Child Development, September/October 2006, Volume 77, Number 5, Pages 1387–1402

Mothers' and Fathers' Racial Socialization in African American Families: Implications for Youth

Susan M. McHale, Ann C. Crouter, Ji-Yeon Kim, Linda M. Burton, Kelly D. Davis, Aryn M. Dotterer, and Dena P. Swanson
The Pennsylvania State University

Mothers' and fathers' cultural socialization and bias preparation with older ($M = 13.9$ years) and younger ($M = 10.31$ years) siblings were studied in 162 two-parent, African American families. Analyses examined whether parental warmth and offspring age and gender were linked to parental practices and whether parents' warmth, spouses' racial socialization, or youth age or gender moderated links between racial socialization and youth outcomes. Parental warmth was linked to parents' socialization. Mothers engaged in more socialization with older offspring, and fathers more with sons. Mothers' cultural socialization was positively related to youth ethnic identity and fathers' was negatively related to youth depression symptoms. Youth exhibited a lower locus of control when mothers were high but fathers were low in racial socialization.

Racial socialization refers to the means through which "parents shape children's learning about their own race and about relations between ethnic groups" (Hughes & Johnson, 2001, p. 981) and is a central dynamic in most African American families (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Stevenson, 1995; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor & Allen, 1990). One reason why research on racial socialization is important is because it illuminates the ways in which sociocultural factors are manifested in the family lives of children and youth: African American parents face childrearing demands that are common to all parents, but also demands that are unique to their sociocultural group, given its history and position as a disadvantaged minority in the larger social structure (e.g., Boykin & Toms, 1985; Peters, 1985). The study of racial socialization is also important because it expands the scope of past research on African American youth and families, which has tended to focus on dysfunction and pathology (Hill, Murry, & Anderson, 2005; McLoyd, 1998).

Grounding our work in ecological and family systems perspectives, in the present study we examined the family contexts of racial socialization and its implications for youth. A family systems perspective directs attention to similarities and differences in the experiences of different family members and to reciprocal relations between subsystems in the family, including the mother–offspring and father–offspring subsystems (Whitchurch and Constantine 1993). An ecological perspective, in turn, highlights the contextual embeddedness of individuals' experiences. In the case of family relationships, dimensions of relationships may go together in different ways in different family contexts (e.g., Parke & Buriel, 1998), and objectively similar experiences may have different implications for individuals in different settings (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983). These ideas provided the foundation for this study.

Specifically, focusing on a sample of two-parent African American families with two youth in middle childhood and adolescence, this study was directed at two goals. First, to illuminate the family relationship contexts of racial socialization, we measured the links between mothers' and fathers' warmth toward their offspring and their racial socialization practices, and we tested whether parents differed in their socialization of daughters versus sons or older versus younger offspring. As we describe below, although parents' *individual* characteristics and experiences have been studied as correlates of racial socialization, we know almost nothing about the relationship contexts of parents' practices. Further, given inconsistencies in

This work was funded by a Grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, RO1-HD32336-02, Susan M. McHale and Ann C. Crouter, Co-Principal Investigators. We thank Marni Kan, Ashleigh May, Jaime Marks, Carolyn Ransford, Cindy Shearer, Shawn Whiteman, Megan Winchell, Sandee Hemman, and Kristen Johnston and Temple University's Survey Research Center for their help in conducting this study and the participating families for their time and insights about their family lives.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Susan M. McHale, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 105 White, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802. Electronic mail may be sent to x2u@psu.edu.

extant data on age and gender differences in youth's racial socialization (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, & Stevenson, in press), we compared parents' practices with two offspring; such within-family comparisons provide for a more sensitive test of age and gender differences in experiences with parents than do between-family comparisons of unrelated youth (McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003).

Our second research goal was to assess the links between mothers' and fathers' racial socialization and youth's ethnic identity development, locus of control, and symptoms of depression. A small body of work has begun to examine the associations between racial socialization and youth functioning, but the findings are inconsistent (Hughes et al., in press). From an ecological perspective, such inconsistencies may arise because racial socialization has different implications in different social settings. To test this possibility, we built on prior research to explore the family and relationship conditions under which the linkages between racial socialization and youth functioning were more or less apparent. In addition to examining youth age and gender, we also studied parental warmth and the racial socialization practices of the other parent as potential moderators of the links between mothers' and fathers' racial socialization practices and youth psychosocial functioning.

Studies of racial socialization highlight its multidimensionality (e.g., Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Stevenson, 1995). Most conceptualizations of racial socialization encompass parents' efforts to foster children's knowledge and appreciation of cultural values and practices; prepare children for experiences, such as discrimination, that stem from their minority status; and socialize children for experiences in the larger society, including teaching respect for a diversity of cultural groups. Given that more is known about the former two kinds of dynamics, in this paper we focus on parents' *cultural socialization*, or efforts to foster youth's knowledge and appreciation of African American culture, as well as their *preparation for bias*, that is, efforts to build awareness of and provide strategies for coping with prejudice and discrimination. In the following pages, we review the literature on racial socialization in African American families that provides the basis for our research goals.

Explaining Variation in Racial Socialization

A body of work reveals that parents vary considerably in the extent and nature of their racial socialization practices. Most of this work examines the personal characteristics and experiences of parents that are linked to their parenting practices. One line of study focuses on the associations between parents' socio-demographic characteristics and their socialization practices. Consistent findings are that women, older parents, and parents with higher levels of education and income engage in more cultural socialization practices such as providing books about African American history or taking children to cultural events (e.g., Hughes & Chen, 1997; Thornton et al., 1990). A smaller set of studies has examined parents' racial orientations and experiences and shows that factors such as parents' experiences of discrimination and their racial identity are positively related to their socialization practices (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Findings that parents' *individual* characteristics and experiences are related to their racial socialization mean that, at least in some families, mothers and fathers may differ in their parenting practices.

Our family systems and ecological frameworks highlight that parents' socialization practices take place within a relationship context. As such, it is important to learn how racial socialization is connected to other parent–offspring relationship dynamics. In this study, we focused on parental warmth as a potentially important correlate of racial socialization. Parental warmth is a key dimension of parent–child relationships, and one that has been linked to a range of youth outcomes (e.g., Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Parke & Buriel, 1998). 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. Indeed, focusing on a sample of preschool children and their caregivers, Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, and Nickerson (2002) found modest positive associations between indices of involved parenting and a range of racial socialization practices. In addition, Frabutt, Walker, and MacKinnon-Lewis (2002) found that moderate levels of socialization regarding discrimination were linked to mothers' positive parenting of young adolescents. We built on this work, focusing on a sample of school- and adolescent-age youth, and testing these linkages separately for mothers and fathers.

A systems perspective directs attention to reciprocal influences in family members' relationship experiences, including how children's characteristics affect the parenting practices of their mothers and fathers. Across the transition to adolescence, for example, parents may see that an expanding social world exposes their offspring to individuals from other ethnic backgrounds as well as to racism and

discrimination and that their offspring are more aware of race-based differential treatment. In addition, cognitive developmental advances mean that youth may become better able to understand parents' messages about race relations. Finally, the salience of identity formation as a developmental task may foster youth's interest in cultural values, traditions, and achievements. These developmental changes may elicit more and different racial socialization practices on the parts of parents as youth mature (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Quintana, 1998). Extant data suggest that age differences in racial socialization are most apparent when samples include adolescents or youth from a broad age span (e.g., Fatimilehin, 1999); further, age effects are more consistent in parental socialization about discrimination than in cultural socialization (e.g., Hughes & Chen, 1997). In our analysis of the role of offspring age in parents' practices, we expanded on extant research in two ways. First, given that studies to date have focused mostly on mothers or asked youth about "parents" in general, we assessed the role of offspring age in the socialization practices of both mothers and fathers. Second, our within-family design allowed us to test whether mothers' and fathers' practices varied for older and younger offspring *in the same family.* Because such a within-family approach controls for other characteristics, it provides for a more sensitive test of mother–father and offspring age differences in parental practices.

Parents may also differ in the socialization strategies they use with their sons versus their daughters. These differences may emerge because boys and girls face different challenges as they are growing up, and also because parents hold different expectations for their sons' and daughters' adult roles and experiences. For instance, the stereotypically feminine role of kin keeper may mean that girls are subject to more socialization around cultural traditions and values (Hagestad, 1986). In contrast, minority males' more frequent experiences of racial discrimination (e.g., Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) may make parents more concerned with preparing sons as compared with daughters for such experiences. Indeed, although findings of gender differences in racial socialization are less consistent than findings of age differences, Hughes et al. (in press) concluded that boys may receive more socialization messages about discrimination, and girls, more messages about racial pride. A limitation of this work, however, is that most studies have focused on mothers or asked youth about their "parents" in a general way. Thus, an important direction for research is to compare mothers' and fathers' racial socialization practices with boys and girls. Research on parents' gender roles suggests that parents, particularly fathers, may be more involved in socialization activities with offspring of their own gender (McHale et al., 2003); in the case of racial socialization as well, parents may "specialize" in the socialization of same-sex offspring. To test this idea we used a within-family design, which allowed us to compare how mothers and fathers from the same families socialized their sons versus their daughters.

Links Between Racial Socialization and Youth Psychosocial Functioning

A growing body of work examines the potential implications of parents' racial socialization practices for their offspring. One set of studies is grounded in the hypothesis that parents who highlight issues of race and ethnicity in their socialization practices will have offspring with stronger or more mature ethnic identity. By making culture salient and by providing instruction about cultural practices and the achievements of group members, parents build pride and knowledge of cultural traditions and values that underlie youth's ethnic identity; children may also model their parents' identification with their cultural group (e.g., Sanders Thompson, 1999). Although some studies have not found linkages between parents' racial socialization and youth's ethnic identity (e.g., Phinney & Chavira, 1995), most studies have detected such associations in samples of African American children and adolescents (e.g., Marshall, 1995; Spencer, 1983; Stevenson, 1995) as well as in retrospective reports by African American adults (Sanders Thompson, 1994, 1999). One possibility is that racial socialization's effects on ethnic identity vary as a function of the specifics of parents' messages. Based on their review of the literature, for example, Hughes et al. (in press) concluded that the link between *cultural socialization* and youth ethnic identity is among the most well-documented implications of parents' racial socialization; in contrast, the link between *preparation for bias* and ethnic identity is less clear cut. As noted, however, most studies focus on mothers' racial socialization, and we may find that different patterns emerge when fathers are included: Given that African American males have more experience with discrimination than do African American females (Stevenson et al., 2002), fathers' role in preparing offspring for bias may be more important in youth ethnic identity than is mothers'.

Another set of studies on the implications of racial socialization addresses the links between parental practices and youth adjustment. Working within a risk and resilience framework, scholars have argued that racial socialization builds pride in and a sense of belonging to a racial group and may help youth to develop strategies for coping with racism. In these ways, racial socialization may protect youth from the sequelae of negative experiences associated with minority status such as personal and vicarious experiences of discrimination, negative images of African Americans, and inequalities in the distribution of opportunities and resources in the larger society (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Miller, 1999; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997). Importantly, however, some forms of racial socialization may give rise to adjustment problems as when, for example, youth come to expect unfair treatment or see limits to their opportunities (Rumbaut, 1994; Stevenson et al., 1997). As such, research on the adjustment implications of racial socialization must take into account the nature of parents' socialization messages (Hughes et al., in press).

In the face of its theoretical and practical significance, the empirical literature on the links between racial socialization and youth functioning remains small, and the results are inconsistent. As noted, some investigators have found negative adjustment correlates of socialization that promote youth's orientations toward the majority culture (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002) or that highlight racial barriers and discrimination (Ogbu, 1974; Rumbaut, 1994), and a handful have found no youth well-being correlates of racial socialization (e.g., Johnson, 2001; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Most studies of cultural socialization, however, document modest positive associations between racial socialization and positive adjustment (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Murry & Brody, 2002; Scott, 2003), and negative associations between racial socialization and adjustment problems (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Stevenson et al., 1997).

There are several limitations to this literature, however. First, virtually all work has focused on mothers' socialization and, with some important exceptions (e.g., Johnson, Brown, Wayumba, Choi, & Hunter, 2005), we know little about the implications of African American fathers' socialization practices for youth. Findings from the larger literature on fathers, however, highlight fathers' role in connecting offspring to the world outside the family (Parke & Buriel, 1998); in addition, as noted, prior work indicates that African American males have different experiences than African American females vis-à-vis the majority culture (Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Stevenson et al., 2002). By studying the implications of both mothers' and fathers' practices in the present study, we may find that fathers play a uniquely important role in racial socialization.

Another limitation is extant studies' reliance on self-reports from one family member (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes et al., in press). When parents or youth provide information on both racial socialization practices and youth ''outcomes,'' associations may be inflated because of reporter bias. For this reason, we relied on information on racial socialization collected from mothers and fathers, and information about ethnic identity and adjustment collected from youth.

From an ecological perspective, an important direction for research on racial socialization is to learn more about *the conditions under which* parents' practices have implications for youth. Inconsistent findings across studies may emerge because racial socialization has different implications for youth with different characteristics and from different social settings. We studied offspring age and gender as two child characteristics that may moderate the links between racial socialization and youth outcomes. With respect to age, racial socialization may have more positive implications for older offspring who have the maturity to understand parents' messages and who are in a position to use those messages as they negotiate the world beyond the family. With respect to gender, parents may specialize in racial socialization with same-sex offspring, and messages from same-sex parents may have special credibility for youth.

To shed light on how other family dynamics provide a context for racial socialization, we also studied each parent's warmth and the racial socialization practices of the other parent as potential moderators of mothers' and of fathers' socialization practices. Darling and Steinberg's (1993) hypothesis about the role of the emotional tone of the parent–offspring relationship in child socialization was the grounding of our focus on parental warmth as a moderator of the link between racial socialization and youth functioning. Specifically, these authors proposed that parental practices are more effective when the emotional climate of the parent–child relationship is positive, because such a climate promotes youth's willingness to be socialized. As such, the combination of high parental warmth and high involvement in racial socialization should give rise to stronger ethnic identity and more positive well-being in youth because youth will be more likely to attend to and assimilate parents' socialization

messages, for example, about pride in their heritage and effective strategies for coping with unfair treatment.

Research on co-parenting provides another scenario on the conditions under which racial socialization will have implications for offspring. Co-parenting is a family systems construct that refers to the extent to which mothers and fathers work together in the tasks of childrearing, including supporting one another in their parenting roles, backing up one another in their childrearing decisions and disciplinary practices, and conveying consistent socialization messages to their offspring (Feinberg, 2003). An emerging body of research documents that such teamwork by parents is linked to positive youth adjustment (e.g., Margolin, Oliver, & Medina, 2001). Although the co-parenting construct has not yet been applied to the study of racial socialization, the existing literature led us to expect that, when two parents convey the same racial socialization messages to offspring, the message will be more readily learned. Mismatches between parents' practices, in contrast, may reflect differing perspectives or even overt conflicts between parents about the importance of racial socialization; in some families, one parent may also intensify his or her racial socialization activities when the other parent is seen as uninvolved. Grounding our ideas in extant research and theory on co-parenting, we tested whether the implications of parents' racial socialization practices depended on the practices of the spouse. First, we expected that, when both parents were highly involved in racial socialization, youth would report stronger ethnic identities. In addition, given findings from prior research on the negative adjustment implications of interparental disagreements, we also anticipated that mismatches between fathers' and mothers' practices would be linked to lower levels of locus of control and higher levels of depression symptoms in youth. Importantly, our focus on the patterning of mothers' and fathers' racial socialization practices is consistent with the call to study racial socialization as a multidimensional phenomenon (Coard & Sellers, 2005).

Method

Participants

The data came from fathers, mothers, and two offspring in 162 families that were participating in the first phase of a short-term longitudinal study of gender socialization and development in two-parent, Black/African American families. Given the goals of the larger investigation, a study of family gender socialization, we did not seek a representative sample. Rather, we sought families that self-identified as being Black or African American and included both a mother and father who were living together and rearing at least two middle-childhood–adolescence-aged offspring.

To generate the sample, we targeted two contiguous urban centers on the eastern seaboard that census data revealed had substantial African American populations; within the zip code areas from which we recruited, 38% of households included married African American parents with at least one child between 6 and 17 years of age (U.S. Census, 2001). We used two strategies for recruiting families. First, we hired African Americans residing in the targeted communities to recruit families by posting flyers in local businesses, providing information on the study to local churches, and distributing flyers at youth activities. Interested families then contacted the recruiters who passed on their names to the project office. Approximately half the sample was recruited using this procedure. We also purchased a marketing firm list that included names and addresses of African American students in grades 4–7 who lived in the geographic region of interest. We sent letters to families that described the study and included an 800 number to call and a postcard to return to the project office if the family fit the study criteria and was interested in participating. Because the marketing firm could not determine family structure or either presence or age of siblings, however, many letters went to families that did not meet project criteria. Of 1,796 letters sent, 131 were returned by the post office as undeliverable. Of the 142 families that expressed interest, 93 were eligible and 49 ineligible. Of those eligible, 86 of the families recruited via the marketing list were interviewed and 7 were not either because the family could not be located based on the information provided on their postcards or because the family was too busy.

The characteristics of the 162 participating families are shown in Table 1. Families were generally working and middle class based on family income and parent education, and the majority (80%) included two or three children ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.18$, range = 2–8 children); in families with more than two children, we focused on the two who were in our age range and proximal in birth order. Most parents were employed (98% of both mothers and fathers), with mothers working an average of 33.48 hr/week ($SD = 17.46$) and fathers working an average of 44.22 hr ($SD = 18.00$). Mothers' job prestige averaged 48.31 ($SD = 11.87$) and fathers' averaged 47.12 ($SD = 13.33$) based on the National Opinion Research

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages for Background Characteristics of the Sample (N = 162)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	%
Fathers' education[a]	14.27	2.37	
Mothers' education[a]	14.67	1.84	
Family income[b]	$90,105.00	$57,805.00	
Parents' years living together	15.62	6.00	
Older siblings' age	13.95	1.99	
Younger siblings' age	10.31	1.10	
Fathers' age	43.70	6.93	
Mothers' age	41.00	5.65	
% Biological mothers of older siblings			92.60
% Biological mothers of younger siblings			95.70
% Biological fathers of older siblings			79.00
% Biological fathers of younger siblings			85.20

[a]*Note.* 12 = high school graduate, 14 = some college, 16 = college graduate.
[b]Sum of mothers' plus fathers' income; 10 mothers and 14 fathers refused to report their income.

Council's codes; jobs in this range include teacher's aide (48.75), dental assistant (47.80), and police/detective (47.68). Although the average family income in this sample was almost $90,000, the range was considerable ($3,500–$525,000). We also calculated income-to-needs ratios. The average family had an income 4.43 times higher than the poverty level for families of their size, but again, the range was considerable (*SD* = 2.96). Families also came from a wide range of communities. School data, for example, indicated that the schools youth attended varied in their racial composition from less than 5% to 100% minority enrollment; the average youth in this sample attended a school in which about two thirds of the students were African American.

With respect to target youth, as Table 1 indicates, youth were in middle childhood and adolescence. The sample was approximately equally divided based on the sex constellation of the sibling dyad and included $n = 165$ girls (older and younger siblings combined) and $n = 159$ boys. As Table 1 also shows, the majority of youth were biologically related to both parents, although more often related to mothers than fathers; in six families, youth were living with couples other than their biological, step, or adoptive parents (e.g., grandparents; aunts and uncles). With respect to couple relationships, 15 sets of parents were cohabiting and the rest were married. In families in which youth were not living with always-married parents, couples had been living together for at least 4 years.

Procedures

Mothers, fathers, and two youth from each family were interviewed in their homes by a team of two interviewers, almost all of whom were African American. The interviews began with a brief description of the study and a review of informed consent procedures. Then, family members were interviewed individually. To maintain interest, interviewers used a variety of procedures, including card sorts, response cards, and questionnaires; in the case of children under age 13 and family members with reading difficulties, all questions were presented orally. For all measures, except the index of depression symptoms, family members were asked to report on their experiences *during the past year*. Parent interviews lasted about 2 hr and youth interviews lasted about 1 hr. Following completion of the interviews, families were sent a $200 honorarium.

In the recruitment process, families self-identified as Black or African American. At the beginning of each individual interview, family members were asked whether they preferred to refer to themselves as Black or as African American, and that term was used to refer to the family member during the remainder of the interview. In addition, youth who were not growing up with two biological parents were asked how they wished to refer to their parent figures, and these terms were used during the remainder of the interview.

Measures

Racial socialization was assessed using two subscales from a measure developed by Hughes and Chen (1997) that assessed cultural socialization (5 items; e.g., "I've read or provided Black history books to my child") and preparation for bias (7 items; e.g., "I've talked to my children about racism"). For each item, parents used a 6-point rating scale that ranged from *never* to *very often*, to describe their socialization practices; at separate points in the interview, each parent reported on their practices with their older and younger child. Reliability of the scales was satisfactory: Cronbach's αs ranged from .80 (mothers' reports of cultural socialization with older child) to .90 (fathers' preparation for bias with older child). Parents' reports of racial socialization with their two children were highly correlated, ranging from $r = .75$, $p < .01$ for mothers' preparation for

bias with their older and younger children, to $r = .88$, $p < .01$ for fathers' cultural socialization.

Parental warmth was measured using an 8-item scale from the parent version of the Child's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (Schwarz, Barton-Henry, & Pruzinsky, 1985). For each item (e.g., "I am a person who makes my child feel better after talking over his/her worries with me"), parents used a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*) to describe their relationships during the past year with their older and younger child, respectively. Cronbach's αs ranged from .83 (mothers' reports of warmth with older child) to .89 (fathers' reports of warmth with older child), and mothers' and fathers' ratings were not highly correlated, $r = .24$, $p < .01$ and $r = .12$, *ns*, for older and younger offspring.

Youth ethnic identity was assessed using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). For each of 10 items, youth used a 4-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 4 = *strongly agree*) to rate how well the item described them over the past year (e.g., "I feel a special connection to other African Americans/Blacks"; "I am happy that I am African American/Black"). Although the ten items originally came from two subscales (Affirmation and Belonging and Ethnic Behaviors and Practices), the scales were highly correlated, $r = .51$, $p < .01$ for older siblings and $r = .62$, $p < .01$ for younger siblings, and therefore combined such that high scores reflect a stronger and more positive orientation to African Americans and their culture. Cronbach's αs were .73 for older and .80 for younger siblings' ethnic identity, and siblings' reports were uncorrelated, $r = -.01$, *ns*.

Youth locus of control was assessed using the 21-item version of the Nowicki–Strickland Internal–External Control Scale for Children (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). On this measure, youth indicated whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*) with statements such as, "Most problems will solve themselves if I just don't fool with them." Cronbach's αs were .71 for older and .68 for younger siblings, and siblings' reports were correlated, $r = .25$, $p < .01$.

Youth depressive symptoms were assessed using the 10-item version of the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1981). For each item, youth chose one of three statements that best represented their feelings over the past week, e.g., "I am sad once in awhile," "I am sad many times," or "I am sad all the time." Reliabilities for the depression scale were .76 and .72 for older and younger siblings, respectively, and siblings' reports were uncorrelated, $r = .06$, *ns*. Owing to skewness on this measure we used square root-transformed scores.

Family background information, including family members' birth dates and levels of education, information about the couple relationship (marital status, duration of co-residence), information about youth's relationship to each parent and to one another, and information about parents' employment (status, occupation, income), was provided by parents.

Results

The results are organized around our research goals. First, we tested whether parental warmth was linked to mothers' and fathers' cultural socialization and preparation for bias, and whether practices varied as a function of offspring's age or gender. We then examined the links between mothers' and fathers' racial socialization practices and youth's ethnic identity, locus of control, and depression symptoms, and we tested the potential moderating roles of parental warmth, the other parent's racial socialization, offspring age, and offspring gender in these linkages.

Links Between Racial Socialization and Parental Warmth

In a preliminary step, we used one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs), with parent as a within-groups factor, to compare fathers' and mothers' racial socialization practices. Given the high correlation between parents' practices with their older and younger offspring and our focus on offspring age in later analyses, for this descriptive purpose, we used the means of each parent's preparation for bias and cultural socialization with their two offspring as the dependent variables in these analyses. A significant parent effect emerged for cultural socialization, $F(1, 161) = 45.08$, $p < .001$, $M = 17.95$, $SD = 5.94$ and $M = 21.38$, $SD = 5.13$ for fathers and mothers, respectively, and a trend emerged for preparation for bias, $F(1, 161) = 2.77$, $p < .10$, $M = 26.73$, $SD = 7.27$ and $M = 27.79$, $SD = 6.26$ for fathers and mothers. As these means indicate, parents' ratings were above the midpoint of the 6-point rating scale, indicating that on average, parents "sometimes" engaged in these practices, and mothers reported more frequent racial socialization than fathers, particularly in the case of cultural socialization. In a second preliminary step, we examined the correlations between mothers' and fathers' socialization practices. These analyses revealed only modest positive associations between mothers' and fathers' reports of cultural socialization, $r = .32$, $p < .01$, and preparation for bias, $r = .28$, $p < .01$. In some families, mothers and fathers may differ in their practices, and in other families parents' practices may be more similar.

To study how parental warmth and youth age and gender were linked to parents' racial socialization, we tested a series of multilevel models (MLM), examining mothers' and fathers' cultural socialization and preparation for bias in separate analyses, using the Hierarchical Linear and Nonlinear Modeling Statistical Package (HLM version 5.05; Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2003). MLM extends multiple regression to take into account the nonindependence associated with nested data, in our case, sibling data. Prior studies of age and gender differences in youth's racial socialization experiences have relied on between-family comparisons; an MLM approach, in contrast, allowed us to test whether gender and age differences between siblings were linked to differences between siblings' racial socialization experiences. Specifically, we took advantage of the MLM framework, structuring our analysis to focus on the correlates of within-family differences; this focus is not inherent in multilevel models, but as described below, requires only a minor elaboration (see Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002).

At Level 1, *the within-family model*, explanatory variables were unique to each sibling and included mothers' and fathers' warmth as well as offspring's gender (0 = *female*, 1 = *male*) and age. In this sample, youth age was confounded with birth order, $r = .74$, $p < .001$, and thus both factors could not be included in the models. At Level 2, *the between-family model*, we included variables that were common to both siblings. Specifically, as control variables at this level, we included mother and father age, mother and father education, and a dummy code to index offspring relatedness (0 = *full siblings*, 1 = *other*). We also included mean age and mean gender of offspring at Level 2 so that we could separate within-family age and gender effects from between-family effects. The results for the model tests are shown in Table 2, and the equations for the model appear in the Appendix. In reporting the results, we focus on effects at $p < .05$, but consider trend level effects ($p < .10$) when these were consistent with results from prior research or with a larger pattern of significant findings.

Table 2
Coefficients, Standard Errors, and T *Ratios for Links Between Parental Warmth and Mothers' (M) and Fathers' (F) Racial Socialization*

	Mothers' cultural socialization			Mothers' preparation for bias			Fathers' cultural socialization			Fathers' preparation for bias		
	B	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio
Fixed effects												
Intercept	21.69**	0.45	47.82	28.34**	0.59	47.97	17.57**	0.52	34.10	26.24**	0.64	40.77
Level 1												
Youth age	0.14*	0.06	2.45	0.97**	0.10	10.11	−0.03	0.06	−0.54	0.08	0.10	0.88
Youth gender	−0.28	0.32	−0.88	−0.27	0.53	−0.52	0.65*	0.34	1.92	1.30*	0.52	2.50
M warmth	0.89*	0.42	2.12	2.29**	0.64	3.59	0.10	0.45	0.22	0.84	0.65	1.29
F warmth	0.17	0.35	0.49	0.04	0.53	0.07	1.38**	0.37	3.71	2.52**	0.54	4.63
Level 2												
Youth age[a]	0.10	0.32	0.32	−0.80†	0.41	−1.96	0.13	0.37	0.35	0.24	0.45	0.53
Youth gender[a]	−2.19†	1.15	−1.90	−1.55	1.48	−1.05	−2.74*	1.32	−2.08	−3.47*	1.63	−2.14
M age	0.10	0.12	0.80	−0.14	0.15	−0.91	−0.11	0.14	−0.77	−0.03	0.17	−0.20
F age	−0.08	0.09	−0.85	0.14	0.12	1.17	0.23*	0.11	2.10	0.23†	0.13	1.76
M education	0.46†	0.24	1.91	0.56†	0.30	1.83	−0.16	0.28	−0.57	−0.22	0.34	−0.65
F education	0.32†	0.19	1.73	0.16	0.23	0.71	0.63**	0.21	2.94	0.23	0.26	0.89
Biological relatedness[b]	−0.93	1.04	−0.89	−2.31†	1.30	−1.77	0.38	1.20	0.31	−0.80	1.45	−0.55

	Variance	*SD*	Variance	*SD*	Variance	*SD*	Variance	*SD*
Variance components								
Residual	4.07	2.02	10.98	3.31	4.47	2.11	10.72	3.27
Intercept	21.58**	4.65	31.33**	5.60	28.88**	5.37	40.14**	6.34

[a]*Note.* Family-level age and gender were included as covariates to capture within-family differences beyond between-family effects.
[b]0 = *full sibling*; 1 = *other* (e.g., half sibling, step sibling).
†$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

Parental warmth, youth characteristics, and mothers' racial socialization. Maternal warmth was a positive and significant correlate of mothers' *cultural socialization* (see Table 2). Offspring age was also significant at Level 1, indicating that mothers engaged in more cultural socialization with older as compared with younger siblings. Among the control variables, both mothers' and fathers' education were linked, at trend level, to maternal cultural socialization. Turning to mothers' *preparation for bias*, the analyses again revealed a positive effect for maternal warmth, a positive effect for offspring age, and a trend-level positive effect for the control variable, maternal education.

Parental warmth, youth characteristics, and fathers' racial socialization. Fathers' reports of warmth were positively and significantly related to their *cultural socialization practices* (see Table 2). There also was an effect at Level 1 for offspring gender, indicating that fathers engaged in more cultural socialization with their sons than with their daughters. In addition, at Level 2, fathers' education and age were significant positive covariates. With respect to fathers' *preparation for bias*, paternal warmth was again a positive and significant predictor and a gender effect indicated that fathers engaged in more bias preparation with their sons than with their daughters. Fathers' age also was a trend level positive predictor.

Parents' Racial Socialization and Youth Psychosocial Functioning

To address our second goal, we used an MLM strategy to test a series of two-level models focused on the implications of parents' cultural socialization and preparation for bias for youth's ethnic identity, locus of control, and depression symptoms. In an effort to simplify presentation of the results and so as to exclude nonsignificant interaction terms (which contribute to increases in standard errors; Aiken & West, 1991), we ran a preliminary set of analyses that tested the potential moderating roles of parental warmth, spouses' racial socialization, offspring gender, and offspring age. Contrary to our hypothesis, these tests revealed no significant interactions between racial socialization and parental warmth, that is, no evidence of stronger links between parental practices and youth functioning under conditions of high parental warmth. In contrast, we found some evidence for a moderating role of spouses' racial socialization. Accordingly, parental warmth was included only as a control variable, but we retained the interaction between mothers' racial socialization and fathers' racial socialization in the models. These preliminary analyses also revealed no evidence that offspring gender moderated the links between racial socialization and youth functioning, but some evidence of the moderating effects of age. Accordingly, in the final models we included offspring gender only as a control variable, but retained the interaction between youth age and racial socialization. Finally, there were no significant three-way interactions, so these were excluded from the models.

We conducted an additional set of preliminary analyses examining the implications of mothers' and fathers' socialization practices in separate models to ascertain whether including indices of both parents' practices in the same model altered the pattern of results (e.g., due to multicollinearity, suppressor effects). The results for paternal and maternal practices did not differ when these factors were examined in separate versus combined models, therefore, we report only the results from the models that include measures of both parents' practices as predictors.

To study the implications of racial socialization practices for youth's ethnic identity, locus of control, and depression symptoms, the Level 1 model included offspring's age and gender, mothers' and fathers' warmth, mothers' and fathers' racial socialization, the two-way interactions between offspring age and each parent's racial socialization practices, and the two-way interaction between fathers' and mothers' practices. The Level 2 model included the control variables common to both siblings (parental education, parental age, and the dummy code for offspring relatedness). The equations for this model are shown in the appendix, and the results are shown in Tables 3 (cultural socialization) and 4 (preparation for bias).

Cultural socialization and youth functioning. Beginning with youth *ethnic identity*, the findings revealed that mothers' cultural socialization was a positive and significant correlate (Table 3). No other effects were significant. Turning to youth's *locus of control*, the analyses revealed a significant interaction between mothers' cultural socialization and fathers' cultural socialization. As Figure 1 shows, and a simple slopes test revealed, when fathers engaged in low levels of cultural socialization, youth scored higher in locus of control if their mothers also engaged in low levels of cultural socialization, $B = -.13$, $p < .01$. When fathers engaged in high levels of cultural socialization, in contrast, youth locus of control did not vary as a function of maternal practices. In other words, consistent with our prediction about interparental congruence, youth reported a higher locus of control when both

Table 3
Coefficients, Standard Errors, and T *Ratios for Links Between Mothers' (M) and Fathers' (F) Cultural Socialization (Cultural) and Youth Outcomes*

	Ethnic identity			Locus of control			Depression[a]		
	B	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio
Fixed effects									
Intercept	3.26**	.04	77.00	33.94**	.32	105.93	1.04**	.08	13.13
Level 1									
Youth age	−0.01	.01	−0.98	0.37**	.08	4.64	−0.02	.02	−0.95
Youth gender[b]	−0.09	.06	−1.62	−0.86*	.40	−2.16	−0.00	.10	−0.04
M warmth	0.01	.05	0.11	0.03	.41	0.06	−0.02	.10	−0.16
F warmth	0.04	.05	0.90	0.53	.36	1.46	−0.08	.09	−0.85
M cultural	0.02**	.01	3.05	−0.04	.04	−0.89	0.01	.01	0.65
F cultural	−0.00	.01	−0.72	0.01	.04	0.23	−0.02*	.01	−2.36
M × F cultural	0.00	.00	0.01	0.01*	.01	2.06	0.00	.00	0.03
Age × M cultural	0.00	.00	1.13	0.01	.01	0.56	0.00	.00	0.56
Age × F cultural	0.00	.00	0.38	−0.02	.01	−1.60	0.00	.00	0.51
Level 2									
M age	−0.01	.01	−0.69	0.06	.07	0.91	0.00	.02	0.11
F age	−0.00	.01	−0.32	−0.03	.05	−0.49	0.00	.01	0.27
M education	−0.03	.02	−1.44	0.10	.14	0.71	0.01	.03	0.43
F education	0.01	.01	0.82	0.37**	.11	3.37	−0.04†	.03	−1.72
Biological relatedness[c]	−0.13†	.08	−1.73	0.87	.60	1.46	−0.13	.14	−0.89

	Variance	*SD*	Variance	*SD*	Variance	*SD*
Variance components						
Residual	.24	.49	10.04	3.17	.74	.86
Intercept	.00	.02	2.64**	1.63	.06	.25

Note. [a]Square root transformation used to correct skewness.
[b]Girls are the reference group.
[c]0 = *full sibling*; 1 = *other* (e.g., half sibling, step sibling).
†$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

mothers and fathers were highly involved or less involved in cultural socialization. Inconsistent with our prediction, youth also reported higher locus of control when fathers but not mothers engaged in more cultural socialization. In addition to this interaction, these analyses revealed that girls, older offspring, and youth whose fathers had higher levels of education reported a higher locus of control. Finally, with respect to youth's *depression symptoms*, we found that fathers' cultural socialization was a negative correlate: When fathers reported more cultural socialization, youth reported fewer depression symptoms.

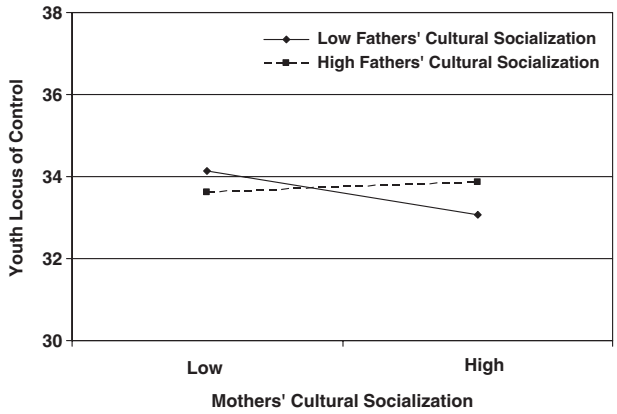

Figure 1. Interaction between mothers' and fathers' cultural socialization predicting youth locus of control.

Preparation for bias and youth functioning. In terms of *ethnic identity*, the findings revealed that fathers' socialization was a positive, trend-level predictor (Table 4). Findings for youth's *locus of control* revealed that mothers' bias preparation was negatively related to youth locus of control, but this main effect was qualified by an interaction between mothers' socialization and fathers' socialization. As Figure 2 shows, consistent with the findings for cultural socialization and with our prediction about interparental consistency, youth reported lower locus of control when their mothers but not their fathers were

Table 4
Coefficients, Standard Errors, and T *Ratios for Links Between Mothers' (M) and Fathers' (F) Preparation for Bias (Bias) and Youth Outcomes*

	Ethnic identity			Locus of control			Depression[a]		
	B	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio	*B*	*SE*	*t* ratio
Fixed effects									
Intercept	3.27**	.04	76.39	34.03**	.32	105.92	1.04**	.08	13.09
Level 1									
Youth age	−0.01	.01	−1.04	0.45**	.08	5.35	−0.03	.02	−1.39
Youth gender[b]	−0.10†	.06	−1.79	−0.82*	.39	−2.10	0.02	.10	0.16
M warmth	−0.01	.06	−0.11	0.18	.42	0.44	−0.04	.10	−0.40
F warmth	0.01	.05	0.21	0.54	.37	1.46	−0.09	.09	−0.98
M bias	0.00	.00	0.66	−0.07*	.03	−2.07	0.02†	.01	1.90
F bias	0.01†	.00	1.66	0.02	.03	0.54	−0.01	.01	−1.61
M × F bias	−0.00	.00	−0.74	0.01*	.00	2.00	−0.00	.00	−1.15
Age × M bias	0.00	.00	0.21	−0.01	.01	−1.16	0.00	.00	0.31
Age × F bias	0.00	.00	0.34	−0.02†	.01	−1.75	0.00	.00	0.76
Level 2									
M age	−0.00	.01	−0.36	0.03	.07	0.38	0.01	.02	0.45
F age	−0.01	.01	−0.83	−0.01	.05	−0.15	−0.00	.01	−0.03
M education	−0.02	.02	−1.04	0.14	.14	0.97	0.01	.03	0.21
F education	0.01	.01	1.02	0.36**	.11	3.25	−0.05*	.03	−1.98
Biological relatedness[c]	−0.14†	.08	−1.88	0.78	.61	1.29	−0.13	.14	−0.87
	Variance	*SD*		Variance	*SD*		Variance	*SD*	
Variance components									
Residual	0.24	.49		9.65	3.11		.73	.86	
Intercept	0.00	.04		3.02**	1.74		.08†	.28	

Note. [a]Square root transformation used to correct skewness.
[b]Girl is reference group.
[c]0 = *full sibling;* 1 = *other* (e.g., half sibling, step sibling).
†$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

highly involved in bias preparation; simple slopes tests revealed that the line describing fathers with low levels of bias preparation was significant, $B = -.12$, $p < .05$, but the line describing fathers with high bias preparation was not. In this model, fathers' education again emerged as a positive predictor of youth locus of control, and boys and younger offspring reported lower levels of locus of control. Although a trend level interaction between youth age and fathers' bias preparation emerged in this analysis, follow-up simple slopes tests were not significant. Finally, in the case of youth's *depression symptoms*, mothers' preparation for bias was a positive, trend level predictor: When mothers reported higher levels of bias preparation, youth reported more depression symptoms. Given that this finding only reached trend level and does not replicate prior work, however, this result should be viewed with caution. Among control variables, fathers' education was the only significant correlate: Youth reported higher levels of depression when fathers had fewer years of education.

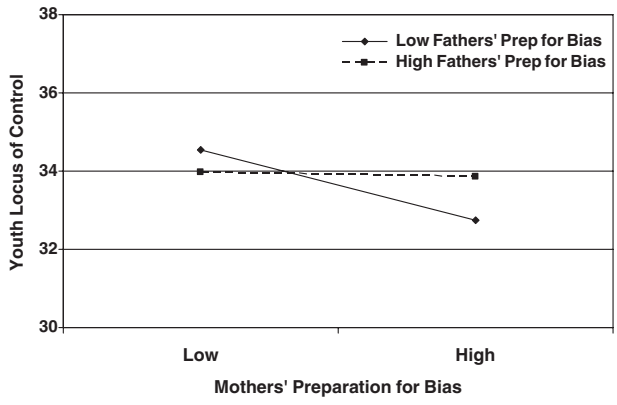

Figure 2. Interaction between mothers' and fathers' preparation for bias predicting youth locus of control.

Summary. Both maternal and paternal warmth were positively related to their own racial socialization practices, suggesting that both cultural socialization

and bias preparation occur within a larger context of positive parenting. We found *within-family differences* in parents' practices, however: Mothers engaged in more racial socialization with their older as compared with their younger offspring, and fathers engaged in more racial socialization with their sons than with their daughters. These patterns emerged when parents' age and education were controlled. Parents' racial socialization practices, in turn, were linked to youth psychosocial functioning. In the case of youth *ethnic identity*, mothers' cultural socialization and fathers' bias preparation (the latter at trend level) were associated with stronger, more mature identity, and these linkages were not moderated by youth or family characteristics. Findings for youth *depression symptoms* were less consistent: Fathers' cultural socialization was negatively related to youth depression symptoms, but mothers' bias preparation was positively related, albeit at trend level, to youth symptoms, and there were no significant moderators of these linkages. The links between parents' racial socialization and youth *locus of control*, in contrast, were moderated by the spouse's socialization practices: High levels of maternal socialization in combination with low levels of paternal socialization (both bias preparation and cultural socialization) were linked to lower levels of youth locus of control. Across the ''outcome'' measures, we did not find strong evidence that parental warmth, youth gender, or youth age moderated the link between racial socialization practices and youth functioning.

Discussion

An emerging literature has established racial socialization as an important dynamic in African American families. We built on this foundation to study the racial socialization practices of mothers and fathers in two-parent African American families. Our descriptive findings were consistent with a family systems perspective in documenting within-family differences in mothers' and fathers' socialization practices with older and younger sons and daughters: In the case of racial socialization dynamics, family members may have quite different experiences within their shared family environment. A primary goal of our work was to assess the implications of racial socialization for youth's ethnic identity and psychological adjustment. Working from an ecological perspective, we studied the family conditions under which the linkages between racial socialization and youth functioning were more or less apparent. Our findings suggest that, in the case of two-parent families, the implications of racial socialization for youth's psychosocial functioning may be better understood when both parents' practices are taken into account. Below, we review our results, considering both how they extend understanding of racial socialization dynamics in families and what directions they suggest for future research.

Explaining Variation in Parents' Racial Socialization

Our findings suggested that parents' racial socialization may be part of a larger pattern of positive parent–child relationships: Parental warmth was linked to cultural socialization and bias preparation for both mothers and fathers, and these links were evident when parent education and age and offspring age and gender were controlled. These findings replicate those reported by Caughy et al. (2002), who studied preschoolers' primary caregivers (mostly mothers) and Frabutt et al. (2002), who studied young adolescents' mothers. Our study relied on parents' reports of both their parent–child relationship quality and their racial socialization practices. As such, these linkages may have emerged because parents see racial socialization as an element of positive parenting. Future studies should include information from other sources (e.g., from youth or objective reporters) to further establish how racial socialization is connected to larger parent–offspring relationship dynamics.

An important question in the racial socialization literature has been whether and how parents' practices vary as a function of offspring age and gender. Findings to date are inconsistent, in part due to methodological limitations of prior research (Hughes et al., in press). Our findings revealed that mothers, but not fathers, engaged in more preparation for bias and cultural socialization with older as compared with younger offspring. In contrast, fathers' but not mothers' socialization practices varied by offspring gender, with fathers engaging in more racial socialization with sons than with daughters. Importantly, these findings reflected *within-family comparisons* of parents' socialization of two offspring. Our findings on age differences in maternal practices are consistent with prior research in which the most clear-cut age differences have emerged in the domain of bias preparation (e.g., Hughes & Chen, 1997). Most prior studies, however, have failed to distinguish mothers' from fathers' practices. Given that mothers tend to be the primary caregivers, they may be more responsive to the developmental needs and capabilities of their children than are fathers. Prior findings regarding differences in parents' practices

as a function of offspring gender are less consistent than findings for age effects, and extant studies have not differentiated men's and women's socialization practices with sons and daughters. Our findings suggest that when fathers have the opportunity to do so (because they have both a daughter and a son), they engage in more racial socialization with their sons. These results are in keeping with prior work showing that fathers exhibit more gender-differentiated socialization of children than mothers (McHale et al., 2003).

Taken together, our findings underscore the importance of distinguishing between mothers' and fathers' practices. Further, they suggest that, although age differences in mothers' bias preparation have been evident in prior literature, other offspring age and gender effects may be detected only in large samples or studies with complex research designs such as ours (i.e., within-family comparisons). To better understand how child characteristics may elicit racial socialization practices, future investigators should ask mothers and fathers in an open-ended way about their reasons for the socialization strategies they use with daughters and sons and their beliefs about how their practices influence offspring at different periods of development.

Implications of Racial Socialization for Youth

A primary goal of our study was to assess the implications of parents' practices for youth's ethnic identity and psychological well-being. In doing so, we addressed several methodological limitations of prior work. First, we moved beyond correlations between self-reports to examine *parent* reports of their socialization practices and *youth* reports of their ethnic identity and well-being. Further, in contrast to the field's focus on the socialization practices of mothers or generic "parents," we collected information about the practices of mothers and fathers from the same families so that we could determine whether the implications of maternal and paternal socialization practices were similar or different. Our work also addressed an important gap in the literature by studying youth gender and age as potential moderators of the links between racial socialization and youth functioning.

A primary contribution of this study was its examination of the family conditions under which racial socialization practices were linked to youth functioning. To this end, we studied parental warmth and the racial socialization practices of the other parent as potential moderators of socialization—youth functioning linkages. In the face of theory about the significance of the emotional climate of parent–offspring relationships (Darling & Steinberg, 1993), we found no evidence that parental warmth moderated the links between racial socialization and youth outcomes. Importantly, with both factors in the model, racial socialization proved to be a more consistent correlate of youth functioning than parental warmth. In keeping with scholars' call for treating racial socialization as a multidimensional phenomenon (e.g., Coard & Sellers, 2005), however, we did find evidence that *the combination* of mothers' and fathers' socialization practices had implications for youth: In two-parent families, the implications of racial socialization for youth adjustment, specifically locus of control, may be better understood when both parents' practices are taken into account.

To study the implications of mothers' and fathers' practices, we first tested the links between parents' socialization and youth's ethnic identity. Replicating prior work (see Hughes et al., in press), we found that mothers' cultural socialization was a positive correlate. As noted, mothers were more involved in cultural socialization than fathers, and the salience of mothers' cultural socialization, coupled with its links to the "kin-keeper" role, may underlie the significance of mothers' practices in this domain. Prior findings on the links between bias preparation and ethnic identity are less consistent than findings for cultural socialization (Hughes et al., in press). Fathers have not been an explicit focus of this work, however, and our results showed that fathers' bias preparation was linked, at trend level, to youth ethnic identity. Prior work highlighting males' more frequent experiences of discrimination (e.g., Stevenson et al., 2002) may mean that fathers have more reason than mothers to see bias preparation as important, and they also may have more credibility with their children in this domain of parenting.

In contrast to the main effects of racial socialization on youth ethnic identity, links between racial socialization and youth locus of control were moderated by other family dynamics. Specifically, our findings suggested that the implications of mothers' practices were contingent on those of fathers: Youth reported lower locus of control in families in which mothers were highly involved in racial socialization but fathers were not, and this pattern emerged for both cultural socialization and bias preparation. These results are consistent with an emerging body of work on co-parenting that highlights the importance of interparental consistency for youth well-being (e.g., Feinberg, 2003), and with family systems' notions about linkages between dyads within a family (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). In contrast

to the negative implications of the high mother/low father socialization pattern, when fathers were highly involved in racial socialization but mothers were not, youth reported high levels of locus of control. Because mothers report higher levels of racial socialization, on average, than fathers do, youth may perceive few differences between mothers and fathers who display the latter pattern. It is also possible that the high mother–low father pattern reflects problematic co-parenting dynamics, such as mothers compensating for fathers' lack of involvement or interparental disagreement about how to socialize offspring. In future studies, parents should be asked directly about co-parenting in the domain of racial socialization.

With respect to youth depression symptoms, the results revealed that fathers who engaged in more cultural socialization had children who were less depressed. As was the case with locus of control, however, mothers' bias preparation was negatively related (at trend level) to youth adjustment. Although cultural socialization has been shown to be a protective factor, some prior work indicates that racial socialization that highlights barriers to opportunity may be linked to poorer youth well-being (e.g., Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Ogbu, 1974). The different valences of mothers' versus fathers' socialization for youth depression symptoms may also arise because mothers tend to engage in more racial socialization, on average, than fathers, and thus, mothers who score high on this dimension may be overly involved. The fact that a similar pattern emerged in the case of locus of control (i.e., mothers' racial socialization was negatively related and fathers' racial socialization was positively related to youth adjustment) also may mean that a more complex process was in play: Youth in this sample were generally well adjusted and limited variability in depression symptoms may have precluded our detecting the mother socialization by father socialization interactions that emerged for locus of control.

Taken together, our findings imply that gendered patterns in parents' racial socialization and their implications merit future research scrutiny. A body of work describes differences in mothers' and fathers' parental roles (McHale et al., 2003). Given differences in their individual experiences and orientations to parenting, it would be surprising if men and women approached the tasks of racial socialization in precisely the same way. Qualitative data from youth on their experiences with mothers and fathers may reveal more mother–father differences than are apparent when rating scales are used.

Limitations and Directions for Study

Although our findings contribute to the literature on racial socialization, our study is not without limitations. First, our study goals directed attention to a particular type of family, that is, families that included a mother and father and at least two children in middle childhood and adolescence. Had we targeted a randomly selected and representative sample of African American families and studied the racial socialization efforts of the caregivers in those families (e.g., mothers and grandmothers or other adults in the home), a different pattern of findings may have emerged.

Our lack of detail on family members' ethnicity is another limitation of this study. Our interest in family dynamics directed our focus on constructs such as racial socialization rather than status variables such as ethnicity. Variability in ethnicity among individuals who self-identify as Black or African American is considerable, however. In future work, researchers should examine whether ethnicity moderates the links between cultural dynamics like racial socialization and youth and family relationship outcomes.

A final limitation is the cross-sectional and correlational nature of our research design. The existing literature led us to frame our research to study the implications of racial socialization for youth, but our design does not allow for such causal inferences. Longitudinal research is essential to shed light on the direction of effect of these dynamics, that is, whether higher levels of racial socialization give rise to positive youth functioning or the other way around. Intervention studies, in which parents are trained in the use of effective racial socialization and the importance of co-parenting is highlighted, are another direction for research that may have both practical and theoretical significance.

In the face of its limitations, this study provides an important contribution to the literature on racial socialization by setting this dynamic in its larger family context. Our findings add to a small but important literature in documenting the characteristics and experiences of family members that give rise to racial socialization practices and how these practices, in turn, have implications for youth and family relationships. This research also speaks to the literature on family socialization influences, more generally, in its investigation of normative dynamics in African American families. Finally, our examination of the racial socialization practices of two parents with two offspring provides insights into how families operate as systems in the process of child and adolescent socialization.

References

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: testing and interpreting interactions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bowman, P. J., & Howard, D. (1985). Race-related socialization, motivation, and academic achievement: A study of Black youth in three-generation families. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 24*, 134–141.

Boykin, A. W., & Toms, F. D. (1985). Black child socialization: A conceptual framework. In H. P. McAdoo & J. L. McAdoo (Eds.), *Black children: Social, educational, and parental environments* (pp. 33–52). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Crouter, A. C. (1983). The evolution of environmental models in developmental research. In P. Mussen (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (*Vol. 1*, pp. 358–414). New York: Wiley.

Caughy, M., O'Campo, P. J., Randolph, S. M., & Nickerson, K. (2002). The influence of racial socialization practices on the cognitive and behavioral competence of African American preschoolers. *Child Development*, *73*, 1611–1625.

Coard, S. I., & Sellers, R. M. (2005). African American families as contexts for racial socialization. In V. C. McLoyd, N. E. Hill, & K. A. Dodge (Eds.), *African American family life* (pp. 264–284). New York: Guilford.

Constantine, M. G., & Blackmon, S. M. (2002). Black adolescents' racial socialization experiences their relations to home, school, and peer self-esteem. *Journal of Black Studies*, *32*, 322–335.

Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, *113*, 487–496.

Fatimilehin, I. A. (1999). Of jewel heritage: Racial socialization and racial identity attitudes amongst adolescents of mixed African-Caribbean/White parentage. *Journal of Adolescence*, *22*, 308–318.

Feinberg, M. E. (2003). The internal structure and ecological context of coparenting: A framework for research and intervention. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, *3*, 95–131.

Fischer, A. R., & Shaw, C. M. (1999). African Americans' mental health and perceptions of racist discrimination: The moderating effects of racial socialization experiences and self esteem. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46*, 395–407.

Frabutt, J. M., Walker, A. M., & MacKinnon-Lewis, C. (2002). Racial socialization messages and the quality of mother/child interactions in African American families. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *22*, 200–217.

Hagestad, G. O. (1986). The family: Women and grandparents as kinkeepers. In A. Pifer & L. Bronte (Eds.), *Our aging society* (pp. 141–160). New York: Norton.

Hill, N. E., Murry, V. M., & Anderson, V. D. (2005). Sociocultural contexts of African American families. In V. C. McLoyd, N. E. Hill, & K. A. Dodge (Eds.), *African American family life* (pp. 21–44). New York: Guilford.

Hughes, D., & Chen, L. (1997). When and what parents tell children about race: An examination of race-related socialization among African American families. *Applied Developmental Science*, *1*, 200–214.

Hughes, D., & Johnson, D. (2001). Correlates in children's experiences of parents' racial socialization behaviors. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 981–995.

Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E. P., Johnson, D., & Stevenson, H. C. (in press). Parents' ethnic/racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology.*

Jacobs, J. E., Lanza, S., Osgood, D. W., Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Changes in children's self-competence and values: Gender and domain differences across grades one through twelve. *Child Development*, *73*, 509–527.

Johnson, D. (2001). Parental characteristics, racial stress and racial socialization processes as preditors of racial coping in middle childhood. In A. M. Neal-Barnett, J. M. Contreras, & K. A. Kerns (Eds.), *Forging links: African American children clinical developmental perspectives* (pp. 57–74). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Johnson, D., Brown, D., Wayumba, E., Choi, Y. K., & Hunter, A. G. (2005). *Correlates of racial socialization among African American fathers*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Atlanta, GA.

Kovacs, M. (1981). *The children's depression inventory: A self-rated depression scale for school-aged youngsters*. Unpublished manuscript. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Margolin, G., Oliver, P. H., & Medina, A. M. (2001). Conceptual issues in understanding the relation between interparental conflict and child adjustment. In J. H. Grych & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Interparental conflict and child development* (pp. 9–38). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Marshall, S. (1995). Ethnic socialization of African American children: Implications for parenting, identity development, and academic achievement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *24*, 377–396.

McHale, S. M., Crouter, A. C., & Whiteman, S. D. (2003). The family contexts of gender development in childhood and adolescence. *Social Development*, *12*, 125–148.

McLoyd, V. C. (1998). Changing demographics in the American population: Implications for research on minority children and adolescents. In V. C. McLoyd & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Studying minority adolescents: Conceptual, methodological, and theoretical issues* (pp. 3–28). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Miller, D. B. (1999). Racial socialization and racial identity: Can they promote resiliency for African American adolescents? *Adolescence*, *34*, 494–501.

Murry, V. M., & Brody, G. H. (2002). Parenting and racial socialization processes in rural, single-parents families: An examination of self-worth and self-regulatory behavior of Black children. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black children: Social, environmental, and parental environments* (2nd ed., pp. 97–115). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nowicki, S. Jr., & Strickland, B. R. (1973). A locus of control scale for children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 40*, 148–154.

Ogbu, J. U. (1974). *The next generation: An ethnography of education, in an urban neighborhood*. New York: Academic.

Parke, R., & Buriel, R. (1998). Socialization in the family: Ethnic and ecological perspectives. In W. Damon & N. Eisenberg (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Social, emotional, and personality development* (*Vol. 4*, pp. 463–552). New York: Wiley.

Peters, M. F. (1985). Ethnic socialization of young Black children. In H. P. McAdoo & J. L. McAdoo (Eds.), *Black children: Social, educational, and parental environments* (pp. 159–173). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *7*, 156–176.

Phinney, J. S., & Chavira, V. (1995). Parental ethnic socialization and adolescent coping with problems, related to ethnicity. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *5*, 31–54.

Quintana, S. M. (1998). Children's developmental understanding of ethnicity and race. *Applied and Preventive Psychology*, *7*, 27–45.

Raudenbush, S. W., Bryk, A. S., Cheong, Y. F., & Congdon, R. (2003). *HLM 5.05: Hierarchical linear and nonlinear modeling*. Chicago: Scientific Software International.

Rumbaut, R. (1994). The crucible within: Ethnic identity, self esteem, and segmented assimilation among children of immigrants. *International Migration Review*, *28*, 748–794.

Sanders Thompson, V. L. (1994). Socialization to race and its relationship to racial identification among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *20*, 175–188.

Sanders Thompson, V. L. (1999). Variables affecting racial-identity salience among African Americans. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *139*, 748–761.

Schwarz, J. C., Barton-Henry, M. L., & Pruzinsky, T. (1985). Assessing child-rearing behavior: A comparison of ratings made by mother, father, child, and sibling on the CRPBI. *Child Development*, *56*, 462–479.

Scott, L. D. (2003). The relation of racial identity and racial socialization to coping with discrimination among African American adolescents. *Journal of Black Studies*, *33*, 520–538.

Spencer, M. B. (1983). Children's cultural values and parental child rearing strategies. *Developmental Review*, *3*, 351–370.

Stevenson, H. C. (1995). Relationships of adolescent perceptions of racial socialization to racial identity. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *21*, 49–70.

Stevenson, H. C., Camercon, R., Herrero-Taylor, T., & Davis, G. Y. (2002). Development of the teenager experience of racial socialization scale: Correlates of race-related socialization frequency from the perspective of Black youth. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *28*, 84–106.

Stevenson, H. C., Reed, J., Bodison, P., & Bishop, A. (1997). Racism stress management: Racial socialization beliefs and the experience of depression and anger in African American youth. *Youth and Society*, *29*, 197–222.

Thomas, A. J., & Speight, S. L. (1999). Racial identity and racial socialization attitudes of African American parents. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *25*, 152–170.

Thornton, M. C., Chatters, L. M., Taylor, J. R., & Allen, W. R. (1990). Sociodemographic and environmental correlates of racial socialization by Black parents. *Child Development*, *61*, 401–409.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2001). 2000 Census Population and Housing. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/sumfile.htm

Whitchurch, G. G., & Constantine, L. L. (1993). Systems theory. In P. G. Boss, W. J. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. R. Schumm, & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 325–355). New York: Plenum.

Appendix

Links Between Parental Warmth, Youth Age, and Gender and Racial Socialization

Level 1:

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{youth age}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{youth gender}) + \beta_{3j}(\text{mothers' warmth}) + \beta_{4j}(\text{fathers warmth}) + eij$$

Level 2:

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_0 =& \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{youth mean age}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{youth mean gender}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{mothers' age}) \\ &+ \gamma_{04}(\text{fathers' age}) + \gamma_{05}(\text{mothers education}) + \gamma_{06}(\text{fathers' education}) \\ &+ \gamma_{07}(\text{sibling relatedness}) + u_{0j}\end{aligned}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}, \beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}, \beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30}, \beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40}$$

Parents' Racial Socialization and Youth Psychosocial Functioning

Level 1:

$$\begin{aligned}y_{ij} =& \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{youth age}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{youth gender}) + \beta_{3j}(\text{mothers warmth}) + \beta_{4_j}(\text{fathers warmth}) \\ &+ \beta_{5j}(\text{mothers' racial socialization}) + \beta_{6j}(\text{fathers racial socialization}) \\ &+ \beta_{7j}(\text{mothers racial socialization} * \text{fathers' racial socialization}) \\ &+ \beta_{8j}(\text{youth age} * \text{mothers' racial socialization}) \\ &+ \beta_{9j}(\text{youth age} * \text{fathers' racial socialization}) + eij\end{aligned}$$

Level 2:

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_{0j} =& \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{mothers' age}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{fathers' age}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{mothers' education}) \\ &+ \gamma_{04}(\text{fathers' education}) + \gamma_{05}(\text{sibling relatedness}) + u_{0j}\end{aligned}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}, \beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}, \beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30}, \beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40}, \beta_{5j} = \gamma_{50}, \beta_{6j} = \gamma_{6}, \beta_{7j} = \gamma_{70}, \beta_{8j} = \gamma_{80}, \beta_{9j} = \gamma_{90}$$