



A review of race socialization within Black families [☆]

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Received 16 May 2005; revised 29 January 2006
Available online 5 April 2006

Abstract

This manuscript provides a critical and comprehensive review of research on race socialization within Black families. Race socialization is defined as specific verbal and non-verbal messages transmitted to younger generations for the development of values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race and racial stratification, intergroup and intragroup interactions, and personal and group identity. Reviewed are published articles that address either analytical or theoretical approaches to understanding Black families' race socialization practices. First, theoretical perspectives of the race socialization process are reviewed. Second, this review defines race socialization in Black families. It then describes modes of message transmittal. Next, it focuses on three domains of research on race socialization: (a) prevalence, (b) content, and (c) race socialization as a predictor of child and adult outcomes. It concludes by outlining important challenges and issues in the literature to encourage the development of future research.

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Keywords: Race; Socialization; African American; Review; Black families; Identity

This paper examines the process of socialization around the status of race. In previous studies, socialization to race as a status has been neglected whereas socialization to other topics such as politics, gender, and religion have received a great deal of attention. Race is

[☆] This work was supported in part by an NIMH training grant (T32-MH18921) and NICHD grant (P30HD15052). This research was conducted as a portion of the author's doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Department of Psychology, University of Michigan. I thank my dissertation committee (Drs. Toni Antonucci, Cleopatra Caldwell, Richard Gonzalez, James Jackson, and Robert Sellers) and Drs. Tony Brown, Bruce Compas, and Howard Sandler for their helpful comments on an early draft.

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not substantively different from these other more frequently studied topics; however, researchers have not adequately theorized the relationship between socialization to race as a status and other socialization processes. So, it is not clear how socialization to race is linked to general socialization practices. This manuscript will attempt to lay out an organizing framework and appraise existing research representing the state of the field. The theoretical contribution of this paper then is not to develop a new theory around socialization, but to highlight linkages between empirical studies on socialization to race with seemingly unrelated literatures such as family processes, socialization processes, and life course development.

Black parents play a pivotal role in educating their children about the structural and psychological implications of race as a stratification status. To raise physically and emotionally healthy Black children, Black parents must buffer information their children receive about race (Murray, Stokes, & Peacock, 1999). Black parents must socialize their children to understand (1) Black culture and how to interact with other Blacks, (2) how to get along with other racial groups, and (3) how to cope with their oppressed minority status (Boykin & Toms, 1985). The process of preparing Black children to understand their unique heritage, culture, and the meaning of membership in a low status racial group is commonly referred to as race socialization (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Peters, 1985; Stevenson, 1994; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990).

The process of race socialization is important to understand for several reasons. First, race socialization links seemingly unrelated literatures such as family processes, socialization processes, life course development, and identity formation. Second, messages about race and racism can interact with the content of other socialization messages. For example, gender roles are often learned in the context of race roles (McRae & Noumair, 1997). General cultural expectations are often shaped by racial expectations (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). And political ideology is often shaped by racial ideology (Stewart, Settles, & Winter, 1998). Third, it implicates the development and stability of racial attitudes across the life course. Fourth, it focuses on a population that is often not the subject of scientific studies (i.e., Black families). Fifth, race socialization is increasingly regarded as crucial for the development of Black children's racial identity, self-esteem, and attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding race. Yet, despite the importance of and interest in the concept, there is considerable ambiguity concerning the exact meaning of the term and the optimum method of measuring the process.

This paper provides a critical review of research on race socialization in Black families. First, theoretical perspectives of the socialization process which link race socialization to socialization in general are outlined. Second, definitions of race socialization in Black families are reviewed and integrated. Third, modes of parental transmission of race socialization messages are described. Fourth, empirical domains of the race socialization literature are discussed: (a) prevalence of race socialization messages, (b) content of race socialization messages, and (c) race socialization as a predictor of child and adult outcomes. This paper concludes by suggesting directions for future research on race socialization in Black families.

Theoretical perspectives of the socialization process

This section links race socialization to general socialization practices using three theoretical perspectives (i.e., ecological theory, life course perspective, and social-cognitive

learning theory). First, ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) defines multiple levels of the environment that simultaneously influence social development. Specifically for race, these environments partially determine when, how, and why parents socialize their children about race. Embedded within the center of these multiple levels is the individual child who is influenced by and who influences the surrounding environment. The microsystem, or first level, represents the direct interactions and relationships the child has with his/her family, school, and neighborhood. The mesosystem, or second level, encompasses the relationships among various systems in the microsystem. The exosystem, or third level, consists of environments not directly a part of the child's environment, but that still possess some influence over the child. Examples of these environments include parents' place of work and community-based resources. In terms of race, these environments may include parents' experiences of racial discrimination in the workplace that would influence the types of messages about race parents transmit to their children (Hughes & Chen, 1997). The macrosystem, or fourth level, consists of general values, beliefs, customs, and laws for the larger society. In general, children are socialized to standard American values and beliefs. However, these values and beliefs may contradict the realities for Black families. Consequently, the interplay between this system and the others may be more complicated for Black families whose experience within the macrosystem differs from mainstream society. This theory also includes a temporal dimension, the chronosystem. This dimension encompasses time as it relates to children's external and internal environments. For example, the chronosystem includes changes in the racial and political climate. These changes in turn influence the types of race socialization messages parents consider appropriate for their children. In addition, as children develop, they may impose changes in their own lives by modifying and creating many of their own race-related settings and experiences.

Second, the life course perspective describes how individuals' lives are shaped by social change embedded in historical time periods. Similar to the temporal dimension of ecological theory, the life course perspective links social change, individual development, and biography (Alwin, 1995; Brown & Lesane-Brown, *in press*; Elder, 1994). Specifically for race, the life course perspective suggests that family communication about race is embedded within both the social conditions and values of the historical period (Park, 2004). It also acknowledges that parents' socialization practices must be responsive to fluctuations in social conditions and the political climate in which their children live. Consequently, the messages transmitted to one generation of children may be different than those transmitted to another generation.

Third, social-cognitive learning theory can explain how parents influence children's beliefs and attitudes. Generally this theory is concerned with the interaction between individuals and social groupings toward the goal of causing individuals to think and behave in desirable or appropriate ways for their given society. These desirable thoughts and behaviors represent the confluence of verbal and non-verbal, deliberate and inadvertent proscriptions and prescriptions about ways of interacting, performing roles, and conceiving the self. This theory asserts that behaviors are learned through observation, modeling, vicarious reinforcement, and imitation (Bandura, 1977). Socialization about race is one area susceptible to the influence of direct modeling, reinforcement, and imitation of behaviors. Through social modeling and reinforcement, children may learn about the consequences of race and how to respond in race-related situations. For example, Black children who observe their parents interacting positively with White adults may imitate these behaviors with their White classmates. Most of the research on social-cognitive learning theory has focused on young children's development. However, race socialization is a life-long

process. Messages received in childhood may have a different meaning than those received in adulthood. In addition, messages received at any point in the life-span may be challenged, rejected, or accepted as individuals, based upon their prior knowledge and experiences, develop their own beliefs and values.

Definitions of race socialization in Black families

Race socialization is a complex, multidimensional construct. Because of its complexity, there is no single or commonly accepted definition. Rather, multiple definitions, each describing either single or multiple functions exist. Some researchers define race socialization simply as the transmittal of values, attitudes, and behaviors that help to prepare future generations for possible negative race-related experiences, while others conceptualize it as a process of helping future generations develop a positive racial identity (Demo & Hughes, 1990). Other researchers go one step further by combining multiple functions. For example, Fischer and Shaw (1999) conceptualized it as “the process of communicating behaviors and messages to children for the purpose of enhancing their sense of racial/ethnic identity, partially in preparation for racially hostile encounters” (p. 396).

It is essential for researchers to be clear regarding their theoretical and operational definitions of race socialization. Given that race socialization is a complex process that incorporates messages pertaining to racial identity, culture, intergroup interactions, and discrimination, excluding one or two of these content areas from definitions limits researchers’ ability to capture all functions of this process (Stevenson, 1994). Furthermore, it is difficult to compare findings from studies that use measures based on different operational definitions. Fatimilehin (1999) stated “Whilst most definitions of racial socialization include the issue of coping in an oppressive environment, the lack of agreement in terms of the boundaries of the definition is reflected in the diversity of ways in which it has been measured. This makes it difficult to compare the few studies that have been published” (p. 307).

To create a more comprehensive definition, I suggest race socialization be defined as specific verbal and non-verbal (e.g., modeling of behavior and exposure to different contexts and objects) messages transmitted to younger generations for the development of values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race and racial stratification, intergroup and intragroup interactions, and personal and group identity. This definition is comprehensive because it integrates those proposed by existing scholars (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Marshall, 1995; Miller, 1999; Thornton et al., 1990) and highlights how messages are transmitted (i.e., verbal and non-verbal), what types of messages are transmitted, and the purpose of messages.

Modes of parental transmission of race socialization messages

Parents transmit race socialization messages in multiple ways. To describe the mechanisms used to transmit messages to children, it is necessary to distinguish between two dimensions: *expression* versus *intent* of race socialization messages. Expression refers to the manner in which race socialization messages are transmitted. Parents may express race socialization messages either verbally or non-verbally (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Murray et al., 1999; Thornton et al., 1990). Intent of messages refers to the state of mind in which race socialization messages are transmitted (i.e., the purpose, aim, or

goal of messages). The intent of parents' messages may be deliberate (i.e., proactive or explicit) or inadvertent (i.e., passive or implicit).

Message expression: Verbal and non-verbal

Verbal messages are communicated through direct conversations between parents and their children, and through indirect parental conversations that the child observes. Verbal messages are the simplest method of expression to examine because these messages are often explicit and thus easily recalled in children's and parents' self reports (Bowman & Howard, 1985). Non-verbal messages are more difficult to investigate. These messages may take a variety of forms, including modeling cultural or ethnic behaviors (e.g., cooking traditional foods, interacting in culturally appropriate ways), structuring children's environments (e.g., displaying culturally based art or books in the home, raising children in either predominantly Black or multi-cultural neighborhoods; Bandura, 1977; Caughy & O'Campo, 2002; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Park, 2004), or selectively reinforcing children's behaviors (e.g., buying children ethnic clothing, attending children's race-related activities; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Murray et al., 1999). Cultural knowledge and racial pride are often transmitted through non-verbal messages (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hughes & Chen, 1999).

Message intent: Deliberate and inadvertent

Parental race socialization messages are distinguished by whether they are deliberate or inadvertent. Deliberate messages are purposely transmitted to children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Murray et al., 1999). Some Black parents believe racism and discrimination are unavoidable realities for their children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Richardson, 1981). In preparation for and anticipation of these realities, some Black parents actively equip their children with the knowledge and skills that are needed to handle these situations effectively. This process consists primarily of explicit messages that are tied to parents' race-related agendas and experiences (Hughes & Chen, 1999). Other race socialization agendas, such as valuing diversity and pluralism, may also be deliberate (Hughes & Chen, 1999).

Inadvertent messages are described as "...subtle, often inadvertent communications about race that may or may not be directed at children, but nevertheless, transmit information to them regarding their parents' attitudes, values, or views about race or race relations" (Hughes & Chen, 1999, p. 471). These messages may be transmitted, for example, by children overhearing parents' conversations or observing parents' interactions with other adults.

Parents may not always transmit verbal over non-verbal messages and they may not always transmit deliberate as opposed to inadvertent messages. Rather a combination of methods may be used. For example, parents may deliberately initiate conversations with their children about race by discussing race-related topics during dinner conversations (i.e., deliberate verbal messages), and expose their children to Black art or books with race-related themes (i.e., deliberate non-verbal). When parents transmit deliberate as well as inadvertent messages, these messages are not always congruent (Dixson, 1995; Hughes & Chen, 1999). For example, parents may deliberately stress the importance of Black pride but inadvertently behave deferentially toward Whites. In need of further consideration is whether children are more likely to attend to parents' deliberate or inadvertent messages,

and if this relationship is dependent upon whether parents' deliberate or inadvertent messages are verbal or non-verbal.

Most race socialization studies investigate verbal and deliberate messages (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Thornton et al., 1990). It is imperative that future studies of race socialization expand beyond this and attempt to capture the various modes of message transmittal (i.e., deliberate non-verbal, inadvertent verbal, etc.). Doing so would require researchers to incorporate these dimensions into new measures and acknowledge these dimensions when evaluating existing measures. For example, parents cannot accurately inform researchers about their inadvertent messages because, by definition, parents are not aware of these messages (Dixson, 1995). Consequently, direct observations of parent–child interactions are necessary to examine parents' inadvertent messages. Although observational methods are widely used in research on social development and general socialization processes (Aspland & Gardner, 2003), these methods have not been applied to the study of race socialization.

Empirical domains of the race socialization literature

Prevalence of race socialization

Prevalence assesses whether race socialization messages are transmitted by parents and received by children. A small body of work has examined the prevalence of race socialization messages. For example, in a nationally representative sample of Black Americans, 63.6% of parents reported transmitting race socialization messages to their children (Jackson, 1991; Thornton et al., 1990) and 62% of adolescents reported receiving race socialization messages from their parents (Bowman & Howard, 1985). In another study assessing prevalence, 79% of Black adults recalled discussing racial issues with their parents while growing up (Sanders Thompson, 1994). Stevenson, Reed, and Bodison (1996) found that 49% of Black adolescents reported having discussions about race with their parents at least sometimes. These studies suggest that socializing children about race is a common practice in most Black families.

Several factors have been identified that may influence the prevalence of race socialization messages. Sociodemographic factors such as parents' age, gender, socioeconomic status, and region of residence have been the primary focus of these studies (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Thornton et al., 1990). In addition, there is increasing interest in how parents' race socialization experiences and children's characteristics (Fatimilehin, 1999; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Johnson, 2001) influence parents' willingness to racially socialize their children.

Sociodemographic factors

Using nationally representative data, Thornton et al. (1990) examined how sociodemographic factors influenced Black parents' propensity to transmit race socialization messages to their children. Sociodemographic variables included marital status, gender, geographic region, neighborhood, age, education, and family income. Using logistic regression analysis to predict prevalence of race socialization messages, they found married parents were significantly more likely than never married parents to socialize their children about race. Mothers were more likely than fathers to transmit race socialization messages. Adults living in the Northeast, especially males were more likely to socialize their children

regarding race than adults living in the South. Adult women who lived in predominantly Black neighborhoods were less likely than those who lived in predominantly White neighborhoods. Older parents were more likely to teach their children about race than younger parents. And at higher levels of education, older parents were more likely than younger parents to racially socialize their children.

The Thornton et al. (1990) study was the first to examine these relationships among a large, heterogeneous, and nationally representative sample of Black adults. It is noteworthy that Black parents (particularly mothers) residing in predominantly Black neighborhoods were less likely to transmit race socialization messages than those residing in racially diverse neighborhoods. This finding was consistent with results reported by Tatum (1987) who found that Black parents living in predominantly White neighborhoods felt it more imperative to racially socialize their children than parents living in predominantly Black neighborhoods. These findings suggest that Black parents raising children in predominantly White environments may take a more active role in buffering their children from negative messages their children may receive about being Black. However, as Thornton et al. (1990) point out, their results must be taken with caution because they are based upon retrospective self-reports that may be subject to recall bias; and the cross-sectional nature of the Tatum (1987) and Thornton et al. (1990) studies limits the ability to make causal statements. In addition, a more complex analysis is needed that better describes the interplay between income, education, neighborhood, and race socialization considering Black families in racially heterogeneous neighborhoods are likely to have higher incomes and be more educated than those in racially homogeneous neighborhoods.

Although the Thornton et al. (1990) study offered insight into the relationship between demographic factors and the transmittal of race socialization messages, it did not describe what types of messages parents transmit in relation to demographic factors. Previous research has shown that evaluating the content of race socialization messages is essential because different messages may have varying impact on individuals (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Thornton, 1997). For example, although married parents may be more likely than single parents to racially socialize their children, they may be transmitting racial content that is not effective for equipping their children to deal with racism (Lesane, 2002a). Parham and Williams (1993) found that although 80% of adults in their sample received race socialization messages, 50% of the sample received neutral or negative messages, and 2% were taught to believe that being Black was not something to be proud of. In an effort to address this limitation, Thornton (1997) extended the Thornton et al. (1990) study by examining the relationship between the content of parental race socialization messages (i.e., mainstream, minority, and culture messages) and sociodemographic factors, racial attitudes, and interracial contact. Results indicated that sociodemographic factors, racial attitudes, and interracial contact differentially relate to the content of parental race socialization messages. For example, using a logit regression, mainstream messages (i.e., messages that de-emphasize race and emphasize personal qualities) were more likely to be transmitted by older, married females who had a White friend than by their counterparts.

Parents' race socialization experiences and children's characteristics

Hughes and Johnson (2001) found that children's characteristics contributed to whether parents transmitted race socialization messages, and the types of messages they transmitted to their children. For example, when children were exploring their racial identity and when

parents perceived their children as having been unfairly treated because of their race, parents were likely to transmit race socialization messages regarding discrimination. When children perceived that they had been treated unfairly by peers and parents perceived their children had been unfairly treated by adults, parents were likely to transmit messages that cautioned or warned children about intergroup relations.

Hughes and Chen (1997) investigated predictors of prevalence of race socialization among 157 married Black couples that had at least one child between the ages of 4 and 14 years old. In this study, parents' own childhood race socialization experiences and their race-related experiences in the workplace shaped the types of messages they transmitted to their children. For example, using bivariate correlations and regression analysis, these researchers found that parents who received messages about Black culture and racial bias during childhood were more likely to transmit messages that prepared their children for racial discrimination. Hughes and Chen (1997) also found that parents were significantly less likely to racially socialize younger children (i.e., children 4–8 years old versus those 9–14 years old, and children 9–11 years old versus those 12–14 years old). Richardson (1981) reported similar findings. During qualitative interviews with mothers of Black children, Richardson (1981) found that mothers felt information regarding race should be given based upon the child's developmental age. That is, parents felt that younger children should receive less information about race than older children. Fatimilehin (1999) examined the relationship between children's age and their reports of parental race socialization messages. Bivariate correlations from this study suggest that parents are more likely to transmit messages to older children, particularly messages that emphasize racial group pride and racial barrier awareness. In addition, Fatimilehin's (1999) findings suggest that the older the adolescent, the more race socialization messages they are likely to receive. However, Fatimilehin (1999) questioned whether this finding truly suggests that parents increase the frequency of messages as children get older, or whether messages become more salient with age.

The cross-sectional nature of these studies leaves several unanswered questions. Based on these studies it is difficult to know how parents' messages would change or even if the content of parents' messages would change as children become older. According to these studies, it is expected that parents of young children would either avoid talking about race and focus on teaching basic skills, or avoid messages that could potentially make their children feel paranoid or resentful of their own racial group. As children mature however, parents would be more open to discussing race-related issues and providing information about racism and discrimination to their children. However, it is also possible that parents who choose to not transmit messages to their young children will also choose to not transmit messages to their children as they become older. This area of research needs further investigation.

If race socialization messages are such an important part of Black child development, why is it that not all Black parents transmit these messages? Parents may not feel comfortable talking about race with their children because of the negative feelings it engenders (Coard et al., 2004). Other parents may feel their primary goal is to teach life skills independent of racial status in an effort to raise race-neutral children. In addition, Thornton et al. (1990) suggested three reasons parents may not transmit race socialization messages. First, parents may have internalized negative images perpetuated about Blacks by society. Consequently, these parents may not see a need to buffer negative messages their children receive about their racial group. Second, parents may fear that discussions about race may

cause their children to be bitter, angry, and resentful. Third, parents may believe that racism is less of a problem now and that discussions about race are no longer needed.

Some scholars (Ogbu, 1982; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987; Thornton et al., 1990) argue that there are negative consequences for not talking to Black children about race. For example, Phinney and Rotheram (1987) suggest that not talking to children about race leaves them vulnerable and unprepared in race-related situations. Children who do not receive messages may be ill-prepared to deal with unanticipated racial circumstances and feel uncomfortable interacting with other Blacks (Ogbu, 1982; Thornton et al., 1990). In addition, not receiving messages about race may leave children vulnerable to internalize the negative images and stereotypes perpetuated about Blacks and hinder children's psychological functioning (Semaj, 1985; Thornton et al., 1990). Alternatively, talking about race and racism with children may result in poor psychological functioning (Greene, 1992). One explanation is that socializing Black children to race, particularly to the possibility of racial bias, may expose them to the possibility that being Black means belonging to generations of people who have anchored the bottom of the United States racial stratification system (Brown & Lesane-Brown, *in press*).

Several limitations exist in the literature on prevalence of parental race socialization messages. First, findings from most studies examining this issue are based on retrospective accounts. Retrospective accounts may be subject to recall bias, particularly if there is a large gap in time between transmitting or receiving messages and data collection. Prospective accounts of race socialization messages may be less subject to recall bias, but may still be problematic. For example, asking parents of young children may produce biased results in terms of the prevalence and content of messages if parents, because they perceive their children as too young, have not yet begun to give their children race socialization messages or have restricted the content of these messages. Second, most studies are correlational and cannot answer questions of causality. Third, research is needed that more accurately distinguishes between parents who do not want to transmit messages about race to their children and those parents who do not feel it is necessary to explicitly transmit messages to their children. Parents may refuse to give their children messages about race for a variety of reasons (see Thornton et al., 1990). In contrast, parents raising children in an all Black context may perceive that race is so pervasive in the given context, that deliberate messages or behaviors are either not necessary or not perceived (by the parent) as race socialization messages (i.e., inadvertent). Unlike all-Black environments, raising children in predominantly White environments may place special pressures on parents (Tatum, 1987; Thornton et al., 1990). Fourth, to date only two studies have compared prevalence of parents' race socialization messages with those transmitted by peers, other family members, and members of the community (i.e., teachers, church members, and co-workers). Sanders Thompson (1994) asked Black adult respondents whether they had received messages from their parents and other adult family members (i.e., adults in the family other than parents) while growing up. Results showed that more respondents received regular to many messages from adult family members than from parents (approximately 71.2% and 50.5%, respectively). In the Lesane-Brown, Brown, Caldwell, and Sellers (2005) study, 77.8% of adolescents and 85.3% of college students reported receiving race socialization messages from other sources (i.e., parents, close relatives, other adults, and friends). These studies suggest that although parents are the primary agents of race socialization messages, they are not the only source. More studies are needed that compare parents with other sources of socialization. As demonstrated by Lesane-Brown et al. (2005) and Sanders Thompson (1994), Black adolescents and adults receive race socialization

messages from multiple sources. As peers become more important in the lives of adolescents, it is possible that peers will have a strong influence on adolescents' racial beliefs and attitudes (About & Doyle, 1996; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). In addition, the more contact adolescents have with adults outside of the home, the more likely they are to receive messages about race from these adults. It is possible that estimates of the prevalence of race socialization messages transmitted may vary depending upon the source.

Content of race socialization

The largest set of studies in this field focus on content of messages (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Coard et al., 2004; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Marshall, 1995; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Stevenson, 1994, 2002; Thornton, 1997; Thornton et al., 1990). In these studies, the dominant question has been: What are the types of messages parents transmit to their children about race? Because variance exists between studies regarding the types of messages parents transmit and the appropriate label to be used for each message category, integration of the content of race socialization messages found across studies is needed. This is a prerequisite to comparing the content found in each study, in addition to understanding what messages are consistently found across studies.

In an attempt to integrate this literature, Table 1 presents published studies that have assessed the content of race socialization messages in Black families. The content found in each study is organized by major categories. For example, race socialization messages that emphasize racial pride, cultural pride, and teachings about Black culture were found in each study. However, the label given to this type of message varied across studies (i.e., racial pride, culture, integrative/assertive, proactive, etc.). Major categories can be utilized to demonstrate the relationship between race socialization messages found throughout the literature. For example, the content of race socialization messages can be captured within at least one of the following three major categories: (a) culture messages, (b) minority experience, and (c) mainstream experience (Boykin, 1986; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Fatimilehin, 1999). Culture messages emphasize racial pride and specific teachings about Black Americans or African culture (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Minority experience consists of messages that prepare and make children aware of an environment that is often oppressive of Blacks. Mainstream experience messages de-emphasize race but stress life skills and personal qualities, such as ambition and confidence in addition to emphasizing Blacks' co-existence in mainstream society (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Stevenson et al., 2002). Boykin (1986) and Boykin and Toms (1985) described these categories as the "triple quandary." Stevenson (1994) purports there are two higher-order factors of race socialization that are similar to culture and minority experience messages—proactive and protective. Proactive messages promote an appreciation of Black culture and cultural empowerment. Protective messages promote coping with and an awareness of societal oppression (Stevenson, 1994).

Some researchers have identified other messages that can be captured within the major categories. For example, minority experience messages can be further broken into two categories: (1) racism awareness and (2) cultural coping with antagonism. Racism awareness messages help children to recognize potential racist and discriminatory events and experiences (Stevenson, 1994). Cultural coping with antagonism messages include ways to cope with

Table 1
Published articles that assessed the content of race socialization messages in Black families

Author(s) (column) content of message (row)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Bowman and Howard (1985), Marshall (1995), Sanders Thompson (1994), Thornton et al. (1990)	Boykin and Toms (1985), Thornton (1997)	Demo and Hughes (1990)	Stevenson (1994)	Phinney and Chavira (1995)	Hughes and Chen (1997)	Stevenson et al. (2002)
Specific messages regarding how to have cultural/racial pride; specific teaching about culture	<i>Racial pride:</i> Black unity, teachings about heritage, and positive feelings toward the group	<i>Culture:</i> Focus on the cultural experience of Africans and Blacks	<i>Integrative/assessive:</i> Positive group-oriented attitude: racial pride, importance of black heritage, acceptance of being black, getting along with whites, try to understand whites, stand up for rights	<i>Proactive:</i> Appreciation of Black culture and cultural empowerment; includes family rearing, spiritual and religious coping, and cultural pride teaching <i>Cultural pride reinforcement:</i> Teaching of Black history and culture	<i>Pride:</i> Be proud of racial group, importance of seeing members of race in positive roles <i>Culture:</i> Teachings about cultural traditions, customs, and celebrations	<i>Cultural socialization:</i> Teaching about Black history, culture, and heritage	<i>Cultural pride reinforcement:</i> Teaching of Black pride and culture <i>Cultural appreciation of legacy:</i> teaching cultural and historical heritage issues
Messages regarding awareness of racial barriers; how to cope with racial barriers and discrimination, and mistrust of Whites	<i>Racial barrier orientations:</i> Awareness of racial inequities and strategies for coping with racism and discrimination	<i>Minority experience:</i> Preparation for and awareness of an oppressive environment	<i>Cautious/defensive attitude:</i> Social distance, deference, white prejudice, whites have the power	<i>Racism awareness teaching/protective:</i> Promote caution and preparatory views regarding the presence of racism and the need to discuss racism openly among all family members	<i>prejudice as a problem:</i> Awareness of prejudice and problems related to it	<i>Preparation for bias:</i> Preparation for encounters with racial discrimination and prejudice	<i>Cultural coping with antagonism:</i> Importance of struggling successfully through racial hostilities and the role of spirituality and religion in that coping

<p>Messages regarding equality among racial groups</p>	<p><i>Egalitarian views:</i> Interracial equality and coexistence</p>	<p><i>Mainstream experience:</i> Focus on teaching life skills. Stress personal qualities such as ambition and confidence</p>	<p><i>Individualistic/universalistic:</i> Messages without specific racial references such as work hard, excel, take a positive attitude toward self, be a good citizen, and all are equal</p>	<p><i>Coping with prejudice:</i> Teachings on how to deal with prejudice</p>	<p><i>Promotion of mistrust:</i> Promotion of racial mistrust</p>	<p><i>Cultural alertness to discrimination:</i> Teach youth to be aware of racism barriers and multiple race relation challenges between Blacks and Whites</p>
				<p><i>Adaptation:</i> Learn to live with and interact with other racial groups</p>		<p><i>Cultural endorsement of the mainstream:</i> Relative importance of majority culture institutions and values and benefits Blacks can receive from those institutions</p>
<p>Messages regarding self-development and personal achievement</p>	<p><i>Self-development orientations:</i> Individual excellence and positive character traits</p>			<p><i>Achievement:</i> Importance of working hard to get ahead</p>		

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s) (column) content of message (row)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Bowman and Howard (1985), Marshall (1995), Sanders Thompson (1994), Thornton et al. (1990)	Boykin and Toms (1985), Thornton (1997)	Demo and Hughes (1990)	Stevenson (1994)	Phinney and Chavira (1995)	Hughes and Chen (1997)	Stevenson et al. (2002)
Other messages	<i>Physical attributes:</i> Messages about skin color, impor- tance of not forget- ting that one is Black, and differ- ence in personal hygiene between Blacks and Whites			<i>Spiritual and reli- gious coping:</i> Rec- ognizing spirituality as one survives life's expe- riences <i>Extended family caring:</i> Promote the role of immediate and extended fam- ily in child-rearing and caring func- tions <i>Life and achievement struggling:</i> Attitudes regarding the realistic burden of being Black while achieving and surviving in school and work settings			

racism and discrimination (Stevenson et al., 2002). Mainstream messages can be further divided into two categories: (1) self-development and (2) egalitarian messages (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Marshall, 1995; Sanders Thompson, 1994). Self-development refers to messages regarding individual attributes that do not directly relate to race (i.e., working hard, getting a good education, and liking oneself). Egalitarian messages emphasize commonalities among all people, with a de-emphasis on race. Other messages found in existing studies include physical attributes (messages related to skin color, physical features, and differences in personal hygiene for Blacks and Whites; Marshall, 1995), extended family caring, and spiritual and religious coping (Stevenson, 1994, 1995; Stevenson et al., 1996).

Frequency of race socialization

The seminal and consequently oft cited national study on the race socialization practices in Black families by Bowman and Howard (1985) examined the content of parental race socialization messages reported by 377 Black adolescents. Race socialization was assessed with this series of yes/no and open-ended questions: “When you were a child, were there things your parents, or the people who raised you, did or told you to help you know what it is to be Black?” If they answered yes (62%), they were asked, “What are the most important things they taught you?” A coding system for the open-ended responses was inductively generated out of the data by a team of senior Black researchers and research assistants in the Program for Research on Black Americans (PRBA) at University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research (ISR). Adolescents’ open-ended responses were coded into four major types of messages: (a) racial pride, (b) self-development orientation, (c) racial barrier orientations, and (d) egalitarian views. Most adolescents reported receiving racial pride messages (23%), followed by self-development (14%), racial barrier (13%), and egalitarian messages (12%). Females (41%) were more likely to report not receiving messages than males (36%). Female adolescents however, were more likely to receive messages regarding racial pride (27%) than male adolescents (19%) whereas male adolescents were more likely to report receiving messages regarding racial barriers (16% males vs. 9% females) and egalitarian views (15% males vs. 9% females) than female adolescents. Sanders Thompson (1994) and Marshall (1995) found similar themes in their studies. However, Sanders Thompson (1994) found messages regarding advice on strategic methods for coping with racial barriers as the most prevalent in a sample of Black adults.

Phinney and Chavira (1995) examined the content of race socialization messages in a sample of 120 adolescents and their parents. Participants were African American, Hispanic, and Japanese Americans who resided in Southern California. Parents were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions regarding their race socialization practices. Parents’ responses were coded into six categories: (a) achievement, (b) culture, (c) adaptation to society, (d) pride, (e) prejudice as a problem, and (f) coping with prejudice. African American parents were more likely to report transmitting messages regarding cultural practices (81.3%) and prejudice as a problem (81.3%) than all other messages. When compared to parents of other ethnicities, African American parents were significantly more likely than Japanese American parents to transmit messages regarding prejudice as a problem (81.3% and 16.7%, respectively), dealing with prejudice (75% and 27.8%, respectively), and adaptation to society (56.3% and 38.9%, respectively). No significant differences were found for gender of adolescents or gender of parent interviewed on reports of race socialization messages. Thomas and Speight (1999), however, found that Black parents’ race socialization messages significantly differed by child gender. Chi-square results suggest that

parents transmit more messages on negative stereotypes (33% male and 24% female) and coping with racism (19% male and 5% females) to their male children and more messages on achievement (12% female and 9% male) and racial pride (11% females and 2% males) to their female children.

Hughes and Chen (1997) examined three components of race socialization: (a) cultural socialization (teaching cultural values, customs, and traditions), (b) preparation for bias (preparation for future racial discrimination or prejudice), and (c) promotion of mistrust (promoting racial mistrust of other racial groups). According to Hughes and Chen (1997), these three components were created to reflect consistent themes that are found in the race socialization literature and are explicitly transmitted. Using paired sample *t* tests, they found parents were significantly more likely to report transmitting cultural socialization messages than they were to report preparation for bias messages. In turn, parents were significantly more likely to report preparation for bias messages than they were to report promotion of mistrust messages.

Results from these studies suggest that parents are more likely to transmit racial group pride and cultural socialization messages. It is interesting to find that in most of the studies reviewed, parents do not stress racial barriers in their socialization practices given the pervasiveness of racial inequality in the lives of Black Americans. Rather, parents seem more determined to focus on the positive aspects of being Black rather than the negative consequences.

Sanders Thompson (1994) considered how respondents' generation related to the content of race socialization messages received from their parents. Sanders Thompson (1994) reported that adults under the age of 36 recalled receiving more race pride messages than adults over the age of 36; and adults age 36 and over recalled receiving more self-development and egalitarian messages from their parents and family members. Sanders Thompson (1994) proposed that these relationships captured underlying cohort, time period, or generation effects, and concluded age differences reflected parents' recognition of changes in political, social, and economic conditions for Blacks. This study did not discuss what particular political, social, or economic changes occurred, and how these changes affected parental race socialization messages.

Brown and Lesane-Brown (in press) investigated whether content of parental race socialization messages varied by historical time period in a national probability sample of 2107 Black adults interviewed in 1980. The three historical time periods examined were: (a) Pre-Brown v. Board of Education (roughly prior to 1957), (b) Protest (beginning shortly after the Brown v. Board of Education 1954 ruling), and (c) Post-Protest (1969–1980). Historical time period was significantly related to content of messages—during particular historical time periods, certain messages were more likely to be transmitted. For instance, messages regarding deference to and fear of Whites (i.e., messages emphasizing reverence toward whites) declined across successive historical time periods. And individual pride messages were significantly more likely to be transmitted to children of the Post-Protest period. More studies are needed that systematically examine how historical time period relates to the prevalence and frequency of the content of parental race socialization messages. As suggested by existing studies (Brown & Lesane-Brown, in press; Sanders Thompson, 1994) and the life course perspective, which embeds children and families within particular historical time periods, parents' messages may reflect the political, economic, and social climate of the time. In addition, the messages that children report receiving may be influenced by these historical factors. That is, children may not accept all of the mes-

sages their parents transmit to them but only those that are congruent with the current historical period.

Limitations in the literature on the content of race socialization messages should be acknowledged. First, there is little consensus on how to measure the content of race socialization; measurement of messages varied from study to study. Because there is inconsistency across studies regarding how to best measure content there is also inconsistency regarding the nature of the content of messages. Even when the content of messages appears to be similar across studies, different labels are used for the same content themes (e.g., minority experience, prejudice as a problem, preparation for bias, and racism awareness). One way to absolve this problem is for future studies to use multi-methods and multi-measures within the same study to investigate the content of race socialization messages. Second, more attention needs to be given to gender differences in terms of the content, prevalence, and frequency of messages considering Black males and Black females are likely have different social experiences.

Race socialization as a predictor of child and adult outcomes

Empirical studies suggest that Black parents' messages about race may be associated with a variety of psychosocial and academic outcomes (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Stevenson, 1995). The relationship between race socialization messages received and various outcomes may differ depending upon a variety of factors. This section reviews and summarizes findings for the relationships between receiving various types of race socialization messages, racial identity, academic achievement, and psychological functioning (see Table 2 for a summary of studies that assess race socialization as a predictor of child and adult outcomes).

Racial identity

Phinney (1996, p. 922) defines racial identity as “an enduring, fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated with that membership.” Developing a positive sense of racial identity poses a challenge for Black children. Black children grow up in an environment where mainstream society often marginalizes and discriminates against them and creates structural barriers that limit their academic and occupational potential. Consequently, developing a positive sense of self and of one's racial group is a challenge faced by all Blacks living in the United States. Receiving race socialization messages in general and receiving specific messages about group membership and group pride are hypothesized to result in positive racial identity and protection from internalizing negative racial stereotypes (Marshall, 1995; Parham & Williams, 1993; Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Sanders Thompson, 1994).

Demo and Hughes (1990) assessed the effects of receiving race socialization messages on Black adult racial identity. Racial identity was assessed by three measures: (a) feelings of closeness to other Blacks, (b) Black separatism (i.e., degree to which Blacks should confine their social relationships to other Blacks), and (c) positive Black group evaluation (i.e., belief that most Black people possess positive characteristics rather than negative characteristics). The race socialization messages respondents received during childhood were collapsed into four categories: (a) individualistic and/or universalistic attitudes (i.e., no specific racial reference, work hard, and all people are equal), (b) integrative/assertive attitudes (i.e., race pride messages), (c) cautious/defensive attitudes (i.e., beware of and keep social dis-

Table 2
Studies of race socialization as a predictor of child and adult outcomes

Author(s)	Sample	Race socialization measure	Outcome measure(s)	Analysis strategy	Significant findings ($p \leq .05$)
Bowman and Howard (1985)	Random sample of Black adolescents, $N = 377$, age 14–24 years, 46% female	NSBA (open and closed-ended interview)	Sense of personal efficacy; self-reported grades	Descriptive statistics; MCA to test effects of RSM categories on outcomes; one-way ANOVA	Adolescents taught nothing about race ($M = 5.8$) had significantly lower efficacy scores than those taught self-development messages ($M = 6.2$). Adolescents taught nothing about race ($M = 2.5$) had significantly lower grades than those taught about racial barriers ($M = 2.9$).
Demo and Hughes (1990)	Random sample of Black adults, $N = 2107$, age 18 years and over ($M = 43$), 69% female	NSBA (open and closed-ended interview)	Three dimensions of Black identity (i.e., Black separatism, closeness to other Blacks, and Black group evaluation)	Correlations and regression of dimensions of Black identity on RSM and social structural variables	Black separatism and cautious/defensive ($r = .07$). Closeness to other Blacks and integrative/assertive ($r = .09$) and cautious/defensive ($r = .06$). Black group evaluation and individualistic/universalistic ($r = .05$). Controlling for quality of relationships and demographic variables: closeness to other Blacks and integrative/assertive ($b = .08$); Black separatism and integrative/assertive ($b = .06$); Black group evaluation and individualistic/universalistic ($b = .05$).
Fatimilehin (1999)	Adolescents of African-Caribbean/White parentage in Britain, $N = 23$, age 12–19 years, 52.2% female	TERS (CSS, RSS, PDS, SCD, and Global)	RSE; RIAS-B (pre-encounter, encounter, immersion, and internalization)	Correlations	<i>Encounter</i> : cultural survival socialization ($r = .48$); racism struggles ($r = .43$); global socialization ($r = .50$). <i>Immersion</i> : cultural survival socialization ($r = .57$); racism struggles ($r = .50$); spiritual coping socialization ($r = .50$); global socialization ($r = .51$). Pre-encounter and TERS = ns. Internalization and TERS = ns. Self-esteem and TERS = ns.

Fischer and Shaw (1999)	Self-identified African American college students, $N = 119$, age 18–25 years, 52% female	SORS-A (RAT); TERS (RSS)	MHI; RSE; SRE	Correlations and hierarchical moderated regression analysis	RSE and RAT ($r = .19$). Controlling for SRE, RSS was negatively related to overall mental health ($\beta = -.55$). Low levels of RSS and more RSE was associated with lower MHI ($F = 5.42$, $p < .05$).
Marshall (1995)	African American children and their parents, $N = 58$, age 9–10 years, 66% female	Open-ended interview (parent and child)	Reading grades; RIAS (pre-encounter, immersion, and internalization)	Correlations and forward stepwise regression	Child encounter and parent reports of race socialization ($r = .50$). Lower reading grades associated with more child report race socialization ($b = -.58$).
Parham and Williams (1993)	Non-random sample of Black adults, $N = 114$, age 18–68 years, 68% female	Open-ended questions	Cross (1971) Model of Psychological Nigrescence	MANOVA	No significant relationships found.
Phinney and Chavira (1995)	American-born adolescents and one of their parents: African American $N = 16$, Other American $N = 34$, age 16–18 years	Open and closed-ended questions (parent)	MEIM; RSE	Descriptive statistics, exact probability test, and t test	A trend toward higher levels of ethnic identity when received messages versus no messages ($t = 1.85$, $p = .07$). Race socialization and ethnic identity = ns. Race socialization and self-esteem = ns.
Sanders Thompson (1994)	African American adults, $N = 225$, age 18–85 ($M = 32.4$), 62.2% female	Frequency, impact, and content (open-ended) of messages from parents and other adult family members	MRIQ (physical, cultural, sociopolitical, and psychological)	Stepwise multiple regression	<i>Physical</i> : impact of other adult family ($F = 7.11$). <i>Cultural</i> : impact of other adult family ($F = 6.57$). <i>Sociopolitical</i> : frequency of other adult family ($F = 5.56$). <i>Psychological</i> : frequency of other family ($F = 19.11$), impact of other adult family ($F = 9.78$).
Stevenson (1995)	Non-random sample of African American inner-city adolescents, $N = 287$, age 14–16 years, 60% female	SORS-A (CPR, EFC, Global, RAT, and SRC)	RIAS	Correlations and stepwise linear regression	<i>Pre-encounter</i> : SRC ($r = -.16$), RAT ($r = -.38$), Global ($r = -.22$). <i>Internalization</i> : SRC ($r = .18$), EFC ($r = .22$), CPR ($r = .30$), Global ($r = .34$). Internalization and SORS-A = ns. (continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Author(s)	Sample	Race socialization measure	Outcome measure(s)	Analysis strategy	Significant findings ($p \leq .05$)
Stevenson et al. (1997)	Non-random sample of African American adolescents, $N = 287$, mean age = 15 years, 60% female	SORS-A	STAXI; MDI	Zero-order two-way ANOVAs categorized by gender	<i>Global (for females)</i> : lower levels of low self-esteem ($F = 4.89$), lower sad mood ($F = 6.18$), lower instrumental helplessness ($F = 4.47$). <i>CPR (male and female)</i> : less anger expression w/o specific provocation ($F = 4.02$), less suppression of anger ($F = 6.50$), less expression of anger in multiple modes ($F = 5.94$). <i>EFC (for males)</i> : more anger control than females ($F = 4.03$).
Thompson et al. (2000)	Non-random sample of African American college students, $N = 84$, age 17–40 years ($M = 21$), 82.1% female	TERS (Global)	RIAS-B; ASI	Correlations and multiple regression explaining acculturative stress	<i>TERS</i> : ASI ($r = .22$), pre-encounter ($r = .23$), immersion ($r = .22$). Race socialization accounted for 4.6% of the variance in acculturative stress ($p < .05$).

Note. ANOVA, analysis of variance; ASI, Acculturative Stress Inventory; CPR, cultural pride reinforcement; CSS, cultural survival socialization; EFC, extended family caring; Global, global race socialization; MANOVA, multivariate analysis of variance; MCA, Multiple Classification Analysis; MDI, Multi-score Depression Index; MEIM, Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure; MHI, Mental Health Inventory; MRIQ, Multidimensional Racial Identification Questionnaire; NSBA, National Survey of Black Americans; PDS, pride development socialization; RAT, racism awareness teaching; RIAS, Racial Identity Attitude Scale; RIAS-B = Racial Identity Attitude Scale-B; RSE, Rosenberg's Self-esteem Inventory; RSM, race socialization message; RSS, racism struggles socialization; SCS, spiritual coping socialization; SORS-A, Scale of Race Socialization-adolescent; SRC, spiritual and religious coping; SRE, Schedule of Racist Events; STAXI, State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory; TERS, Teenager Experience of Race Socialization.

tance from Whites), and (d) respondent taught nothing about race. Through correlation and regression analyses, they found that adults who received race socialization messages from parents while growing up were significantly more likely to have strong feelings of closeness to other Blacks and to hold stronger support for Black separatism. More specifically, individualistic and/or universalistic messages received during childhood were positively associated with having a positive group evaluation. Cautious/defensive attitudes were positively associated with Black separatism. And integrative/assertive and cautious/defensive attitudes were positively associated with feelings of closeness to Blacks. When controlling for quality of relationships and demographic variables in the regression analyses, adults who received individualistic and/or universalistic attitudes endorsed more Black separatism than adults who did not receive race socialization messages. And adults who received integrative/assertive attitudes endorsed more closeness to Blacks than adults who did not receive race socialization messages.

Consistent with the findings of [Demo and Hughes \(1990\)](#), [Sanders Thompson \(1994\)](#) also found that race socialization messages were associated with adult racial identity. Racial identity was assessed by the 30-item Multidimensional Racial Identification Questionnaire ([Sanders Thompson, 1994](#)). High scores on each of the four dimensions (i.e., physical, cultural, sociopolitical, and psychological) of the questionnaire indicated positive racial identification. Race socialization was assessed by asking Black adults a series of questions regarding the frequency and content of conversations with parents and other adult family members (i.e., adults in the family other than parents) regarding race. Participants' responses were coded into four broad dimensions (e.g., racial pride, self-development, racial barrier, and egalitarian views). Respondents reported that race socialization messages received by adult family members had the strongest impact on their racial identity (i.e., physical, cultural, and psychological) compared to race socialization messages received from parents. In addition, the frequency in which other adult family members transmitted race socialization messages was a positive and significant predictor of two racial identity dimensions (i.e., psychological and sociopolitical).

[Phinney and Chavira \(1995\)](#) assessed ethnic identity with the 14-item Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure ([Phinney, 1992](#)). Race socialization was assessed by asking parents of different ethnic groups a series of questions concerning whether they ever taught or told their children things about their ethnic group membership. [Phinney and Chavira \(1995\)](#) found that race socialization was not significantly related to adolescent ethnic identity (or other outcomes such as self-esteem and coping). These findings are consistent with [Parham and Williams \(1993\)](#) who found that their measure of race socialization was not related to any dimension of racial identity. However, the non-significant findings for the [Phinney and Chavira \(1995\)](#) study may be attributable to the small sample size and low statistical power. In addition, combining the various ethnic groups in the analysis may have also affected the results. Furthermore, in most studies the recipient of race socialization messages is often asked to report on the messages he/she received. However, in the [Phinney and Chavira \(1995\)](#) study, parents reported the types of messages they transmitted to their children, and the children responded to questions regarding their racial identity. Consequently, these findings may differ from other studies because the person reporting the race socialization messages is the transmitter rather than the recipient. As stated earlier, parents are only aware of the deliberate messages they transmit, whereas children observe parents' deliberate and inadvertent messages. Considering inadvertent and deliberate messages may differ, it is possible that messages reported by children and those reported by parents would differ.

This suggests that the relationship between race socialization and racial identity (or another outcome) may vary depending upon who reports the messages (i.e., parent or child). Studies are needed that simultaneously examine the relationship between parents' reports of transmitted messages and children's reports of received messages on children's racial identity.

Stevenson (1995) examined the relationship between race socialization attitudes and racial identity stages in a sample of Black adolescents. Racial identity was assessed with the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS; Parham & Helms, 1981). The RIAS is designed to measure three of the four attitudes characteristic of Cross's (1971) Black racial identity development model. According to Cross's (1971) model, individual's racial identity develops through a series of stages. The first stage, pre-encounter attitudes involve devaluing Black culture and valuing White culture. The next stage, immersion attitudes involve a rejection of White culture and an idealization of Black culture. The final stage, internalization is characterized by acceptance of and comfort with Black culture and a decline in anti-White attitudes. Race socialization attitudes were assessed using the Scale of Racial Socialization- Adolescents (SORS-A). This 45-item scale is composed of factors that measure adolescents' attitudes regarding different aspects of race socialization (i.e., racism awareness, spiritual and religious coping, extended family caring, cultural pride, and global racial socialization). For example, high scores on cultural pride indicate a belief that these messages are important for adolescents to receive. Results showed that believing messages regarding racism awareness teaching and spiritual and religious coping were important was significantly and inversely related to being in the pre-encounter stage.

Marshall (1995) examined the relationship between race socialization and stages of racial identity. Children's racial identity was assessed with a revised version of the RIAS (Parham & Helms, 1981). Children and their parents answered a series of questions about parents' race socialization messages. No relationship was found between children's reports of the race socialization messages they received and their racial identity. However, a significant relationship was found between parents' reports of race socialization and children's racial identity. Children were more likely to express racial identity views characteristic of the encounter stage (i.e., stage where a person begins to question his/her allegiance to the worldview of the dominant culture) when parents reported transmitting race socialization messages to them.

Thompson, Anderson, and Bakeman (2000) examined the relationship between racial identity and race socialization in a sample of 84 undergraduate students attending a southern university using the RIAS-B as a measure of racial identity and the Teenager Experience of Race Socialization (TERS; Stevenson et al., 2002) as a measure of parental race socialization messages. The RIAS-B differs from the RIAS in that it measures an additional stage of identity development (i.e., encounter). The encounter stage occurs directly after the pre-encounter stage and is characteristic of uncertainty about one's identity brought on by a race-related event. Thompson et al. (2000) found the more frequent race socialization messages were received from parents, the higher the levels of college students' pre-encounter (i.e., anti-Black) and immersion (i.e., anti-White) attitudes. Although the TERS assesses multiple dimensions of parental race socialization messages, Thompson et al. summed all of the items (i.e., Global socialization). Combining the dimensions is problematic because it does not permit the assessment of differential relationships between the TERS dimensions and racial identity, and could explain why race socialization would have a similar relationship with two very different stages of racial identity.

Fatimilehin (1999) used the RIAS-B (Parham & Helms, 1981) and the TERS (Stevenson, 1995; Stevenson et al., 2002) scales to investigate the relationship between racial identity and race socialization among 23 teenagers of mixed African-Caribbean/White parentage in Britain. Bivariate correlations suggested that encounter and immersion attitudes were significantly and positively associated with experiencing cultural survival, racism struggles, and global (i.e., indication of the overall frequency of race socialization) socialization. Encounter attitudes, were also positively associated with spiritual coping socialization. Internalization attitudes were not significantly related to race socialization.

In sum, although there appears to be an important relationship between the content of race socialization messages and racial identity, some of the research findings are inconclusive (see Table 2). Messages emphasizing racial group pride, traditions, and history were associated with more racial awareness and knowledge, and greater closeness to Blacks as well as greater preference for Blacks, compared to other messages (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Thornton et al., 1990). Yet, messages emphasizing racial barrier awareness and coping with racism and discrimination have produced mixed results. Some empirical studies suggest these messages are associated with internalizing Afrocentric racial attitudes and preferences (Spencer, 1983), while others suggest receiving these messages discourage children from interacting with, and trusting others outside their own racial group (Biafora et al., 1993; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Marshall, 1995). Little is known about the relationship between receiving mainstream messages that either de-emphasize race or suggest equality among all racial groups and racial identity (Demo & Hughes, 1990). Scholars suggest that children who are socialized from this perspective may internalize negative stereotypes, have unrealistic intergroup relations, and may be unable to cope with experiences of racial discrimination (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Spencer, 1983; Stevenson, 1995). However, more empirical evidence is needed to substantiate this claim.

What is evident from Table 2 is that the relationship between race socialization and racial identity varies depending upon the content of the messages received and the measure of racial identity utilized. Different race socialization and racial identity measures such as the NSBA, TERS, SORS-A, RIAS, MEIM, and the RIAS-B have been used across studies. In addition, the samples used in the studies vary greatly (e.g., children, adolescents, or adults). Another problem is that there is inconsistency as to who reports the race socialization messages. In some studies it is the parent, but in others, it is the child. These limitations make it difficult to make comparisons between studies. Another limitation is that most studies examining the relationship between race socialization and racial identity are cross-sectional. Consequently, no conclusion can be made regarding the long-term effects of parental race socialization messages on children's racial identity.

Academic achievement

Few studies have examined the relationship between race socialization and academic achievement. Bowman and Howard (1985) investigated the association between receiving race socialization messages from parents and adolescent's self-reported grades and perceived self-efficacy. They found that receiving some type of race socialization message versus not receiving any messages resulted in different outcomes. Youth who reported receiving racial-barrier awareness messages, for example, received higher school grades than youth who were taught nothing about race. In addition, youth who reported receiving self-development messages had higher self-efficacy scores than youth who did not receive race socialization messages. What is interesting about this study is that this data came from

a study of three contiguous generations (i.e., child, parent, and grandparent from the same family) of Black families. However, responses from only the youngest generation were used in the analysis. This study could have been expanded by the inclusion of the adolescents' parents. That is, in addition to asking the adolescents about the parental race socialization messages they received, parents' reports of the messages they transmitted could have also been used. This would have demonstrated whether adolescents' and their parents' reports of race socialization messages differentially relate to adolescents' outcomes.

Marshall (1995) found that receiving race socialization messages was significantly related to reading grades. Children who reported receiving parental race socialization messages that prepared them for the significance of race had lower reading grades compared to children who did not report receiving messages (Lesane, 2002b).

Psychological functioning

Living in a society that places limitations on opportunities, holds lower expectations, and disproportionately portrays negative images of Blacks in mass media places challenges on parents who attempt to raise Black children to feel good about themselves and who are psychologically healthy. Peters (1985) suggests that in an attempt to prepare their children for aversive race-related experiences, Black parents feel it is essential to help their children develop a positive sense of self. For example, mothers in a qualitative study conducted by Richardson (1981) felt that this was a primary goal in socializing their children.

Findings from studies examining the relationship between measures of psychological functioning and race socialization have produced mixed results (see Table 2). For example, Fatimilehin (1999) examined the relationship between self-esteem (measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory; Rosenberg, 1979) and race socialization (measured by the TERS; Stevenson, 1995) among teenagers of mixed parentage. No significant relationships were found between the dimensions of the TERS and self-esteem. However, it is important to keep in mind that the sample used in this study was small and comprised of biracial youth living in Britain. The racial identity and race socialization measures used in the study were not originally intended for this population. Consequently, the meaning and significance of racial identity and race socialization may be qualitatively different for these youth.

Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, and Bishop (1997) examined the relationships between adolescents' attitudes towards race socialization and their experiences and expression of anger and indicators of depression. Four subscales and one overall summary score from the SORS-A were used to measure race socialization attitudes. Seven subscales measured anger experience and anger expression, and seven subscales were used as indicators of depression. Of the 70 possible relationships in the 2×2 ANOVAS (i.e., male vs. female and low vs. high race socialization), Seven significant effects were found. For example, compared to females who reported lower levels of global race socialization, females who reported higher levels of global race socialization had lower levels of low self-esteem, lower sad mood, and lower instrumental helplessness. Considering the number of relationships examined, it is likely that the significant effects were found by chance.

Fischer and Shaw (1999) investigated whether the relationship between perceptions of racial discrimination and global mental health was moderated by race socialization experiences in a non-random sample of 119 Black college students. They predicted that perceptions of racial discrimination would be associated with lower global mental health but only among those Blacks who had low race socialization experiences. As expected, they found that perception of racial discrimination was related to lower global mental health among

respondents who reported few race socialization experiences with parents and caregivers. However, no direct relationship between race socialization experiences and global mental health was found. There was, however, a significant and positive correlation between students' attitudes regarding racism awareness teaching (SORS-A) and their self-esteem.

In sum, scholars have consistently suggested that receiving race socialization messages promotes positive psychological functioning by preparing children to cope with and interpret prejudice and discrimination (Barnes, 1980; Hughes & Chen, 1999). Yet, little empirical evidence from large and diverse samples exists on how the content of parental messages relates to children's psychological functioning. Some studies suggest racial barrier messages are associated with a greater sense of self efficacy and higher grades in school (Bowman & Howard, 1985). However, other studies suggest more negative outcomes from receiving racial barrier messages (and experiencing discrimination) such as lower reading scores (Marshall, 1995), lower self efficacy (Ogbu, 1974), deviant behaviors (Biafora et al., 1993), and higher levels of depressive symptoms (Rumbaut, 1994). When examining the effects of racial barrier messages it is important to make a distinction between those messages that prepare children for coping with negative race-related experiences and those messages regarding an awareness of racial inequities. Making children aware of racial barriers and discrimination without teaching them how to cope with such experiences may be maladaptive. Whereas preparing children to cope with racial discrimination may be protective. Consequently, subtle differences between these messages may be associated with different outcomes.

Directions for future research

This review highlighted several directions for future research on race socialization. Considering that the race socialization literature is a developing area of research, it is essential that its foundation is well grounded in theory and empirical evidence that captures the process of race socialization practices in Black families. To this end, I offer the following suggestions:

(1) Expand beyond exploration of content, prevalence, and precursors of race socialization messages to examine the process of race socialization (i.e., how messages are transmitted, when they are transmitted, and what facilitates internalization of certain messages).

(2) Future research should explore how race socialization messages from parents interact with messages from other sources (i.e., peers, siblings, grandparents, and adults outside of the household) in shaping children's beliefs, values, and attitudes about race (see Lesane-Brown et al., 2005).

(3) Devote more attention to the role of parent gender (particularly fathers) and child gender in the socialization process. Important differences in the amount, quality, mode, and content of messages may be found between mothers and fathers or between the messages transmitted to male and female children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thornton et al., 1990).

(4) Include longitudinal research designs. Such designs are needed for several reasons. First, they are needed to specify the relationship between child age and prevalence, content, and outcomes of race socialization. Second, they are needed to better understand when parents begin to transmit race socialization messages to their children and when they stop transmitting messages. Third, longitudinal research designs are needed to examine the causal relationship between race socialization and outcomes such as racial identity, academic achievement, and psychological functioning, as these relationships are dynamic.

(5) Incorporate observational methodologies to examine parent–child communication about race. To date, most research on parent race socialization has relied on parents' or children's self-reports of messages. Such reports are subject to recall bias because they are based upon the individual's perception of messages either transmitted or received. Although understanding the perception of the individual is important, it would also be informative to use direct observations of parent–child race-related interactions.

Though the race socialization literature is still new and developing, the concept is not. Black families have always been preparing their children for the inequities and glories associated with growing up Black in the United States. This body of literature can and will be important as one factor responsible for the healthy development of Black children and adults. To move forward, future studies should make connections between general socialization processes and race socialization. In addition, linking socialization to social learning, social-cognitive, and ecological theories as well as life course and life span perspectives creates a theoretical framework and enriches our understanding of socialization processes.

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