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Authors
Carlo, Gustavo
Murry, Velma McBride
Davis, Alexandra N
et al.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Culture-Related Adaptive Mechanisms to Race-Related Trauma Among African American and US Latinx Youth

Gustavo Carlo[1] · Velma McBride Murry[2] · Alexandra N. Davis[3] · Catherine M. Gonzalez[4] · Marlena L. Debreaux[5]

Abstract

African American and US Latinx families have faced over two centuries of systemic racism and discrimination, elevating risk for trauma, adversity, and disparities for their youth. These circumstances have compromised the health and well-being of many of these youth. However, many other African American and US Latinx youth are able to succeed despite these challenges. In recent years, scholars have begun to identify ways in which minoritized youth adapt and respond to adversity to become competent, well-functioning individuals. Drawing on two conceptual models of cultural resilience, one grounded in the study of African American youth and one grounded in the study of US Latinx youth, we summarize supportive research associated with each model. Using these conceptual models to guide our critical review of extant studies, we present an integrative review of work to guide the design of strength-based, cultural asset-centered research studies and preventive interventions targeting African American and US Latinx youth.

Keywords African American youth · Latino/a/x youth · Trauma · Cultural resilience · Strength-based

Systemic Oppressive Ecologies

Despite society's flawed impression of improved equitable conditions for all people, many minoritized groups continue to be impacted by systemic racism and oppressive ecologies. Systemic racism theory posits that there is an inherently unequal hierarchy of dominance in society that precedes the prosperity of White (non-minority) individuals over people of color in multiple areas of society including healthcare, employment, education, housing, and judicial systems (Feagin, 2006). Black, Indigenous, Pacific Islander,

Latino/s, and Asian (BIPOC) peoples continue to face the repercussions of unjust and oppressive laws and practices, often manifested through segregation, deportation, and lynchings. These acts of systemic oppression have not only dehumanized them but have left behind historical trauma to be passed down through generations. In this essay, we summarize our understanding of the trauma and systemic racist experiences of US Black and Latinx families and youth. Culturally grounded and strength-based theories are presented and select related research is highlighted that informs scholars, practitioners, and policymakers on the antecedent conditions, the various influences, and consequences of exposure to racism, prejudice, and discrimination against Black and Latinx youth in the USA. We conclude our review with suggestions for future research and applied implications.

The Black Experience in the USA

Though we acknowledge the significant transformation of the economic situation of Black Americans, in particular, during the twenty-first century, the current state of Black Americans can best be described as paradoxical. Many Black American families and communities are in crisis, confronting high unemployment, poverty, crime, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, and teenage pregnancy and parenthood (Aral et al.,

✉ Gustavo Carlo
  gcarlo@uci.edu

1   School of Education, University of California, Irvine, Irvine, CA 92867, USA

2   Department of Health PolicyDepartment of Human and Organizational DevelopmentSchool of Medicine, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA

3   College of Education, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, USA

4   Department of Human and Organizational Development, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA

5   Department of Human and Organizational Development, Nashville, TN, USA

2008; Finer & Zolna, 2011). This paradox is further exemplified in research on Black American families. According to the Pew Research Foundation (Kochhar & Fry, 2014), White Americans' net worth is 13 times greater than Black Americans with the gap widening since 2007. Furthermore, while the overall unemployment rate for the United States was 5.3%, Black Americans accounted for 9.6% of those unemployed (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Similar overrepresentation can be seen in the criminal justice system. Minoritized groups make up 37% of the US population; however, one in 15 Black children has a parent in prison compared to 1 in 111 White children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Black families are also disproportionately affected by homicidal death. While Blacks accounted for 50% of all murders in the USA, national homicide rates in 2012 revealed that Black males represented 32.7/100,000 homicidal deaths compared to 3.36/100,00 of White males, and Black females' homicide rate is also higher than their White counterparts, reflecting 4.51/100,000 compared to 1.45/100,000, respectively (Langley & Sugarmann, 2015). That Black children are six times more likely to be shot to death by police (Sirry et al., 2017) is evident as the US continuously witness in the killings of young children, such as Fanta Bility, Tamir Rice, and adolescents, like Adam Toledo and Ma'Khia Bryant. Collectively, these findings indicate that despite the significant progress of Black Americans, they are continuously impacted by racialized institutions and policies.

The majority of Black Americans report having had some race-related stressful experience during their lifetime. Results from a 2013 national survey of adults (Pew Research Center, 2014) revealed that 88% of Black Americans reported being subjected to "some/a lot" of discrimination. Reports from adolescents also confer such acts. Simons et al. (2002) reported that 46% of their sample of early adolescents residing in small towns and rural communities had experienced racial slurs, 33% had been excluded from an activity due to race, and 18% indicated that they had been threatened with physical harm because of their race. Moreover, McKown & Weinstein (2003) have demonstrated that awareness to racial discrimination increases with age. Whereas Black American adolescents experienced lower rates of discrimination at entrance to high school, by the end of the 4-year study, reported rates of exposure had dramatically increased (Greene et al., 2006). Results from a mixed-methods study offered greater insights on differential reports based on the response platform (Berkel et al., 2009). For example, quantitative estimates of adolescents' experiences with racism were relatively low but result from individual face-to-face interviews revealed that Black youth were concerned about how racism was affecting not only their personal lives but also their mothers and other adults in their communities. Furthermore, shared examples of their daily experiences demonstrated ways in which they were being affected by discriminatory experiences, including a sense that they were devalued by their Caucasian teachers and classmates, and, for males, heightened fear about frequent harassment by local police. Spears Brown & Bigler (2004) found that Black children as young as five years of age described feeling marginalized by teachers. Gibbons et al. (2012) extend this finding to show that among 10-year-old Black American children, early experience with racial discrimination was predictive of substance use as a coping mechanism, and overall high substance use eight years later. Other scholars reported that among fourth- and sixth-grade Black American students, anticipating that one would be exposed to racial discrimination experiences was associated with lower reading skills and higher externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Kohli et al., 2017). These negative experiences, in addition to those incurred during the pandemic, have impacted Black Americans' physical and mental health, increasing morbidity and mortality rates in this group (Adesogan et al., 2021; Murry et al., 2001).

The Latinx Experience in the USA

Similar to Blacks, many Latinxs in the USA have made some progress in education and economic status in recent decades. However, US Latinxs also continue to experience the legacy of ethnic discrimination (both systemic and interpersonal) and White privilege. As a result, a disproportionate number of Latinxs live in poverty, lack adequate access to healthcare and health insurance, are unemployed, lack access to higher education, and suffer from disparities in psychological and physical health problems (including disproportionate deaths from COVID-19; García Coll et al., 2020). Latinxs are also subjected to disproportionate rates of police-involved homicide (almost twice as likely as White, non-Latinxs), incarceration (28% more likely than White, non-Latinxs), parent incarceration (twice as likely as White, non-Latinxs), and 74% higher likelihood to be exposed to gun violence than White, non-Latinxs (Seroczynski & Jobst, 2016; Washington Post, 2022; Zimmerman & Messner, 2013). However, even in the midst of existing disparities, there has been a resurgence of anti-immigrant hostility and sentiment towards immigrant groups in recent years, with a particular focus on Mexican-heritage persons and Latinxs from Latin American countries. While Latinx individuals belong to a variety of racial groups, including afro-Latinx groups, many are racially ambiguous and have been "racialized" as people of color who still face both ethnic and racial discrimination (Lockwood & Cuevas, 2020). These racist attitudes and overt hostile acts are linked to long-standing political ideologies that promote White supremacy and have been empowered by political

and government leaders. The result is a recent increase in hate crimes towards Latinxs (FBI, 2019), as well as, an increase in anti-immigrant legislative actions across the USA (much of those targeting persons of Latinx heritage). One legislative action that had powerful, harmful consequences was condoned by the Trump Administration—the forced separation of thousands of undocumented Latinx parents from their young children (Bouza et al., 2018).

Latinx youth and families in the USA also face structural barriers that contribute to inequities across multiple domains (e.g., education, juvenile justice, healthcare systems), as ethnic/racial biases permeate social institutions (see Espinola et al., 2019). Importantly, Latinx individuals belong to a variety of racial groups, as phenotypic characteristics are diverse among this ethnic group, and researchers are increasingly acknowledging the importance of considering the intersection between ethnicity and race, as is evident in the work on Afro-Latinx youth (Salas Pujols, 2020). The systemic oppression resulting from racism and ethnic discrimination can be seen in disparities across many indicators of health, including physical health outcomes, educational disparities, socioeconomic conditions, and the overrepresentation of ethnic and racial minority individuals, including Latinx individuals, incarcerated and exposed to violence (see Espinola et al., 2019). US Latinx families live under systems and institutions that limit access to opportunities, such as economic opportunities and high-quality education (see Espinola et al., 2019), which can impede developmental processes. For example, US Latinx students experience higher "push-out" rates (students are often pushed out of the education system as opposed to simply dropping out; Doll et al., 2013) than their White, European American peers and are thus at risk for living in poverty because of restricted educational opportunities (see Espinola et al., 2019). Structural inequalities also often result in experiences of both chronic and acute stress that can impact family processes and youth adjustment because of the chronic, pervasive nature of these stressors (Flores et al., 2008).

Many US Latinx families face chronic stress that results from living in poverty, as Latinx families are disproportionately at risk for living in poverty with limited access to financial and community resources (Berlan & Harwood, 2018). US Latinx families also experience acute stressors associated with navigating US. culture and societal systems that may differ from their traditional cultural norms (e.g., immigration; Berry et al., 2006). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of the existing stressors for Latinx families because of the financial strain caused by the economic downturn, as well as increases in prejudice toward ethnic/racial minority and low-SES populations during this historical event (FBI, 2019; García Coll et al., 2020).

Implications of Current Race-Related Events on Black and US Latinx Youth

A major culture-related stressor that affects Black and Latinx families, regardless of social class, is racism and incidences of prejudices and discrimination, which create major social structural challenges that are commonly characterized as primary sources of stress for these families (Carlo et al., in press). Structural policies, implicit racial bias, and socioeconomic inequity cascade through Black and Latinx families to affect everyday life experiences. In fact, disparities that persist for Black and Latinx populations, regardless of family income, parental education, or community context, are thought to be attributed, in part, to systematic discrimination experienced by these populations (Brody et al., 2006; Davis & Carlo, 2019).

A common approach for explaining these patterns is to associate outcomes and plight of Black Americans and Latinxs to their lifestyles, as contributors to these social ills. It is worth highlighting, however, that much of what happens inside Black and Latinx families are spillover effects and consequences of structural challenges and barriers, often associated with macro-level stressors. Although some of these stressors are overt and powerful, many of these stressors are often mundane, uncontrollable, and unpredictable events that have direct effects on families' everyday life experiences. It is clear that these varied culture-related stressors contribute to harmful effects on parenting, family functioning, and family processes, and have cascading effects on adjustment and developmental outcomes (see Murry et al., 2018; Williams & Mohammed, 2009, for further discussion).

While previous research has highlighted how anticipating and experiencing racial discrimination contributes to declines in academic performance and increases in internalizing and externalizing behavior, Black and Latinx youth still face a variety of racial stressors that are not yet sufficiently explored within developmental research. One such emerging area is the study of the psychological effects of media exposure to racially or ethnically traumatizing events such as viewing police-involved shooting of an unarmed Black person or witnessing the forcible separation of undocumented parent immigrants from their young children by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Tynes et al. (2019), referring to these experiences as exposure to traumatic events online or TEO, have found that such exposure is linked to increased depressive and post-traumatic stress symptoms among Black and Latinx youth.

The senseless killings, the chronic and cumulative stressors, and the disproportionately high rates of health problems not only end the lives of hundreds of children and adolescents early in life, but there are also generational spillover effects on their families, communities, and the lives of those

that witness and experience violence and loss (Ali, 2021; Cineas, 2021). Limited consideration has been given to the cascading effects of systemic racism and environmental trauma on Black and Latinx youth development, beyond examining how individually perpetrated racism affects youth's academic and psychological functioning. There is an urgent need to move beyond individual perpetuated racist acts to examine ways in which institutional forms of racism impact the well-being of young people of color. For example, the push in many educational and political systems to ban critical race theory and conversations of race in the classroom. This is only one example, of many, in which lawmakers use legislation to further protect the interest of a White supremacist status quo while invalidating the racial realities of children and adolescents of color (Kaplan & Owings, 2021). Taken together, these contemporary challenges necessitate the development and refinement of traditional theories and to embrace critical conceptual frameworks to guide future research studies, preventive interventions, and policies that target Black and Latinx youth.

Theoretical Foundations

Traditional Theories of Adolescents' Development

Traditional theories of adolescents' development tend to focus on micro-level, interpersonal processes that occur universally, such as cognitive-developmental theories and theories of identity development (Piaget, 1972; Steinberg & Lerner, 2004). Specifically, cognitive-developmental theories focus on increases in complex cognitive processes including hypothetical reasoning and future planning (Moshman, 2015). Additionally, Lerner's positive youth development perspective focuses on developmental assets of adolescents and highlights the strengths of adolescent populations by proposing the 5 C's (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring; Lerner et al., 2009). This perspective aims to promote positive adjustment among adolescent populations, but there is little recognition in this model of the role of cultural diversity and mechanisms. While these theories contribute to our understanding of developmental processes across a variety of domains, they are also devoid of any acknowledgment of historical systemic oppressive structures and mechanisms that shape the development of Latinx and African American youth.

The Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children

In order to address the lack of theoretical models incorporating systemic oppressive mechanisms as central to the

development of minoritized youth, García Coll et al. (1996) developed the Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children. This model considers historical, structural, and systemic factors that shape the reality of youth of color. The model highlights the discrimination and oppression mechanisms that shape ethnic/racial minority youth adjustment through various culture-specific (e.g., ethnic/racial identity, assimilation), non-culture-specific (e.g., temperament, biological), and contextual variables (e.g., neighborhood experiences, family processes).

Following the Integrative Model (García Coll et al., 1996), there are unique and common influences on African American and Latinx youth development. For example, both African American and US Latinx youth have a legacy of intergenerational trauma (e.g., violence, poverty, discrimination, injustice, forced family separation, cultural genocide that can impact family dynamics that ultimately create trauma for successive generations) at the family, community, and individual levels. However, there are other historical traumatic experiences that are relatively unique to African Americans (e.g., slavery) and US Latinx youth (e.g., immigration status, language). Furthermore, there is wide variability in the history and susceptibility of some of these traumatic experiences across subgroups of US Latinx youth (e.g., Mexican versus Cuban heritage youth). Importantly, commonalities across these youth groups are enhanced when one considers the intersection of these cultures or mixed heritage groups (e.g., Afro-Caribbean youth, Puerto Rican-African American youth).

The Integrative Model was a significant advancement in the study of ethnic/racial minority youth in highlighting the various distal influences of youth development. In recent years, cultural developmental scholars have extended and elaborated upon this model and other cultural developmental theories (e.g., Super & Harkness, 1997) to bridge those distal historical, structural, and systemic influences to relatively proximal intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual mechanisms that impact youth development. Moreover, these newer approaches emphasize cultural strengths and assets related to positive social youth development. However, a greater theoretical understanding of how race and ethnicity are critical in the lived experiences of minoritized children and youth can be captured through critical race theory.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) first emerged from critical legal studies wherein law scholars began to question how despite years of legislative equity, racial disparities persisted. As described by its originators, "the critical race theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race,

racism, and power" and thus has increasingly been used by scholars outside of the law to better understand the social function and maintenance of racial marginalization (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 2). Here, we evoke CRT as a framework through which to better understand how the marginalized experiences of youth of color can be simultaneously similar and distinct.

CRT is guided by six core tenets: (1) racism as ordinary; (2) interest convergence; (3) race is socially constructed; (4) differential racialization; (5) intersectionality and anti-essentialism; and (6) unique voices of people of color. The first tenet, racism as ordinary, posits that racism is a regular occurrence rather than the infrequent actions of a bigoted few. The second tenet, interest convergence, suggests that in order for more racially equitable measures to be enacted that they must be of some benefit to the group that holds the most power. The third tenet, racism as socially constructed, means that the concept of racism was created to serve a social purpose. Differential racialization refers to the idea that beliefs and attitudes toward a particular group of people shift according to the perceived utility of those attitudes. For example, while Asian Americans have generally been portrayed and believed to be the model minority—a racial belief that is often weaponized against other people of color— they were quickly scapegoated for spreading COVID-19 in the USA—a belief that allowed those fearful of the virus to place blame on those viewed as perpetual foreigners (García Coll et al., 2020). The fifth and sixth tenets are related to one another. The fifth, intersectionality and anti-essentialism, claims that people experience discrimination through multiple marginalized identities and therefore it is often inappropriate to view racial groups as monolithic as the experiences of group members may vary greatly. Instead, the lived experiences of minoritized groups are examined based on the different forms of oppression they are vulnerable to because of their gender, class, immigration status, and other characteristics (e.g., language accent). The sixth tenet, unique voices of people of color, establishes that people of color have an emic understanding of oppression that is not always reflected in scholarship (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Though critical race theory has largely emerged in education literature to challenge Eurocentric perspectives and elevate discussions around social justice for children and adolescents from minoritized groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001), it has been rarely put to practice in examining the role of racism in the developmental patterns of minoritized youth. Furthermore, this is highly relevant now, given claims of post-racial progress, where we still see high rates of discrimination affecting the life opportunities of children of color. Despite their experiences with oppression, many minority children have been able to succeed and demonstrate resilience in the context of a racialized society.

While we are unaware of instances wherein critical race theory has been explicitly used to supplement developmental theory. Here, we draw upon the tenets of CRT to better understand how children and adolescents from varying racial groups have both similar and distinctive experiences of racial marginalization and to better conceptualize the function of race in a racialized society through consideration of how chronosystem (e.g. history), macrosystem (e.g. cultural attitudes), and exosystem (e.g. policies) factors shape the developmental context of Black and Latino/a youth. Though influenced by the same racialized society, minoritized youth are both protected and impacted by different forms of discrimination, prejudice, and racism. Understanding these various forms is highly important for capturing normative developmental processes and adjustments that explain the resilience of these youth amidst their challenges.

The Integrative Model for the Study of Stress in Black Families

Drawing on tenets of original family stress theories, including the expansion of the Mundane Extreme Environmental Stress model (MEES; Peters & Massey, 1983), and aspects of García Coll et al. (1996) integrative model for the developmental competencies of minority children and families, Murry et al. (2018) designed the Integrative Model for the Study of Stress in Black Families (see Fig. 1). This model explicitly illustrates the reciprocal and recursive processes through which the vestiges of slavery and Jim Crow laws (*path A*) and race-related exposure cascade through Black families' lives, often experienced as a consequence of socio-structural stressors, such as racism, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and marginalization (*path B*).

These stressors, in turn, relegate families into social positions as a consequence of phenotypic characteristics (*path C*), which affect, influence, and create daily stressors and hassles in the everyday life experiences of Black families. Within this model, such hassles are hypothesized as primary predictors of mundane, extreme environmental stressors (MEES), manifested through multiple disparities, including economic, education, employment, and health (*path D*). The model hypothesizes that MEES amplifies families' vulnerabilities to internal stressors that compromise family relationships, parenting, and mental and physical health functioning, which can negatively affect youth development and adjustment (*path E*).

On the other hand, the model makes explicit that cultural strengths and coping assets serve a protective, ordinary magic function in Black families (*path F*), playing a critical role in mediating the potential negative effects of stressors on families, by reducing the potential negative spillover effect of MEES on families (*noted in path D*), thereby inhibiting risk vulnerabilities, and instead of enhancing

Fig. 1 Integrative model for the study of stress in Black American families
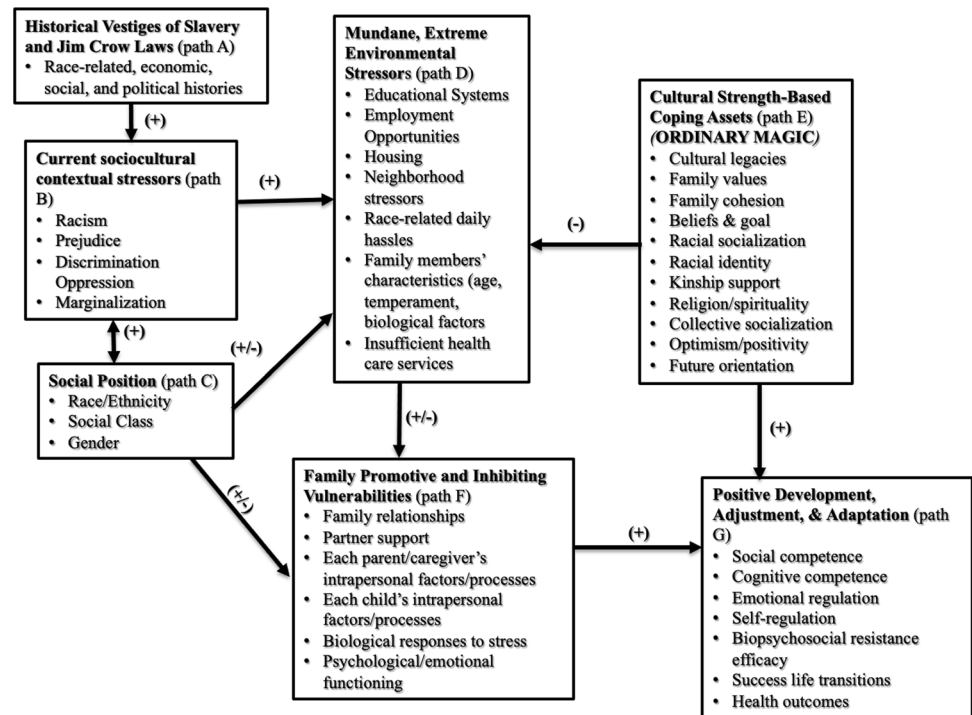
promotive capacities (*noted in path E*). We propose a direct link between cultural, strength-based, coping assets (*path F*) and family promotive processes (*path E*), as well as a direct path between culturally strength-based coping assets (*path F*) and positive development, adjustment, and adaptation over the lifespan (*path G*).

Understanding these linkages and how they function generationally is particularly important for family-based interventions. In a recent study testing this model (Murry et al., 2021), sociocontextual stressors such as mothers' perceptions of discrimination were linked to negative parent–child relationships through mothers' compromised mental health, impacting youth's attachment and internal working models. However, a positive parent–child relationship mediated the negative effects of racial discrimination on youth's internal working model, demonstrating increased competence and decreased anxiety and depression (Murry et al., 2021). In summary, Murry et al.'s model emphasizes the centrality of culturally strength-based coping assets, or *ordinary magic*, in capturing the nuances of ways in which Black American families overcome the odds and manage a wide range of events and circumstances, both normative and non-normative, that are intertwined, recursive and reciprocal, operating on multiple levels.

Ecocultural Stress-Based Model of US Latinx Youth

Building upon prior ethnic/racial minority theoretical (Berry et al., 2006; García Coll et al., 1996; Knight et al., 1995; Laosa, 1990) and cultural developmental (Super &

Harkness, 1997; Whiting et al., 1988) perspectives, Carlo, Raffaelli and their colleagues (Carlo & de Guzman, 2009; Raffaelli et al., 2005) proposed an ecocultural stress-based model of US Latinx youth prosocial development. The model proposes that a number of antecedent influences, such as immigration history, family background (including parenting practices, siblings, extended family), stressful family/life events and school, community, and neighborhood characteristics influence youth personal tendencies (e.g., ethnic/racial identity, cultural values endorsements, self-regulation, moral reasoning, empathy-related tendencies) and youth-specific, culture-based (e.g., discrimination, physical attributes, immigrant status, language) stress experiences. These personal tendencies and culture-based stress experiences can, in turn, directly or interactively predict US Latinx youth outcomes. Thus, in essence, the model accounts for individual and group differences in prosocial development outcomes among US Latinx youth that result from the joint influence of specific culture-group and intrapersonal attributes. One relatively recent focus based on prior models (Carlo & Conejo, 2019; Knight et al., 1995) is the delineation of the cultural values transmission model. In this framework, US Latinx caregivers' engage in ethnic group-specific socialization practices designed to foster their ethnocentric beliefs and values (such as familism, respect for others) in their youth. In turn, US Latinx youth who endorse such beliefs and values are expected to exhibit social behaviors (including prosocial behaviors) consistent with those ethnocentric beliefs and values (Knight et al., 2016).

Building and extending upon the ecocultural stress-based model of prosocial development, Carlo and Davis and their colleagues (Davis & Carlo, 2019; Davis Carlo, & Maiya, 2021; Davis et al., 2021a; Davis, McGinley, et al., 2021) posited a *US Latinx Youth Model of Social Inequities* that explicitly links culture-specific and non-culture-specific US Latinx youth developmental competencies to social equity, justice, and integration. This model also integrates strength-based moral developmental mechanisms (e.g., empathy, moral reasoning, and moral behaviors) to better understand social inequity and injustice. The inclusion of these strength-based, prosocial developmental variables is a unique and important contribution of this model, because these prosocial competencies play an important role in social integration and resilience among US Latinx youth that impacts long-term behavioral trajectories (Carlo, 2014).

Importantly, this model (see Fig. 2) delineates the cyclical and bidirectional relations among the various mechanisms such that social inequities and injustices create cultural stress and demands that influence youth relational systems, which in turn, influence their behavioral trajectories via the youth intrapersonal characteristics. These youth behavioral trajectories, in turn, contribute back to impact social inequalities and injustices. Of course, addressing social inequities and injustice also requires the expression of prosocial behaviors from dominant culture groups towards minorities. Ultimately, prosocial behaviors are necessary from both dominant and minoritized groups towards diverse others in order to work cooperatively and collaboratively towards a more just world.

Extending García-Coll's and Murry's models, Davis and Carlo's model is designed to explain how systemic and structural social inequities and injustices, such as harsh immigration laws, exacerbate stress, which in turn, can undermine personal adjustment and interpersonal (e.g., family, peer) functioning and result in social isolation and marginalization. Personal maladjustment, distressed interpersonal functioning, and social isolation and marginalization experiences can place US Latinx youth on antisocial, rather than prosocial, behavioral trajectories. Once some US Latinx youth populate these antisocial behavioral trajectories, the negative biases and prejudice inherent in social systems and structures are reinforced, and youth are further isolated and marginalized. Indeed, these antisocial behavioral trajectories can be exacerbated by the lack of access to high-quality services and resources (e.g., social, health, and education). Oftentimes, the end result of US Latinx youth-populated antisocial behavioral trajectories is the creation and/or refinement of stricter and harsher laws and policies against US Latinxs. These laws are inherently biased and discriminatory and therefore, subsequently, strengthen social inequities and injustices against these youth. Therefore, it is important to conduct research examining the correlates of positive behavioral

Fig. 2 US Latinx youth model of social inequities
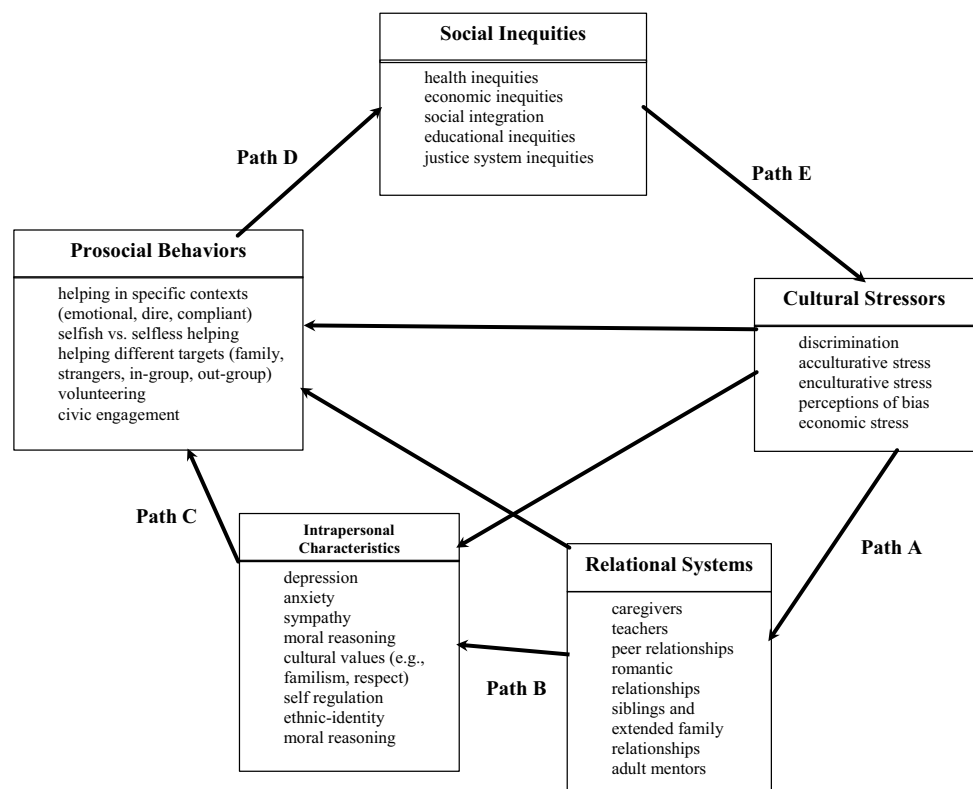
outcomes among US Latinx youth in order to promote resilience among this population.

Culture-Related Adaptive Mechanisms to Race-Related Trauma and Stress

Strength-Based Research in the Development of Black Youth

Studies examining the protective capacities of Black American families have identified several factors and processes that may offer insight into what might be perceived to be evidence of *ordinary magic*. Key family protective factors—beliefs, values, relational support systems, adaptability, cohesion, communication, and problem solving—enable families to rebound from adversity, as evinced by displays of increased strength and resourcefulness, or self-righting, and growth in response to crisis or challenges (Walsh, 2015). Having a positive outlook on life has been associated with better psychological adjustment to negative life events, increased access to positive social networks, and better physical health (Taylor et al., 2010). Studies of stress coping among Black American mothers, for example, have demonstrated associations among optimism and high levels of effective child management, and its moderation effects have shown to reduce the amplification of economic stress on maternal internalizing problems (Taylor et al., 2010). Cutrona et al. (2000) provide empirical evidence to illustrate that despite living and raising children in impoverished and crime-ridden neighborhoods, optimism combined with positive affectivity (e.g., good interpersonal relationships) enabled rural Black mothers to overcome the deleterious effects of environmental conditions on their daily lives. Being hopeful for the future may be especially relevant to well-being when the present appears bleak.

Other protective processes in Black families include preparing their children to live in a racialized society and instilling a sense of pride as a member of their racial group. Racial socialization and racial identity have been documented as culturally strength-based assets—resources that enhance adaptive coping—that are particularly important and protective for Black families. Conveying messages to promote racial pride, preparation for racial discrimination, and equality shape Black adolescents' identity-promoting positive adjustment and development (Caughy et al., 2002). For instance, Caughy et al. (2002) found that Black American parents who communicated messages of racial pride reported fewer behavioral problems among their children. Racial socialization messages and perceived social support from parents served a protective function for students, enhancing resilience capacity as youth transitioned from high school to college. In addition to preparing their children for interactions in their external environment, racial

socialization also transmits messages about identity formation, namely racial identity. Racial identity refers to the significance of and meaning individuals attach to their racial group membership (Sellers et al., 1998) and is also predictive of healthy psychological well-being and positive outcomes in numerous domains (Murry et al., 2018; Oyserman et al., 2001).

In addition to families, *the Black church* is one of the most significant and influential institutions in the Black American community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Black churches have provided social services that benefit the Black community, such as food pantries, substance use programming, cash assistance, and employment counseling (Barnes, 2004). Furthermore, spirituality has been associated with a range of emotional protective processes including happiness, hope, faith, optimism, strength, confidence, forgiveness, trust, and meaning (Mattis, 2001). Church involvement promotes positive behavior and developmental outcomes through its impact on moral development, racial pride, and self-esteem (Butler-Barnes et al., 2012).

Maintaining positive and supportive relationships with extended kin is an ''adaptive strategy'' for poor Black American mothers (Jarrett et al., 2010). García Coll et al. (1996) describe kinship support as ''stress buffering'' or ''stress absorbing.'' Kinship support is positively associated with family functioning and family relations, reducing the negative effects of financial pressure on individuals through the enhancement of self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions of personal resources to overcome challenges. Taylor et al. (2010) found that increased kinship support was negatively associated with mothers' depressive symptoms and positively linked to parents' optimism about the future. Furthermore, although family financial pressure was positively associated with adolescents' depressive symptoms and problem behavior, these patterns were disrupted in the presence of kinship support. For Black families, close relatives and access to neighbors who invest in each other's children can serve a protective function. Having access to other adults in the community who come together to support parents and monitor neighborhood children is a process referred to as collective socialization or collective efficacy (Burton & Jarrett, 2000). Collective socialization can also encourage prosocial development among youth through community members' oversight and establishing norms for sanctioning appropriate behavior and processes to monitor and correct misbehavior. When community residents band together in this way, the process of parental monitoring reaches beyond household boundaries and represents a measure of trust and agreement among adults about acceptable conduct for children (Berkel et al., 2009). As noted in Murry's theoretical model, these assets, or *ordinary magic in Black American families*, serve as a protective resource that enables Black families to respond to stressors in a promotive and adaptive

manner and may reflect similar protective processes in Latinx families.

Strength-Based Research in the Development of Latinx Youth

Building primarily on the work of Knight & Kagan (1982) that demonstrated relatively high levels of cooperative behaviors (which stem from the emphasis on collectivism) among US Mexican heritage children and adolescents, contemporary researchers have focused on the predictors and correlates of prosocial behaviors (voluntary actions intended to benefit others) in US Latinx youth (Carlo & Conejo, 2019; Knight & Carlo, 2012). Typical forms of prosocial behaviors include sharing, donating resources, volunteerism, helping and comforting others, and being kind to others. A particularly interesting subset of prosocial behaviors is altruistic actions. Altruistic actions are defined as behaviors that are primarily intended to benefit others, often at a high psychological or material to one's self, and with little or no expected self-reward. Some examples of such actions include high-cost acts of donating or sharing behaviors, risking one's life to save others, and long-term and committed acts of charity (e.g., volunteerism). These actions have also been intricately linked to moral or care-based exemplars who exhibit strong moral identity (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Walker & Frimer, 2007).

The focus on prosocial behaviors is also important because there is growing evidence on the correlates of these behaviors to other markers of health, social functioning, and well being such as depressive symptoms, delinquency, self-esteem, self-efficacy, illegal substance use, aggression, academic performance, self-regulation, quality of interpersonal relationships, and moral development (Carlo, Samper, et al., 2018; Streit et al., 2018; see Carlo, 2014). Interestingly, there is also growing evidence that the early presence of high levels of prosocial behaviors protects against adversity and later maladjustment, which suggests that prosocial behaviors themselves can also be considered a protective factor (see Carlo, 2014).

Although research on prosocial development in US Latinx youth continues to accumulate, scholars have identified three primary culture-related mechanisms that manifest resiliency characteristics: cultural values, ethnic identity, and culture-specific socialization.

Cultural Values

There is evidence that familism values predict multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Armenta et al., 2011; Davis Carlo, & Maiya, 2021; Davis et al., 2021a; Davis, McGinley, et al., 2021; Knight et al., 2016; Streit et al., 2018).

One study with US Mexican early adolescents found that familism values were directly, positively related to compliant, emotional, dire, and altruistic prosocial behaviors (Knight et al., 2015). Additionally, familism values positively predicted perspective taking and prosocial moral reasoning, which were associated with multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Knight et al., 2015). Another study of US Mexican adolescents found that adolescents who increased in family values or showed relatively less steep decreases, from fifth to tenth grade displayed higher levels of compliant, emotional, and public prosocial behaviors in grade 12 (Knight et al., 2018). While the majority of research has focused on familism values among Latinx families as a cultural value that facilitates prosocial behaviors, there is also evidence that respect values positively predict multiple forms of prosocial behaviors and traditional gender roles positively predict public prosocial behaviors and negatively predict altruistic prosocial behaviors in a sample of US Latinx adolescents (Davis et al., 2015).

Ethnic/Racial Identity

Ethnic and racial identity have also been linked to prosocial behaviors in Latinx youth (Streit et al., 2018, 2020). In a longitudinal study of US Mexican adolescents, familism values in seventh grade positively predicted emotional, dire, compliant, anonymous, and public prosocial behaviors but negatively predicted altruistic prosocial behaviors in tenth grade (Knight et al., 2016). This study also highlighted the important role of socialization, as parental familism values predicted ethnic group-specific socialization practices, which predicted youth familism values, which predicted prosocial behaviors via ethnic identity (Knight et al., 2016). Overall, the evidence suggests that ethnic identity is a promoter of multiple forms of prosocial behaviors, with the exception of altruistic prosocial behaviors which might require high levels of other-oriented social cognitions and emotions (e.g., moral reasoning, sympathy; see Carlo, 2014).

Relational Support Systems

Socialization experiences provide youth with a foundation for prosocial development. There is evidence that positive parenting practices, including warmth, support, and social rewards as a behavioral reinforcement are associated with prosocial behaviors among US Latinx youth (Calderón-Tena et al., 2011; Carlo, Samper, et al., 2018; Carlo, White, et al., 2018). Ethnic group-specific socialization practices have also been linked to prosocial behaviors (Knight et al., 2016), highlighting the need to examine traditional parenting practices as well as ethnic culture-group specific parenting

practices in relation to Latinx youth prosocial behaviors. One recent study examined traditional parenting practices (i.e., acceptance and harsh parenting) and culture-specific parenting (i.e., ethnic identity) as predictors of multiple forms of prosocial behaviors via ethnic identity and familism values. Overall, results demonstrated ethnic group-specific socialization practices predicted multiple forms of prosocial behaviors, including altruistic prosocial behaviors, via ethnic identity and familism (Streit et al., 2021). Additionally, fathers' acceptance and harsh parenting directly predicted multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Streit et al., 2021). While the majority of previous research on Latinx families has focused on parenting, there is also evidence that siblings are important socializers of prosocial behaviors (Streit et al., 2020). Additionally, there is evidence that neighborhood contexts provide important avenues for prosocial development, and that community risk can mitigate prosocial behaviors for Latinx youth (Davis Carlo, & Maiya, 2021; Davis et al., 2021a; Davis, McGinley, et al., 2021; Memmott-Elison et al., 2021).

Future Directions

The recent dramatic and surging increase in hate crimes and overt hostility towards Black and Latinx persons in recent years has centered on the importance of rigorous scholarship aimed at understanding the structures and systems that enable racism, prejudice, and discrimination towards these persons. Scholars have long known the serious developmental consequences of exposure to such trauma and stress but relatively less attention has been devoted to examining and identifying protective and resiliency mechanisms that are needed to combat such socially and personally destructive processes.

In the present chapter, we presented the tenets of culturally-grounded, strength-based theoretical models specifically designed to explain ways in which the sociohistorical context of Black and Latinx youth impact their development and adjustment. The related research on these populations demonstrates commonalities, as well as, somewhat unique mechanisms. Importantly, the models and research on Black and Latinx youth acknowledge that systemic oppression has similar negative consequences in terms of risk vulnerabilities, as well as, great similarities in the protective effects of relational support systems, cultural values, and ethnic/racial identity.

However, much more work is needed to delineate the complex interplay of structural and person-based processes on the development and adjustment of Black and Latinx youth. For example, space limits our discussion of intersectionality, which is the reality for many minority persons. Indeed, there is a relative dearth of research that specifically examines the developmental consequences of Black or Latinx youth. Furthermore, research on Black or Latinx youth who identify as non-binary or fluid gender or who are also members of a US religious minority (e.g., Muslim) are also lacking. Indeed, the challenges of understanding the development of ethnic/racial minority youth are further complicated by the intersectionality across multiple identity dimensions including, but not limited to, indigeneity, race, gender, sexuality, religion, specific Latinx (e.g., Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Nicaraguans) or Black (e.g., Haitian, Kenya, Jamaica) heritage, and recognition status of these groups by the US government. Moreover, future research should examine the feedback loop that occurs for youth living under systems of oppression, as oppressive systems place them on trajectories of marginalization, and such trajectories ultimately further contribute to the disparity, as highlighted in the previously discussed models. It is important to better understand the nature of such complex developmental processes in order to design and implement effective interventions that promote social integration and thriving for youth of color.

The systemic and structural barriers facing Black and Latinx youth are present throughout our society. Within science, for example, there is a greater need for research funding support for culturally-grounded focused science that adopts a strengths-based framework—lest we continue to reinforce negative stereotypes and stigma of ethnic and racial minorities. Funders should also focus investments on studies targeting prosocial development among youth of color in order to increase high-quality scholarship in this area and also to redress pathology-based perspectives of youth of color.

Importantly, intervention and policy efforts cannot afford to continue to focus solely on mechanisms that reduce pathology and maladjustment. Successful and complete interventions for minorities require that we move beyond the reduction of pathology and instead move towards the promotion of health and well-being while also working to reduce racist systems of oppression. One important avenue that moves us closer to this goal is to place a greater emphasis on prosocial developmental outcomes, as such behaviors represent one marker of healthy social functioning and well-being. The cumulative result of these efforts can lead to healthier persons and communities who can thrive and reach their maximum potential, and to a society in which all persons can benefit from an improved quality of life.

Declarations

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