it's across the board, I can't say that's true." Over the years, Grace has had several negative experiences with her sons' teachers. She first realized that her sons might not be held to the same high expectations as other students when her oldest child was in kindergarten. Grace was concerned about his reading ability, and she asked his teacher "When is he going to learn to read? What can I do to help him?" The teacher's response was, "Oh, it's not time yet. He's ok. He's right on target." Again, in 1st grade, Grace asked the teacher, "Well, when's he gon' be reading?" And the teacher replied, "He's on target." Once he got to 2nd grade, the teacher told Grace, "He's behind level." Grace said, "Well, I was on you for kindergarten and 1ˢᵗ grade and you're like, 'Don't worry, he's gon get it.'" Despite Grace's inquiries about her son's reading, teachers did not put forth effort to get her son to a high reading level, which eventually resulted in him being behind.

Grace suspected that teachers' low expectations of her sons have contributed to her sons being less engaged in their learning. She regretted that "they're not as strong as they should be because they're not pushed like they should be. The boys just don't seem to have that excitement about learning and achieving." Grace's opinions about her sons' engagement in school were based on a comparison to her nieces, who were very engaged in learning and appeared to be pushed more by their teachers. More examples of mothers' perceptions of teachers' low expectations for sons and mothers' responses to unfair treatment will be described in Chapter 5.

Preparation for bias more crucial for boys. Considering that boys are perceived to have worse experiences of racism than girls, mothers deemed preparation for bias messages to be more important for their sons compared to their daughters. Francine is the mother of two sons and two daughters. When asked to share stories about her racial socialization experiences with them, she reflected, "I don't have many stories about the girls because the discrimination is more with the boys than it is with the girls. When it comes to discrimination, the boys are usually the ones that start getting profiled early in age." Due to her sons' and daughters' different experiences of racism, Francine believed that preparation for bias messages are necessary for her sons, but not her daughters. She said, "I haven't really had to tell the girls much of anything about race, like, 'people

are not going to like you because you're Black.' Because you don't get the discrimination as you do as a Black man."

Lillian has four daughters and she helped raise her nephew. She felt like there was a definite difference in what her nephew experienced compared to her daughters because of "the way African American men are labeled in this society—as the underdog so to speak." Her perceptions of Black men as "the underdog" were informed by watching the experiences of her ex-husband during their 20-year marriage. She explained,

> I've seen what he has had to go through as an African American male. And even now, he can be doing the same job as somebody of a different race on his job and come to find out they're getting paid, and he is making less than all of them. But those are the kinds of things that I watched him go through to get to where he is. Just having to work harder and being on top of your game.

Although Olivia found that she mostly gave her nine-year-old son and teenage daughters the same messages about race, she anticipated telling her son that, "he would have to be more on the defense." When he begins to transition out of childhood, she plans to tell him that, "Just because you are a Black man, they may have a first impression, and depending on your size and if you are bigger, they are going to be scared of you." Olivia explained, "The girls need to be on defense too, but with boys, it is a safety thing." Like other mothers, Olivia believed that her son's safety was more at risk than her daughters, requiring that he take a more defensive stance in the world than they do.

Barbara had 3 daughters and one son. Her specific message to her son was:

> "You're a Black man in America and you have it the hardest." And I'm always telling him that. "And I know that we love you, but it's like you're a walking target out here in this world." So this is a scary thing for us as parents to have to deal with it with him. I see how people see him by the way they treat him and the way they talk to him. I'm very observant of it. And I've taken a step back and looked at it, like, how do people view my son, who I feel is the most beautiful person, but they don't.

Barbara felt obligated to explain to her son how he would be perceived throughout his life. Her comments reveal the hurt that mothers experience as their innocent sons get positioned as threats.

Whether prepared or not, sons experience bias. Three mothers in the study expressed reluctance about giving their children preparation for bias messages. Of these three mothers, Paula was the only mother with a son. Therefore, the majority of mothers with sons were proactive in their approach to discussing racism and they felt that their children should be prepared for bias. However, Paula hesitated to discuss racism with her son because she did not want him to develop hatred for White people or to anticipate being discriminated against. Despite her reluctance, Paula's son learned about bias early in life due to his own experiences of racism at school.

In 4th grade, Paula's son was suspended from school because he called a White male student "faggot" after the student kept licking him. In response to his suspension, Paula went to the school to speak with the principal. Ironically, she found that several other parents were waiting to speak to the principal about a separate incident involving all the Black boys from K-5th grade. The day that Paula's son was out of school for suspension, White and Black male students were caught using the word "nigger." The other parents told Paula how the principal responded to students' use of the n-word. She explained,

> The principal took every Black boy out of class that morning, which is why the parents were there. She went from kindergarten to 5th grade and brought every African American boy into the auditorium to talk to them about the n-word, to tell them what it meant. Of course no parents were in there, so we don't know exactly what she said.

The principal, who was a White woman, was eventually removed from the school for her actions because parents complained to the superintendent that it was irresponsible of her to single out the Black males students and give them her explanation of the n-word. The aspect of this experience that was most significant for Paula's son was that the boys who used the n-word were not punished, but he was. He asked his mother, "Why did I get suspended for saying faggot, but they don't get suspended for saying the n-word? Is it 'cause I'm Black?" Paula explained, "All I could tell him was, 'I believe so.' Because that's what I felt in my heart." She told her son, "Your punishment, to me, was harsher because you are Black. But I think both words are equally bad." Paula thought the school should have treated the students who said the n-word the same way they did her son for his offense. Paula also believed the boy who licked her son should have been punished.

Paula's experience with her son illustrates that, even when mothers refrain from preparing their children for bias, discussions about discrimination arise eventually because children, and boys especially, are confronted with discrimination. Therefore, mothers' messages about race and racism, whether in anticipation or in reaction to an event, become necessary socialization practices. Even when mothers, such as Paula, do not want to make their children aware that they could be targets of discrimination, children are made aware of it when it happens to them directly. Despite Paula's reluctance to discuss racism with her son in order to shield him from feeling targeted, her son's own experiences resulted in him being attuned to racial inequities and to his status as a likely target of bias.

The Impact of Racism on Girls

Although mothers perceived that boys experienced more discrimination than girls, mothers were concerned about how racism impacted their daughter's self-image and sense of beauty. Whereas only two of the 10 mothers of sons mentioned that they encouraged their sons to feel handsome, all mothers of daughters referenced messages about beauty (n=14). The 14 mothers of daughters included both mothers who only had daughters and mothers with daughters and sons. As was the case for boys, the types of experiences that girls encountered spurred mothers' gender-specific racial socialization messages. For girls, such incidents included peer interactions that made daughters question their attractiveness in comparison to White standards of beauty. Upon entering school, girls began to have questions about their skin color and hair texture, often brought upon by peers' attention or teasing. From childhood through early adulthood, daughters' experiences elicited messages about beauty from their mothers.

Emphasis on physical beauty. The aspects of beauty that most commonly sparked conversations between mothers and daughters were skin color and hair texture. When Carolyn's daughter moved from a predominantly Black school to a predominantly White school in 2nd grade, she started noticing differences between herself and her White female classmates, particularly regarding hair texture. She asked her mother, "Why doesn't my hair lay straight?" Carolyn said,

> I had an opportunity to make it really positive and basically say, "You have hair that is strong, and most White girls have hair that's weak. It just lays there. You can't do anything with it. Maybe you can curl it, but the curls fall. Or you can put it in a ponytail, but the ponytail just sits there." I said, "You have an opportunity to have your hair braided. You can have yours curled. You can have it braided and then undo the braids and it's crinkly. You can wear it in several ponytails. You can wear it down." I think a lot of it was really empowering her to be able to see, "Ok, my hair is strong because I can do all these things with it."

Carolyn wanted to ensure that her daughter felt proud of her hair, especially since she was regularly around children who looked different from her. She told her daughter that people often want what they do not have, and it was important that her daughter be happy with her hair and the various ways she can style it.

Alice had a similar conversation with her youngest daughter in the 3rd grade when her daughter said she no longer wanted to wear her hair in afro puffs because her fellow classmates would touch them. As Alice explained, before her daughter went to this predominantly White school, she loved to wear her hair in afro puffs. But at this school, "The kids play with her hair and they want to touch her hair because it's different." To encourage her daughter to keep her unique style, Alice told her, "They like your hair because they can't do that with their hair. If they put their hair in two ponytails, it's going to be straight. It's not the same effect." Like Carolyn, Alice framed her daughter's hair difference as advantageous rather than shameful or deficient.

Protecting girls' self-esteem and feelings of desirability. As Black women themselves, mothers were conscious of the negative feedback their daughters may get from peers regarding their attractiveness. Trish anticipated that her daughter would experience identity issues if their family remained in the predominantly White East Coast city where her daughter was born. She decided to move from this city, which she described as racist, to the Bay Area to give her daughter opportunities to see more people that resembled her and to feel proud of herself. Trish explained that if they had stayed there,

> She would spend a lot of time feeling very unattractive because people wouldn't be able to date her. So with her trying to grow up in that community and be a Black woman, she was going to lose a lot of herself. That really is an integral part of why we moved to California. I wanted her to be around Black people and I wanted her to understand Blackness in a way that was different. Because she experienced Blackness as the "other," she was the "other." But I wanted her to see herself in a very different light, which is exactly what I got by moving to [the Bay Area].

Despite being pleased with her decision to surround her daughter with more Black people in order to give her a different image of herself, as a teenager, her daughter continued to work through feelings of unattractiveness and insecurity. As Trish explained, her daughter commented that "I feel that because I'm darker, I'm not as attractive to people. Guys in school, they like lighter girls." Trish said,

> I have been trying to tell her, "Your beauty is not around your skin color; your beauty is in terms of how you interact with people and just the fact that you really are cute." So that has been a big one for us in terms of just her shade.

Sabrina's daughter made similar comments about her skin color. As early as kindergarten, classmates would taunt her daughter by calling her "black, blackie, charcoal." Growing up, Sabrina was also teased because of her skin color. She explained,

> I knew what I faced as being a dark-skinned child, so I said whenever I had a child, I don't want my child to be faced with that. And when I was coming up, my mother and them never told me I was pretty.

Compared to her own development of self-esteem, Sabrina said of her daughter,

> I think that it hasn't been as hard because she has someone telling her that she is beautiful and just guiding her along the way. And I think that if I would've had that then I would probably be much further than where I am today. And my self-esteem probably would be much, much, much higher. I just got to this point.

To help her daughter feel proud of her skin color, Sabrina constantly reminded her, "You know, everybody like chocolate. They always come back for chocolate, right? So remember that." Her daughter would reply, "Yeah, everybody like chocolate." Sabrina believed that her daughter's self-esteem has benefited from Sabrina's messages about beauty.

Sabrina, Trish, and other mothers of daughters regularly told their daughters how beautiful they were in order to combat the negative feedback they got from peers. Grace did not have daughters, but she considered it very important to consistently compliment her nieces on their beauty in order

to raise their self-esteem. She said that, as a family, they celebrated the girls' "beautiful big lips" and "nappy hair" because "the world might not say that."

Elise said her daughter began to feel undesirable when she started college because of "the whole dating scene there." Elise explained,

> In high school, she was the cheerleader, she was active, she was this, she was that, so it was like, "Yeah I got it going on." When she got to college, it was like, "Mom they only want the White girls, even the Black guys." So it was like a slap in the face. It just totally slapped her in the face.

Elise hoped that the way she raised her daughter prepared her for the rude awakening that she might not always be attractive to others. Elise said, "I just tried to raise her with a true sense of, 'You are absolutely gorgeous,' across the board. So what comes after that, if you already know it inside, that doesn't hit as hard." Although Elise raised her daughter to know that she was beautiful, her daughter was disturbed by the realization that men, particularly Black men, were attracted to women who did not resemble her.

Pressure on girls to wear hair weaves. Two mothers discussed their daughters' desire to get a hair weave as a contentious issue. Hair weaves are human or artificial hairpieces that are interwoven with real hair to give the appearance of longer and/or differently textured hair. Although they discouraged it, Sabrina and Kim were willing to pay for their daughters' weaves because they wanted their daughters to feel beautiful. Sabrina said that her daughter had been asking to get a weave, and although she did not want her to get it because of the cost, Sabrina decided to allow it "because that's what all the girls are wearing now." Sabrina said she is going to "get the best" because she does not want her daughter to feel embarrassed about not having the same thing as her peers. Sabrina explained that when she was young, she had to wear the same clothes to school twice in a row. She remembered feeling ashamed for being less well dressed than the other students, and she did not want her daughter to feel inferior by not having a weave like her classmates.

Kim was also reluctant but willing to let her daughter get a weave. Kim preferred that her daughter embrace her natural hair texture. She told her daughter, "Girl please, you look good. Stop messing around with that weave." But as Kim explained,

> She loves wearing the weave. She loves it because of the ease of it. And I tell her all the time, "There isn't a Black woman on this planet that didn't have to figure out her hair." And she struggles all the time learning how to work with the texture of her hair and the way it is.

Although Kim preferred that her daughter not wear a weave, she recognized that her daughter was learning how to work with her hair. For Black girls, feelings about one's hair can be an important factor in self-esteem. Mothers helped their daughters feel good about their hair and themselves.

Whereas Sabrina and Kim's daughters requested a weave, Alice's oldest daughter got pressure from her grandmother, Alice's mother, to get a long, straight hairstyle. Alice's daughter wore her hair in locks, but Alice's mother regularly encouraged her to get a different hairstyle. Alice explained,

> My mother doesn't like locks and so she's always like, "Oh, when are you going to take your hair down?" So she'll say the same to me, you know, "She looks like a boy, I don't know why she wants to wear her hair like that."

In response to her mother's insistence on changing Alice's daughter's hairstyle, Alice repeatedly told her mother, "No, I don't want extensions in her hair. I don't want her to have this fake hair down to here."

In addition to the disapproval of her grandmother, Alice's daughter also got teased at school when she first started wearing locks in the 6th grade. Alice helped her daughter withstand negative feedback about her appearance from both her peers and her grandmother. As the experiences of Alice, Sabrina, Kim, Trish, Elise and Carolyn exemplify, Black mothers helped their daughters

develop feelings of physical attractiveness despite messages from peers, family, and society at large that straight hair and light skin are standards of beauty.

The Impact of Racism on Romantic Attraction and Relationships

Attractiveness of Black women. Mothers believed that society's glorification of White standards of beauty are not only detrimental to their daughters' self-image, but also to their sons' attraction to Black women. Just as mothers wanted their daughters to feel beautiful, they expressed concern that their sons find Black women attractive. As Black women themselves, mothers found it personally offensive when Black boys and men did not recognize Black women as beautiful.

Kim explained that the model of beauty as White could be just as damaging to her sons as it could be to her daughter. She said,

> It's such a struggle for me because that's the exact antithesis of myself. I'm never going to have light skin. I'm never going to have long hair, unless of course I get a weave. My butt is going to always be big. So, to say that I'm not beautiful bothers me a lot. That's why it bothers me with my boys. I don't want them going that way because they don't think Black women are beautiful.

Grace had similar concerns for her three sons. She told them,

> I don't want to ever hear you say, "I don't date Black women." Now, if you fall in love with a White, blond-haired, blue-eyed woman just because, that's fine. But if you are out saying, "I don't date Black women," then that's an insult to me as your mother. That's an insult to all Black women; that you say you can search this whole world and can't find a Black woman that's suitable.

Although Trish only has a daughter, her experiences working on a college campus have raised her concerns about how Black young men perceive Black young women. She explained,

> I've met a couple of athletes on campus who are like, "I will not date a Black girl." And for me, I am like, how do you look at your mother or your sister and be like, "I will not date you?" But you are going to look at someone with blond hair and blue eyes and be like, "This is what I consider attractive." Which is fine. The issue with me is not that they find someone else attractive; it's that they have decided that people who look like them are not good enough.

Elise agreed with Trish, explaining that her concern is not with interracial relationships, but with either her son or daughter thinking that "someone White or someone other is a better choice." She said, "I have had people tell me, and this make me cringe, 'I'm going to be with this person so that my child can look a certain way.' That makes me hurt." Mothers wanted their children choose partners based on their affection for them, but they hoped sons would not exclude Black women as potential mates.

In order to avoid her three sons' embrace of a White standard of beauty, Grace made conscious efforts to teach her children that Black women are beautiful. She said,

> I make a big deal out of beautiful chocolate people. When they were growing up, I always did. Gabrielle Union was the best thing since sliced bread because she is absolutely gorgeous. So when somebody is chocolate and beautiful, I say, "She's so pretty. She's adorable." And I make a big deal out of Beyonce too. They're chocolate people of all shades, and just because they look close to White don't mean they're the most beautiful. So I make them look. I challenge their idea of what beauty is.

By emphasizing the beauty of Black women of all skin tones, Grace tried to ensure that her sons would not ascribe to a narrow definition of beauty.

Natalie's concern was not with her sons' love interests. Instead, she was concerned about her daughter's attraction to Black men. Regarding her daughter, Natalie explained,

> I really feel like she will probably never marry a Black man. She always talks about, "Ok,

when I go to college, and I'm going to find that Italian, you know he is going to be from southern Italy, he's going to have that real tanned skin, he's going to play soccer" ─ so she has got this all mapped out, exactly who she is going to marry.

Although Natalie was open to her daughter dating interracially, she did not want her to view Black men as less desirable. Natalie said,

I just reiterate to her, because she always talks about meeting this Italian man, but I never hear her say, "Oh yeah, I'm going to meet this Black man…" She never says that, so I just remind her, "Don't lump all our Black men into one category." She's like, "No, no, I'm not Mom." "But I don't always hear you speak positively of Black men; your dad is Black, your grandfather is Black, you come from a Black family, so just know you are not necessarily looking for the race, you are looking for the qualities that you want in a man and no matter what the race is, if they meet the qualities that you're looking for, then that's what you fall in love with."

Natalie's message to her daughter about looking for a mate echoes the majority of mothers in the study. Aside from one mother of a daughter, mothers were content with children's possible interest in interracial dating. However, mothers were skeptical of how their children would be received by their partner's non-Black family. Therefore, when children expressed interest in interracial relationships, mothers gave preparation for bias messages.

Interracial relationships. Though most mothers were open to their children dating interracially, mothers of both sons and daughters worried that if their children decided to date outside their race, their partner's family would not be accepting. For example, Mary's son attended a predominantly White, private, all-boys high school. When Mary noticed that her son was showing interest in a few of the non-Black girls at the neighboring school, she felt it necessary to prepare him for possible disappointment that he may not be able to date someone he likes. She explained,

I see he likes all types of girls. I said, "I'm not trying to hurt your feelings, but you may come across a girl who you want to take to the dance and her family may say 'no, absolutely not.' So, I don't want your feelings to be hurt, and that's not a reflection on you, but some of these people cannot get ready for it."

Paula's son also attended a private, predominantly White high school, and he was in a relationship with a Filipino girl. She said,

My biggest concern was that, and I did tell him this, that, as Black families, we're more accepting of interracial relationships. We don't mind the other coming to our family functions and hanging out with us. But sometimes, when they have their functions, they don't want someone there of another color.

Paula's perspective was largely based on an Asian friend of hers who had a Black husband, but did not let her family know that she was married. "She hid her husband. And he would leave if her parents came to the house. I don't want my son to be like that." Now that her son was in an interracial relationship, Paula's experience with her friend prompted her to be especially vigilant. "So it made me kind of watch when I first met her family, because don't for once think I'm going to let you date my son and he's not welcome in your home or with your family." Although Paula had mostly positive experiences with his girlfriend's parents, she still wondered, "How are the grandmother and old school relatives going to accept it?"

Like Paula, Kim's concerns about her children dating outside their race were informed by what she had seen relatives and friends experience as the Black person in an interracial relationship. She said,

I could never do it because I don't want to constantly have to educate about my experience during the day when I come home at night. And I just think, too often, especially with Black

men and White women, our culture gets lost. They end up acquiescing because the mother ends up being the main caretaker, and her values end up being placed more strongly in the children than the Black culture. So that's my issue.

Whereas Mary, Paula, and Kim had some reservations about their sons engaging in interracial relationships, Sabrina urged her daughter to avoid interracial relationships altogether. She explained,

I always tell my daughter, "Stick with your own race because your own race knows you better than anybody. It's going to always be somebody in that family that is not gon' accept you, and you gon' have to deal with that. If you stick with your own race, you ain't got to trip about that."

Generally, the common concern among mothers was not that their children love someone of a different race, but that the family of the partner may reject their children. Mothers prepared children for the possibility that the family of their non-Black partner would not accept them.

Gender-Neutral Racial Socialization Goals

Although sons and daughters confronted gender-specific race-based challenges, mothers believed that all children needed to develop knowledge of and pride in themselves and their racial group. Consistent with previous findings (see Thomas & Speight, 1999), mothers reported giving the same messages about self-pride to boys and girls. Mothers sought to give children awareness of their own self-worth and of the legacy of Black people in order to invalidate racial prejudice. As Boykin and Toms (1985) theorized, the mothers in this study are indeed negotiating mainstream, minority, and Black cultural realms of experiences as they consider their goals for children's optimal socialization. Cutting across all of these realms, mothers also have higher-order goals for how children understand humanity. The following sections present mothers' aspirations for their children's knowledge of self and heritage.

Encouragement of self-worth. Universally, mothers wanted their children to feel a strong sense of self-worth. Each mother expressed the desire that her children love themselves. Mothers explained that a strong knowledge and love of self provides the foundation to remain strong when faced with adversity in life. Mothers spoke of the importance of their children being proud of who they are and grounded in who they are. Also, drawing on spiritual doctrine, 11 of the 16 mothers wanted their children to be aware that their existence is deliberate.

The importance of personal pride. Encouraging personal pride was a way mothers hoped to buffer against adverse experiences outside the home. Mothers did this by frequently telling their sons and daughters how deserving they are. Mothers' messages about personal pride echoed findings from previous research about parents' emphasis on egalitarian principles as an aspect of their racial socialization practices (Hughes et al., 2006). For example, Elise said she tried to raise her son and daughter with a sense of self-love so that when they are treated unjustly, they know that "They are equal to everyone on every level; having the sense that you are as they are, no better, no worse. You are human and they are human." Elise explained that she did and said things to help her children feel good about themselves because "It makes you develop the world on your own terms. They have a sense of 'I am beautiful in who I am.'" To accomplish this, Elise made sure her children had Black dolls to play with and had books that emphasized Black people's accomplishments. She explained, "We tried not to let things emphasize the White." Instead, she and her husband wanted to provide toys and books that reflected their children. She wanted her children "to understand who you are is so very important and you are so beautiful right there where you are."

Renee told her children that it is a good thing to be Black, "even though people tend to want to make you feel like something is wrong because you got that skin color. But no! You're beautiful. You can do anything like anybody else, and more." Olivia also told her daughters that they were intelligent, beautiful, and well prepared. She said she never wanted her children to think, "'Well, since I'm not White, I shouldn't deserve to…' You may have to work a little bit harder, but get on

up there!"

Like Olivia, other mothers also explained to children that difference does not necessitate hierarchy. For instance, Francine said she did not want her children "looking at a White person and saying 'I wish I was White,' because I want them to look at themselves and realize that they have talents, and they have gifts, and they have their own beauty."

The importance of being grounded. Mothers encouraged their children to be grounded and unshaken by others' attitudes and opinions. In a few cases, mothers' emphasis on being grounded was brought about by observations that their children were too easily swayed by people's opinions, or too eager to conform to others' ways. Trish noticed that her daughter "is a little insecure in terms of wanting validation from other people," so Trish was determined to help her daughter understand that "other people's perceptions of you don't define you." Trish told her daughter, "At some point you're going to be acceptable and at some point you're not; and you are going to have to find that place of strength so that you understand for yourself that you are always acceptable to you."

The importance of being grounded was salient for Diana because her daughter, who was the only non-White player on her sports team, seemed to try very hard to conform to the ways of her White teammates. Diana tried to get her daughter to understand that "if your feet aren't grounded, then you're bound to slip and slide trying to find your way." Renee gave a similar message to her son, who was frequently a minority in his social settings. She said, "I just feel that if you know you, and what you're about, and you have a strong sense of self in who you are and where you come from, then nobody can shake you." Overall, mothers encouraged children to interact with the world on their own terms, and not succumb to pressure to fit another person's value system.

Acknowledging one's purposefulness. Mothers also sought to influence their children's self-worth by informing them that they were created purposefully. When children questioned why they are the way they are, (especially in comparison to peers who may look differently, talk differently, or get different reactions from society), mothers told children that they were who they were supposed to be.

Eleven mothers framed messages about pride using spiritual doctrine to support their children's understanding of self and others. For example, Lillian said, "I taught them to be proud of who they are. We're Black and we're proud. Don't be ashamed of the color of your skin. That's how God created us. You be proud of that." Olivia concurred, telling her children that "who you are is exactly who God made you to be. You are exactly who you were meant to be." Paula told her son, "God made everybody, and there's no great race. God didn't say the White man is better than the Black man. There's nowhere you'll read it. So don't ever feel inferior." Spirituality is often an important coping strategy for African Americans faced with racism and discrimination (Mattis, 2002; Utsey, Adams, & Bolden, 2000). Spirituality reflects an aspect of the self that can provide a connection with a larger community and a sense of meaning for one's life (Harrell, 2000).

Mothers explained that self-worth was essential for children's progress through life, especially during distress. Given the existence of racial inequities, mothers sought to raise their children to feel proud, beautiful, capable, and grounded.

Encouragement of Black pride. In addition to wanting children to have pride in themselves as part of the human race, mothers also wanted them to realize pride as Black people. For example, Barbara taught her children that the struggles Black people go through contribute to their strength. She said,

> It's going to be a reality to the situation where you may have to work harder because this is just the world we live in. But you need to know that you're up to the task because you've come from a long line of people that have done that and you have a lot to be proud of.

Mothers made efforts to inform their children about the historical accomplishments of Black people so that children would take pride in their cultural legacy. Mary said she and her son:

Talk a lot about the inventors, how much we as a people have brought America to where it is today. They [society] don't talk about it, but nevertheless it is true. I am definitely trying to expose him to those types of things so that he will always have a sense of pride.

To push them to do their best, Grace told her sons, "You stand on the shoulders of these giants that have sacrificed and done great things."

Encouragement of connectedness and communalism. Four mothers expressed their hopes that their children recognize the Black cultural strengths of connectedness and communalism that mothers found to be virtues in their lives. Concerning her son and daughter, Elise explained,

I think they are really getting it now, just how loving we can be. We are so communal. Even like right now, I am raising my nephew. How we kick in and how we are there for each other. My family is my family. My biological family, my sisters or whatever, but then there is my other family—my really good friends. I am not saying that in no other culture this exists, but in Black culture that really starts to exist. Those people that you are close to really become family. They are not friends, they are family. I am sure it happens in other cultures. But even with working with other people that are White, I get the sense that they don't know how embedded that is in our culture. Like this sense of family ties, that it is not perfect, you don't have a lot, but you absolutely share it. And sometimes Black folks don't get how we have that. They don't get how intense that is. The way that we really do kick in. They see the division of us so much that they don't see that we are there. I really want them to get that, that sense of support, that communal support that you feel it. I don't feel like it is always expressed and sometimes we don't really get how it is there, but it is there.

Connectedness and communalism among Black people have been described as expressions of cultural integrity (Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, & Albury, 1997). Communalism is conceptualized as the awareness of one's inextricable link and mutual interdependence with others (Boykin et al., 1997). The value of extended family is one way in which Black communities express communalism and interconnectedness as the embodiment of an African cultural legacy (Boykin et al., 1997). Among the interviewees, two mothers modeled communalism based on their willingness to take over parenting responsibilities for other people's children. Although Elise and her husband had not wanted to raise another child, Elise assumed care of her 2-year-old nephew when it became necessary. Also, Carolyn obtained temporary guardianship of her 6th grade student after Child Protective Services removed him from his home and placed him in foster care.

Barbara wanted her children to experience the connectedness of Black people because of the positive feelings that can result from affiliation with one's racial group. She explained,

I think that I want my kids to understand that they are a part of a community of Black people, we are a part of that. And we have a rich history. Part of it is spirituality, part of it is the connectedness, part of it is just our identity. Just embracing those aspects of things, like the swag or whatever it is, you embrace that because that's a part of your community and that's a part of who you are. And I'm so happy to just see [my son] or my daughter when they feel comfortable around their people, because that's who you are, that's a part of who you are, and I want you to feel that connectedness. And I want you to relate to it and I want you to be proud of it. So I want them to feel like, "Yeah, we're a part of a community." It's almost like just the way we interact with one another, it's kind of like, to me, it's innate. It's like, we've got those things passed down, generation to generation. And so we feel connected. We see each other across the room, and we're like, "what's up?" [laughing] So I feel like, that's great, that's a good thing.

Barbara's encouragement of a communal worldview for her children exemplifies one of the traditional African American parenting principles that psychologist Wade W. Nobles (2006) described as reflections of ancient African philosophical concepts. Specifically, Nobles asserted that

the parenting principle of reciprocity suggests that parents should help children understand that they are interconnected and interdependent with others, and "what happens to one, happens to all" (p. 177). By reclaiming parenting techniques from the indigenous cultural system of African and African American communities, parents help to prepare children for excellence in the context of an often non-supportive environment (Nobles, 2006).

Other mothers echoed Barbara's sentiments about how a shared racial identity allowed for connectedness among strangers. Grace explained it this way:

> Being Black actually becomes a good thing because it's an identity, something that you can identify with. You meet another Black person on the street, then all of a sudden, you automatically have something in common. That's an identity thing. Just like when you meet another Christian, you automatically have something in common because it's an identity thing. So it's not bad to have that very strong ethnic identity. You know, we're brown, we're chocolate people, so it's no doubt.

Francine also valued interconnectedness among Black people and she taught her children about communalism by modeling it for them.

> I've always embraced my other Black people. I always speak. You know, we always have that bond. I don't care where you are, you always say, "Hey, how you doing?" That's a brother and I don't care who that is, they are your brother and sister, I always speak to them. I always respect them. And when you see an older Black lady standing up on the bus, give her your seat. I want them to have the connection of this is our people. If you don't respect your own people, then nobody else will.

Congruent with scholarship on Afrocultural family values, mothers in this study aspired for their children to recognize communalism as an aspect of Black cultural integrity.

Emphasis on Black group commitment. For two mothers, showing respect to other Black people included a commitment of generosity to Black communities. Kim used her own work in her children's schools as an example of how she expected her children to give back to Black communities. She said,

> Because so many people have done so much in the past, you have an obligation. I don't care how small it is. I'm not talking about go find a cure for sickle cell or anything like that. I'm just talking about in very little ways. Just like I do everyday, with the Black History Month thing, being in the classroom. Give back in some way.

Carolyn, the mother to two teenage girls, framed giving back as her daughters' obligation because people have given generously to them in their pursuit of basketball.

> They have expectations to come back and share with those who didn't have the opportunity, whether it be family members, whether it be younger girls who are trying to play basketball. It's their responsibility to help because there's somebody who helped them along the way. As long as they understand that nothing that they've accomplished, they've accomplished on their own. And that there's a reason why they are where they are.

In all, mothers wanted their children to be aware of the legacy and culture of Black people. Additionally, mothers encouraged their children to continue the legacy with a sense of pride.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided insight into why mothers differentially socialize their sons and daughters to race. The findings contribute to our understanding of the concerns, fears, and worries that mothers carry as they raise their children in a racially stratified society. Additionally, the findings reveal some of the specific messages about self-pride and racial pride that mothers deemed important for all children, regardless of gender.

Mothers believed that boys were more likely to be targets of discrimination than girls. Their children's experiences at school, as well as mothers' own experiences in the work place, led them to

believe that boys have greater racial barriers to confront than girls. Mothers believed that stereotypical constructions of Black males as intimidating and threatening resulted in boys being subjected to unfair treatment. As boys got older, mothers observed that their sons were increasingly perceived as threats. Mothers thought preparation for bias messages were most important for boys because boys would face more severe discrimination in society than girls.

For daughters, mothers gave messages about feeling beautiful and proud of their physical characteristics. Their messages were often prompted by daughters' concerns that their hair texture or skin color made them less desirable. Mothers emphasized messages about Black women's attractiveness to sons and daughters. They believed that boys and girls were vulnerable to beliefs that physical characteristics common to White women were more desirable than Black women's physical features. Although most mothers welcomed their children's interest in interracial dating, they prepared children for the possibility that their partner's family would not tolerate the relationship.

Self-pride and racial pride messages were considered important for both boys and girls. Mothers encouraged their children to accept themselves as Black people and embrace the legacies of the Black race. Mothers urged their children to be proud, grounded, and to recognize their existence as purposeful. By teaching about historical accomplishments and Black cultural strengths, mothers sought to instill a sense of pride in their children to promote well being despite adversity.

The findings from this chapter contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how mothers' perceive their sons and daughters differential social realities, and why they believe particular messages about racism, race, and self are important for their children. The findings strengthen our understanding of why mothers socialize their sons and daughters in different ways. Mothers in this study recognized that their sons and daughters faced different challenges, yet the data do not support assertions that mothers hold higher expectations for daughters compared to sons (Hill & Zimmerman, 1995; Staples & Johnson, 1993). Though mothers in this sample believed that their sons were at greater risk of being discriminated against, they did not express differential expectations of their sons' achievement.

Chapter IV
Mothers' Approaches to Preparing Children for Bias

Introduction

Research on stigma and prejudice explores how being a member of stigmatized group, or the target of discrimination, can affect one's mental and physical health (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). There is ample evidence that being the target of discrimination has negative consequences, including institutional and structural barriers (Better, 2008; powell, 2008), increased stress reactions (Brown et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1997), and poor physical health (Paradies, 2006; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). However, there is also evidence that awareness of the possibility of being a target of discrimination can be self-protective (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). Specifically, attributing a negative event to discrimination rather than one's own inferiority results in self-esteem protection for members of stigmatized groups (Major, Kaiser, & McCoy, 2003). Yet, perceiving oneself as a target of discrimination can also incur negative consequences, such as recognizing yourself as devalued in society and as subjected to uncontrollable negative events (Major, Kaiser, & McCoy, 2003). Furthermore, attributing a negative event to discrimination can result in increased feelings of hostility (Major, Kaiser, & McCoy, 2003).

Similar to findings that perceiving oneself as a target of discrimination can yield both positive and negative results, studies of racial socialization have also found mixed results regarding the benefit and harm of giving children preparation for bias messages (Hughes et al., 2006). Whereas several studies found that preparation for bias messages support children's resilience and problem-solving strategies (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Phinney & Chavira, 1995), others indicate that preparation for bias may contribute to increased feelings of depression and anger, increased anti-social behaviors, and decreased self-esteem and academic engagement (Davis & Stevenson, 2006; Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009; Stevenson et al., 1997). The negative outcomes associated with parents' preparation for bias messages suggest that explicit cautions about discrimination may have unintended consequences for children (Hughes, McGill, Ford, & Tubbs, 2011; Hughes, Witherspoon et al., 2009).

Despite inconsistent findings about how preparation for bias impacts children, research suggests that Black parents primarily endorse preparing children for bias. In a review of the literature, percentage estimates of African American parents reporting preparation for bias ranged from 67 percent to 90 percent across four samples (Hughes et al., 2006). A study of 104 African American parents found that 96 percent of respondents thought it was important to prepare their children for bias (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Research shows that Black parents give preparation for bias messages because they "view discrimination as inevitable and seek to arm children with tools for coping with potentially damaging psychological aftermath" (Hughes et al., 2008, pp. 260). By preparing children for bias, parents hope to buffer against inevitable experiences of discrimination by bolstering children's determination and optimism.

The research literature has provided some insight into why parents perceive preparation for bias to be an important aspect of their racial socialization practices (Hughes et al., 2008). Yet, little is known about the variance in parents' beliefs about preparing their children for bias. Additionally, several studies have found that parental preparation for bias messages are related to negative outcomes for children, but research has yet to study parents' anticipations of how their messages will affect their children and how they make decisions about preparing children for bias. Furthermore, no studies have investigated the beliefs of parents who do not give preparation for bias messages. Given the evidence that preparation for bias messages are not inherently protective, I examined if and how mothers wrestled with conflicting expectancies when making their children aware of discrimination. I also examined mothers' perceptions of how children accepted or resisted their preparation for bias messages.

Overview of Findings

To examine mothers' approaches to giving preparation for bias messages to children, I asked the mothers to share their opinions on talking to their children about racism. Consistent with prior research (Hughes et al., 2006), the majority of mothers (12 out of 16) perceived conversations about racism to be imperative. However, three mothers were relatively reluctant to broach the subject. Of these three mothers, two were mothers of daughters and one had only a son. The findings indicate two primary approaches to discussions of racial bias with children: proactive and moderate.[1] Mothers who took a proactive approach prepared children for racial bias to help buffer against the psychological and material consequences of these experiences, whereas mothers who took a moderate approach chose not to give preparatory messages in order to avoid the psychological consequences of children knowing that they are in a stigmatized group.

Mothers with proactive and moderate approaches were working from two different hypotheses about how the awareness of possibly being a target of discrimination affects one's well being. Mothers with a proactive approach believed their children should know that they might be targets of discrimination and know how to carry themselves accordingly, as a means of protection. In contrast, mothers with a moderate approach believed that awareness of possibly being a target of discrimination contributed to undesired outcomes, such as feelings of hostility, disempowerment, and victimization, and therefore preparation for bias was more detrimental than beneficial. Though mothers with a moderate approach chose not to prepare their children for bias, they did discuss racism once children experienced it for themselves.

Complementing mixed results regarding the impact of preparation for bias messages on child outcomes, this study shows that mothers have divergent beliefs regarding the pros and cons of preparing children for bias. This chapter presents the characteristics of each approach and offers a comparative analysis of proactive and moderate attitudes toward preparation for bias.

Proactive Approach: Mothers Prepare Children for Racial Bias

Racism manifests in several different ways, including ideologically, structurally, and interpersonally. Ideological racism includes the establishment of oppressive social relations based on the creation of a "social illusion" that oppression is legitimate and justified because Blacks are "naturally inferior" (Shelby, 2003, p. 177). Structural racism includes how "institutional practices and cultural patterns can perpetuate racial inequity without relying on racist actors," such as "racially neutral" policies that reinforce racial stratification and systematically result in worse outcomes for people of color (powell, 2008, p. 795). Interpersonal racism includes "direct and vicarious experiences of prejudice and discrimination" that occur during interactions with people who hold racist beliefs (Harrell, 2000, p. 43).

The most common types of racial bias that mothers said they prepare their children for are overt and subtle interpersonal bias. Preparation for bias includes messages about how racism affects children and how children should behave given the pervasiveness of racism (Hughes et al., 2006). Overall, the 12 mothers who took a proactive approach to discussing racism wanted to prepare their children for bias in order to protect their self-esteem, their future job security, and their opportunities for advancement. They believed preparation for bias served as a buffer to negative experiences by helping children attribute a negative experience to the ignorance of the perpetrator and not to their own inferiority, and by teaching children how to deal with discrimination

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[1] There was one mother who did not fit into either category. This mother did not believe it was important to discuss racism with her children at any time. She reasoned that there was no need to discuss racism with her two daughters because they were not likely to be subjected to it. She based this belief on her perception that she had never been a target of racism. A section of this chapter explores this mother's beliefs in greater depth.

experiences, including controlling emotions and responding to unfairness. Mothers' preparation for bias messages included: (1) explicit instructions for behavior to minimize the applicability of stereotypes, (2) historical and workplace lessons regarding the nature of prejudice, (3) strategies to defend against unfairness, and (4) warnings about the ubiquity of prejudice among people of all races. The 12 mothers with a proactive approach included all eight mothers of sons and daughters, one of the two mothers of only sons, and three of the six mothers of only daughters.

Despite their intention to foster children's positive self-image, five mothers who gave preparation for bias messages sometimes encountered resistance from their sons and daughters. The following sections describe the proactive approach and highlight a challenge mothers encountered during preparation for bias: children's resistance to mothers' messages.

Preparation for bias messages. The 12 mothers with a proactive approach made their children aware of how racism could impact their lives, such as people applying negative stereotypes to them, holding them to a double standard, or giving subtle messages that Black people are inferior. Given society's perceptions and treatment of Black people, mothers hoped to prepare children by advising them to carry themselves in certain ways and to strategically cope with and respond to discrimination.

Explicit instructions for behavior. Grace explained that when her three boys became old enough to catch the bus to school and walk to the corner store by themselves, at about 5-7 years old, she decided it was necessary to let them know how they would be perceived. She told them, "When you guys are going places together, the three of you look like a gang. So you have to be pleasant. You always have to smile and disarm people because they're expecting you to be a gang." Grace also gave specific instructions to her sons about how they should act when entering a store.

> They've been instructed to smile and say hello to the clerk when they walk in. Never put your hands in your pocket. Buy what you're going to buy. Never ever steal because that's what they're expecting you to do. And when you leave, you always get a paper bag, you always get a receipt. Don't ever walk out with anything in your hand and without a paper bag and receipt. That's something that White folks don't have to tell their kids.

Grace thought it imperative that her sons know about the negative stereotypes that will be applied to them and that they have some tangible ways to avoid the potential consequences of prejudice. Her statement that White people do not have to give their children these messages shows that she felt a unique burden as a Black mother to prepare her children for dealing with racism.

Mothers expected their children to present themselves in particular ways in order to disconfirm negative stereotypes that people may try to apply to them. Lillian, a mother of four girls, sought to teach her daughters the same rules of behavior that her grandfather imparted to her as a child, "You show them by the way you carry yourself, the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you handle your business. You show them that you are not some ignorant, ghetto Black girl." Similarly, Natalie advised her children that,

> You have to show them that, no, you might have this idea that Black people behave a certain way, but I can show and prove to you, no, that's not true. That is a stereotype and I don't fit in that stereotype. I could if I choose to, but I am not what you think.

Natalie was especially concerned about her 16-year-old son because he sometimes behaved and responded in ways that were off-putting to people in authority. She told him,

> People are going to judge you based on your own behavior, and then they will lump you in a group with people who they think have that behavior. And then with rap songs and music videos, "Oh yeah, all Black people act like that, and degrade women, and talk stupid, and whatever." But you have to prove that you are not that and that's not who we are. And yes, there are some of us who are like that, but everybody's not like that. And you have to prove it by the way you act and behave. Can you read? Can you learn? Can you speak with proper

grammar? You make the difference.

Natalie drew her son's attention to the negative stereotypes about Black people that get perpetuated through popular culture, and she encouraged him to behave in ways that make it impossible for people to apply those stereotypes to him.

Historical lessons on the nature of prejudice. Mothers also used historical events to initiate conversations about the enduring qualities of racism and the necessary precautions children needed to take. The stories mothers chose to share with their children were often informed by their own experiences of learning about racism. For example, Francine was greatly affected by the death of Emmett Till when she was 13 years old and she decided to share his story with her children to help them understand the manifestations of racism. She explained,

> I remember pulling it up on the Internet so my kids could see the story of Emmett Till, and to read what went on and to see how they beat him up and the whole works. I mean, you have to show them some of the bad stuff so that they can learn, this is what can happen. And still can happen. It's not over.

By discussing Emmett Till's tragic murder, Francine tried to help her children understand how Black people were mistreated in the not too distant past. She wanted to ensure that her children were aware that racism could still affect their lives. She said,

> I think it kind of scared them like it scared me. Just looking at the picture, it's something that stays in your mind. You're not going to forget it. You saw the picture and you said, "God they did that to a boy, a cute little boy." It can happen to anybody. Back then it happened, and it could happen now.

Francine believed that her children are just as vulnerable to racial discrimination and violence today as children were in the 1950s, and she thought it important that her children be aware of the potential dangers.

Lessons from corporate America. In addition to using historical events as opportunities to teach about racism, mothers drew from their own work experiences to explain how racism could affect their children and how children should behave given the prevalence of racism. In particular, two mothers who worked in corporate America had frequent experiences of racial bias, and they wanted their children to be aware of how racism operates at work. Prior research supports the present findings that mothers' experiences of race-related stress informed their likelihood of giving preparation for bias messages (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2010).

For example, soon after Mary's oldest son began working at a corporation, he was upset by an experience that he perceived to be racist. Mary used this event as an opportunity to remind her oldest son and teach her younger son that, "We can never show our anger." She explained to them that there are double standards for the behavior of Whites and Blacks, such that Blacks are expected to exhibit a higher level of self-control than is often expected of Whites. Mary told her children, "Hear me when I tell you this: They can show their anger. They can have a meltdown and it's ok. But if we have a meltdown, they will call the police. They will never forget it!" Mary's advice to her children was based on her own career experiences in corporate America:

> Seeing how some of us Black folk, we get to acting up and the White folks go, "uh huh," and kind of push you aside. So what I've learned is from observation of who they accept and who they put aside. If you're accepted, you might be able to enjoy some of the perks, be invited certain places. If you're not, you're put aside.

Not only did Mary learn this lesson by observing the treatment of others around her, she also had co-workers show concern when she allowed her frustration to be evident. She explained,

> When I'm here at work, they always say, "You're always so happy. Are you always like that?" And I said, "No, I'm not." And they go, "You're always smiling." And I'm not. But here, that's all they see. Because I have gotten upset, and for me it wasn't really upset, but I have

had people go, "Are you, ok?" I'm thinking, "If ya'll really saw it…" They'd be scared. And so I tell the kids over and over again, "No, no, no, I don't care what happens, don't show that side because they'll never let you live it down, they'll always be looking at you sideways after that." "Is she going to go off? You know she has a bad temper. I didn't know she had a temper like that." But, it just is. I keep saying it to them, I keep saying it to them, I keep saying it to them, "You will scare them. Don't do it!"

Mary's advice to "never show our anger" was her attempt to protect her children from being marginalized when they entered predominantly White spaces. Mary described her efforts "to impart my knowledge to our children because if we get violent, it doesn't work. They just throw us aside as just another irrational Black person going off."

Based on her experiences, Mary has found that appearing consistently happy is the best way to function within a racially biased, predominantly White workplace. While her preparatory messages may protect her children from losing their jobs or being negatively perceived by co-workers, the stress of having to wear a mask of contentment in order to put people at ease may result in negative health consequences overtime (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). Nevertheless, Mary believed that these preparation for bias messages were necessary in order to increase her children's opportunities for social advancement. As her 15-year-old son grew into manhood, she wanted him to know how he was perceived and to learn how to connect with people. She said,

I meet a lot of CEOs, CFOs, I'm sitting down at the table talking to them about their business and I know that they are saying, "Does this Black woman even know anything about business?" So, I have had to learn how to connect immediately. [clapped hands] Put them at ease, you know. "Are we good?" That is a lesson that I am trying to teach to my son. You're going to meet people that are going to be put off from you right away. And if you can break that barrier quickly, you're in.

Based on her work experiences, Mary's overarching message to her children is,

We have to learn to assimilate. It's not selling out. But if you want to get ahead, if you want to move in this circle, you have to know the rules and you have to play the game. And I don't mean be phony, but you need to know the rules. And when you are at home, you're at home. When you are with your homeboys, that's a whole different thing. You have to know when it's time. I think they're getting it.

Like Mary, Sabrina has also experienced racism in her workplace. She gave a similar message to her 15-year-old daughter about always remaining calm and collected when faced with discrimination. When she worked at a bank, Sabrina felt as though her co-workers would deliberately try to make her mad so that she would act out and they would have grounds to fire her. She explained,

They used to just always say stuff to try to make me mad. And I never would bite. Then when you bite, now they saying that they intimidated. "Cause now you done made me mad and I'm pissed off and I'm cursing you out, or saying what I feel, now I intimidate you?" They do that all the time, so that's when you have to learn how to deal with it. Because they actually are scared of us. Because of our tempers and stuff. But they know what they be doing because they feel like, if they do certain things, they got us wherever they want us. Cause they know that we're gon' cuss them out, and then they got us. And we have to learn how to maintain that. You know, be professional at all times.

By sharing her experiences and perceptions, Sabrina tried to prepare her daughter for these types of interpersonal slights. She said,

I want her to be able to be strong and overcome that and not just bite at the bait cause it's thrown at you. Learn how to just be cool, you know, check out your scenery. And maintain your self-esteem and be a lady at all times.

Similar to other mothers, Sabrina told her daughter about how Black people can be mistreated and she advised her to carry herself in ways that will hopefully protect her self-esteem and her employment. Mary and Sabrina provided examples of preparatory messages that address subtle bias that can occur in the workplace and ways sons and daughters should contain their emotions in order to stay in good standing. Overall, mothers expected their children to be conscious of how they behave towards others and skilled at presenting themselves in ways that contradict people's expectations of how Black people are stereotypically thought to behave.

Defending against unfairness. Mothers also hoped to give their children insight into how racism manifests in order to eliminate feelings of inferiority and encourage assertiveness when children felt slighted. Olivia, a mother of two daughters and a younger son, highlighted the role of privilege and entitlement in racialized interactions, as well as the role of ignorance in individuals' racist acts. Olivia said,

> I think that some White people, they think they're entitled. Not all White people. They think they're just entitled. And they'll just step up to the front of the whatever, and you're like, "Excuse me!" And that entitlement is just like, wow, it's just engrained. It is just threaded in. I want them to see that it's ignorance in the other person. It's just something they haven't learned or been taught or trained, or even researched for themselves to learn about people, as people just being people.

As a way of standing up for themselves and not allowing themselves to be positioned as inferior or less worthy of equal treatment, mothers advised children on how to strategically respond to unfairness. Like Olivia, Kim has experienced being disregarded by White people when standing in line. Kim used these everyday experiences as teaching moments for her children. She explained, "If we're at the store and somebody White jumps in front of me or something, that's an opportunity to learn. I mean, not that that was necessarily racially motivated, but still, the point is you stand up for yourself." In anticipation of her children being harassed by the police Kim said,

> We have always taught them to engage with the police and be respectful and do what they say. And simply tell them that I need to call my mother, she is a lawyer, and call my father, he works with the NAACP. And make it real clear that whatever that officer does from that point forward, you decide, because this is not going to go over easy.

As a mother who proactively discussed racism with her three children, Kim gave them guidance on how to interact with people who may be discriminating against them. She wanted her children to inform police officers of her and her husband's occupational statuses to potentially limit harassment.

Mothers who prepared their children for bias had specific guidelines for how children should assert themselves and confront injustice. Renee likened her children's struggle to that of Black leaders. She explained,

> I want them to have morals. I want them to be able to speak like Martin Luther King, and be able to stand up like Rosa Parks; able to have that determination like Nelson Mandela. And be in the face of people and don't quit. You know, if it's something they want, if it's something for them to accomplish or gain, and to be able to fight for what they want. That's what I'm hoping, that no challenge that will come up that they will see themselves so defeated that they can't do nothing, that they would revert to drugs or drinking.

Like Renee, Elise wanted her children to stand up for their rights, not just for themselves, but for those who come behind them. She said,

> I want them, as they grow into adults, to know that it is important that they take it up and not ignore it. In the bigger picture, if it happens to you, they are going to do it to somebody else. Just think about all the others that come behind you. [If you ignore it] they will think it is okay, and it is not okay.

Mothers used their own life experiences as examples for children to see how one can

effectively address racism and secure self-protection by knowing their rights in a particular context, documenting biased incidents, and confronting the perpetrators professionally and respectfully. Olivia, who had to take such actions in her career, explained that when you build a solid case and display your intelligence, "they don't tend to play the games with you." However, before children approached a boss, teacher, or administrator with a case of discrimination, mothers underscored the importance of having knowledge of their rights. As Olivia explained,

> Before you fight that fight when you know something is an injustice, know what you're entitled to. Just have all of your eggs in your basket before you even approach someone. You listen to them and you say, "But this is what the book says. I went through steps a, b, and c according to what the book says." Make sure you know because people will tell you anything. You have got to know it for yourself.

As explained in Chapter 1, based on ethnographic data, Lareau (2003) argued that middle-class families' concerted cultivation practices with children resulted in a sense of entitlement for White and Black middle-class children. Entitlement was defined as children's belief that they had a right to pursue their individual desires, resulting in their willingness to address adults as equals and questions adults. What she characterized as entitlement could be alternatively construed as assertiveness or agency in relationship to social institutions for Black middle-class families. Also, because Lareau did not analyze the significance of race in Black families' lives, it is possible that the sense of entitlement that she observed functioned differently for Black and White middle-class families. As the present study found, Black middle-class mothers sometimes described Whites as possessing a sense of entitlement that included ignorance to their own racial privilege and unreflective expectations of superiority. It may be that what Lareau observed as entitlement may have qualitatively different meanings depending on the family's race. More than just a sense of one's right to pursue individual preferences, transmission of "entitlement" in Black middle-class families may represent parents' efforts to teach their children to protect and defend their rights and privileges.

Ubiquity of prejudice. In addition to the goals of having their children understand how racism operates and how they should respond, mothers also wanted their children to understand that prejudice is not strictly a phenomenon perpetrated by Whites onto Blacks. As Elise stated, "If I am honest, Black folks can be prejudiced toward Black folks." Similarly, Mary hoped her son understood that:

> There are good and bad everywhere. When you talk about White folks being racist, there are Black folks that are racists. There are Black folks that are ignorant. There are people that will help you; there are people that won't help you. And that is truly straight across the board. There are people who will jack you in a heartbeat, and I hope that he can recognize those folks.

Lillian agreed, saying,

> I try to teach them to be respectful to everybody, but again, you're going to run into some people, and it's not all Caucasian people, or all Indian people, or all whatever people that are prejudiced or may mistreat you. It could be people in your own culture that mistreat you.

Like other mothers who have chosen to prepare their children for bias, Renee believed that her children have yet to fully experience "the whole big picture of the world yet, and how really evil and nasty it can be." Though mothers wanted to prepare their children for bias, they also realized that, developmentally, children would come to understand what their mothers were telling them once they had their own experiences with racism and prejudice. In the meantime, sometimes mothers were confronted with children's resistance to these preparatory messages.

Children's resistance to messages: "Why are you guys talking about race all the time?" The racial experiences of children differed from the experiences their mothers had growing

up. Many of the mothers who took a proactive approach grew up in racially segregated communities and were well aware of the differential treatment that Whites and Blacks received. Yet, most of these mothers raised their children in integrated or predominantly White communities. With the election of a Black president and a generally more diverse and integrated society, the permanence of racism was not always as clear to children as it was to their parents. Additionally, as the stage theory of racial identity development suggests, children who have yet to personally experience discrimination are in the pre-encounter stage, which is characterized by feelings that race is irrelevant (Cross, 1991). Studies show that some Black children minimize race in relation to their own experience and endorse American egalitarian ideals that race does not matter (Nasir, 2012; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004).

Five mothers reported that their children opposed or struggled with conversations about discrimination because they had yet to experience racism for themselves. Mothers' preparation for bias messages were incongruent with children's beliefs that race did not matter. When children showed resistance to mothers' messages, mothers felt conflicted about disturbing their children's egalitarian, post-racial outlook on the world.

For example, Kim encountered some unexpected reactions from her children when she talked about race and racism, which she attributed to "their spirits" being "so gentle and so innocent." Kim made it a point to discuss race and racism throughout her children's lives. When asked how often she talks to them about discrimination, Kim replied,

> Oh, all the time. We have a little tradition. We watch the Martin Luther King video every year. We go to the Martin Luther King Day parade, we come home and have hot chocolate and watch the movie. Anytime they're doing anything…like when they had to study the California mission system. They just enslaved those Native Americans. I said, "This is what White people have done, this is their history. And this unfortunately is why they are the way they are today and why we still have problems."

When asked how her children seemed to respond to her emphasis on discrimination, Kim explained,

> Because of their spirits once again, they worry more that they can't have White friends, or that I might disapprove, which is really an interesting twist. It's like, "No, mama's not trying to say that. But you have to understand that they are not necessarily going to treat you in a respectful manner or give you your just due because of their own biases." It's very hard to explain it to them.

Kim said her children sometimes got exasperated with her preparatory messages: "You know, everybody tries to pretend that everything is so wonderful now because it is 2011." Yet, Kim's past experiences of being "yelled at, and called nigger, and spit on" solidified her resolve to prepare her children for bias in spite of their impressions that, because she talks about racism, she is racist.

Like Kim, mothers who took a proactive approach to discussing racism were sometimes challenged to get their children to understand that talking about race and racism did not make them racists. Barbara said her youngest, 10-year-old daughter thought that the rest of the family was racist and often complained, "Why are you guys talking about race all the time?" Reflecting on her daughter's attitudes about race, Barbara explained, "I feel like it is because of where she is now. The majority of her friends are White. And she doesn't want to see race. She gets frustrated with us when we talk about race, period, cause she thinks we're being discriminatory." Barbara recognized that her daughter's stance was also attributable to her lack of experience with racial injustice as of yet. Barbara explained,

> So she feels like, "I am going to be accepted by everybody." So she told me she wants to go to Juilliard. She was like, "The summer of my 12th grade year, I want to go to the jazz camp." So she researched it and she already knows, this is her plan. I told her, "If you get in, we'll support you." But I already know that there's going to be things that she's going to

have to experience. But I feel like you have to go through those things to become a stronger person.

Though Barbara attempted to teach her daughter about racism, her daughter resisted this perspective of the world. Barbara believed that her daughter would eventually learn from personal experience that Black people could be treated unfairly, and Barbara believed that this learning process was a means to increasing resilience.

When mothers cautioned their children about the presence of racism, sometimes children opposed these messages on the basis of their egalitarian, post-racial framework. For example, Barbara's youngest daughter was excited about having a particular gym teacher because she had heard that he was nice. However, this was the same teacher who "openly disrespected" her brother a few years prior when the teacher "took the paper and basically threw it on the ground instead of handing it to him. So he had to bend over and get it." When Barbara learned that this was the same teacher that her daughter was assigned to, she said,

> I told her, "I don't like him. I don't want you in his class." She's like, "Well everybody says he's nice." I said, "Everybody who? Everybody that's White?" She was like, "There's other Black people that like him." And I was like, "Black boys?" She was like, "No." And I was like, "There's more leeway for you as a Black girl than for your brother. And you have to be aware of the fact that your brother was mistreated." But these are things that I'm trying to get her to open up to. But it's difficult because she's kind of being resistant to that because she wants to see the world in this way of how they treat her. This is what we taught her. In a way, part of me doesn't want her to have to learn that. But I just feel like you're going to learn it sooner or later.

Barbara revealed that she had some hesitation about disrupting the way her daughter perceived her world. Because of her positive experiences with White peers and teachers, Barbara's daughter rejected her family's messages about the existence of racial bias. Yet, Barbara believed the pros of teaching her daughter about racism outweighed the cons given the perceived inevitability of her daughter's experience of prejudice.

Moderate Approach: Mothers Hesitate to Discuss Racial Bias

In contrast to the proactive approach, the three mothers who took a moderate approach did not want to draw their children's attention to racism before children had their own experiences of prejudice because they did not want preparation for bias messages to result in hatred toward Whites, feelings of disempowerment, or lack of personal responsibility. Two of these mothers had daughters, and one had a son. Like those with a proactive approach, mothers who took a moderate approach wanted their children to know about the history of racism. However, as the following sections describe, mothers with a moderate approach are characterized by: (1) their beliefs that their children would not necessarily have discriminatory experiences, (2) their beliefs that preparation for bias messages are disempowering, (3) their expectations that children not assume that mistreatment is necessarily due to prejudice, and (4) their choice to wait to discuss racial bias until an event catalyzed a conversation. In all, mothers with a moderate approach believed that preparation for bias incurred more consequences than benefits to their children.

Discrimination may not be inevitable. The mothers that fell into the moderate category reported that they did not want their children to think that Black people's experiences of racism in the past were inevitably going to be their experience as well. Paula, the mother of a 17-year-old boy, explained that she wanted her son to understand how Black people were treated in the past, but she hoped he would not have these experiences. Paula said her son was around 7 years old when her father started watching films about Black history with her son. In response to seeing films that displayed the violence Black people endured, including being sprayed with water hoses during Civil Rights marches, her son asked her and his grandfather, "Why are they doing that?" Whereas her

father responded bluntly that "That's how they did Black people in the day. That's how White people are," Paula interrupted her father saying, "Don't make it like that, cause you don't want him to go off. Like, 'I hate White people.'" Paula told her son,

> That was then. And you may encounter that; it may come up again. It won't be as brutal or as violent as it is on this movie. But when you're in school, sometimes that happens. I hope that it doesn't happen to you, but it could.

Although Paula exposed her son to films that informed him of the racial history in the United States and warned him that he may encounter prejudice, she also told him that the level of brutality would not be as extreme, and implied the possibility that he would not experience it at all.

Paula acknowledged that racism persists, but she believed it possible that her son would not encounter it. She said,

> I didn't want him to think that it doesn't exist. It does. Hopefully you won't have to experience it, and I don't think it's going to happen to that extent because now we tend to stand up for ourselves anyway. We not going to just let somebody talk to us crazy, because we know we have rights. But back then, they didn't have those rights. But I just always hoped that he wouldn't have to experience it.

As detailed in the previous chapter, Paula's son did eventually experience discrimination when he was suspended for using a derogatory word and other students were not punished for a similar offense. As that example shows, Paula ended up confirming her son's status as a target of bias once her son noticed it for himself.

Similar to Paula, Trish talked to her 15-year-old daughter about the existence of racism, but she did not want her daughter to feel like this would be her experience just because she is Black. Trish said,

> I let her know about other people's experiences, I just try not to make it hers. I am not casting it on her in terms of "this is your experience." Because she has a high level of appreciation, I think, for people's differences. I think she enjoys that. I try not to get her stuck in that space.

Although Trish wanted her daughter to be informed about the existence of racism, she also wanted to sustain her daughter's appreciation of people's differences. Trish did not want her daughter to get "stuck" thinking about herself as a target of discrimination. Mothers who took a moderate approach to discussing racism left open the possibility that their children would not necessarily encounter discrimination.

Avoiding undesired consequences of preparatory messages.

"That wasn't an empowering conversation for me, so I don't go there with her." Trish's concerns about discussing racism with her daughter stemmed from her own experiences of racial socialization. From the time Trish started school, her mother told her, "You're Black. You're going to have to work harder. It's not going to come easy to you, regardless of how intelligent you are, regardless of how smart, there is always going to be someone who thinks you can't do it because you're Black." Trish explained,

> I haven't had the conversations that my mom had with me. Like that whole, "Since you're Black you're going to have to work four times harder." For me, I understood what my mom was saying, but it was actually disempowering for me. It didn't empower me, it made me feel worse. It was almost like, "You are dumber than they are, so you're going to have to push yourself." And I know that's not what my mom's intention was, because I know she was like, "You're incredibly smart and you're going to have to push harder." But that wasn't an empowering conversation for me, so I don't go there with her.

Since Trish found it disempowering to be told that being Black meant that people would perceive her to be less capable and required her to work harder than others, she decided not to give the same

messages to her daughter.

Trish also limited her conversations about racism with her daughter because she did not want her to develop a mistrust of White people. Trish felt that the preparation for bias messages her mother gave to her made her suspicious of White people. Congruent with Paula's concerns for her son, Trish explained,

> That's not how I wanted my daughter to move through the world. Not that I think that the world has greatly changed, but I think that the environment that she's in right now is not the same as when I was coming up. And so I want her to be clear about her power before I say to her, "Now here are the ways that people are going to take it away." Which is why I feel like, when she is getting ready to go to college and she is shifting environments, I am going to say to her, "So now, here's what you need to understand."

Trish decided to wait to talk to her daughter about being a target of discrimination until she was about to leave for college. When Trish attended college, she found it important to surround herself with a positive Black community because it provided a "safe haven" for her within a relatively unsupportive, predominantly White campus. Trish anticipated that her daughter would also need to seek out a safe haven in college. However, Trish did not want to raise her daughter's concerns prematurely. Trish believed that, while her daughter was still living at home, she should be focused solely on building her sense of power and self-worth. She thought that her daughter's independence from home marked the appropriate time to make her aware of the ways in which she may be marginalized or discriminated against.

"I don't want them to use it as a crutch." Another characteristic of the moderate approach is mothers' caution to children to not conclude that their negative experiences are due to racism. Members of stigmatized groups are sometimes faced with attributional ambiguity—that is, not knowing whether negative feedback is due to discrimination or something about them as individuals (Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003). Whereas mothers with a proactive approach were more likely to encourage their children to recognize mistreatment as due to people's prejudices, mothers with a moderate approach urged their children to consider other reasons that they may be receiving negativity. Carolyn said, "I guess as a parent, I really struggle with how much information to share because I don't want them to use it as a crutch." Carolyn's hesitancy to not share too much about discrimination was partially informed by her experience working as a 3rd grade teacher. One day, a Black boy in her class did not follow the instructions and meet the expectations, so Carolyn made him stay after school. She explained,

> It was an eye-opener for me because he was like, "Well you're just treating me like this because I'm Black." And I kind of laughed. I said, "Baby, I'm Black too." I said, "You can't pull that race card on somebody's that's Black." So it was really crazy for me to be able to see a 3rd grader already pulling the race card about something. They learned, and it's been instilled in them, that when people are treating you a certain way it's because you're Black.

Carolyn was surprised that this student, at such a young age, had already begun to believe that when people did something to him that he found unfair, it was because he was Black. She said,

> So, I really pick and choose what I talk to my girls about in terms of racism because I don't want them to use it as a crutch. I don't want them to be made to feel like it's acceptable that, anytime they're being mistreated for one reason or another, that it's because they're Black. You might be mistreated because you treated somebody else badly, and they're getting you back for how you treated them, and it has nothing at all to do with you being Black.

Similarly, Trish explained that if her daughter experienced negativity or rejection from others, Trish would encourage her to consider, "What is it that you need to be doing different?" Instead of attributing negative experiences to discrimination, Trish wanted her daughter to evaluate ways in which she could change to make the situation better.

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Mothers shared examples of their children's negative experiences that could have been considered racist, but were decidedly attributed to another cause. For example, when Carolyn's daughter was in the 4th grade, she came home one day with bruises on her shins. Her daughter explained that the White boy sitting next to her in class kept kicking her legs. Carolyn said,

> We didn't turn it into a race type of thing, although someone easily could have, but it was more so, she was tall and a girl. As someone tall, there were things that people would do to see how far they were able to take her before she got upset. And so as a parent, you don't ever want your children to be taken advantage of. And being a nice person, she doesn't really like conflict, but I wasn't going to allow her to be taken advantage of just because she's tall.

Instead of attributing the physical abuse to racism, Carolyn attributed the culprit's actions to his desire to provoke her daughter because of her height. Carolyn responded to this incident by telling her daughter to tell her teacher. If the teacher did not protect her, then Carolyn told her daughter that she was justified to kick the boy back. Indeed, this is how the incident played out and Carolyn received a call from the school about her daughter kicking the other student. Carolyn met with the principal and advocated on her daughter's behalf, but she never made mention of her daughter's experience as racially motivated, neither to her daughter nor to the school. Although Carolyn conceded that one could have framed the incident as racist, her reaction to her daughter's experience exemplifies how she resisted attributing the negative experience to racism.

Paula's reaction to her son's negative experience in school also provides an example of how mothers with a moderate approach deterred their children from attributing these somewhat ambiguous experiences to racism. Paula explained that, a few times throughout his secondary schooling, her son noticed that, "if he raised his hand, he wasn't always called on. And he was like, 'I wonder if it's because I'm Black. She always calls on the White boys first, or she calls on the White girls first.' So he did notice that." Instead of affirming his perceptions that he may not be getting called on because he is Black, Paula advised her son to keep a log in order to identify the patterns of who the teacher called on when. She told him,

> If it's important to you, you will log it, so that I can have a fight. So I'll have something to say. Because it can't just be, "oh when I raise my hand…" How often? Because maybe she didn't pick you because she picked you earlier; maybe she's trying to spread it around. So start paying attention to that. That maybe it's not that you're Black, maybe it's because you already answered the question and she wants to give somebody else a turn. See if that's it. I'd always tell him that. "And if you didn't give me a chart, then that means it didn't happen enough for it to have been a racial thing. Or it really wasn't that big of a deal to you." And it ended up not being a big deal. So, either he didn't want to fight about it, or maybe he got called on after all.

Paula challenged her son to consider reasons why he might not be getting called on other than the color of his skin. She was unwilling to approach his teacher with a complaint if her son could not provide evidence that the teacher's actions were actually prejudiced. Paula's reaction to her son's concerns shows that she resisted attributing her son's negative experiences to discrimination. Her advice to provide proof of discrimination may have been a rather daunting task for her son because proving subtle bias is extremely difficult (Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2004), particularly in the scenario that her son confronted. In the end, her son did not provide a chart, nor did he mention the problem to his mother again. This mother-child interaction invites a question about how Paula's son felt about her response to his dilemma. Whereas he could have had positive feelings associated with his mother re-positioning him as not being a target of discrimination, it is also possible that he felt that his perceptions were not validated by his mother, which may have led him to refrain from discussing his experiences of discrimination with her in the future. Having identified the different ways in which mothers approach discussions of racism in this chapter, the concluding

chapter proposes an examination of children's emotional and identity outcomes based on mothers' approaches as a direction for future research.

Delaying discussion of racial bias. Research has shown that preparation for bias is often reactive to children's experiences, and parents may utilize children's experiences of discrimination as opportunities to introduce conversations about discrimination that might otherwise be difficult to broach (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Instead of preparing their children for bias, mothers who took a moderate approach preferred to wait to discuss racism with their children until an incident or impending event demanded such a conversation. Trish chose to wait to talk to her daughter about how she may experience being marginalized until she left for college. Although Trish perceived that her daughter had not yet experienced discrimination, she suspected that her daughter would begin to have personal experiences of prejudice in college. Therefore, Trish thought that her daughter's departure to college was the best time to prepare her to understand that she may be a target of discrimination. Trish worked on a college campus, and she and her daughter had discussed the dwindling number of Black students on campus, as well as Black college students' frustrations that professors did not regard them as highly as non-Black students. Yet, Trish explained,

> I know that she hears it, but she does not necessarily integrate it because it's not her experience yet. But when it's time to go [to college], I'm going to say, "Depending on where you're going, this may very well be your experience and you need to talk to people about how you are going to deal with it."

Trish was confident in her decision to wait to discuss the impact of racism with her daughter because of their strong mother-daughter relationship. Trish said,

> She asks me everything. I'm really thankful that we have created the relationship because I trust that if it comes up, she'll come and say, "Okay, this is what came up for me." And then I'll know that this is the right time to go there with you. Like I said, I really just want to watch her and let her have experiences. The funny thing is, it's not that I think that my mom did it wrong, because part of me is like, there was some level of preparation. Like when it came along, I was like, "Oh that's what she was talking about." But at the same time, I kind of want my daughter to analyze and say, "Ok, this is what I see going on, what do you think about it?" And for me to say, "Yes."

In all, Trish chose a more moderate approach to discussing racism because she wanted her daughter to come to an understanding for herself, without being overly influenced by the experiences of others. Also, Trish sought to minimize her daughter's experience of the negative feelings that Trish had growing up, including feeling disempowered and suspicious of Whites.

Similarly, Carolyn was not in a hurry to discuss the full extent of racism with her 13- and 15-year-old daughters. As she explained,

> It's like you have a lot of information that you have as a parent and you don't really want to overwhelm them with giving them everything at one time, so it's like you give them little by little. And you give them what they need at the time that they need it.

An example Carolyn recalled that exemplifies how she gave her children a little information as needed occurred when her oldest daughter moved from a predominantly Black school to a predominantly White school in 2nd grade. At the Black school, her daughter excelled academically, but she struggled at the White school because more was expected of her. Carolyn explained,

> She had to work harder. So, it was a lot of the, "Why do I have to do this? Why do I have to do that?" And so we really, at a young age, I started having that conversation with her about, based on how she looks and based on her experience in society, she, as an African American female, will have to work 10 times harder than anybody else to be recognized. So really having those conversations and explaining to her what that meant.

Interestingly, the message about having to work harder as a Black person is exactly what

Trish tried to avoid telling her daughter. Although this could be considered a preparation for bias message, the way Carolyn framed it did not emphasize that her daughter would be a target of discrimination, but more that her daughter had a personal responsibility to be the best she could be. Carolyn deliberately did not delve further into a conversation about being a target of prejudice because:

> I think that at that time, that was the piece that she needed. And it was definitely given to her as a result of what she was experiencing. But I think that she would've gotten it somehow, but it's good that she got it when she did so that she didn't have to go through life thinking that it didn't exist. So that she knows how to deal with it when that time comes.

Although Carolyn wanted her daughters to know about racism eventually, her perspectives and actions are best categorized as moderate because she *responded* to her daughter's questions of "Why do I have to do this?" rather than having a conversation about Black women having to work harder *prior* to her daughter entering the new school setting. Also, Carolyn's message about hard work was framed more as a personal responsibility, and less as a burden.

Overall, mothers who took a moderate approach chose not to prepare children for bias. Instead, they waited until after their child had an experience that prompted a conversation. Mothers reasoned that preparing their children would do more harm than good because it could lead to children feeling disempowered and angry toward Whites. These mothers left open the possibility that their children would not experience racism to the extent that it affected people in the past; therefore they did not want their children to expect to be targets of discrimination.

Neither Proactive or Moderate: Avoiding Discussions of Racism

The sole mother who did not fall into either category can be best described as avoidant in her approach to preparation for bias. She did not think it was important to discuss racism with her daughters at any time because "I don't feel like, 'oh we've got the Black man's plight and whitey's trying to get us.' I don't think the kids have ever felt that way either. I guess we've been blessed that I haven't had any real racist issues." Her comments suggest that she does not perceive Black people to be victims of White supremacy.

Interestingly, this is also the sole mother who preferred that her children ignore racist incidents rather than confront the perpetrator. She wanted her children to know that Black people are not inferior, but she did not engage them in explicit conversations about racism. She explained, "I think my oldest knows, and I assume my youngest does too. But again, there haven't been any specific situations that I would say, 'I need to teach you this about this.'" This mother's personal experiences growing up in the South are the basis for her opinion. She explained, "I never had any racial issues at all, even going to school in Alabama. I've always been treated with southern hospitality from everybody I met, wherever I went." Since she did not experience discrimination in her life, she did not perceive that her children would need to be prepared for experiences of discrimination.

In addition to not having experienced discrimination, she did not receive messages from her family about Black pride. She explained, "I didn't grow up being pro Black. I didn't have that at home. I went to school down the street, a private school with Black, White, everybody; so, I've always had friends that were every race. And so my teachings have always just been about being the best you. I've never been pro cultural." She described her mother and father as "conformists." She explained that her mother refused to wear her hair naturally, and her mother also disapproved of her daughter's locks.

Not having experienced racial discrimination in society or racial socialization at home, this mother did not perceive a need to discuss race with her children. Also influencing her decision was her limited knowledge about her ancestral past. She explained, "It's never really been like, Black Power, or let's learn about your African culture because I don't even know my own culture past my grandfather." Though she knows her family has some Canadian and African roots, she "definitely

wouldn't be teaching them" because she has "no clue." Overall, this mother would not be characterized as proactive or moderate in her approach to preparation for bias because she did not consider race or racism to be salient to her life experiences, and she did not want to discuss the history of racism with her daughters.

Comparison of Proactive and Moderate Approaches

The distinction between proactive and moderate approaches is based on whether mothers considered preparation for bias messages to be primarily beneficial or harmful to children's well being. Twelve of the 16 interviewees are best categorized as proactive in their approach to talking to their children about race. These mothers discussed racism with children before there was a specific racialized incident that their children confronted. Mothers who took a proactive approach believed that their children would inevitably encounter racism and, therefore, preparation for being a target of bias served as a means of self-protection. Three mothers reported more moderate approaches to racial socialization, meaning they most often preferred to wait to talk to children about their possible experiences of discrimination until an event necessitated a conversation. Mothers who took a moderate approach did not believe that their children would inevitably experience discrimination, and they believed that preparation for bias messages resulted in undesired psychological consequences for their children.

Research suggests that members of stigmatized groups who attribute negative feedback to discrimination rather than personal blame experience higher self-esteem (Crocker, 1999). This finding lends support to the beneficial outcomes of preparation for bias. However, mothers who took a moderate approach preferred that their children attribute negative feedback to factors other than discrimination because they did not want their children to use racism as a crutch. Instead, they wanted their children to understand that negative feedback may very well be due to their own behavior and not others' prejudices, making them personally responsible for their life outcomes. Although research supports the perspective of mothers who took a proactive approach (i.e., that preparing children for bias promotes children's well being), mothers who took a moderate approach based their racial socialization decisions on personal experiences that have highlighted the risks of preparation for bias messages. These mothers did not prepare their children for bias in order to avoid the risk of children using racism as a crutch, disliking White people, or feeling disempowered.

Although mothers had different approaches to discussing racism, they had similar concerns for their children's attitudes toward themselves and others. Mothers who took a moderate approach did not want their children to develop hatred toward White people or become jaded about their position in life, so they decided not tell their children that they would be targets of discrimination. Mothers who took a proactive approach wanted the same thing for their children, but instead of avoiding conversations, mothers accompanied preparation for bias messages with cautions about not making generalizations. As mothers with a proactive approach sought to make their children aware of the manifestations of racism and prejudice, they dually intended to show their children that there is no racialized rule governing who is bigoted and who is kind. Though children should be prepared for the possibility of bias, these mothers also thought children must understand that people cannot be judged solely on their identity characteristics. For example, Kim wanted to avoid transmitting certain attitudes to her children, but she persisted in giving messages about bias. She explained,

> It is so hard not to kill their spirit. I don't want them to be as jaded as I am, or as cynical as I
> am. But I want them to understand that one on one, people are fine. I just have distrust
> when it comes to the group setting kind of thing.

Mothers who proactively prepared their children for bias sought to avoid the same potential risks of preparation for bias messages as mothers who took a moderate approach.

An interesting difference in mothers who were proactive versus moderate is the way in

which they framed racism for their children. Mothers with a proactive approach framed racism as an inevitable part of life, whereas mothers with a moderate approach framed racism as possible, but not inevitable. All mothers acknowledged that society's racial atmosphere had changed since their childhood. However, mothers with a moderate approach wanted to be careful about not mapping Black people's past experiences onto their children. In comparison, mothers with a proactive approach thought that racism may not be as overt as in the past, but it still impacted their children's lives in subtle ways. Therefore, these mothers wanted to prepare their children to recognize the subtle manifestations of bias. Research on racial socialization has found that parents who experience discrimination are more likely to expect that their children will experience it (Hughes, 2003). Consistent with the present study's findings, Black parents who reported perceptions of discrimination in the workplace were significantly more likely to give preparation for bias messages to their children (Hughes & Chen, 1997). In light of previous and present findings, a mother's approach to discussing racism with her children is greatly influenced by her own racial discrimination and racial socialization experiences.

Mothers' perceptions regarding the likelihood that her children would experience racism were closely related to mothers' willingness to attribute a negative event to discrimination. Mothers with a proactive approach encouraged children to recognize unfairness as resulting from prejudice and not "mislabel it and call it something else when it really is just that simple." Whereas mothers with a moderate approach discouraged children from attributing negative incidents to racism and urged them to consider other reasons that they might be getting negative feedback that have "nothing at all to do with you being Black." Mothers with a moderate approach expressed concern that their children not disregard personal responsibility for their life experiences. Comparatively, mothers with a proactive approach preferred that their children attribute negative events to prejudice so as not to blame themselves.

Overall, it appears that mothers with a moderate approach did not want to impose a racialized perspective on their children, so they were less likely to attribute children's negative experiences to racism. These findings indicate a need for further research to examine if mothers who are more likely to attribute a negative experience to racism are also more likely to give preparation for bias messages. Based on findings from the present study, it is hypothesized that mothers with a proactive approach are more likely to give preparation for bias messages because they perceive discrimination attribution as more accurate and protective than personal blame. Mothers who are less likely to attribute a negative experience to racism may be less likely to give preparation for bias messages because they see discrimination attribution as unfounded. Whether mothers deem discrimination attribution as accurate or inappropriate may also be related to the degree to which mothers find subtle racism to be salient. Mothers who prepared children for bias believed that children needed to be sensitive to subtle bias, whereas mothers who did not prepare children for bias did not want children to be preoccupied with detecting bias. In all, mothers approached discussions of racism in ways that they thought would best support their children.

Chapter Summary

The findings presented here contribute to an understanding of why mothers choose to prepare their children for bias or not. Twelve of the 16 mothers took a proactive approach to discussing discrimination with their children. These mothers prepared their children for bias because they perceived racism to be an inevitable burden in their children's lives. The mothers who prepared their children for bias introduced conversations about discrimination by giving explicit instructions for behaviors that negate stereotypes, sharing lessons from history and from mothers' own work experiences that revealed the nature of prejudice, giving instructions for how to defend against unfairness, and highlighting the presence of racism across racial groups. Sometimes children resisted mothers' preparation for bias messages. In these cases, children who had yet to experience

discrimination for themselves perceived conversations about racism to be unnecessary. Children who were resistant also perceived that their mothers were racist because they emphasized race.

Mothers who took a moderate approach to discussing racism did not want to prepare their children for bias because they suspected that preparatory messages would lead children to dislike White people, feel disempowered, or use racism as a crutch. Mothers with a moderate approach delayed conversations about racism until their children encountered it for themselves. They did not want children to internalize other people's past experiences of discrimination as their own experience. Instead, mothers wanted children to have a chance to form their own impressions of the world without undue influence. Furthermore, mothers with a moderate approach discouraged children from attributing negative experiences to racism.

As this study shows, mothers have varying beliefs about the benefit and harm of preparation for bias messages. This study contributes to the literature by providing examples of how mothers negotiate their racial socialization efforts with their goals for children's well being. While most mothers believed that preparation for bias would incur positive outcomes, some mothers purposefully avoided giving preparation for bias messages to protect children from negative outcomes, such as feelings of disempowerment and victimization. The mixed results found regarding the effects of preparation for bias messages on children (Hughes et al., 2011) may be partially explained by the different approaches mothers take to giving preparation for bias messages. Future studies should consider how children's acceptance of or resistance to mothers' messages is related to their psychological and behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, research should explore how children's acceptance of or resistance to mothers' messages shifts as a function of children's developmental growth and social experiences.

Chapter V
Children's Racialized Experiences:
Catalysts to Mothers' Messages and Advocacy

Introduction

Experiences of discrimination are common among Black youth (Brown et al., 2011; Dulin-Keita et al., 2011; Fisher et al., 2000; Seaton et al., 2008). Children's discrimination experiences take place at school, in restaurants and stores, and in police interactions (Brown et al., 2011; Fisher et al., 2000; Neblett et al., 2006; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Studies have mostly focused on schools as contexts where Black youth are especially likely to encounter racial discrimination and negative stereotypes (Crocker & Major, 1989; Steele, 1997). Black students report that teachers hold lower expectations for them and discipline them more harshly compared to their non-Black peers (Fisher et al., 2000; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Black children also experience discrimination from peers, including being called racially insulting names and being excluded from activities because of race (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Fisher et al., 2000).

Experiences of discrimination at school are associated with decreased academic curiosity, persistence, and grades among Black youth (Neblett et al., 2006). Research has found that boys experience more negative effects when faced with discrimination from teachers, including decreased cognitive engagement (Wang & Huguley, 2012) and increased bravado attitudes (Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003). For boys and girls, higher levels of peer discrimination distress are shown to be associated with lower levels of self-esteem (Fisher et al., 2000).

Research also shows that parents' preparation for bias messages are significantly associated with youth reports of teacher, peer, and institutional discrimination (Fisher et al., 2000). One of the first studies to examine how children's experiences of discrimination informed parents' racial socialization messages found that parents' perceptions of children's unfair treatment by adults, but not by peers, significantly predicted preparation for bias messages (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). The researchers theorized that the greater power and authority adults have over children's lives, and the more severe consequences that could result from unfair treatment from adults, may explain why parents believe it important to give children a framework for interpreting experiences of unfair treatment attributable to racism (Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

Researchers have also investigated how racial socialization messages moderate the relationship between children's discrimination experiences and their academic outcomes (Wang & Huguley, 2012.) The findings suggest that parents' cultural socialization messages attenuated the negative effects of teacher discrimination on children's GPA and educational aspirations (Wang & Huguley, 2012). Furthermore, cultural socialization messages buffered against the negative effect of peer discrimination on GPA (Wang & Huguley, 2012).

As the literature shows, discrimination experiences are common among Black youth and these experiences contribute to negative academic and psychological consequences for youth. Additionally, parents' racial socialization messages attenuate the negative effects associated with children's discrimination experiences, particularly for experiences that occur in school.

Research on how children's experiences of discrimination relates to parents' racial socialization have defined racial socialization as verbal messages communicated through direct conversations between parents and children (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). However, racial socialization is not limited to communication through direct conversations with children; it also includes indirect parental conversations that children observe, parents' modeling of cultural behaviors, and parents' structuring of children's home and out-of-home environments (Caughy, O'Campo, et al., 2002; Coard et al., 2004; Lesane-Brown, 2006). There is little known about the actions that mothers take in response to children's experiences with discrimination and how these actions constitute racial socialization experiences for children.

Also, studies that examine parents' racial socialization messages in relationship to children's discriminatory experiences are cross-sectional studies that assess these variables at one point in time (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Wang & Huguley, 2012). This method allows the researchers to determine the number of times that children experienced unfair treatment and the number of times parents engaged in racial socialization efforts. Yet, using these methods, researchers are unable to examine the messages mothers give in response to specific incidents of discrimination.

The present study fills these gaps in the literature by: (1) qualitatively assessing mothers' direct responses to children after a specific instance of racial discrimination, and (2) examining the actions mothers take in response to children's discriminatory experiences, including their advocacy efforts at children's schools.

Overview of Findings

To examine mothers' responses to children's discriminatory experiences, mothers were asked to recall experiences when their children were discriminated against. They were also asked to describe experiences that gave them an opportunity to talk to their children about race. Mothers reported that school- and community-based events catalyzed their messages to children about race and racism. All mothers reported at least one experience involving a teacher, peer, or police officer that mothers considered racially discriminatory toward their children. The major types of teacher-related racialized experiences included: (1) low expectations and insinuations of inferiority, and (2) uncaring and unfair penalties. The major types of racialized experiences resulting from peer interactions included: (1) name calling and bullying, and (2) exclusion on sports teams. Experiences with police included being pulled over and searched. Mothers reported that boys experienced more racially salient experiences with teachers and police, and girls received more disparaging remarks from peers. As Chapter 3 foreshadowed, mothers' stories of children being held to low, disparate expectations and being punished via humiliation were more common for sons compared to daughters. Yet, peers more commonly teased daughters about their skin color and hair texture than sons.

In most cases, for mothers to be aware of their children's experiences, children had to tell mothers what happened. Therefore, the incidents that mothers recalled are greatly influenced by whether children shared their experiences with their mothers. Perhaps the gender difference in mothers' reports of peer-related incidents is a result of daughters being more open about their experiences than sons (Brown et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the shared experience of many of these mothers highlights that these racially salient incidents were not isolated, and they often served to catalyze mothers' racial socialization messages to children.

Indeed, mothers gave messages that positively contributed to a child's sense of self before racist incidents occurred (see Chapter 3). Additionally, most mothers gave preparation for bias messages in advance of actual incidents (see Chapter 4). However, this chapter examines the specific moments that prompted mothers' racial socialization messages and the actions taken in response to children's racially salient experiences.

An area that has received little attention in the racial socialization literature is how parents' advocacy and vicarious modeling of responses to discrimination constitute racial socialization experiences for children. This chapter examines how mothers not only give children direct messages about race in response to children's discrimination experiences, but they also model coping strategies for children. Mothers' advocacy efforts serve to both protect children and help children learn how to deal with discrimination. In a couple of cases, when mothers confronted children's negative teacher-related experiences, they were forced to re-evaluate their presumed partnership with teachers. The following sections describe the teacher, peer, and police-related incidents that impacted children, the subsequent messages that mothers gave to their children, and how mothers intervened and advocated on their children's behalf. Table 4 details the number of incidents reported by mothers.

Table 4

Types of Racialized Events by Gender

	Girls (n=14 moms of daughters; n=26 daughters among the sample)	Boys (n=10 moms of sons; n=16 sons among the sample)	*Total*
Teacher-Related Events • Low expectations • Unfair discipline & practices • Obstruction to child's progress	7 (4 of 14 moms reporting)	17 (8 of 10 moms reporting)	*24*
Peer-Related Events • Name calling & bullying • Exclusion on sports teams	13 (6 moms reporting)	6 (4 moms reporting)	*19*
Police-Related Events • Pulled over • Searched • Detained	1 (1 mom reporting)	4 (4 moms reporting)	*5*
Total	*21*	*27*	

Teacher-related Catalysts

Of the 24 teacher-related events that mothers reported, including unfairness and disparate expectations, 17 of these events happened to boys and seven happened to girls. Eight of the 10 mothers with sons recounted at least one incident when her son's teacher mistreated him in a way that mothers considered racist. Four of the 14 mothers with daughters accounted for the seven events that affected girls. The ratio of teacher-related events affecting boys compared to girls was over 2:1. Furthermore the proportion of mothers who had these experiences with boys (80 percent) was greater than the proportion of mothers who reported teacher-related experiences for girls (~30 percent). The heightened concerns mothers reported for sons compared to daughters (see Chapter 3) are based in mothers' experience of boys being mistreated by teachers more commonly than girls. Following examples of children's discriminatory experiences, I discuss how mothers responded to these incidents either directly with their children or by intervening at school.

Low expectations and insinuations of inferiority. As previously reported, mothers worried that their sons were not held to the same expectations as other students. Presented in Chapter 3, Grace's story described her feelings that her son's elementary school teachers never pushed him in reading. Renee had the same concern about her son in kindergarten when she noticed that he would always be building and playing with blocks while the other students were writing. Renee's son was the only Black child in his class at a predominantly Latino school. Despite Renee telling her son's teachers that "he needs to be writing like the other kids," she said, "as soon as my back turned, they would put him to build, and not write." Renee said, at 10 years old, her son still had trouble writing. Research shows that, as early as 1st grade, children are aware of differential behaviors teachers exhibit toward children (McKown & Weinstein, 2003), and this awareness predicts children's own

expectations for their future academic progress (Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001). Although research suggests that children are aware of disparate treatment from teachers at a young age, Renee decided not talk to her son about his teacher's expectations because she thought he was too young. Instead of talking to her son, Renee's response was to move him to a new school.

In contrast, when Mary's son was held to low expectations as a 4th grader, Mary did not intervene at the school level. Instead, she gave her son insight into why his teacher was not holding him to high academic standards. In Mary's son's case, he was getting a C or D, and the teacher told him, "Oh, that's not a bad grade, that's okay for you." When he told his mother what the teacher said, Mary said,

> This is the stereotype, son. I don't even think she's realizing what she's saying to you. But she's basically telling you, for "you" that's okay. If you don't get an A or B, that's okay for "you." That's not okay! You know that's not okay.

Her son agreed, saying, "That's what I told her!" This incident led Mary to prepare her child for more bias in the future. She said, "You're going to come in contact with some people that feel like, because of their prior experiences, they think, as a race, 'Well, you may not be able to do it and if you can't, okay.'" Refuting the teacher's comments, Mary said, "But, no, that's not okay. And that's not where you're from and that's not where you're going."

Whereas Renee chose to intervene at school and not discuss her concerns with her son, Mary chose to make her son aware of bias in order to help him navigate his relationship with his teacher on his own. These different responses are likely attributable to the difference in children's ages.

When sons were young, mothers approached the teacher with their concerns about low academic expectations, as happened in the cases of Grace and Renee. If they were not satisfied with the school's response, mothers moved their children to a new school. However, as children aged, mothers were not as compelled to confront the teacher. Instead, they talked to their children directly. Mary's experience illustrates how mothers empowered older children by making them aware of what the teacher was doing and why.

Uncaring and unfair penalties. Four mothers described experiences with teachers and administrators who "just didn't like" their sons. When this happened to children in early childhood (i.e., kindergarten), mothers did not say anything to their children, but they did intervene at the school level. For example, Natalie realized her son was disliked after receiving a call from her children's predominantly White elementary school about her family living outside the school district. The principal told Natalie that she was willing to let her daughter stay at the school, but not her son. Angered by the principal's proposition, Natalie told her,

> You will keep [my daughter] because she is compliant; she'll sit all day long with her legs crisscrossed on the rug if you told her to, and yeah, she is academically strong for 2nd grade. But [my son] is an average boy. Or is it that it's my Black child?

She told the principal, "You guys are not going to destroy my Black male child and give him some complex that he doesn't meet the mold of what you want here at the school." She said, "I thought that was more of a racial thing that she was doing to him, it really ticked me off. I saw that as a racial discrimination." Natalie ended up moving her son to a school run by Black people for the completion of his elementary school years.

Mary's son also seemed to not be liked by his 5th grade teacher. The teacher would constantly call Mary to complain about her son's behavior. Mary said, "I wasn't sure she liked him." Instead of confronting the teacher, Mary guided her son on how to navigate his relationship with the teacher. Mary put the onus on her son to deal with the teacher. She told him, "You need to learn how to get along with her. This is her class. I don't want to talk to that teacher. So do what she says so that she does not call me." Mary urged her son "to fly under the radar." She said, "I don't always agree with what she is saying in regard to you, but this is her class, and we just want to get through her class."

Mary's comments reiterated her preparation for bias messages (see Chapter 4) concerning her son's advancement in this world. As she learned to do in her work in corporate America, she advised her son to figure out how to avoid negative attention in school.

Teachers' unreasonable criticisms of students' performance. The unfair incidents that led Grace to recognize that teachers did not care about her son included two occasions when teachers criticized her sons' performance in unreasonable ways. Grace's son was "devastated" when, in front of the class, his 5th grade teacher tore up an essay he had put a great deal of effort towards. Grace knew the incident had a big impact on her son because "he wouldn't tell me if he wasn't upset about it. When they come to you with a conversation, it's something that's of significance to them." In response, Grace went to talk to the teacher. She told the teacher,

> This is a child. You have to know that you're dealing with a child's psyche. You know, their emotional state of being. You're the teacher! And there are certain ways to handle things. You don't just say this is messy and tear it up after they put all that work in it.

Grace recalled her feelings during the interaction with the teacher:

> So I'm sitting up there at a conference with her and the principal, and the details are sketchy, but what I remember is that this woman became argumentative, like, "but he did this…" Like a kid arguing with another kid. That's how I thought it was. It was like this challenge between the kid. It's like, "You're the teacher. You are the teacher. It shouldn't be a tit for tat here."

A separate incident happened when her son's middle school teacher called Grace in for a parent-teacher conference to discuss her son's poor construction of the head of a lion on a pottery assignment. Grace said,

> I'm sitting up here like, I cannot believe this woman would call me up here for a conference cause he just didn't seem to be getting this head right. Like he wasn't going to get a good grade because he couldn't get the head right. And I was married. My husband and I did all of the parent-teacher things together whenever possible, because we wanted them to know that these kids come from a two-family, middle class…you know, these ain't no ghetto rats or nothing, and you're not going to treat them like that.

Grace was shocked to learn that her son's teacher was so critical of his pottery project. She and her ex-husband attended the parent-teacher conference together in order to disrupt the teacher's possibly stereotypical impression of their son. Grace wanted the teacher to know that she and her husband would not allow their son to be mistreated.

Mothers regret not listening to sons sooner. The sons of Barbara and Grace would come home complaining that the "teacher just doesn't like me," and "I hate my school. I don't want to be here. I really hate it." Both Barbara and Grace initially reacted by telling their sons "You can do it, you just have to get organized" and "you need to get the teacher on your side. You need a good grade, so go in and talk and figure out how to get your good grade." But, after interacting with teachers during meetings, Barbara and Grace came to realize that the teachers were being especially hard on their children, and mothers regretted not listening to their sons sooner.

Whereas Grace and Barbara initially saw themselves as partners with their sons' teachers, they eventually learned that "these teachers are human and they don't like my child, and I need to get my child out of this class because it's not clicking." Grace said it was during a parent-teacher conference when she became aware that "the teacher was just obviously nitpicking and didn't like the kid, it was so obvious. I was like, wow, she really doesn't like him, just like he says." Grace qualified her perspective by explaining,

> I'm not one of those people that thinks my child is always right. I listen and I usually give the teachers the benefit of the doubt. In that case, I said, "You are wrong." You did not treat this child fairly. And I got him out of that class. But it was toward the end, so way too late. I

should've listened to him and got him out sooner.

Barbara also had regrets about her initial response to her son's complaints. She said, "I feel like I failed him because I wasn't listening to him when he was telling me, 'Mom I hate my school. Get me the hell out of here.'" As evidence mounted that the teacher had little care for her son, Barbara decided to put him in another school.

Though mothers initially encouraged their sons to push through negative experiences with teachers and focus on their academics, mothers eventually discovered that their sons' complaints were valid and should have been taken more seriously earlier on. As mothers interacted with their children's teachers, they came to realize that children were not cared for by the teacher. In Grace's case, she and her son's father advocated on their son's behalf by attending the parent-teacher conference and confronting the teacher's unreasonable practices. Barbara also advocated for her son, but when she felt the school disregarded her concerns, she withdrew her son's enrollment and moved him to a predominantly Black school. Barbara explained,

> When I told him that the school was all Black, he was excited. He was like, "I want to go, oh yes, it's all Black, yes!" He wants to be around all Black people. So I noticed immediately the difference in just his demeanor, because he was more comfortable. And he even started to laugh and joke.

Although Barbara was concerned about the fewer material resources at the predominantly Black school compared to his original school, she privileged her son's comfort in his school environment when choosing where to send him. Barbara also noticed a stark difference between the attitudes of the all White faculty and staff at the first school and the diverse faculty and staff at the new school. During the open house at the new school, she was excited that, "every teacher seemed like they really cared." She was particularly impressed by "the way they communicated their lesson plan, and how they wanted to interact and relate to the kids. They were trying to teach them to be professionals." Overall, Barbara was pleased by the better socio-emotional conditions of the new school, including the abundance of caring teachers.

Lack of support when children fell behind in class. In four cases, mothers came up against uncaring teachers when their children (2 boys, 2 girls) were not staying on top of their work. Interestingly, each of these incidents occurred during children's 9th grade year. When mothers attempted to work with the teachers to aid their children's progress, mothers found that teachers seemed disinvested in, and even obstructive to, their children's successful class completion. Upon entering a private high school, Elise noticed that her daughter "was struggling in this English class, and I couldn't understand why she was struggling." Elise explained,

> I am the kind of parent who will say, "Let's sit down and talk about it." I am definitely not one of those parents who says my child can do no wrong. I really want to sit down so that we can see what is going on.

After weeks of trying to schedule a meeting, Elise and her daughter finally met with the English teacher. The teacher was 20 minutes late to the meeting, and then she said she would have to leave early.

During the meeting, the teacher made comments that Elise interpreted as "keynote words that people can say when they are saying either Black kids, poor kids, people of color." Specifically, the teacher accused Elise's daughter of plagiarizing a paper because her work was exemplary. As Elise was explaining to the teacher that her daughter "came out of a school where the classes that she took were advanced placement," the teacher started packing up to leave in mid conversation. Elise said, "I knew at that point that I was either going to let her really see me act a fool or I was just going to try to do this a different way." Instead of confronting the teacher, Elise went directly to the principal's office to complain about how she and her daughter were treated by the teacher. She also told her daughter, "That teacher is really ignorant. We just need to get through this year. Do the best

you can and let me know if anything else happens because we will go back to the administration. I want to make a record of this." Elise's advocacy resulted in the teacher being fired at the end of the year.

During his 9th grade year, Barbara's son fell behind on assignments in his Spanish class. Barbara reached out to the teacher and they agreed that if her son turned in several assignments that he was missing, he would no longer have a D in the class. However, the teacher did not follow through with their agreement. Barbara explained,

> She made him do all this stuff and she wouldn't accept the work. I emailed the principal because the teacher still had him with a D- and he had turned in all this late work. The principal was like, "It's the summer. I think she went on vacation. I'll see if I can reach her."

Eventually, Barbara heard from the teacher via email that she would not accept the late work. Barbara said, "Why would you give him a late pass if you're not going to accept the work? You already told him you would, and he did this work." In the end, the principal did not support Barbara, and her son got a D- in the class. Barbara reflected, "I feel like I failed 9th grade. I mean the amount of work that I put in with him on all his assignments and emailing teachers." Her husband gave her solace, explaining,

> All the work that you put in, they didn't accept that; that wasn't good enough for them because that was their mentality. But if you put that work in somewhere else, he would've done great. It had nothing to do with you, it has to do with them.

Barbara's husband's support was important for her because, "I felt really bad because to see my son have to go through that, no mom wants that."

Whereas Elise and Barbara intervened on their children's behalf, Mary challenged her son to figure out how to improve his grade on his own. Mary talked to her son about teachers' prejudices, and she also gave him guidance as to how to form relationships with his teachers. Mary believed that her son's negative teacher-related experiences at his predominantly White, private high school had a silver lining because they gave her an opportunity to teach him about people's biases. She explained:

> I have had a chance to teach him that teachers are people too. And while some of them may think they're not racist, they might be and not really know if. I am teaching him to have a relationship with his teachers because they tend to look at "us" as probably being here under a grant or for sports, it's human nature.

Given this faulty expectation of him as a Black student, Mary told her son, "have a relationship with them. Go in, ask the questions, be involved, be attentive."

Advocacy modeled for children. As children confronted unfair experiences at school, mothers often approached teachers with their concerns, especially when children were younger. As read in Chapter 3, Paula's son was suspended during 4th grade for using a derogatory word ("faggot"), but other students were not suspended for using a different derogatory word ("nigger"). As reported, Paula's son was angry about the differential treatment. Paula's reaction to the incident illustrates how mothers advocate on their children's behalf, and how mothers' intervention at the school level serves as a model for how children should respond to discriminatory experiences in the future. Paula explained that the incident gave her son an opportunity "to see that his mom will stand up for him, because I was at that school. It was to let him see the actions that I was willing to take for that. And so he was able to go back to school the next day." By advocating for fair treatment, Paula was able to get her son's suspension reduced.

Having witnessed his mother advocate for fairness, Paula's son later modeled her efforts. In the 6th grade, he observed the school librarian accepting White students' misbehavior, but punishing Black students for the same behavior. While sitting in the library, Paula's son saw the librarian allow two White male students to laugh and make noise. However, when two Black girls came into the library laughing, the librarian started yelling at them. Paula's son wrote up a statement of what he

witnessed and gave it to the principal. Paula said,

> [The principal] ended up calling the kids in, calling him in, calling the librarian in. And [the principal] said my son did not back down from his story of what happened. She said he presented himself very well. He told her how he felt about what he had seen.

After being alerted to racial bias because of his own experiences in elementary school, Paula's son later modeled the advocacy he observed his mother do on his behalf by intervening on behalf of students who were unfairly disciplined.

Summary. Mothers whose children experienced unfair treatment at school advocated for their children and empowered them to deal with unfairness. Children, especially boys, encountered teachers who seemed not to have children's best interests in mind. In mothers' experiences, sometimes teachers seemed disinvested in children's academic progress. In other instances, mothers came to learn that teachers did not like or care about their children. Some times mothers first responded to children's complaints by encouraging them to focus on their work and do their best. Yet, a couple of mothers regretted not following up on their sons' complaints sooner. By meeting with teachers and principals, mothers attempted to secure equal treatment for their children. Most times mothers' efforts were successful, especially if they had the principal's support. Regardless of the outcome of mothers' advocacy at school, their willingness to stand up for their children modeled how mothers wanted their children to respond to bias in the future.

Peer-related Catalysts

Of the 19 peer-related events, including racist name calling, bullying, and bias on sports teams, 13 of these events happened to girls and six happened to boys. Whereas mothers reported more teacher-related incidents for boys, mothers reported more peer-related incidents for girls. Ten of the 16 mothers in the study recounted at least one peer-related incident that they considered racist. Although mothers intervened on their children's behalf in over half of the teacher-related cases, mothers were less likely to intervene at school in peer-related incidents (3 out of 19). Instead, mothers most often talked to children directly about coping with the negative peer experiences. The differences in mothers' responses to teacher and peer incidents are consistent with prior research (Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

Experiences of peer rejection.

Racist name calling. Name calling incidents were the most common type of peer rejection. As discussed in Chapter 3, girls were teased about their skin color and hair. These insults against girls' physical characteristics were the most common type of peer rejection that mothers reported (n=8).

Other disparaging remarks included peers calling a teenage girl an "oreo," and peers telling a teenage boy that "he talked white" via facebook. In these instances, children were getting teased by Black peers for exhibiting qualities that were associated with White people. The girl who was called an oreo and the boy who was accused of talking white were both 15 years old. As mothers observed, these children stood up to the name callers, not shaken by the comments. By 15 years old, these children had already been called names growing up and their mothers believed they had developed a thick skin. For example, the 15-year-old boy who was accused him of talking white on facebook stood up for himself by replying, "you and I can't talk no more."

Experiences affecting children at earlier ages were more hurtful to children because they were unexpected. For example, the same boy who defended himself on facebook at 15 years old was "so upset and so hurt" when his classmates called him ghetto two years earlier. At 13 years old, he was shocked that his peers had this impression of him. He said to his mother, "How am I ghetto? Wow, that's what they think of me? I thought these were my friends." His mother, Mary, said he went from being "a happy go-lucky child" to "really, really sad." Mary responded to the incident by talking to her son and talking to the principal.

Thankfully, the principal was very responsive and spoke to the boys who called her son ghetto.

Mary told her son, "ghetto could be a mindset, it's an ignorance, people who are not trying to better themselves. It doesn't have to be Black, it could be anybody." She encouraged him to "forgive them because they don't quite understand." She told her son that he would run into these things again. She said, "For some, they expect the worst from us." Therefore, he has to "go represent." With his mother's encouragement, he rebounded from his hurt feelings and became more confident in the face of insults.

Barbara's daughter was also called ghetto by her peers during her first year in college. Her peers joked that anyone going to her hometown would need to carry a knife. Rather than being debilitated by her peers' remarks, Barbara's daughter advocated for herself. Barbara explained, "She had a meeting and she had everybody in her room. She said, 'I am sick and tired of you calling me ghetto and talking about where I come from. I don't put you down, so don't put me down.'" In order to combat her peers' negative impressions of her, Barbara said her daughter told them about her family's educational achievements. Barbara was "very proud of her, to actually be able to stand her ground." With age, children gained the confidence needed to confront negative feedback from their peers.

However, when children were first subjected to overt peer rejection at young ages, they had a more difficult time working through hurt feelings and they were more heavily reliant on mothers' comfort. One of the first times that Barbara "saw the pain" her son experienced was when two White male classmates asked him "Is it okay if we call you nigger?" At 13 years old, Barbara's son was shocked because he was "coming from an environment where he felt like everyone cared about him, it was like a family, all his friends, and he left that." Barbara was speaking of the Muslim school that her son attended before going to a predominantly White public middle school. Barbara was proud that her son stood up for himself by saying, "No you can't call me nigger." The incident had "this mild mannered kid ready to fight." Barbara and her husband told their son that he could fight back if someone put their hands on him. They told him, "You don't have to feel like my parents don't have my back. We care about you, even if you feel like no one else does." Barbara said her son's experience at school "got to the point where we had to strengthen our family bond with him, just to make him know that you're loved, you're supported." Barbara also went to the principal and identified the perpetrators. Unlike Mary's experience, the principal at Barbara's school was not as cooperative in dealing with the offenders. When Barbara and her son named the offenders, the principal said, "His mom is head of the PTA and I'm just so shocked." It is unclear if the White male students were disciplined.

Racist, physical bullying. Of the two physical bullying incidents, one was perpetrated against Barbara's son during his 8th grade year. The same White boys that asked if they could call him nigger jumped him in the hallway. The other incident happened to Renee's son in the 1st grade. Renee's son was bullied "basically because of the color of his skin." He was being beaten up and told, "We don't want you here. We're beating you because you're Black." Renee said, "He would cry a lot. It broke my heart lots of times." Renee's son thought something was wrong with him, but she corrected him: "You just live in a mean, evil world. That's the way it is." She encouraged him to forgive. Renee eventually pulled him from the school because "he's too young to be going through all that."

Barbara also pulled her son from the school where he was being bullied, which was the same school where he experienced uncaring teachers. As previously detailed, she enrolled him in a predominantly Black school where he was observably more comfortable. As the stage theory of racial identity development suggests (Cross, 1991), Barbara's son's encounter experiences resulted in his pro-Black attitudes and his interests in being around other Black people. Due to his negative school experiences, Barbara thought her son learned that he could only trust a few people. However, she did not promote messages about mistrust. She said, "It wasn't like you had to tell him that. He got that from his own experience."

Mothers came to their children's side when children were hurt from negative peer experiences. They provided support to help children cope with the experiences of being ostracized by peers. Mothers told children that, although bias was rampant, their family loved and supported them and they should feel empowered to confront the perpetrators. As children got older, they were less hurt by their peers' negative comments and they could more easily stand up for themselves.

Bias on sports teams. Solely mothers of girls reported problems involving children's sports teams. It is possible that boys did not tell their mothers about frustrations with their sports teammates, or that boys did not feel excluded on their teams. Of the three mothers that reported daughters' problems on their sports teams, none of them intervened with the coaches. Instead, mothers encouraged their daughters to "take care of business and say on top of your stuff."

During middle school, Diana's daughter played soccer on a predominantly White, neighborhood soccer team. Diana said her daughter started to realize that "it's them and then there's you." As Diana explained, her daughter's teammates,

> Would do stuff like lock her out the locker room. One of the girls took something out her backpack. You know, just kind of little, immature, mean girls type of things. And on the soccer field, they wouldn't pass the ball to her. You know, just that kind of stuff. So, that went on a good chunk of time.

Instead of handling the taunting and feelings of exclusion cunningly, like Diana suggested, Diana's daughter ended up initiating a fight and getting arrested because her teammates' parents filed charges against her. Diana told her daughter, "It made you look like you're the aggressor. You're the little Black kid who lost control. If you're going to walk into this environment and do something, you've got to know that these are the possibilities." Her daughter learned the consequences of being the Black girl "who lost control" when "she figured out that she was pretty much blackballed from all the city teams because of that fight. It had everything to do with the parents that sit on the board." Diana's daughter learned the hard way that being a racial minority on a team required her to be especially careful about avoiding conflict. When Diana's daughter failed to control her anger, she suffered severe consequences including a police record and exclusion from the soccer league.

Olivia's daughter experienced somewhat ambiguous treatment from her volleyball teammates. She was one of two girls of color on the 12-person team. Olivia noticed that the other girls barely called the ball, but "the ball gets fed to them." She told her daughter, "get in there, and don't just stand back." Olivia perceived that her daughter was treated differently than her teammates such that her daughter had to make great strides to get the ball passed to her, whereas the White girls on the team made little effort to call for passes, and yet they steadily got the ball passed to them. Olivia believed that her daughter might have been getting unfairly excluded from active participation during the games due to her racial minority status.

When daughters felt excluded on their sports teams, mothers urged them to stay committed and level headed. Mothers wanted their children to stand up for themselves. However, as in the case of Diana, they also wanted their daughters to avoid fighting because it could result in more permanent exclusion from the predominantly White teams.

Summary. When children experienced racism and exclusion perpetrated by peers, mothers helped children cope with their hurt feelings and they encouraged them to assert themselves. Although mothers often intervened in teacher-related incidents, they rarely intervened in peer-related incidents. Instead, mothers wanted to empower children to handle negative social interactions on their own. By validating children's feelings, strengthening their family bond, and advising children on how to behave in light of unfair treatment, mothers supported children through painful realizations that their peers and teammates held negative perceptions of them.

Based on mothers' report, girls experienced more peer-related incidents than boys, suggesting that girls may be more offended by peer insults and/or more likely to share these experiences with

their mothers. As children got older, they overcame the hurt of the experiences more quickly, and they were better able to voice opposition to disrespect in appropriate ways.

Police-related Catalysts

Of the five police related incidents mothers reported, including children being pulled over, searched, or detained, four of these events happened to boys and one happened to a girl. Mothers did not intervene in the four incidents involving boys because they learned of the situation after the fact. Sons told mothers about their experiences with police once they got home.

Child detained by police. The only example where a child was detained in a police station involved Kim's daughter at 12 years old. This was also the only reported occasion when a mother intervened in a police-related incident because she was called to the police station. Kim's daughter and three of her friends, all Black, were walking around a neighborhood park one summer evening. As Kim explained, "Some White woman was screaming in the park that someone had stolen her baby, and the police came. And, of course, they saw my child and her friends and pulled them to the side. They had them sitting on the curb." Whereas Kim's daughter was in shock, Kim was infuriated. She said,

> I could not get down to that police station fast enough. They always try to explain everything away. But as I listened to them about this woman, it was pretty clear that she had some mental issues and there was no baby.

She told the police officers, "Your response was over zealous to say the least." She told her daughter, "This is how they are going to treat you." Not only did Kim come to her daughter's rescue and reprimand the irrational response of the police, she also prepared her daughter for the likelihood of more bias in the future.

Children pulled over and searched by police. Of the four boys who were pulled over and searched by police, two were pulled over while driving, one was pulled over while biking, and the other was confronted while walking home. The mothers of these four boys talked to their sons about bias and gave them guidelines for how to avoid attention from police in the future. Grace reflected on her conversation with her son after he arrived home, upset that he was pulled over for no reason. She explained, "It's nothing you can say. 'Yep, there you go. Yep, you're right, you got pulled over for being Black." Grace felt like all she could do to help her son deal with his hurt and angry feelings was to validate his experience. She also told him, "You didn't have to have an attitude. That didn't help any." Though she empathized with him, Grace also told her son that it would benefit him to suppress his annoyance in future encounters with the police.

Like Grace, Natalie reminded her son that maintaining a pleasant demeanor was essential to dealing with police. When he was pulled over by the police while riding his bicycle at 12 years old, Natalie's son was asked to prove his age to the officers. Luckily, Natalie had prepared her children for these experiences by insisting that they always carry their identification cards in their wallets. When the officers were satisfied that he was indeed 12 years old and lived in the neighborhood, they let him go. Natalie told her son, "You are big statured, and you are a Black man. Those are things you really need to be aware of, and how you respond back to people." In response to this police encounter, Natalie prepared her son for more bias by highlighting the impact of his size and race on people's impressions of him. Like Grace, Natalie wanted her son to respond to people without an attitude, particularly to avoid additional trouble in police interactions.

When Elise learned that her son was pulled over by the police as he walked home, she told him, "You are always going to be a little Black boy, or Black male, and be subject to that. It doesn't matter what you bring to the table, you are going to be subject to that, no matter what I do." Elise's comments show that she felt powerless to protect her son from the onslaught of police harassment that Black males are subjected to.

Overall, mothers responded to children's police-related experiences by emphasizing the

pervasiveness of discrimination perpetrated by police officers against Black people. Mothers suggested that children avoid having an attitude and respond politely when questioned by police in order to avoid more severe consequences.

Chapter Summary

The present study contributes to the literature by examining the specific ways in which mothers responded to children's experiences of discrimination, including the messages they gave to children directly and the actions they took to advocate for their children's fair treatment.

Despite the small number of interviewees, each mother reported at least one experience of racial discrimination affecting her child, whether teacher, peer, or police-related. The overlap in mothers' stories highlights the pervasiveness of racial discrimination in school and community settings. Boys had several experiences of teacher mistreatment and police profiling, and girls had several experiences of peer rejection.

This study shows that children's racially salient experiences catalyzed mothers' messages about bias and their advocacy efforts. This study also reveals nuances in mothers' responses depending on the child's age and the type of discriminatory experience. Mothers were more likely to intervene at the school level when children were younger and when children experienced unfair treatment from teachers versus peers. Mothers' advocacy efforts included holding parent-teacher conferences, meeting with the principal, or moving the child to a different school. The resolution of children's negative school-based experiences was based on the school's responsiveness to parents' concerns. A few mothers reported shifts in their perceptions of parent-teacher relationships due to their children's racialized experiences. Whereas some mothers initially felt partnered with teachers and urged children to abide by teachers' rules, mothers began mistrusting teachers when they realized that teachers did not support their children's academic progress. When mothers were dissatisfied with the school's response to their concerns, mothers sometimes moved their children to different schools.

Research has shown that the types of discriminatory experiences that mothers and children encounter and what mothers say to children about these experiences has implications for children's socio-emotional and academic outcomes (Fisher et al., 2000; Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Neblett et al., 2006). The present study adds to this literature by highlighting the additional role of mothers' advocacy efforts on children's ability to overcome negative experiences of discrimination. These findings have implications for the development of positive school climates and mutually beneficial family-school relationships that support students' academic achievement and socio-emotional well being.

Chapter VI
Discussion

Significance of the Study

This study contributes a process-focused theoretical framework to help explain how and why racial socialization takes place in middle-class Black families. Racial socialization has primarily been studied using standardized measures so that individuals' perspectives and experiences can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories. Scholars have provided insight into what messages parents give about race and how these messages differ based on personal factors, including parents' and children's gender, and parents' education level. Whereas surveys are useful for gathering respondents' general thoughts about a subject and examining correlations between those beliefs and personal characteristics, such tools are inadequate for exploring how parents explain, rationalize, or interpret the process by which they socialize their children to race and racism. Though we know a lot about what racial socialization is, much less attention has been dedicated to the questions of how and why parents engage in racial socialization.

Filling a gap in the literature, this study explored the dynamic and interdependent nature of racial socialization, rather than conceptualizing racial socialization as static and unidirectional (Coard & Sellers, 2005). The present study used a qualitative approach to examine Black mothers' reasoning about their racial socialization efforts, highlighting some of the complexities of racial socialization in Black families. Qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, allowed for an understanding of what prompted racial socialization messages from mother to child.

The advantage of a qualitative approach is that it produces a wealth of detailed information about a smaller number of people, thereby increasing the depth of understanding of the cases studied, but reducing the generalizability (Patton, 2002). Though the results of this study cannot be generalized to larger populations, the findings open up new directions for further research. The interview format permitted mothers to describe what was meaningful and salient to them with no restrictions on their responses.

Although this study represents a significant contribution to the literature, there are several limitations to the study design. In addition to the limitations of small sample size and lack of generalizability, the scope of this study excluded the perspectives of children, fathers, and other significant socializing agents. Therefore, the study does not afford a complete picture of the interdependent nature of racial socialization. The study also excluded families of lower and upper income levels, disallowing comparisons of racial socialization processes across socioeconomic status. Additionally, the interview format required mothers to recall past events. Due to memory constraints, the accuracy of mothers' stories of past experiences may have been compromised. Finally, mothers who volunteered to participate in this study may have been more reflective about their racial socialization practices compared to mothers who chose not to participate.

Despite the study limitations, an important contribution of this study is how it gives voice to the beliefs and experiences of Black mothers. Giving voice to this group is important because, historically and in contemporary society, negative and controlling images of Black mothers persist (Collins, 2000). This study challenges oppressive constructions of Black mothers by highlighting the deliberate ways in which mothers engage in parenting, particularly when considering issues of race. The study also complicates the negative images of Black mothers by showing the unique challenges they face when raising Black children in American society, and the different ways in which they grapple with how to best parent given the contexts they find themselves in.

This chapter discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the study findings. The following sections explore how this study extends our theoretical understanding of the gender dynamics in racial socialization, the complexity of mothers' provisions of preparation for bias messages, and the roles that contextual experiences and developmental progression play in family

racial socialization processes. Additionally, practical implications for parenting, schooling, and family-school relationships will be explored. Lastly, this chapter details directions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

By employing a qualitative study design, this project has resulted in an expanded theory of racial socialization. Namely, this study presented parental racial socialization as an interdependent, developmental, and contextual process, not simply a transmission of messages from parents to children. The ways mothers choose to approach racial socialization are guided by mothers' own racial experiences as children and adults, and their aspirations and concerns for children. Also, this study highlighted mothers' responses to racial discrimination and advocacy on children's behalf as important aspects of racial socialization processes. Furthermore, the growing findings of gender differences in the provisions of racial socialization suggest that more exploration is needed to understand gender-based messages about race (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown et al., 2010; McHale et al., 2006; Thomas & Speight, 1999). By interviewing mothers with sons and mothers with daughters, this study showed that mothers choose to send gender-based messages about race because they have distinct concerns about their sons' and daughters' well being considering the differential impact of racism by gender.

Clarifying gender dynamics in racial socialization. Consistent with previous research and historical accounts (Hill, 2001; Lewis, 1975), mothers in this study expressed more worry for their sons than their daughters. There was consensus among the sample that Black boys were stereotyped as threatening and intimidating. These negative perceptions of Black boys led to mothers' concern for their sons' physical and emotional safety. Although mothers believed that their sons were more likely to be targets of discrimination than their daughters, mothers did not report having lower expectations for sons than daughters. Contrary to previous reports (Hill & Zimmerman, 1995; Staples & Johnson, 1993), mothers expressed similar expectations for their sons' and daughters' success in mainstream society. However, mothers did consider preparation for bias messages to be more important for boys than girls because they perceived that boys encountered more discrimination.

Similar to previous findings (Thomas & Speight, 1999), mothers gave more messages about accepting physical beauty to girls than boys. Societal emphasis on women's physical characteristics influenced the types of messages that mothers considered important to give to girls. Mothers perceived that these societal standards of beauty were also influential on who their sons found attractive. Mothers sought to help boys and girls recognize the beauty of Black people, and of Black women in particular, despite pervasive messages and images that uphold White physical characteristics as the standards of beauty.

Findings from this study call attention to specific types of messages that have been absent from conceptualizations of racial socialization. Namely, mothers expressed concerns about their children's engagement in interracial relationships and their romantic attraction to other Black people. Although all but one mother supported children's involvement with a partner of a different race, mothers worried that the non-Black partner's family would be unwelcoming of their children. Parents' messages about romantic relationships and attraction may have implications for children's psychological outcomes and willingness to engage in intergroup relationships.

Furthermore, an issue that arose for some mothers was concern that their son not only find Black women attractive, but more generally that they find women attractive. Underexplored areas of study in the gendered racial socialization literature are Black mothers' perspectives on children dating outside their race, as well as their beliefs about children engaging in same-sex relationships.

Complicating racial socialization: Varied approaches to preparation for bias. The findings from this study, particularly the evidence that mothers have different opinions on whether to prepare their children for bias, reveal that Black mothers' attitudes toward racial socialization are

not homogeneous. Although this study's sample was limited to middle-income Black mothers within the same geographical region, there was diversity in mothers' beliefs about how and why children should be alerted to racial discrimination. Mothers' own racial socialization experiences growing up, as well as their racial discrimination experiences in adulthood, influenced what mothers chose to share with their children.

Whereas some mothers thought their children should be prepared for discrimination and took a proactive approach, other mothers thought preparatory messages would negatively affect their children's sense of self and outlook on the world, and therefore they moderated their discussions of racial bias. In deciding what to say to children and when to say it, mothers negotiated their own experiences, attitudes, and worries to strike a delicate balance between supporting children's awareness of racial injustices and supporting their sense of self-worth.

The current study found that mothers who actively prepared their children for bias were also more likely to attribute negative events to discrimination; and mothers who refrained from giving preparation for bias messages were more likely to discourage children from attributing negative experiences to racism. As Brown (2008) proposed, several factors influence whether a child interprets a situation as discriminatory, including the ambiguity of the situation and parents' messages about racism. Mothers' willingness to attribute children's negative experiences to discrimination may help explain mixed findings regarding the effect of preparation for bias messages. For example, when children encounter negativity, be it peer rejection or negative feedback from teachers, mothers' decisions to attribute it to discrimination or another cause (including the child's own behavior) may have significant implications for how children come to understand themselves and others.

Mothers' guidance on detecting bias may have varied results. For example, children could become hypersensitive to discrimination and inaccurately "play the race card" when in fact they should be taking personal responsibility for their actions. As a teacher, one mother in the study encountered a 3rd grade student who she perceived as using race as a crutch because "it's been instilled in them, that when people are treating you a certain way it's because you're Black." Therefore, this mother wanted to limit her messages about bias with her children so that they would not automatically blame negative feedback on racism. However, not preparing children to detect bias could result in undue self-blame.

Studies that ask parents how often they give preparation for bias messages cannot effectively capture the nuances of how children are taught about racial injustice. With this study's identification of varied approaches to discussing racial bias, researchers can develop measures that more specifically assess mothers' provisions of preparation for bias messages. The mixed results found regarding the effects of preparation for bias messages on children (Hughes et al., 2011) may be partially explained by the different approaches mothers take to giving preparation for bias messages.

Furthermore, this study found that children sometimes resisted mothers' preparation for bias messages. In particular, children who had yet to confront their own experiences of discrimination seemed to reject or misinterpret mothers' discussions of racism. This finding highlights that children's developmental progression and experiences of discrimination can influence how they interpret, respond to, and internalize mothers' messages. As scholars seek to understand the impact of preparation for bias messages on child outcomes, it is important to consider how the developmental timing of messages may contribute to differential child outcomes.

Contextualizing racial socialization.

Mothers' responses to children's experiences of discrimination. This study found that mothers' racial socialization messages are often in reaction to children's racially salient experiences outside of home. Messages are given to children based on the contexts that mothers and children find themselves in. These racial socialization moments unfold in a process, starting with a catalyst

and ending with children's increased understanding of how race operates. Children's increased understanding is shaped by mothers' responses to the catalyzing events.

Mothers reported that their children experienced racist and unfair treatment, and these situations required mothers to respond to children's hurt and confused feelings by giving messages about racism, inequality, and the meanings of Blackness in American society. The most commonly reported experiences that mothers identified as racially salient included encounters with unfair teacher practices, peer rejection, and police profiling. Therefore, a significant component of mothers' racial socialization occurred as in-the-moment responses to experiences of unfairness and prejudice (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

Mothers' advocacy as a component of racial socialization. In addition to giving messages to comfort and support children through negative experiences, mothers also advocated for their children. In meetings with children's teachers and school administrators, mothers fought for their children's fair treatment in school. Mothers' efforts served to protect their children and to model assertiveness. Mothers observed that, as children aged, they began to advocate for fairness for themselves and others, just as their mothers had done for them. The role of parental advocacy as an aspect of racial socialization processes has yet to be explored in the literature. Investigations into parental advocacy experiences are particularly important for children who are at elevated risk of discrimination, such as children who attend predominantly White schools and children who have learning difficulties.

Mothers' learning and development resulting from children's experiences. Contributing to the conceptualization of racial socialization as an interdependent process, this study sheds light on the developmental transitions that some mothers experience as they help their children learn about race. The research literature has honed in on how children's racial socialization experiences impact their psychological, behavioral, and academic outcomes. Yet, no attention has been given to the psychological development of mothers as they help their children understand race and racism.

A unique finding of this study is that mothers sometimes regret their responses to children's racialized experiences. In particular, a couple of mothers initially perceived themselves to be allied with teachers, putting the onus on their children to rectify any conflict children were experiencing with teachers. Although these mothers presumed that they were in partnership and shared common goals with teachers for their children's academic success, mothers eventually came to realize that teachers were not similarly invested in their children's academic or socio-emotional well being.

Though mothers had specific beliefs about race and self that they wanted their children to understand, mothers were also developing their racial socialization beliefs in reaction to children's experiences. The findings suggest further exploration of how mothers' racial socialization practices are learned based on children's experiences. Contributing to a comprehensive theory of racial socialization, the findings from this study imply that racial socialization is not just a learning and developmental experience for children, but also for parents.

Practical Implications

This research holds practical implications for the fields of psychology and education. First, this study contributes to the well being of Black families in several ways. The stresses experienced by working parents can interfere with their time to reflect on parenting behaviors and goals. By participating in the interview, mothers were allotted a space for reflection. At the end of the interviews, several mothers stated that having space to consider these issues helped them identify topics that they wanted to be sure to discuss with their children. Perhaps these types of consideration can contribute to better parenting practices and better outcomes for children. Additionally, there was overlap in the types of racialized experiences that impacted children at school and in the community. Given the pervasiveness of children's experiences of racial discrimination, parents of Black children should be encouraged to participate in group discussions

about how to best support their children at school and at home.

In the service of supporting parents' and children's mental health, as well as children's opportunities for academic achievement, schools and community organizations should lead parents in discussions about their concerns for children. Particular emphasis should be given to parents' concerns about how their children's Black identities confer unfair treatment at school and in the community. By engaging in these types of conversations in a group setting, parents can gain support and advocacy tips. Additionally, by holding these conversations at school, teachers, administrators, and counselors can gain awareness of how their policies and practices should adjust to authentically engage parents in a partnership for children's success. When Black families are a numerical minority at children's schools, community centers, including churches, serve as an appropriate place to engage Black parents, particularly for those who are relatively isolated from parent groups at their children's schools. As the findings indicate, mothers often perceive that racial socialization requires a delicate balance of messages. Considering that most parents are engaged in racial socialization and are being forced to respond to children's experiences of discrimination, parents would benefit from spaces to share ideas and gain support.

Lastly, the study identified mothers' negative interactions with schools as a particular challenge they faced during child rearing. During the interviews, each mother was asked what she thought schools could do to help prepare children to cope with and address racism. A resounding response was that schools should, at minimum, engage children in discussions about the history of racism and about the appreciation of cultural differences. Schools should take heed of mothers' demands for more multicultural education for both the benefits of a well rounded education for students, as well as the benefits of integrating curriculum that parents value within children's schooling experiences. Listening and responding to parents' educational goals for children is one way that schools can authentically engage Black parents in a partnership to strengthen children's academic experiences.

Directions for Future Research

Based on this study's introduction of understudied theoretical concepts related to processes of racial socialization, there are several opportunities for future research.

Gendered themes. Researchers should assess how parents' beliefs and messages about romantic attraction and interracial relationships constitute racial socialization. These messages may shed light on children's comfort with engaging in intragroup and intergroup relationships, and how girls and boys may differ in their willingness to engage with same-race and other-race romantic partners. There is also a need for research on how Black mothers address issues of sexual orientation with their children in order to understand how differential acceptance of homosexual relationships may contribute to children's psychological and behavioral outcomes.

Parental advocacy as racial socialization. Researchers should consider how parents' advocacy efforts serve to socialize children to race as both direct support during negative experiences, as well as vicarious modeling of responses to discrimination. As was illustrated, when their children began experiencing negative treatment at school, mothers were sometimes compelled to reevaluate their trust in teachers. Future research should more closely investigate the developmental trajectories of Black parents' relationships with their children's schools. As children progress through school, how do parents' advocacy efforts evolve? An important component to this research is investigation into how schools create environments that either welcome or restrict parents' advocacy.

Also, the mothers in this study had the social capital and professional experience to successfully advocate for their children. When mothers were not able to secure protections for their children at one school, mothers were able to access other schools. Investigations of advocacy among Black parents should consider the impact of social capital and school choice options on parents' experiences with schools.

Proactive and moderate approaches to discussions of racism. Another ripe area of research is further investigation into the typologies of proactive and moderate approaches, which may help tease out the differential effects of preparation for bias messages on children's well being. It may be that the way parents frame their racial socialization messages variably impacts children's internalization of these messages. For example, the present study found that some mothers wait to warn their children that they may be targets of racism until children are confronted with a racist experience. When assessing whether parents give messages about bias, it is important to delineate whether messages are given before actual racist incidents or in response to discriminatory experiences. Although this study did not assess child outcomes, it is theoretically plausible that the timing of mothers' messages about bias can influence how children take up these messages.

Furthermore, depending on their children's experiences outside the home, mothers' moderate approach (i.e., waiting to discuss bias and discouraging discrimination attribution) could serve to either preserve their children's fresh outlook on humanity or leave children ill equipped to cope with unfairness. Children's age, gender, experiences of discrimination, and educational settings may all influence how a proactive or moderate racial socialization approach impacts children's psychological and behavioral outcomes.

The impact of children's resistance to mothers' messages about bias. Some mothers in this study encountered resistance from their children when giving preparation for bias messages. More research is needed to determine how the discontinuity between mothers' and children's beliefs contributes to variance in child outcomes. Also, it is important to understand how this discontinuity is influenced by a child's developmental stage and personal experiences with discrimination. Such research would help to identify recommendations for when and how parents should approach conversations about racism with their children.

Effects of attributing negative events to discrimination. By examining children's and parents' perspectives on whether negative experiences are attributable to discrimination or another cause, researchers can determine the degree of consistency between parents' and children's interpretations. It is plausible that if mothers and children conflict in their interpretation of a situation as discriminatory or not, the messages that mothers give (or refrain from giving) may have consequences for children's psychological and behavioral outcomes. To clarify the impact of preparation for bias messages, future research should examine how children respond when mothers either confirm or deny that children's negative experiences are attributable to discrimination.

Need for longitudinal studies. Longitudinal studies are necessary to gain a more complete picture of child outcomes. As mothers in this study explained, children's beliefs about self, race, and racism changed overtime, with children becoming more confident, assertive, and grounded with age. Studies that seek to relate parents' racial socialization efforts to children's outcomes should acknowledge that children's reports of psychological outcomes are subject to change overtime. Therefore, rigorous research would involve assessments of children's outcomes (e.g., self-esteem) over several time periods to more accurately reflect their psychological experiences. Additionally, longitudinal studies can capture how parents' racial socialization beliefs and practices shift in response to children's age and experiences of discrimination.

Assessing different populations. Lastly, compared to the Black mothers in this study, researchers should determine how dynamic racial socialization processes are similar or different among fathers, grandparents, non-Black parents with Black and/or mixed race children, and Black families with lower or higher income levels. Scholarship on racial socialization will be strengthened by research that acknowledges the diversity of Black families.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Child Characteristics
1. Tell me about your child.
2. What do you consider to be your child's strengths? What does he/she do well?
3. What are his/her favorite activities?
4. Tell me about his/her school. (Type of school, demographic characteristics, teacher quality).
5. How do you feel your child is doing in school this year?

Racial Socialization Experiences
1. Please tell me about experiences you've had that gave you an opportunity to teach your child about race.
    a. Alternate phrasing:
        i. Please tell me about experiences when your child has experienced racism (at school or in another setting).
        ii. Please tell me about conversations you have had with your child about getting along in the world as a Black person.
    b. Probes:
        i. What happened?
        ii. What did you communicate to your child?
        iii. Were there other ways you thought about responding?
        iv. What factors influenced your response?
            1. What is it about your child—personality, situation, desires—that you think led you to respond the way you did?
            2. What is it about you—your situation, personality, desires—that led you to respond the way you did?
        v. What do you think your child learned from you about being Black?
        vi. How do you want your child to cope with racism and racial discrimination?
            1. What are some psychological tools you hope to provide to your child to deal with racism?
2. Do you find it easy or difficult to discuss race with your children? How so?
3. When you have had conversations about being Black with your child, what messages does your child seem uncomfortable with?
    a. Please share an example.
    b. What is it about your child—personality, situation—that you think led him/her to feel this way?
    c. How do you approach topics about race with your child to make your messages more agreeable to him/her?
4. Are there particular environments you choose for your child to give him/her experiences that inform his/her identity as a Black person? What factors inform your choices?

Specific Racial Socialization Messages
1. Imagine that your child was accepted to attend a prestigious summer program where he/she was going to be the only Black child among 200 students.
    a. Would you let your child go? Why or why not?
    b. Is there anything you'd want to do or say to prepare your child for this experience? What and why?
    c. Have there been situations when your child has been the only Black person among a group? What were these experiences like?
2. Imagine that your family has moved to a city where Black people make up most of the population. This will be the first time your child attends a school with all Black students and staff.
    a. Is there anything you'd want to do or say to prepare your child for this experience? What and why?
    b. Have there been situations when your child has been in all-Black communities? What were these experiences like?
3. Do you think girls require different messages about being Black compared to boys?
    a. What messages about race are most important to give to boys? Why?
    b. What messages about race are most important to give to girls? Why?
4. (If not already discussed—) Some parents have mentioned that they want their children to rely on spirituality and faith to help them deal with racism. How do you feel about this for your child?

Impact of Racial Socialization
1. When you talk to your child about being Black, what do you hope your child will understand…
    • Understand about himself/herself?
    • Understand about other Black people?
    • Understand about non-Black people?
2. What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your children by giving messages about being Black?
    a. Academic outcomes? (How do you hope your child will approach school?)
    b. Behavioral outcomes? (How do you hope your child will behave?)

Additional Information
1. What, if anything, do you think schools could do to better prepare children to cope with and address racism?
2. Is there anything else you would like to add that I didn't ask?
3. Is there anything you'd like to ask me?
4. What was your experience participating in this interview? How did you feel being asked these questions?

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age? _____

2. How do you describe your race/ethnicity?

_____

3. Are you:
____Married
____Divorced
____Widowed
____Separated
____Never been married
____A member of an unmarried couple

4. What is the *highest level* of education you have completed?
____Nursery school to 8th grade
____Some high school, but did not finish
____Completed high school/GED
____Some college, but did not finish
____Technical School
____2-year college degree (AA, AS)
____4-year college degree (BA, BS)
____Masters degree
____Doctoral degree
____Professional degree

5. Are you currently:
____Employed full-time
____Employed part-time
____Self-employed
____Unemployed/Looking for work
____A homemaker
____A student
____Retired
____Unable to work

6. What do you expect your 2011 family income from all sources before taxes to be?
____Less than $10,000
____$10,000 to $19,999
____$20,000 to $29,999
____$30,000 to $39,999
____$40,000 to $49,999
____$50,000 to $59,999
____$60,000 to $69,999
____$70,000 to $79,999
____$80,000 to $89,999
____$90,000 to $99,999
____$100,000 to $149,999
____$150,000 or more

7. How many people live in your household?
_____

8. How many children live in your household who are...
      Less than 5 years old? _____
      5 through 12 years old? _____
      13 through 18 years old? _____