

VILLAGE OF WISDOM: UNDERSTANDING HOW PARENTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
BOYS HELP THEIR CHILDREN NAVIGATE RACIAL BIAS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

William P. Jackson: Village of Wisdom: Understanding How Parents of African American Boys
Help their Children Navigate Racial Bias to Academic Success
(Under the direction of Dana Griffin)

This study examined how parents understand the experiences, resources, and situations that inform how they approach racial socialization with their pre-adolescent Black sons. Using qualitative analysis and leveraging a phenomenology-informed approach, I explored the psychological world of beliefs, identities, perspectives, emotions and experiences of parents. In this study, I revealed an understanding of the thought processes that precede the complex mix of messages parents share with their young boys about race. I also sought to determine how school situations contributed to or facilitated parent conversations with children about race. Parents indicated that older siblings, school-based incidents of racial bias, extended family, school lessons on diversity, and other factors impacted their racial socialization conversations. A process model of racial socialization emerged from the analysis of the data collected from parents in this study. This study adds to the research literature by identifying new factors that impact parent racial socialization and developing a richer understanding of known factors, processes and strategies that guide parent racial socialization.

I dedicate this work to my grandmothers, Amelia Jackson and Barbara DeVoe Mason. Not only did you give me my amazing parents, but you both lived with an honesty I admired and attempt to emulate in my daily life.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

I recently heard a Black teenager ask, “Who created the idea that Black people are less than?” This question likely stems from the American tradition of oppressing Black people, beginning with the enslavement of Africans, continuing with Jim Crow laws, and evolving to its present form of educational and societal inequities (e.g., police brutality against Black women and men and the school to prison pipeline). The question is ubiquitous in the Black community, as evidenced by the social media hashtag and parallel social movement #BlackLivesMatter; this movement began in response to numerous videotaped shootings of unarmed Black people by law enforcement. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is a simple statement but one Black people use to remind themselves that Black lives do indeed matter and are not “less than,” even when a 12-year-old Black boy named Tamir Rice gets shot on a public playground shot within two seconds of encountering the police. Due to racial tensions in our society, Black parents are burdened with the serious and complicated challenge of teaching their children how to cope with racism and Black identity invalidation.

The study of how Black people cope with racism is not new. W.E.B. DuBois is often credited for initiating the public and academic discourse about this topic in his renowned work *Souls of Black Folks* (1903; Bruce, 1992). In this exploration of race in America, DuBois introduced the concept of “double consciousness” to describe the “two-ness” of Black people’s identity. According to DuBois, Black Americans struggle to come to terms with their ancestors being taken from western Africa and their own feelings of connectedness to their African ancestors. The focus of racial identity research is to understand how Black Americans reconcile

their position in society, current culture, and ancestral history (Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Coates & Rowley, 2007). Accordingly, a significant amount of this research has focused on how Black parents share racial identity ideas with their children, a process called “racial socialization.” Racial socialization research has received attention because it demonstrates that the messages Black parents send to their children about race help Black youth cope with racism (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Harris-Britt et al. 2007; Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake & West-Bey, 2009; Neblett, Phillip, Cogburn, & Seller, 2006).

The buffering effect of racial socialization appears to work through a process in which certain types of socialization messages encourage Black youth to develop positive conceptualizations of their racial identity associated with the ability to cope with racism adaptively. This ability to handle racial bias has been shown to have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Black students (Good, Aronson & Inzlicht, 2003; Neblett, Chavous, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2009). Despite the positive potential of racial socialization research to address current challenges associated with the racial academic achievement gap, discussion about racial socialization in education is surprisingly limited. In addition, research exploring how parents approach racial socialization in the context of education has been scant. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how parents make racial socialization decisions, particularly with young children from age four to 11.

However, it should not be assumed that the conversations Black parents have with their children always benefit their children’s academic achievement or that parents find these conversations easy to facilitate; nor can the racist societal milieu that makes these conversations necessary be overlooked. Racial socialization researchers have shown that it is particularly challenging for Black parents to engage in conversations about race and racism with young

children, especially those ages five years and under (Clark & Clark, 1939, 1940, 1950; McAdoo, 2003; Spencer, 1984, 1990). However, the seminal Baby Doll studies by Clark and Clark (1939, 1940, 1950) demonstrated that Black youth could develop negative self-images related to their race as young as age four. Black children's early recognition of false inferiority puts parents in the challenging position of needing to counteract negative images of Blackness before their children enter elementary school.

Considering the educational and psychological ramifications of the aforementioned racial socialization decisions, it seems important to build on the findings of previous research that indicates families have not done preparatory thinking related to these conversations. Marshall (1995), Peter (1985) as well as Suizzo, Robinson, and Pahlke (2008) asserted that parents frequently reported that they did not anticipate or prepare to respond to questions their pre-school age children had about race. Similarly, some evidence suggests many parents avoid conversations during early childhood because they worry about sending messages that could negatively impact their children's self-esteem (Hughes et al., 2006; Robinson & Pahlke, 2008). Nonetheless, a few studies have focused on how Black parents prepare for conversations about race with their children (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson & Brotman, 2004; Peters, 1985). The need for more research on this topic stems from the negative effects of racism Black children encounter in their social environment and the effects it may have on their self-image and academic achievement. This racism is often partially informed by their exposure to the common, negative racial stereotypes of Black people presented in the media and popular culture (Fujioka, 2005). As a result, parents face difficult decisions regarding how to protect their children's self-image from anti-Black messages while at the same time avoiding damage to their children's perceptions of themselves in the effort to discuss racial prejudice and its effects. These dilemmas

and the nature of the related parental decisions they engender, especially in the context of education, are the central focus of this study.

In addition, the racial socialization children receive from parents has been shown to vary according to a child's gender. Generally, Black males receive fewer messages that reaffirm racial and cultural pride than their female counterparts (Hill & Sprague, 1999; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston & McLoyd, 2002). Furthermore, males tend to receive less affirming and responsive parenting, harsher discipline, and fewer effective disciplinary practices in comparison to females (Mistry et al., 2002). Recognizing that intersectional identities impact the racial socialization of children, I decided to investigate this phenomenon through a gendered lens by focusing on young Black males. The research questions guiding this proposal are as follows:

1. What situations influence the racial socialization conversations parents have with pre-adolescent Black boys?
 - A) What child-initiated situations influence parent racial socialization?
 - B) What school-based situations influence parent racial socialization?
2. How do parents understand and interpret their racial socialization actions and conversations with pre-adolescent Black Boys?
 - A) How do parents explain their reasons for racial socialization?
 - B) What resources do parents use for racial socialization?

This introduction justifies the immediate significance of this study through a discussion of the racism that Black boys face and how racial socialization can protect them from the negative impacts of racism.

Public Treatment of Black Men and Women

In the past two years, a multitude of unarmed Black boys, girls, men, women, and transgendered people were killed by police and vigilantes who were subsequently acquitted of, and in some cases, not even charged with, murder, (e.g., Trayvon Martin, Miriam Carey, Eric Garner, Aiyana Jones, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Mya Hall, and Michael Brown). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, during the last 40 years, Black people have been 4.2 times more likely to be shot and killed by the police than White people (Justice Bureau of Statistics, 2003, 2009). In the years between 2003 and 2009, Black people were three times more likely to die during an arrest than Whites (Justice Bureau of Statistics). These events weigh heavily on the minds of most Black parents grappling with questions about how to prepare their children for a world in which such actions can go unpunished.

Racially Biased Treatment in Schools

Researchers have presented evidence showing that the disparate treatment Black people experience in the justice system also occurs in the educational system. For example, Harris-Britt, et al. (2007) presented data indicating that up to 93% of Black children perceive discrimination in American schools. Conscious of the profound effects racism often has on Black children's individual and racial identity, Black parents frequently undergo emotional stress when they prepare their children to deal with the likelihood of encountering discrimination, especially in educational environments (Brody, et al. 2006; Fisher, Wallace & Fenton, 2000; Harris et al., 2007). In addition, gender differences further complicate the racial socialization process. Due to the unique challenges children of each gender face and the complex nature of gender identity, I have chosen to focus on investigating ideas particularly relevant to the experiences of young Black males. However, much of the relevant research is not disaggregated by gender, so

findings often apply to both genders. The major difference in perception between Black males and females is that boys and men tend to be perceived as more intimidating than girls and women (Seyfried, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Black boys and men have been described as being less surprised by discriminatory experiences than their female peers because they are frequently aware they are perceived as intimidating or dangerous (Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003). On the other hand, Black girls and women experience situations in which issues of sexism and racism work in concert and thus are often perceived as less competent (Love, 2012).

To better understand the type of environment that Black boys endure in school, racial disparities in school suspensions, special education identification, and nomination for gifted and talented classes will be examined. Highlighting these disparities illustrates the challenges parents may face when attempting to console children who have been treated unfairly because of other people's implicit and explicit biases.

Although a number of studies demonstrate that students participate in roughly equal levels of misbehavior regardless of gender, most available data suggest that Black boys are disciplined more harshly than any other combination of gender and racial group in the US (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Noguera, 2003; Skiba et al. 2011, Townsend, 2000). These disparities in discipline are consistent even when researchers account for teacher perceptions of misbehavior (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010).

In addition to higher suspension rates, Black students are disproportionately identified for special education services (Blanchet, 2006; Bryan et al., 2012; Gregory et al. 2010; Harry & Klingner, 2014; Klinger et al., 2005; Schott Report, 2012; Skiba et al., 2008). Skiba et al. (2008)

found that in 2006, Black males comprised 32% of intellectually disabled cases even though fewer than 9% of the national student population consisted of Black males at the time.

Furthermore, Black males are over-represented in every special education classification category (Skiba et al., 2008). Researchers also discovered that in 2010 only 2.85% of Black males were enrolled in AP courses compared to 30.17% of White males (US Department of Education, 2010).

Ford (1995, 1998) argued that a number of issues contributed to the disproportionately low number of Black youth identified as gifted including reliance on standardized achievement tests that are frequently criticized for having inherent cultural biases, parental mistrust of schools, educators' lack of cultural competency, disproportionate membership in low resource schools, and narrow definitions of giftedness. Interestingly, in a study of 155 Black students identified as gifted, only one Black student associated acting Black with positive academic characteristics (Ford, 1998). Ford's results suggest some Black youth do not define Blackness in terms of academic achievement despite their socially affirmed academic acumen. Ford found that parents are often left with the burden of helping children develop positive racial identities in educational environments where even when they do succeed, success seems to be separated from their racial identity.

These data suggest that Black males are exposed to a group of specific, significant, and adverse biases (e.g., disparate suspension, special education identification, and advanced placement rates) that reflect educators' negative perceptions of these students (Noguera, 2003; Schott Report, 2012; Skiba et al. 2011, Townsend, 2000). Often aware of the biases that others have against them, the unstandardized, subjective, and discriminatory treatment youth of color frequently experience can negatively impact their perceptions of their academic identity and

efficacy (Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Ford, 1998; Tyler et al., 2008; Van den Berg, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, Holland, 2010; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Subsequently, parents are left with the difficult tasks of helping their children process the racial biases they experience in school and teaching them how to cope with these messages in ways that will allow them to avoid the harm these ideas can cause to their mental health.

Teacher expectations and biases. Teacher perceptions, expectations, and biases against Black youth undoubtedly undergird the disparities in suspensions and special education identification highlighted in the previous section (Noguera, 2003; Schott Report, 2012; Skiba et al., 2011, Townsend, 2000). Alvidrez and Weinstein (1999) established correlations between teacher expectations and perceptions of students and student academic performance. Indeed, teacher perceptions of students impact student identity development, teacher grading, and student mental health (Baldrige, 2014; Gross, 1993; Jussim, Eccles & Madon, 1996). In this section, I discuss how negative teacher expectations, biases, and perceptions of Black youth negatively impact their educational experiences. This discussion highlights the need for greater investigation into how conversations parents have with Black male youth may help these children develop a positive view of their racial identity and increase their capacity to succeed academically.

Many researchers (Baron et al., 1985; Gross, 1993; Ferguson, 2003; Jussim et al., 1996; Neal, 2003) have conducted studies that demonstrated teacher expectations were lower for Black students than for White students. Jussim et al. (1996) found that teacher expectations have a negligible impact on Black students' standardized test performance in comparison to the scores of White students, but these same expectations have three times more impact on Black students' non-standardized grades than those White students receive. These findings are relevant to my

study because they suggest that teachers' expectations affect the way children are graded when assessments are not standardized (Jussim, 1989; Jussim & Eccles, 1992; Jussim et al., 1996; Jussim & Harber, 2005). Gross (1993) found similar evidence of teacher racial bias and lower expectations in a longitudinal study tracking teacher perceptions of students from 4th to 6th grade. Teacher expectations for White students declined less than their expectations for Black students. Gross (1993) reported that Black students were frequently confronted with comments that suggested they were incapable of high quality work. Neal et al. (2003) found that the movements (i.e., the gait of their walk) common to Black male youth were interpreted as indicative of a student with lower achievement, aggression, and need of special education. Baldrige (2014) found that Black youth are not only subjected to teachers' negative racial biases but are also often aware of the disproportionate treatment they experience. His findings suggest that some youth may have had conversations with their parents about these experiences, thus putting parents in the position of having to address these events.

Several researchers (Brody, Chen, McBride, & Murry, 2006; Neblett et al., 2012; Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Neblett & Roberts, 2008; Neblett, Banks, Cooper, & Smalls-Glover, 2013; Pachter & Coll, 2009; Priest et al., 2012; Seaton, Caldwell, & Sellers, 2010; Seaton, Upton, Gilbert, & Volpe, 2014) offer more conceptual clarity and empirical evidence linking youths' experiences with racial discrimination to negative mental health outcomes. For example, two review studies exploring the racial discrimination experiences of Black children lend additional support to the argument that student perception of racially biased treatment frequently leads to negative mental health outcomes (Pachter & Coll, 2009; Priest et al., 2012). Researchers have conducted a litany of additional studies that confirm the negative relationship between mental health and experiences with racism (Brown, 2008;

Johnson, 1992; Mercer et al., 2011; Smalls et al., 2007; Utsey et al., 2002).

According to literature reviews conducted by Pachter and Coll (2009) and Priest et al. (2012), several researchers (e.g., Chatman, 2007; Harris-Britt, Kurtz-Coates & Rowley, 2007; Seaton, 2009; Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2010; Seaton & Yip, 2009; Sellers et al., 2006) found correlations between youth experiencing racial discrimination in and out of school and negative mental health outcomes including depressive symptoms, feelings of low self-esteem/self-worth, anxiety, and conduct disorder. For example, Brody, Chen, McBride, and Murry (2006) found for Black students ($n = 784$), experiences with racism predicted increased depression and conduct disorder. This finding is of interest because the authors established a stronger case for causality through a longitudinal design whereas most other investigations of the relationship between racism and mental health only establish correlation. Adding to the evidence that interpersonal racism impacts mental health outcomes, Brody et al. determined that for Black adolescents, consistent experiences with racial discrimination predicted increased blood pressure levels after controlling for confounding variables (e.g., depression and perceived stress). In summary, evidence supports the assertion that racism impacts the mental and physical health of Black students in measurable ways (Pachter & Coll, 2009; Priest et al., 2012).

Classroom cultural invalidation and cultural dissonance. In addition to demonstrating the commonly low teacher expectations for Black youth, researchers have also asserted that the cultural practices used in most American classrooms not only differ from those with which Black youth identify but also often devalue African American cultural norms. This devaluation presents a unique challenge to Black parents as they attempt to help their children navigate the complexities of learning in environments that do not affirm their cultural identities. The American Psychological Association (APA) (2003) and several researchers (Boykin, 1983;

Gay, 2000; Pai, Adler, & Shadiow, 2006; Rouland et al., 2014; Tyler et al., 2009) have asserted that the majority of American classrooms reflect mainstream, White, middle-class norms. Black students do not typically share White, middle-class values, and, consequently, they are frequently expected to suppress or abandon their cultural and familial practices to assimilate to school culture (Tyler et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 2009, Tyson, 2003). Seminal theories in educational psychology demonstrated the role of culture as an integral factor in how students learn information (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Rogoff & Chavajay, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) asserted that humans develop learning skills in social situations; therefore, markers of their culture become fundamental tools for learning. Vygotsky's theory also contextualizes the fact that the devaluation of Black students' culture in the classroom is correlated with reduced academic achievement.

Emerging research is beginning to provide empirical evidence to support long-held claims that invalidation of Black culture is common in most schools and negatively impacts the racial self-image of Black youth (Tyler et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2009). This type of cultural invalidation results in culture discontinuity, which is the taxing of cognitive and emotional resources people experience when attempting to understand, communicate, and operate in an environment where cultural norms are tangibly different than their own (Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis & Kizzie, 2005; Wright et al., 2009). This research suggests that the majority of Black students will experience cultural discontinuity unless they adopt more White, mainstream, Eurocentric cultural practices most frequently observed in schools. Cultural discontinuity is exacerbated by differences in the linguistic practices of Black families and more "standard" forms of English. As a result, Black youth frequently strive to conform to the conventions of the dominant culture's language. (Terry, Hendrick, Evangelou, & Smith, 2010).

Moreover, Black students' home language is often ridiculed and teachers admonish students to use *proper* English in their classrooms, thus teaching students to value the language used at school more than the language they use at home (Brown, 2004; Tyson, 2003; Williams, 1991). For many Black students, the colloquial version of English used at home demonstrates unity with their family and reflects their shared values; therefore, harsh critiques of this language have the potential to affect children's self-image adversely (Brown, 2004). The devaluation of certain types of colloquial speech may cause dissonance for Black children as they grapple with the value of their home language and culture in comparison to that of the school, a reflection of White culture. These realities further contribute to an environment that is more stressful for Black students and threatens their racial self-image (Webb-Johnson, 2002). Coping with linguistic prejudice adds to the unique pressures Black parents face in assisting their children with navigating the American school environment.

Stereotype threat and microaggressions. Both stereotype threat and microaggression research add empirical potency to the argument that racial biases impact the academic performance of Black youth. Stereotype threat occurs when an individual's fears confirm a negative stereotype about a group with which they identify (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Stereotype threat presents in many areas and across all ethnicities including Black students (Bowman, Wegmann, & Webber, 2013; Cohen, Garcia, Purdie-Vaughns & Brzustoki, 2009; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Steele and Aronson found that when Black students were asked about their race prior to taking a standardized test their performance on that test was worse than when they were not asked about race.

On the other hand, microaggressions "are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate

hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 79). Microaggressions lead to the internalization of negative stereotypes by Black students that support the cognitive process of stereotype threat. For example, Black students have reported feeling unwelcome in Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) classes due to comments by peers or teachers who question the legitimacy of their position in the course (Bryan et al. 2012; Skiba et al., 2011; Noguera, 2008). Such incidents can cause the internalization of negative stereotypes that engender the anxious thoughts, thus creating stereotype threat (Mercer et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008). Indeed, both the stereotype threat and microaggression literatures provide quantitative assessments for the cognitive disadvantages Black students face due to experiencing regular indignities and invalidations because of their race and cultural practices; in turn, these disadvantages adversely affect academic achievement (Mercer, Zeigler-Hill, Wallace, & Hayes, 2011; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Sue et al., 2007).

The Promise of Cultural-Based Resiliency

Unfortunately for most Black students, the reality is that they must become resilient when faced with a number of racial stressors that negatively impact academic performance. Therefore, it is important to consider how to prevent these potentially negative effects. The ideal method of curtailing these negative experiences for Black students would be to end racially and culturally biased practices. However, according to Harris’ (2010) review of data trends that reflect the racially biased treatment Black people experience across various fields including education, our society will achieve racial equity at the earliest by 2060, but students currently matriculating through American schools cannot wait for the systemic inequities to be corrected. Black students must be prepared to cope with this disparate treatment at an interpersonal level despite the unfairness of being required to do so.

Researchers who have investigated the cultural strengths of Black families have found that exploring racial identity makes Black students less susceptible to the negative effects of overt racism, discrimination, and perceived implicit biases, e.g., microaggressions (Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Seller, 2006; Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). Researchers have found that Black youth who have relatively high levels of race centrality and private regard are more likely to demonstrate greater persistence, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and mental health outcomes (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006; Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012; Seaton et al., 2012). Racial centrality is the extent to which a person believes race is a defining part of her or his identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Private regard is the degree of personal pride or positive belief an individual has about his or her racial group (Sellers et al., 1998).

Black parents have been shown to be a key socialization factor in students' racial identity and academic development (Hughes et al., 2006). A variety of studies speak to the important role racial socialization and a positive racial identity play in determining academic success, positive mental health, and healthy responses to discrimination or bias among children of color (Brown, 2008; Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Neblett et al., 2009; Seaton et al., 2006; Steele, 1995). In sum, parents' socialization practices appear to be significant factors that enhance Black students' resilience to racial bias and positively impact academic outcomes.

Current Research Gaps in Racial Socialization Literature

Although researchers have established that parent racial socialization is often positively related to Black youth's ability to navigate racial bias and academic performance (Neblett et al., 2009), much remains unknown about how parents make socialization decisions (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes et al., 2006). Researchers have identified several types of racial socialization

messages: racial/cultural pride reinforcement, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, advancement of egalitarian beliefs, and emphasis on self-worth. Parental socialization of children usually occurs through modeling, direct instruction, and exposure to rich cultural environments (Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett et al., 2012). Several studies demonstrate that at least two thirds of Black parents typically report participating in some type of racial socialization (Coard et al., 2004; Marshall, 1995; Peter, 1985). An earlier study completed by Thompson (1994) found that 85% of Black young adults from a random sample of 225 participants reported that their parents in some way racially socialized them. However, substantive research has not been conducted on the experiences, information, beliefs, and attitudes that guide parents' socialization practices.

Furthermore, despite numerous studies on parent racial socialization, little is known about how socialization practices might differ for parents of pre-adolescent Black male youth. Parents of males who are in the pre-adolescent developmental period, i.e., 5-12 years old, must create ways to discuss difficult ideas with youth who, according to developmental theory, are just beginning to develop the capability to handle abstract and complex conversations (Piaget, 1952; Spencer, 1984). Many parents of pre-adolescent Black youth hesitate to racially socialize their children in order to protect them from the burden of learning about racism (Marshall, 1995; Peter, 1985; Suizzo et al., 2008). However, studies dating back to the 1940s have indicated that youth are aware of race as early as three years old (Clark & Clark, 1940; 1950; Spencer, 1984; Wright, 1998). Furthermore, Spencer (1984) demonstrated that some Black youth can separate ideas of private regard from public regard at as young as age three. Consequently, it is important to understand how parents conceptualize their racial socialization at this period of their children's lives, especially if researchers are looking for possible interventions to assist parents of Black males navigating this challenging period.

Parent racial socialization holds promise for helping Black youth develop racial identities that make them more capable of adapting and coping with the racial biases they will experience in school and improve their academic performance. In this chapter, a justification for the importance of investigating how parents of young Black boys approach racial socialization was provided. In the following chapter, the research literature most relevant to parent racial socialization of young Black boys is reviewed.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, I focus on how parents of young Black males participate in racial socialization, especially in the context of education. Therefore, in this chapter, I review the parent racial socialization literature, focusing on studies that investigate how children perceive their parents' racial socialization practices, how parents' racial socialization impacts children's racial identity development, how parents' racial socialization impacts children's educational achievement, and how children's gender impacts parents' racial socialization practices. In conclusion, I discuss the complexity of delivering socialization messages and what is known and not known about parents' beliefs and knowledge and how these two factors inform their racial socialization.

Racial Socialization

Research on racial socialization--most often described as the process by which parents transmit messages related to race and ethnicity and the meaning of these concepts to children--emerged a quarter century ago (Aboud, 1989; Bowman & Howard, 1985; Peters, 1985; Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes et al., 2006). Socialization messages can be communicated in a number of ways (e.g., art, books, television and events); however, most researchers focus on socialization by conversation.)

Racial socialization is most frequently organized into six categories of messages: 1) cultural socialization, 2) preparation for bias, 3) promotion of mistrust, 4) egalitarianism, 5) self-worth, and 6) negative. Cultural socialization is associated with messages that communicate pride or confidence in heritage. Preparation for bias is the process of alerting youth to the

possibility of encountering racism or racial bias. These two categories, (i.e., preparation for bias and cultural socialization) are the most frequently discussed types of racial socialization in the research literature (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Davis & Stevenson, 2006).

Other types of socialization messages include promotion of mistrust, egalitarianism, self-worth, and negative. Promotion of mistrust messages convey negative ideas about other racial groups, especially White people. Egalitarian messages communicate ideas that emphasize equality and the commonalities shared across racial and ethnic groups. Self-worth messages focus on the personal and individual value of the person or youth receiving the communication. Negative messages involve communicating ideas that cast Black people in a non-favorable or poor light (Hughes et al., 2006).

Researchers have suggested that Black parent racial socialization practices differ from those of parents who belong to other races (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hale-Benson, 1986). The unique socialization patterns of Black parents are often attributed to the historical experiences of African Americans, specifically, the history of transatlantic enslavement and ongoing systemic issues that devalue the lives and culture of Black people in comparison to White people. Additionally, Eurocentric cultural values are believed to be essential factors shaping socialization decisions of Black parents (McAdoo, 2002). Most researchers believe that racial socialization within Black families is done with the intention of raising socially and mentally healthy children who are resilient when they encounter the discrimination inherent in a society that consistently associates Blackness with negativity (McAdoo, 2002; Peters, 1985). It is also believed that some parents use racial socialization to prepare their children for greater educational success (Hughes et al., 2007). However, as will be elucidated through the following review of the literature, few studies explicitly ask parents questions designed to gain information about their attitudes,

knowledge, and beliefs pertaining to racial socialization. In addition, research that focuses on how parents approach racial socialization in the context of education is even more scant.

Furthermore, a discussion of racial identity provides important conceptual context to racial socialization as parents' racial identity is a predictor of the kinds of socialization messages they will share with children; this socialization is often related to how the child's racial identity develops (Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett et al., 2012). A pivotal assumption made in this study is that the impact of racial socialization on racial identity can make Black youth more resilient against the racial biases they are likely to experience in school. Next, I provide a brief analysis of the most frequently cited racial identity models

Racial Identity

Two prominent racial identity theories in the research literature were developed specifically for Black Americans: Cross's Model of Nigrescence (Cross, 1971) and Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley and Chavous's Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) (Sellers, Smith, Rowley & Chavous, 1998). I have limited my review to these two models because they are the ones most frequently cited in the research literature; both articles that present these two models have been cited over 700 times, according to Google Scholar. Both take a unique approach to the development of racial identity among Black people and have been investigated theoretically and empirically. Through the years, these models have been modified to increase reliability and accommodate emerging theoretical concerns (Simmons, Worrell & Berry, 2008; Vandiver, Cross, Worrell & Fhagen-Smith, 2002; Worrell, 2012).

The most current version of Cross's Model of Nigrescence, the Expanded Nigrescence Theory (NT-E), consists of three multidimensional worldviews: Pre-encounter, Immersion/Emersion and Internalization (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Worrell, 2012). Pre-

encounter ideas are organized into two categories: assimilationist and anti-Black attitudes. The assimilationist worldview is found among individuals who demonstrate preference for White Eurocentric cultural norms. According to Worrell, the second category under the Pre-encounter worldview consists of Black people who have an anti-Black attitude. This attitude stems from what Woodson labels “miseducation.” People who fall under this category see themselves as deficient and hold negative beliefs about themselves and other Black people in general. The Immersion stage involves strong pro-Black and anti-White feelings. Cross’s third stage, Internalization, occurs when Black people come to terms with Black history and is frequently associated with no longer feeling ashamed of being Black and letting go of anger towards White people. Cross’s model has been frequently operationalized in the research literature as the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Vandiver et al., 2000) and the Black Racial Identity and Attitude Scale (RIAS-B) by Parham and Helms (1981).

Sellers et al.’s (1998) MMRI conceptualized racial identity for Black people as a two-piece construct: how important a person believes it is to identify him or herself as Black and how a person perceives what it means to belong to the Black race. The MMRI has four dimensions: Racial Salience, Racial Centrality, Racial Regard, and Racial Ideology. Racial salience is the degree to which race is apparent to an individual at any given point in time. Racial Salience is frequently higher when Black people find themselves in situations in which they are the only Black person. Racial Regard is split into two components: private and public regard. Private regard refers to what people personally think about those in their racial group. Public regard is an assessment of how a person predicts or believes the public majority feels about those in his or her racial group.

Racial Ideology has four different components: nationalist, oppressed minority, assimilationist and humanist. Individuals who have a nationalist perspective revel in the uniqueness of being Black. People characterized as perceiving themselves as an oppressed minority typically identify with other oppressed minority groups including gay individuals, women, or other people of color. Assimilationist views are associated with people who believe Black people should adopt mainstream American values. Those who focus on the similarities across races and do not acknowledge racial identity as an important, relevant, or real distinction between people possess a humanist perspective. Humanist beliefs are characterized by a focus on personal characteristics and on only recognizing one human race. For a more nuanced discussion of Sellers' model, see Sellers, et al. (1998).

Neither Sellers and colleagues (1998) nor Cross have asserted a particular racial identity state as optimal; however researchers have demonstrated that certain racial identity statuses are associated with more positive educational outcomes. For example, using the Sellers and colleagues (1998) model, Chavous, Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood and Zimmerman (2003) evaluated the relationships between academic attainment and students' racial identity using Sellers and Colleagues model and found that student educational attainment was most related to high racial centrality and high private regard. In the next few sections, a brief historical analysis of how researchers first conceptualized the idea of racial socialization is provided, followed by an explanation highlighting the relationships between positive racial socialization and racial identity development that make youth more resilient when confronted by racial discrimination, and concludes with a summary of the most recent advances in the field of racial socialization.

Racial Socialization Research Progression

One of the first explicit studies of Black racial socialization was conducted by Bowman and Howard (1985). These two researchers worked with a sample of African American youth ($N=377$) ages 14-24. The authors used semi-structured interviews and surveys to collect data, which focused on following primary factors: a self-report of student grades in school and a four-item instrument measuring both motivation and self-efficacy (Douvan & Walker, 1956; Gurin et al., 1978). In addition, Bowman and Howard asked their subjects to respond to two qualitative questions designed to assess the racial socialization the youth perceived they had received from their parents. Using a one-way analysis of variance to compare the academic performance and personal efficacy of those children who had received racial socialization messages about “being Black” to those children who had not, the authors found that the youth who had received racial socialization messages had greater personal efficacy than those who had not. Similarly, greater academic performance correlated more with students who had experienced racial socialization in comparison to their peers who had not. Also, worth noting is the finding that girls were more likely than boys to receive racial socialization messages (Bowman & Howard, 1985). Just as important, findings also showed that youth who had received little to no racial socialization had lower self-efficacy scores than their peers who had experienced more racial socialization, and that children who had received preparation for bias messages received higher grades than their peers who had not (Bowman & Howard, 1985). This study is considered the first attempt to investigate the connection between racial socialization, racial identity, resiliency, and academic performance in Black youth (Bowman & Howard, 1985).

From their research, Bowman and Howard (1985) identified four types of racial socialization: racial barriers, self-development, ethnic pride and egalitarianism, which current

research continues to reference. Racial barriers messages communicate the type of racial bias children are likely to experience. Self-development messages communicate to children that with effort they can improve their personal abilities. Egalitarian messages communicate to children that all people should be treated the same regardless of race. Ethnic pride messages communicate to children that they should feel pride in their ethnic and cultural origins.

Demo and Hughes (1990) investigated how parent racial socialization messages, demographics, and familial factors relate to the racial identity of Black adults. Demo and Hughes sampled 2,107 Black participants ($N = 2107$) ages 18 and over for their 1979-80 National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA). Participants completed a survey and free-response questions that assessed ideas including but not limited to racial centrality, public regard, nationalist ideas, general parenting practices, interracial interactions, family dynamics and socio-economic status. Most relevant to this dissertation, Demo and Hughes utilized open-ended questions from the NSBA in their analysis, which assessed participants' written responses to questions such as: *What it is to be Black and how to get along with White people?* Using a multiphase analysis, the authors first identified four emerging themes relevant to racial socialization and then moved to a secondary phase of analysis and used their coding scheme to quantitatively determine which of the socialization themes had the strongest correlation to positive academic outcomes.

Based on their observations, Demo and Hughes (1990) divided racial socialization into four categories: *individualistic/universalistic*, *integrative/assertive*, *cautious/defensive* and a *no racial socialization*. The individualistic/universalistic group was characterized by ideas commonly related to self-worth socialization messages, for example, telling a child he or she is just as capable, good, and talented as anybody else. The integrative/assertive group included messages expressing what is frequently termed "racial pride" and "preparation for bias." The

cautious/defensive category referred to messages emphasizing deference to Whites and accepting imbalanced racial power dynamics and prejudice. The no racial socialization group consisted of parents who had little to no conversations about race with their children. Demo and Hughes coded the written responses as either related to each of the various types of socialization messages they categorized (coded 1) or not related (coded 0). Using their coding system, the authors completed a standardized regression to determine the relationship between socialization messages and racial identity development. They found that socialization types strongly correlated with certain racial identity development characteristics and asserted that Black family interactions and socialization had a significant impact on racial identity development. Participants who recalled that their racial socialization focused on racial pride and preparation for bias had higher levels of racial centrality than those participants who did not report experiencing these two socialization types.

Demo and Hughes's (1990) main conclusion was that Black racial identity is a multi-dimensional construct impacted by several factors including socialization, family interactions, socio-economic level and friendships. In addition, they hypothesized that the study results implied institutional racism could negatively impact Black adults' perception of in-group characteristics or private regard. Demo and Hughes's hypothesis suggested that parents who have experienced discrimination may have internalized negative messages about race, and, as a result, could potentially transmit harmful messages to their children. This finding is particularly troubling when considering the chronic racism that Black parents in the US have been and continue to be exposed to. As a result, this environment could lead them to convey this racism unintentionally in their racial socialization messages. For example, while the Demo and Hughes study was a forerunner in the racial socialization field, many subsequent studies revealed similar

findings that support a relationship between parents' experiences with racism and the choice to share negative messages about Black people with their children (Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett et al., 2008; Seaton et al., 2006).

Rivas-Drake, Hughes and Way (2009) investigated how racial socialization factors impact the racial identity development of youth of color. They conducted a study that assessed the way 379 sixth grade students (age $M=11.5$, $SD = 0.61$) from three diverse middle schools in New York City perceived the racial socialization messages of their parents and how these messages related to the students' ethnic/racial identity. The sample of students included Blacks (19%), Puerto-Ricans (12%), Dominicans (9%), Chinese (28%) and White (32%). These researchers evaluated the socialization messages their sample had received by using Hughes and Chen's (1997) parent ethnic/racial socialization framework, which includes preparation for bias and cultural socialization. Cultural socialization included items asking how frequently students experienced specific socialization messages, (e.g., "How often have your parents said you should be proud to be the race or ethnicity you are?"). Similarly, preparation for bias messages were measured by five items that assessed the frequency with which students received those messages from their parents, (e.g., "How often have your parents said some people may treat you badly or unfairly because of your race or ethnicity?").

Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) used a perception of discrimination measure developed by Way and colleagues (Greene et al., 2006; Pahl & Way, 2006; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). The measure consisted of nine items and directly asked students how often they attributed instances of racial and ethnic discrimination specifically to adults, (e.g., "How often do you feel that adults in school treat you with less respect because of your race and ethnicity?"). A similar nine-item measure was used to evaluate students' experiences with discrimination from student peers.

In addition, Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) assessed ethnic identity using a measure they developed that included concepts from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997); MIBI-Teen (Scottham, Sellers & Nguyen, 2008). The measure Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) utilized assessed three different factors: identity importance, private collective self-esteem, and public collective self-esteem. The primary revision these two researchers made to the MIBI questions was changing the word “Black,” which was used in the MIBI and the MIBI-Teen, to refer to ethnicity, including wording such as “my ethnicity” or “my group.” Identity importance questions or racial centrality prompts included items such as “being my ethnicity is important to me.” The private regard or private collective self-esteem prompts included items such as “In general, others respect people of my ethnic group.” The public collective self-esteem or public regard prompts included questions such as “In general, others respect people of my ethnic group.”

Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) also analyzed racial identity constructs including public regard centrality and private regard. The authors conducted an HLM analysis to interrogate multilevel interactions between study variables and found that between cultural socialization and preparation for bias, only cultural socialization was determined to be significantly associated with higher centrality. This finding suggests that parents who focus on the positive points of group membership may be encouraging youth to embrace their cultural identity more readily, while messages that focus on negative consequences of group membership may impede a youth’s progress towards accepting their ethnic identity.

Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) also found that cultural socialization was related to a heightened sense of private regard for youth. Additionally, the preparation for bias messages Black youth received predicted their public regard beliefs. The authors asserted that these

findings support long-held beliefs that Black youth can maintain a high private regard for their race while simultaneously understanding that publicly, their racial group is perceived to have a lower social status. Perhaps the most telling finding from the Rivas-Drake et al. investigation related to this dissertation is that the cultural socialization Black children were receiving from their parents was the only assessed factor significantly correlated with racial/ethnic centrality. This finding supports the results of previous studies (e.g., Bowman & Howard, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Peter, 1985; Sellers & Shelton, 2003) suggesting that parent socialization messages and actions were correlated with child racial identity development. These studies lend empirical support to the early conceptualizations provided by Richardson (1981) and cited in the Peter study (1985): Black mothers “know that Black children will ultimately have to know that they are Black and understand what a Black identity means in a racist society” (Richardson, 1981, pp. 168-169).

Racial Socialization and Resilience to Racism

Perhaps the most remarkable outcome associated with racial socialization is its correlation with positive racial identity development, which has been shown to buffer Black youth and adults from stress caused by racism and other toxic stressors in their environment, (e.g., poverty, crime, violence) (DeGruy, Kjellstrand, Briggs & Brennan, 2011; Hughes et al., 2009; Margolin, 2006; Williams, Aiyer, Durkee, & Tolan, 2014). Even more significant to my study are findings demonstrating that the development of positive racial identities has been linked to higher academic achievement (Altschul, Oyserman & Bybee, 2006; Ford & Harris, 1997), increased self-esteem (Spencer et al., 2001), and decreased problem behaviors (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). The buffering effects of a positive racial identity are particularly important because Black youth are disproportionately exposed to more psychologically harmful

stressors than their peers of other races.

Generally, empirical investigations of positive racial identity development and its ability to prevent negative behavioral outcomes associated with experiencing racial bias stressors are weakly confirmative (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Additionally, a theme frequently repeated throughout the racial socialization literature is that racial barrier messages or preparation for bias messages can harm children who may be too young to handle these harsh truths (Hughes & Chen; Hughes et al., 2006). However, racial pride, egalitarian and self-worth messages do provide some buffering effects against discrimination. Furthermore, self-worth messages seem to correlate with positive behavior outcomes and shield Black children from other negative factors associated with the racism they disproportionately experience (Hughes & Chen; Hughes et al.).

Several other researchers have obtained similar results confirming the belief that racial socialization positively affects Black children's racial identity and, therefore, can serve as a buffer against the negative mental health effects of discrimination (Coates, 2014; Brown, Tanner-Smith & Lesane-Brown, 2009). As a result, it seems logical to posit that the mental health benefits of positive racial identity development may also enhance adaptive behavior and improve academic performance. The studies in the following section provide empirical evidence for the claim that positive racial identity development and positive racial socialization lead to beneficial behavior outcomes.

Racial Socialization and Academic and Cognitive Performance

Researchers have reported mixed results about the relationship between racial socialization and good academic performance (Brown, Linver, Evans, & DeGennaro, 2008; Marshall (1995); Neblett et al., 2006). Here, I briefly review select studies that demonstrate the impact of racial socialization on academic performance.

Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, and West-Bey (2009) conducted a longitudinal study (i.e., covering two consecutive academic years) with 466 White and 339 Black students in 4th through 6th grade to determine how ethnic-racial socialization predicted racial identity development, academic performance and behavior. An adapted form of Hughes and Chen's (1999) measure of ethnic racial socialization created by Hughes and Johnson (2001) for younger children was used to assess these children's perceptions of their racial socialization experiences. The Hughes and Chen measure includes 19 items that assess cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarianism and promotion of mistrust messages. The authors used six items from the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) designed to measure respondents' affirmative feelings towards their ethnic group. For example, one item states, "I am happy I am the race that I am." Hughes et al. (2009) found that students in grades 6-8 who received cultural socialization had greater academic engagement, efficacy, ethnic affirmation and pro-social behavior. However, students in the study who received preparation for bias had worse outcomes than their peers who did not in regard to self-esteem, ethnic affirmation, antisocial behavior, and academic performance. These findings align with other studies in which researchers have shown that adolescents ages 13 and younger are vulnerable to poor socio-emotional health outcomes if exposed too early to some of the harsh realities presented in preparation of bias messages (Branscombe et al., 1999; Davis & Stevenson, 2006; McHale et al., 2006; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001). However, Hughes et al. (2009) found that cultural socialization messages have a beneficial, unmediated, significant impact on positive academic outcomes. On the other hand, ethnic affirmation mediated a marginally significant negative relationship with poor behavior occurrences. Hughes and colleagues provided evidence that for children in early adolescence, cultural socialization messages seem to predict more positive behavioral, academic

and racial identity outcomes than preparation for bias messages.

Similarly, Neblett, Phillip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) conducted a study to determine if racial socialization practices provided Black children with a buffer from the negative effects empirically linked to the experience of discrimination and devaluation. This study was cross-sectional in design and all data were collected via surveys. The 24-item Child Socialization Scale (Brown, Scottham, Sellers & Nguyễn, 2005) that consists of six statistically confirmed subscales, Racial Pride ($\alpha=.69$), Racial Barrier ($\alpha=.70$), Egalitarian ($\alpha=.65$), Self-Worth ($\alpha=.75$), Negative ($\alpha=.67$) and Behavior ($\alpha=.73$), was used to assess racial socialization messages. Harrell's (1997) 17-item Perceived Discrimination Scale ($\alpha=.92$) was used to investigate children's experiences with racial discrimination. Harrell employed a frequency measure that included prompts such as the following question: "In the past year how often have you been ignored, overlooked, or not given service because of your race?" This study focused on a sample of 548 self-identified African American students in grades seven through 10 from a school district in the Midwestern United States. Neblett et al. (2006) found that messages of self-worth and egalitarianism were positively associated with academic performance, while messages of racial pride predicted lower grades. Neblett and colleagues also determined that discrimination events negatively impacted academic persistence, curiosity, and performance. Racial socialization was positively related to students' academic performance and curiosity but did not significantly moderate the negative effect of discrimination on these academic factors.

Brown, Linver, Evans, and DeGennaro (2008) utilized a sample of 218 African American adolescents (grades 9-12) from a northeastern American city to determine how gender and racial/ethnic socialization messages received are related to academic performance. Forty-eight percent of the study participants were boys. These researchers used The Adolescent Racial and

Ethnic Socialization Scale to measure the participants' perceptions of racial socialization messages received (ARESS; Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007). The ARESS is a 36-item measure with three dimensions related to racial socialization (i.e., racial barrier awareness, coping with racism and discrimination and promoting cross-racial relationships) and five dimensions for ethnic socialization (i.e., African American cultural values, African American cultural embeddedness, African American history, celebrating being African American, and promotion of ethnic pride). The authors utilized hierarchical regression analysis to parse moderation interactions related to the type of socialization messages boys and girls received. The authors also analyzed how the gender relationship between parent and child impacted the type of messages shared. Brown et al. (2007) found that the type and impact of socialization messages differed depending on the gender of the child. For example, higher grades for boys were linked to receiving socialization about African American cultural values but were linked to lower grades for girls.

Focusing on young Black males, Neblett, Chavous, Nguyen and Sellers (2009a) conducted a longitudinal study of 144 African American boys in 7th through 11th grades from a Midwestern American city to determine the specific ways socialization messages impacted the academic performance of boys. The authors also investigated the potential of racial socialization to mediate the negative relationship between academic performance and racial discrimination experiences. Neblett et al. (2009a) used the Racial Socialization Questionnaire-Teen (RSQ-T), a 26-item measure, which has five subscales: Racial Pride ($\alpha=.64$), Racial Barriers ($\alpha=.63$), Egalitarian ($\alpha=.70$), Self-Worth ($\alpha=.77$), Negative ($\alpha=.75$), and Socialization Behaviors ($\alpha=.73$). The Racism and Life Experience Scale (Harrell, 1997) was used to assess racial discrimination in this study. Academic achievement outcomes were assessed by questions pertaining to academic

curiosity (e.g., “I work hard when we start something new in class”); academic persistence (e.g., “When I do badly on a test, I work harder the next time.”); and academic performance (i.e., composite GPA).

Unlike the other researchers mentioned above, Neblett et al. (2009a) utilized a cluster analysis to create socialization profiles that allowed them to analyze the relationship between the totality of participants’ socialization experience on selected outcomes, as opposed to correlations with specific socialization elements (e.g., relating preparation for bias messages only with resilience). The authors determined that socialization profiles associated with relatively high levels of cultural socialization messages and self-worth mediated the negative effects of racial discrimination on academic performance. Neblett and colleagues also found that patterns of socialization associated with self-worth were correlated with more persistence on difficult school tasks and higher academic performance. Even more, students who had a profile characterized by high levels of racial pride also reported higher levels of persistence and performed better academically than all the profiles except for the self-worth group. Students who received negative messages about their race or little to no socialization performed the worst academically and were the most maladjusted.

Based on the available empirical evidence, the academic performance of Black youth can be sustained in the face of racial bias if they receive consistent and developmentally sensitive racial socialization. Racial socialization messages focused on cultural appreciation, self-worth and egalitarian messages that contain fewer racial bias messages seem to be particularly effective at positively impacting life outcomes for youth. However, the link between academic success and racial socialization practices that focus on racial pride development and preparation for bias messages appears less clearly correlated with the positive outcomes reported in the studies

reviewed up to this point.

Some conceptual, theoretical, and methodological considerations should be taken into account when interpreting the findings presented in the aforementioned studies. In assessing these studies, I noted that developmental factors seem to impact the relationship between preparation for bias messages and positive outcomes for Black youth. Developmentally, children younger than 13 are often negatively affected by preparation for bias messages that emphasize racial barriers (Hughes et al., 2009; Williams et al., 2015). Developmental theory suggests youth this age may not yet be able to separate their private racial identity from their public identity due to not achieving relevant developmental milestones associated with becoming less egocentric (Siegler, 2000). Specifically, it may be problematic if youth are unable to move outside of egocentric thought to consider that the public's perceptions of them as a Black person do not necessarily reflect their personal conceptualization of Blackness. When Black youth are not developmentally prepared to grasp this complex and abstract concept, it is likely that they may interpret preparation for bias messages to mean that they must have something inherently wrong with them because they do not have equitable access to all of American society's benefits. These complexities can lead to potentially precarious conversations between Black parents and their children. As a result, these parents face the reality for which no correct and easily identifiable approach of talking to their young children about race exists. This specific difficulty is the primary concept of interest for this study because greater investigation of how parents approach racial socialization will hopefully inform interventions designed to support families undergoing this challenging process.

Parent Racial Socialization with Young Children

Parents of preadolescent Black males ranging in age from 4-12 are in an especially precarious situation because their sons are old enough to recognize racial differences and even internalize negative ideas about their own racial identity yet are still developing the ability to construct an identity (Clark & Clark, 1940; Wright, 1998). As will be seen from the discussion of the following studies, parents recognize that although Black youth may benefit from racial socialization messages and activities, they may also feel ambivalent about acting on what they learn from these experiences (Hughes & Chen, 1998; Marshall, 1995; Peters, 1985; Suizzo et al., 2008). Researchers have also reported that parents often cite their children's innocence at these ages as a justification for not racially socializing their children (Peters, 1985; Suizzo et al., 2008). However, Black children approaching adolescence may need to develop a positive racial identity that will allow them to become resilient when faced with the negative effects of racism (Sellers et al., 2008; Spencer et al., 2001; Wong et al. 2003). The challenge is that children on the cusp of adolescence are just beginning to develop the ability to grasp this essential insight logically (Aboud & Skerry, 1984; Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Yip, Seaton & Sellers, 2006). Wright (1998) and Clark and Clark (1940) demonstrated that awareness of color prejudice may emerge in Black children as early as age four. On the other hand, Aboud and Skerry found that although four-year-old Black youth could detect racial prejudice, they were unable to understand the permanency and consequences of racial difference until they were 9-10 years old. Aboud asserted that racial identity development does not typically begin to happen until after this developmental milestone. Due to the developmental complexities involved with racially socializing young children, some researchers are now exploring how parents and children make sense of race when children are at such an early developmental stage.

Suizzo et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative study with 12 middle-class African-American mothers in order to describe and identify the cultural models of childrearing the group utilized with their three- to six-year-old children. This study focused on the beliefs, goals, and practices that drove or motivated the mothers' daily interactions with their children. All parents were middle class and lived in predominantly White suburban neighborhoods. The mothers were a mean age of 32.75 (SD=4.22). Six of the mothers had one child and the other six had two or more. Ten of the 12 mothers worked outside of the home. Only one mother was unmarried. Suizzo et al. devised a 1.5 hour interview protocol that included questions about the relationship between the mothers and their children, the mothers' own upbringing and family background, the children's experiences with racial discrimination, the mothers' long-term goals and values for themselves, and the mothers' long-term goals for their children as well as the values they wanted to instill in their offspring. After the individual interviews, the authors conducted a focus group with five of the mothers to triangulate the emerging themes they found in the interviews. The study's findings showed that parents of children ages four and younger were especially hesitant to talk to children about race and most did not do so. The majority of the study participants maintained that racial socialization was important, but because they believed their children were too young to handle such in-depth conversations, they reported they had not racially socialized their children.

Caughy, Randolph, and O'Campo (2002) brought a unique perspective to the study of Black families' socialization practices by focusing solely on the home environments of 200 Black families and how the artifacts in those environments allowed for socialization. An adapted form of the Parent Experience of Racial Socialization (PERS) was used to assess parents' socialization practices. The PERS is a 40-item measure assessing four factors of socialization:

Promotion of Mistrust, Preparation for Bias, Racial Pride and Spirituality (Stevenson, 1999).

The Afrocentric Home Environment Inventory (AHEI) was also used. This 10-item survey ($\alpha = .88$) was developed and psychometrically assessed in the study to evaluate the quantity and quality of Afrocentric elements in the home. The families in the study had children between the ages of three and four years. After conducting two in-home interviews, the researchers reached two significant conclusions: (1) Parent reports of socialization were highly verbal and action based, and (2) the presence of cultural artifacts in the home was not correlated with parent reports of racial socialization practices.

Peters (1985) conducted an ethnographic, two-year, longitudinal field study and found that the parents of young children frequently emphasized messages related to self-esteem, positive feelings about ethnicity, preparation for bias, and the importance of education and self-respect. African American parents ($n = 30$) were interviewed for two years starting when their children were 12 months old. Thirty children were observed during interviews lasting two-three hours and were conducted in the home environment of the family. Due to the two-year, longitudinal nature of this study, only 16 mothers participated in an interview about their racial socialization practices. During this interview, they were asked about their attitudes, behaviors, and goals specific to raising a child of color in a culture that privileges Whiteness. Like other researchers who have studied racial socialization practices, Peters found that mothers hesitated to communicate messages that explicitly addressed the racism and prejudice their children might be experiencing. Specifically, mothers did not engage in activities that included talking about racial pride or cultural heritage. Despite mothers' lack of action in delivering racial socialization messages, they saw instilling pride or self-respect in their children as a way to make them resilient when faced with the race-based challenges. Mothers demonstrated awareness of the

disproportionate consequences their children would face in various situations ranging from playground interactions to the professional environment and discussed preparing their children for these biases. Most saw education as both a coping mechanism and a navigation strategy.

Interestingly, 13 of the 16 mothers interviewed said that racism caused them stress, but only nine thought that their children were also stressed by racism. Peters (1985) also found that mothers linked significant negative life events like job loss and health complications to racism and believed the pressures these forms of discrimination placed on the family unit affected the children. A limitation of this study was that the researchers did not investigate parents' choices related to racial socialization. Another limitation was that parents were not asked about how they would approach future racial socialization; questions of this nature might have uncovered how these parents could have used socialization messages once their children moved beyond early childhood.

Similar to Peters (1985), Marshall (1995) concluded that although Black parents believed ethnic identity development for Black children was important, they did not consider racial socialization a high priority. Marshall interviewed 58 Black mothers of children nine and 10 years old using a racial socialization scale for this study to generate an interview protocol; participants' qualitative responses were coded into seven categories. The seven categories developed from this process were as follows: racial differences; coping with racism; presence of Black pictures in home; purchasing Black toys; feelings of being overwhelmed by the racism their child will likely face; and, most importantly, goals for the children. Racial identity development was assessed by a revised 30-item version of the Racial Identity Scale (RIAS) measure, which is based on the Nigrescence Model (Spencer, 1990). The measure is comprised

of four scales: pre-encounter ($\alpha = .67$), encounter ($\alpha = .88$), immersion ($\alpha = .66$), or internalization ($\alpha = .71$).

Marshall (1995) found that most parents (98%; $N=57$) did not report socialization as an important part of parenting when asked general questions about their parenting practices. However, Marshall did find that when asked explicitly about race, most parents (89%; $N=52$) felt it important to address this concept in their parenting, which resembles Peters' (1985) findings. Marshall also found that there was a significant relationship between parent-reported socialization of egalitarian views and children's perception of that socialization. The discrepancy between parents' reports of socialization and children's perception of socialization seemed to be greatest with cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages. Marshall hypothesized that children were more in tune with parents' attempts to convey egalitarian messages in comparison to cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages because the broader society reinforces humanistic, egalitarian views. In addition, he also theorized that messages of Black pride or racial biases are less likely to be discussed explicitly. Children's perceptions of greater levels of racial socialization were related to better development of racial identity. Also of interest, Marshall found that greater levels of racial socialization correlated significantly with lower reading scores. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, Marshall could not establish the causality of the relationship. Therefore, Marshall conjectured that the relationship between greater racial socialization and lower academic performance could indicate that parents responded when their children were having a poor academic experience and consequently increased their racial socialization.

Hughes and Chen (1997) conducted an investigation with 157 African American parents living in Chicago who had children ranging in age from four-14 years old. The purpose of the

investigation was to determine how child, parent, and job-related factors impacted the racial socialization experiences that happened between parents and children. All of the parents participating in the study were part of dual-earner, two-parent families. Both fathers and mothers participated in the study. All of participants in the sample held professional, technical, managerial, clerical or sales positions. To gather these data, Hughes and Chen developed a 16-item measure that assessed three dimensions of racial socialization: Cultural Socialization, Preparation for Bias, and Promotion of Mistrust. The dimensions developed were taken from focus group interviews previously conducted by the authors as part of a prior study. The instrument was composed of items that prompted parents to report how often they engaged in various socialization behaviors with their children. The large majority (<60%) of parents reported not participating in socialization practices regularly; however, most (90%) reported participating in socialization of some sort (e.g., talking to their children about racism or reading Black History books to them). Cultural socialization was found to happen the most with lower numbers of preparation for bias messages and even lower numbers of messages focused on promotion of mistrust. The parents also reported that they rarely communicated messages of mistrust to their children. Hughes and Chen also found that parents of younger children (four-eight years old) participated less frequently in racial socialization conversations in comparison to parents whose children were older (nine to 11 years old).

More recently, Coard et al. (2004) conducted a qualitative study to determine the frequency of and reasoning for the use of racial socialization strategies by low-income, urban Black parents. They also investigated the content and methods of delivery parents used to racially socialize their children. The sample population of the study was comprised of 15 Black parents living in an urban environment in low socio-economic conditions whose children were

five or six years old. The researchers developed a semi-structured interview protocol termed the Personal Interview for Racial Socialization (PIRS) to guide the data collection of the study. The PIRS was developed in a pilot project conducted by Coard and was revised based on feedback from its initial use with another group of parents to improve clarity and encourage participant disclosure. The majority of the parents reported sharing messages of racial pride with their children (93%). Parents also cited personal experiences with racism as the basis for urgency in raising Black children to have a sense of awareness of racial dynamics in American society. Coard et al. (2004) found that parents attempted to establish the right level of nuance and balance in socializing their children. Specifically, parents discussed wanting their children to be optimistic but at the same time prepared to experience racial bias.

One limitation of Coard et al.'s (2004) study is that although the researchers planned to analyze what parents were thinking, the authors focused primarily on why parents shared messages. They did not examine the reasons why parents decided not to engage in socialization conversations or how the parents made choices to delay these discussions as a whole or to withhold some information. However, this study is extremely important because it is one of the few studies conducted in the last ten years that has provided a qualitative analysis of parents' attitudes and beliefs about racial socialization.

Development of Profile-Oriented Racial Socialization Research

In the mid-2000s, researchers began to question prior methodological approaches used to assess the protective factors racial socialization provides Black children (e.g., Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes et al., 2006). Specifically, researchers asserted that racial socialization was a synergistic process in which multiple types of messages were likely communicated in concert from parent to child (Coard & Sellers; Hughes et al.). Prior to Neblett et al.'s (2008) study,

researchers conducted empirical analyses that focused on the relationship between a specific type of racial socialization (e.g., racial pride messages) and a hypothesized outcome (e.g., academic performance, racial identity beliefs, psychosocial results) while statistically controlling for other socialization types. Neblett, White, Ford, Nguyễn and Sellers (2008) utilized a profile analysis that allowed for an empirical investigation of unique socialization experiences. Subsequent to Neblett et al.'s profile-based study, several researchers have utilized the profile approach in order to allow for a more nuanced assessment and to establish empirically that in practice, socialization messages are not constrained to one category or type because of the complex composition and nature of the messages that are transmitted (Granberg, Edmond, Simons, Gibbons, & Lei, 2012; Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn & Sellers, 2009; Neblett et al., 2008; Neblett et al., 2012). This new type of analysis also signaled a shift in the field because it led more researchers to assess empirically whether racial socialization and identity could protect youth from the negative experiences of racism. However, since this shift in research methodology, no one has utilized this new profile method as a mode of theoretical analysis for a qualitative study. Therefore, I will apply the theoretical framework of racial socialization employed in these studies to analyze how parents choose to approach socialization.

Neblett et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between socialization profiles and resilience in the face of racial discrimination by utilizing a longitudinal design to determine if racial discrimination predicted psychological maladjustment (i.e., depressive symptoms, perceived stress, psychological well-being and delinquent behavior) and if socialization practices could buffer against any identified negative effect. Neblett et al. assessed a sample of 361 students ranging from 11 to 17 years of age from the Midwestern United States and used the Racial Socialization Questionnaire-Teen (RSQ-t; Lesane-Brown et al., 2006) to assess perceived

racial socialization messages. Using latent class analysis, Neblett et al. (2008) identified four different socialization profiles: High Positive, Moderate Positive, Low Frequency and Moderate Negative. The High Positive and Moderate Positive clusters were very similar and only differed in that the High Positive cluster was associated with more frequent positive socialization messages (e.g., racial pride and self-worth) than the Moderate Positive cluster. The largest proportion of the sample fell into either the Moderate Positive ($n=164$, 45% of sample) or High Positive ($n = 95$, 26%) profiles. The Moderate Negative cluster was characterized by higher than average scores for negative messages received by children and lower than the sample averages of scores for receiving messages conveying racial pride and self-worth. For those clustered into the Moderate Negative profile, scores for racial barrier messages as well as for egalitarian and socialization behaviors were near the sample mean. The Low Frequency profile was characterized by the generally low occurrence of racial socialization messages across all of the areas assessed the RSQ-t.

Neblett et al. (2008) found that students with the High Positive group had the best mental health outcomes in comparison to students in the other profiles. Students in the High Positive profile had the lowest incidence of depressive symptoms; those in the Moderate Negative and Low Frequency clusters had a considerably higher number of depressive symptoms. The moderate profile did not differ significantly from the high positive cluster when related to their correlation with depressive symptoms. Similar results were seen for perceived stress. The high positive group had significantly lower levels of perceived stress in comparison to the low frequency and negative cluster groups. Youth who were in the negative cluster also reported experiencing significantly more racial discrimination than did their peers in the other socialization clusters. The findings of this study confirm the theoretical assumption that parent

racial socialization contributes to Black youth developing resilience to cope with experiences involving racial bias.

In another study, Neblett et al. (2009a) conducted a two-wave longitudinal investigation using a sample of 358 African American youth from a Midwestern public school district to determine how parent socialization types impacted children's racial identity development. The RSQ-t (Lesane-Brown et al., 2006) was used to assess the children's experiences with racial socialization and employed the MIBI-T (Scottham et al., 2008) to measure racial identity development. Neblett et al. (2009a) also used the Latent Gold cluster analysis technique (Vermut & Magidson, 2005) and identified three socialization profiles: High Positive, Moderate Positive, and Low Frequency. These levels were divided by the number of socialization messages youth believed they had received from the person they identified as their main caregiver. The High Positive (n=131, 36.6%) group reported levels of socialization well above the mean of the sample on racial pride, behavioral socialization, and self-worth, egalitarian, and racial barriers messages. The High Positive group was below the sample mean on negative messages perceived. The Moderate Positive (n=146, 40.8%) group consisted of children who perceived socialization activities at frequencies that were near the sample mean in egalitarian, racial pride, and self-worth messages. Moderate positive results were also just below average frequency for racial barriers and socialization messages. The Low Frequency profile (n=81, 22.6%) was characterized by youth who perceived they had received low numbers of racial socialization messages in every category, except for negative messages. Participants fitting the Low Frequency profile believed they had received negative messages at a rate slightly above the population mean. The Moderate Positive and High Positive clusters were similar in many respects but differed when related to three categories according to standard mean comparisons.

Those categories included higher proportions of socialization behaviors, racial barrier messages, and racial pride messages. The longitudinal nature of the analysis Neblett et al. (2009a) utilized allowed the authors to establish predictive relationships between the socialization profiles and the racial identity development of youth. Also worth noting, Neblett et al. (2009a) found that membership in the High Positive socialization cluster predicted greater levels of centrality and nationalist ideology and lower levels of assimilationist ideology. These findings are similar to those of Sellers and Shelton (2003) and Sellers et al. (2003; 2006), who also found that centrality and nationalist ideology have been shown to buffer against and even eliminate the negative effects of experiencing racism.

The groundbreaking contribution of the Neblett et al. (2008, 2009a) studies was the use of a profile type analysis of racial socialization that allowed the researchers to identify how racial socialization messages overlap and coalesce into profiles, patterns or meta-messages instead of into separate and distinct categories. Neblett et al. (2008) found that those in the High Positive profile seemed to be partially protected from the negative effects of personal discrimination due to the type of parent socialization they received. Granberg, Edmond, Simmons, Gibbons, and Kit Lei (2012) published a similar study that also demonstrated the methodological advantages of using a clustered analysis approach that identifies socialization profiles.

However, these studies do not address what ideas, beliefs and choices the parents made that inspired and preceded the socialization of young boys. In addition, no one else has used this profile approach as a theoretical basis for qualitative analysis of parent's socialization subsequent to Neblett et al.'s (2008, 2009a) seminal work. Nor have researchers utilized this more nuanced approach to investigate the racial socialization practices of parents of younger children.

Gender Socialization

Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, and McLoyd (2002) investigated how low-income situations affect the general socialization of parents of color and its correlation to the social adjustment of their children. Mistry et al. surveyed Black and Latino families with children between the ages of five and 12 ($n = 519$). The researchers collected data on the following variables: economic wellbeing, perceived economic pressure ($r = .37$), parent psychological distress ($\alpha = .82$), parental disciplinary efficacy (*Hope Scale*, $\alpha = .83$), and problematic child social behavior (Center for Epidemiological Studies depression scale: $\alpha = .90$).

The authors found that parents generally were less affectionate with and offered less praise to boys relative to girls ($\beta = -.15$, $\beta = -.14$). Likewise, parent disciplinary practices for boys in comparison to girls were less effective when compared to the treatment of the boys. This study confirmed many long-held beliefs that boys of color experience harsher and less effective disciplinary correction from their parents in comparison to girls.

Howard, Rose, and Barbarin (2013) conducted an ethnographic study to better understand the lives and development of Black boys between the ages of three and eight using a sample of 15 Black parents who were all US born. Parents were selected to represent a variety of demographic factors including gender, age, education level, socio-economic level, and marital status. Parents were asked to respond to the following prompts: What are things parents can do to help their sons perform well in school? What are things parents can do to help their sons feel good about and proud of their race? What are the things parents can do to help their sons feel good about their gender and mature in to successful men? Follow-up questions in every case were the same: What do you do and what prevents you from doing other things you would like to do?

Regarding racial socialization, the majority (13 out of 15) parents reported using various approaches to build up the racial pride of their children but also indicated the importance of racial socialization. Many (38.5%) indicated that teaching African American history was a good starting point for building up children's racial pride. Parents not only focused on history as a cultural pride building activity but also indicated that popular contemporary events and accomplishments of friends and family members could be used to instill pride. Some parents also had reasons for not engaging in racial socialization that often related to their own experiences as children or from believing their sons were too young to make sense of racial concepts. The majority of parents reported that it was important to have developmentally appropriate conversations about race with their children; this response did not reflect whether or not these parents advocated for reinforcing racial pride.

When dealing with gender socialization, parents put the most emphasis on their sons' need for positive male role models (73%). However, Howard et al. (2013) noticed diverse approaches among the parents: Some seemed to have well-planned approaches and others seemed to be more spontaneous and reacted when occasions to teach their children what they believed it meant to be a boy and man presented themselves. Parents commonly reported emphasizing the attributes of strength and leadership to their sons and considered developing these traits important aspects of socializing young Black males. Howard et al. (2013) reported that although the topics of strength and leadership were mentioned less frequently, 40% of parents raised these issues expressing intense emotion when doing so. In addition, these researchers noted an emphasis on role models, being an independent leader, and embracing traditionally masculine activities. However, the gendered advice to Black boys to become leaders is somewhat incongruous with common racial socialization messages related to Afro-centrism

that emphasize communalism. Howard et al. questioned parents' awareness of the potential contradictions between their views of gender and racial socialization and cited this phenomenon as one that needed further study.

McHale et al. (2006) also investigated the how Black parents' own gender affected their socialization processes. These researchers also examined how age differences of children within a family impacted parents' socialization as well as how parent racial socialization impacted youth's identity development, locus of control, and symptoms of depression. The authors included 162 families in their study. Each family included was comprised of a mother, father and two children who were in the middle-childhood to adolescent age range. The authors used Hughes and Chen's (1997) cultural socialization measure that assesses the frequency at which certain socialization messages are delivered to youth. The authors also assessed parental warmth, youth ethnic identity, youth locus of control and youth depressive symptoms.

The McHale et al. (2006) study revealed a number of things about how parent gender, child gender and child age impact parent socialization practices. The researchers found that cultural socialization and bias preparation were correlated with parental warmth and that there was a moderating relationship between spouses' racial socialization practices. The researchers found that mothers were more likely to participate in differentiated socialization of their children based on age in comparison to fathers. Mother's differentiated socialization was demonstrated by the finding that they were more likely to present barrier messages to older offspring rather than to younger children. McHale et al. suggested that these findings support claims that mothers, who often act as primary caregivers, are more attuned to the developmental needs of their children. Fathers were found to be more likely to vary their socialization practices based on the gender of the child, engaging in more racial socialization with their sons than their daughters,

while the mothers did not vary significantly across gender lines in their socialization of children. McHale et al. (2006) asserted that future studies should assess qualitatively the reasons mothers and fathers provide to justify their socialization practices.

Likewise, Brown, Linver, and Evans (2009) also conducted a study to determine how parent racialization differed based on the gender of the parents and the gender of the children. The authors investigated these phenomena through the perspective of the child, collecting data from 218 Black high school students from the northeastern United States. Racial socialization was evaluated using the Adolescent Racial and Ethnic Socialization Scale (ARESS; Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007).

Brown et al. (2009) found differences across gender in the racial socialization youth reported receiving from parents. Specifically, female adolescent participants reported receiving more coping with racism messages from maternal caregivers than did male adolescents. Similarly, female adolescents reported receiving more information about African American history and ethnic pride. Findings for paternal caregivers in this study did not suggest that racial socialization practices differed significantly based on the gender of the child. Generally, it was found that maternal caregivers participated in greater racial socialization than their paternal counterparts. The researchers hypothesized that the racial socialization messages differed across genders due to variance in how socialization is elicited by daughters versus sons.

Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Neblett, and Banks (2014) conducted a study that investigated how Black fathers altered their racial socialization practices based on the gender of their children. Fathers (n = 166) from the southeastern United States participated in the study, the majority (82%) of whom were employed full-time. Sixty-five percent of the participants were fathers of girls. Cooper et al. used the RSQ-P measure, a parent centric version of the RSQ-t

assessment, (Lesane-Brown et al., 2008) to assess the participants' racial socialization practices. The authors used latent profile analysis (LPA) to determine racial socialization profiles for the fathers based on their responses to the RSQ-P measure. Five profiles were identified through the LPA. The first profile, *infrequent socializers* (n=13, 8%), was characterized by low participation in any types of racial socialization. The second profile, *negative race socializers* (n=14, 8.5%), was characterized by below average use of self-worth messages and above-average use of negative racial messages. The third profile, *positive racial socializers* (n=64, 38%), was characterized by use of above average racial socialization messages across all areas except negative messages, which were below the sample mean. The fourth profile, *low race salience* (n= 61, 37%), received lower than average messages across all areas of racial socialization except for self-worth messages, which were close to the sample mean. The fifth profile, *race salience socializers* (n=14, 8.5%), was characterized by average scores across all of the areas except for the frequency of race negative messages, which were 2.5 standard deviations above the mean.

In their study, Cooper et al., (2014) found that fathers of girls were more likely to participate in race-salient socialization in comparison to fathers of boys who were more likely to participate in infrequent racial socialization. In particular, fathers were less likely to have race-specific socialization conversations with their sons. These authors also pointed out the need for more nuanced studies focused on how children's gender may impact racial socialization and modes of transmission. Cooper et al. indicated the need to further investigate the social determinants of African American parents' socialization practices.

Caughy, Nettles, and Lima (2011) conducted a study that investigated another aspect of the way Black parents (n=218) socialize young Black children by organizing the patterns of

racial socialization parents typically used in to profiles. Caughy et al. also used their profile analysis to determine if socialization practices differed within their sample of participants depending on the gender of the children being socialized. Parents participating in the study had children entering the first grade in Baltimore City schools. The authors used the Parent Experience of Racial Socialization scale (PERS: Stevenson, 1999) to assess parental racial socialization practices. The Afrocentric Home Environment Inventory (AHEI: Caughy et al., 2002) was used to assess the racial socialization context of participants' homes. Using Latent Class Analysis, Caughy et al. clustered the parents into four different racial socialization profiles. The four profiles identified were as follows: *Silence about race* ($N = 10$) characterized by little endorsing of any racial socialization measures and low scores on the AHEI; *Cultural Socialization emphasis* ($N = 68$) characterized by above average scores on cultural pride reinforcement; *Balanced* ($N = 112$) characterized by average scores cultural pride and preparation for bias, but also the highest promotion of mistrust scores in the sample; *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* ($N = 40$) was similar to the cultural socialization group but used promotion of mistrust messages significantly less.

Caughy et al. (2011) found gender-based differences in the types of racial socialization boys and girls received from their parents. Parents of boys were more likely to be in the *silence about race* profile. Also, girls were more likely than boys to receive socialization with an emphasis on cultural socialization. Boys were more likely than girls to receive socialization emphasizing cultural socialization accompanied by preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust. Overall, Caughy et al. (2011) extended previous research that shows profile-based analysis provides greater ability to differentiate how racial socialization differs based on various contextual factors such as children's gender.

Although researchers have shown that gender can impact the types of racial socialization children receive, findings have been disparate and do not point to one consistent pattern or trend in the ways gender impacts the type of racial socialization practices parents use (Brown et al., 2009; Caughy et al., 2011; Cooper, 2014; McHale et al., 2006). However, most studies show Black males do seem to receive fewer racial socialization messages than black females (Brown et al., 2009; Caughy et al., 2011; Cooper, 2014). Even more significantly, girls seem to receive more messages specific to racial pride reinforcement than boys (Brown et al., 2009). Sons seem to be exposed to fewer verbal interactions and consequently receive fewer messages in aggregate from their parents in comparison to girls (Caughy et al., 2011).

Conclusion

In reviewing the literature, I noted a group of findings that pose important questions to be addressed as many researchers asserted the need to develop interventions that would bolster the racial socialization that Black children receive in order to improve their resilience when they encounter racial bias (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Chen, 1998; Neblett et al., 2009; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Hughes and Chen (1997, 1999) assert that messages can be deliberate or unintended, synergistic, verbal or non-verbal, proactive or reactive. However, the degree to which parents socialize their children outside of conversations has been under-investigated, with the lone exception being Caughy et al.'s (2002) study on how household elements provided racial socialization. Another under-investigated concept raised by Hughes and Chen is that socialization could be delivered unconsciously, meaning messages attributing negative ideas about Black people that have been shown to have negative effects on youth could be shared unintentionally, even those that contradict the parents' explicitly stated ideals. Howard et al. (2014) found that parents sometimes conveyed conflicting messages to children when engaging

in gender and racial socialization practices. Further investigation of this potential problem would provide important perspectives on children's complete socialization experience. Examining this issue would require the use of a robust qualitative analysis.

Further, researchers have said little about young children's role in prompting or initiating racial socialization conversations. My literature review did not reveal any studies that allowed for analysis of how school experiences, children's questions, or family situations have contributed to parents' choosing to address issues of race that become salient. Such an investigation would also contribute to the current literature base by providing perspectives on how prepared parents need to feel engaged in a socialization conversation and what factors contribute to parents avoiding or having these conversations. The existing research literature offers little empirical data and few theoretical discussions that address questions about how non-parent initiated socialization conversations are prompted or evolve.

Two emerging trends from the research literature on how young Black males are socialized make greater study of this population of parents important: 1) Although not conclusive, several researchers (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Neblett et al. 2009; Sanders, 1994; Stevenson, 2004; Thomas & Speight, 1999) have reported that women and girls more so than men receive greater socialization related to racial pride and ethnic/racial affirmation. This is a somewhat troubling trend considering the buffering effect this type of racial socialization holds for youth against the negative effects associated with experiencing racial discrimination; and 2) the difference in socialization received across genders is interesting considering that most data would suggest that Black boys experience as much, if not more, than, girls (Gregory et al., 2010; Noguera, 2008; Stevenson, 2003). Further, researchers have determined that the age of children influences how their parents racially socialize them. Although, many scholars have theorized that

parents who refrain from racially socializing children are likely attempting to maintain the innocence of their children, there is scant empirical research to support these common claims. Ultimately, understanding what motivates parents' choosing whether or not to participate in racial socialization has important implications for young Black boys, who often encounter biased treatment in schools at ages as early as preschool.

Another important inconsistency that has emerged from this review is that although the majority of Black parents seem to recognize the importance of preparing their children to navigate a racially biased world, some parents more actively pursue that preparation through racial socialization than others. However, the situations and experiences that prompt parents to engage in racial socialization conversations have not received sufficient attention. More research is needed on the spontaneous discussions that occur between parents and children in which race becomes particularly salient but was not intentionally infused into the conversation by an adult. These questions seem especially important when considering the work of Neblett and others who have demonstrated that the more socialization a child receives related to racial pride and self-worth, the more likely that child will be resilient to the negative effects of experiencing racism.

The need has been established for a nuanced empirical investigation of how parents of young pre-adolescent Black boys make socialization choices and what contextual factors influence these choices. Previous studies (e.g., Coard et al., 2004; Suizzo et al., 2008) have not included in-depth person-centered analysis or considered parent and child influence on the racial socialization process.

The data produced by such an investigation would likely be relevant to research interventionists who are attempting to forward the call for interventions that promote racial socialization in Black families to buffer children from the deleterious effects of racism (e.g., Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Chen, 1998; Neblett et al., 2009; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Therefore, I conducted a qualitative investigation to explore parents' racial socialization attitudes and beliefs that affect the way they raise pre-adolescent Black boys.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

As many researchers have demonstrated, parents of Black children face unique challenges when socializing their children because of the racial bias their children are exposed to in an anti-Black, racist society (Coard et al., 2004; Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Chen, 1998; Neblett et al., 2009; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Chapters one and two elucidate the ways parents prepare and approach racially socializing their children. I am particularly interested in how parents' approach this process with their young Black boys. Due to racial and gender dynamics, Black boys experience disproportionately negative treatment in schools that leads to biased suspensions, over identification for special education, and inequitable grading practices. Moreover, Black boys' experiences with racial bias at a young age increases the likelihood that ideas of race become salient in conversations between parents and their sons. However, parents may not be prepared to have this conversation when negative racial experiences occur, especially parents of young children, (i.e., those 4 years-old and younger). The following research questions guided my study.

1. What situations influence the racial socialization conversations parents have with pre-adolescent Black boys?
 - a. What child-initiated situations influence parent racial socialization?
 - b. What school-based situations influence parent racial socialization?
2. How do parents understand and interpret their racial socialization actions and conversations with pre-adolescent Black Boys?
 - a. How do parents explain their reasons for racial socialization?

- b. What resources do parents use for racial socialization?

Methodology

I used qualitative analysis to address my research question because it allows researchers to capture thick and rich descriptions on how participants make sense of the phenomena of interest. Specifically, for this study I investigated how parents react in situations when ideas of race become particularly salient to them and their sons and how parents decide to address these situations with a child who may not be developmentally able to fully understand all of the implications of being a Black boy in America. By combining qualitative analysis with phenomenological methods (Smith & Osborn, 2003), I attempted to access the lived experiences of parents to better understand the beliefs and attitudes that inform their racial socialization practices during these critical moments. Phenomenology, as defined by Edmund Husserl, studies how individuals make meaning of and perceive their experiences (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Saldana, 2009; Smith, 1996). Phenomenological approaches work well when researchers aim to understand the participants' psychological world of beliefs, identities, constructs and emotional experiences, also referred to as a *lifeworld* (Giorgi & Giorgi; Saldana, 2009; Smith & Osborne, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology informed my analysis of the data collected during this study.

Phenomenological analysis is also unique in that researchers can use it to focus on the cognitive processes participants undergo such as those encountered when individuals engage in conversations about race and racial bias (Smith, 1996). For example, Smith (1996) asserted that a phenomenological approach provides clarity in areas of research that have been heavily dependent on quantitative research, as has been the case with the current parent racial socialization literature. Researchers (Pivčević, 1970; Smith & Osborne, 2008) asserted that

phenomenology aims to describe the underlying reasons for phenomena. Using phenomenological methods enabled me to contribute to the current understanding of the reasons parents cite for participating in racial socialization conversations when their pre-adolescent sons recognize the salience of race in various situations.

In addition to drawing on phenomenological methods for my interviews, I conducted site visits at a school attended by two of the study participants' children. Based on parent preferences, I also conducted parent interviews at either the families' homes or another location chosen by the parents. Specifically, I met with two parents at their homes and with the other four at locations they designated. These places included a co-working space, a library and a hotel lounge. My home observation reflects the approach Caughy (2002) used to study the socialization strategies of parents with young children. The field observations I collected illuminated both processes and spaces that are often missing pieces of content but relevant to the central inquiries of studies (Mulhall, 2003; Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006). These visits assisted with data triangulation and, consequently, enriched my analysis and conclusions. Observing how these children moved through their school environments and watching how they were treated provided context for the types of situations their parents chose to address related to school and issues related to race during our interviews.

Participants

In accordance with the recommendations outlined by Smith and Osborn (2009) for studies using phenomenological methods, six participants were recruited for this investigation. The participants of this study were parents of Black boys ranging from six to 12 years of age who lived in a southeastern city.

Also, in keeping with the recommendations of phenomenological researchers, my participants were a semi-homogeneous group (Smith & Osborn, 2009). These caregivers were similar in that they all were providing primary care to young Black boys that identified as African American and live in the same southeastern city. These families were dissimilar in familial structure, schools their children attended, marital status, educational attainment, and ethnic self-identification. However, differences seen across familial structures were inevitable, appropriate, and indicative of the diversity frequently observed among Black families (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison & Bishop, 1997).

Prior to recruiting parents for this study, for which I used convenience sampling, I started Village of Wisdom, a non-profit organization designed to support Black families. My work with Village of Wisdom has increased my interaction with and visibility in the Black community of the city where this study took place. To recruit parents, I sent a digital recruitment flyer to email lists that I had become familiar through my work with Village of Wisdom. In addition, I personally notified some parents whom I believed would diversify the range of socio-economic and status represented in this study. Table 1 provides more detailed information about each of the parents including job type, marital status and level of education. None of the parents selected for this study have participated in the substantive programming Village of Wisdom has provided, which includes our parent workshops but not our community events. This decision was made because Village of Wisdom's substantive programming aims to augment Black parents' racial socialization practices.

Data Collection Techniques

Semi-structured interviews. Smith and Osborn (2003) have asserted that the purpose of phenomenological analysis “is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world (p. 852).” This sort of analysis necessitates the following two-step process interviews enable: 1) the participants attempting to communicate their conceptualization of their experiences or life-world and 2) the researcher attempting to make sense of the information gathered from the interviews (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Scholars advocate for the use of semi-structured interviews for phenomenological analysis because such meetings provide the structure needed not only to gather, organize, and analyze data but they also allow the investigator the latitude to engage in deeper interrogation when interesting concepts emerge (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Saldana, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). In accordance with recommendations from the phenomenological literature, interviews with caregivers took, on average, 80 minutes. Although the interviews were semi-structured, funneling was used by starting the discussions with simple less-explicit prompts before moving to more specific questions if needed in order to reduce the impact of potentially leading questions (Smith & Osborn).

Site visits and field notes. I conducted site visits, visiting one school and one home with the aim of corroborating data collected from the parent interviews. During the site visits to the selected families’ homes and schools, I created field notes based on my observations of the general experiences of the children and the presence of African American cultural items. For my school site visit, I selected the only school attended by children from two different sets of participating parents and observed one of these sons in the school setting for 90 minutes. I chose to observe him because his father discussed instances of racial bias that he had encountered at

school. During this visit, I paid special attention to the ways this child was treated in the school and the quality of his interactions with teachers and other students. In my field notes, I also observed the presence or absence of African American cultural items in the school. During my school site visit, I listened for and made notes when I heard discussions about race or cultural history and included those conversations in my field notes as well. In addition, I conducted a site visit to one parent's home that lasted 20 minutes and wrote down remarks this father made during and after the interview. These methods were inspired and framed by the analysis and work of Caughy et al. (2002) who validated a survey instrument that assesses the number of Afrocentric items in the home.

Data Analysis

Few studies of racial socialization research literature have explicitly investigated how parents approach conversations with children when issues of race intersect with academic performance. Thematic analysis involves the iterative identification of shared explicit and implicit psychological phenomena inherent in the ideas of the participants. Therefore, I used thematic analysis, which is cited as methodologically appropriate for phenomenological approaches (Smith & Osborn, 2003). For example, MacIntyre (1984) suggested that thematic analysis welcomes contradictions that arise in the narration and representation of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Therefore, by using this methodological approach, I was well positioned to address the complex nature of the synergistic and nuanced cognitions that informed the racial socialization practices of the parents in this study (Neblett et al., 2012).

For a theoretical framework to guide my analysis of my research, I relied on Lesane-Brown's description of racial socialization as consisting of "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” (Lesane-Brown, p. 400, 2006). Using this conceptual framework, I was able to focus my thematic analysis on phenomena related to racial socialization, and I organized the themes that emerged by my research questions.

Following the practices and recommendations of phenomenological researchers including Lee and Koro-Lungberg (2007) and Moustaka (1994), I compiled individual studies of each participant I interviewed. Compiling and presenting individualized studies facilitated an analysis of the psychological world of beliefs, identities, constructs and emotional experiences that underpinned the racial socialization parents reflected on during interviews. Likewise, the cases of individual parents helped position the findings of this study within the work of previous researcher. (e.g., Cooper et al., 2014; Neblett et al., 2008; White-Johnson et al., 2011) whose studies leverage profiles to capture the complex, synergistic racial socialization messages parents share with their children. I used these parent studies to inform conclusions about the type of synergistic racial socialization profile parents represented, thus allowing for comparison to those profiles presented in the previously mentioned studies.

I used the paper and pencil method for initial coding and all thematic analysis. Following guidelines for best practice, I read the interview transcripts in their entirety prior to making notes about my thoughts related to the transcript, thus giving me time to take a holistic perspective of the verbal data shared by participants (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Going through transcripts the second time, I demarcated each transition in meaning in the transcript. I attributed an initial code to every segment of words that represented a unique idea, action, or thought to a theme. During this process, I also took notes about themes, psychological perspectives, and ideas that are within each meaning unit. In a last read of the transcript, I finalized my notes and assessments of the

events and provided a description, which is also described as a transformation of each meaning unit. Once completed, I assessed all the transformations gathered and created themes that were essential summations that condensed participant experiences into ideas that seem to be most common and salient (Giorgi & Giorgi).

Authenticity. To honor the voices of the participants I interviewed, I provided multiple opportunities for member checking to verify and validate my analysis of the narratives that were shared. Member checking is a tactic qualitative researchers frequently use to explore how participants experience and construct knowledge around phenomena (Glense, 2006). In the context of this work, my analysis and presentation of these caregivers' true voices and intentions are the basis of validity in this study. Explicitly, I established two check points for member checking: 1) a post-interview check-in where caregivers reviewed and commented on their transcripts and shared any thoughts that may have arisen after the interview, and 2) a secondary post-interview opportunity was extended to ensure that my presentations of their voices and analyses of their ideas reflected their intentions. That said, due to the busy schedules of the parents in this study, five of the six participants only wanted to conduct the initial post-interview check-in and indicated they trusted the direction I was going in with the study. I promised all parents that I would share the final version of this manuscript with them prior to publishing in case additional changes needed to be made.

Researcher positionality. Positionality is important to discuss because qualitative research tradition necessitates reflective practice in interpreting the data collected and embracing how the researcher's previous experiences impacts the presentation of findings (Madison, 2005). I am a Black man and an only child who was reared in the suburbs of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, by two parents. My parents moved me from Clayton County to Fayette County so that I

could attend schools that had higher academic rankings. This move evidences the privilege of growing up in a middle-class household. My father worked for an airline company as an aircraft mechanic and my mother was a second-grade teacher. I always enjoyed school as a child, and due to my parents' interests (i.e., mechanics and education), I was encouraged to love science. As a result, I was in a perpetual search for an experiment to conduct or an object to tinker with.

Reflecting on my childhood, my mother was the major verbal racial socializer in my life. She frequently told me about Black scientists and inventors and was the first one to help me tie my greatest potential to people who shared my skin color. I do not remember ever being teased or questioned about my Blackness. Atlanta and its surrounding suburbs provide a unique context in America where it is more common to see Black people who possess economic wealth. Consequently, unlike in other places I have lived, it was common to see middle-class and even affluent Black families.

I attended a Historically Black University, majored in Chemistry, and subsequently taught physical science as a middle and high school teacher. All of my teaching experiences occurred in schools where the overwhelming majority of the students were Black with a few Latino students. The schools where I taught were Title 1 schools as the majority of my students lived in low-income areas. I am now a researcher and the leader of an organization that I to work with Black families to ensure that children grow up to embrace a positive racial identity; my organization also encourages the families with whom I work to disrupt the racially biased policies and practices of American schools.

I recognize that my life is in many ways reflected in the research I have conducted. From my rearing as a child to my own participation in educating Black youth to my current work as a non-profit leader that works with families on topics related to racial socialization, I bring these

experiences to the analysis that I have conducted. Being aware of this positionality, I recognize how the strength in my experiences not only deepens my understanding of the data to be collected but also may bias my interpretations. Therefore, I utilized reflexive journaling and member checking to maintain my commitment to reflecting the voices of the participants who lent their experiences to this study.

Reflexive Journal

I kept a reflexive journal during the process of interviewing so that I might maintain and consider my thoughts deliberately during the data analysis. It is a common and even suggested practice for researchers to maintain journals while conducting qualitative research because this allows researchers to capture their most immediate reactions, which can be lost quickly over time (Tribe, Xiao & Chambers, 2012). I began to use my journal as the interviews commenced and continued to use it during site visits. At the conclusion of my data collection, I looked at my journal to see how my own perspectives and thoughts shifted across the entire process.

Reciprocity

All participants were given a \$50 gift card as compensation for their time. In addition, all informants were offered access to Village of Wisdom's services, which includes culturally affirming community events, one-on-one academic planning, school advocacy support, and parent support group meetings. I hope that the information collected from this study will contribute to the larger national conversation about the challenges facing Black families as they support their child's matriculation through the US education system. In turn, I hope that parents, researchers and educators will be able to use this research to apply political pressure to policy leaders, school boards, and principals to invest in programming that will benefit their children's access to a more culturally responsive education.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of this study as they relate to the research questions presented in Chapter three. This chapter begins with an introduction to the lifeworlds of the parents who participated in my study. Consistent with the studies that draw from phenomenology, I introduce each parent by using parts of his or her interview to provide background information that gives a context for understanding how each person's experiences have shaped his or her racial socialization decisions. Next, I discuss the themes that arose during the semi-structured interviews with parents. To guide my analysis, I used Lesane-Brown's (2006) framing of racial socialization as specific processes and actions that communicate to a younger generation how race is conceptualized. After briefly discussing these themes, I present examples of those themes organized by my research questions (see p. 23 for research questions). I have also provided two supplementary tables that can be found in the appendix: Table 1 provides parent pseudonyms, employment, education and marital status, and Table 2 provides parent pseudonyms, age of first racial socialization conversation, and a brief description of the cue that first made the child aware that he was Black.

Parent Socialization Lifeworld Profiles

Phenomenological methods encourage the understanding of the lifeworld of participants (Smith, 1996). Consequently, in this chapter, I provide a synopsis of the lifeworld of each participant as revealed during my interviews with him or her. I focused on the socialization practices parents said they use with their sons and highlight the complex factors that impact the parents' overall socialization methods. As previously discussed, I provide descriptions of the

types of racial socialization messages each parent reported using based on their interview data. I used the naming conventions from Lesane-Brown and colleagues RSQ-t (2006) to label the types of socialization messages parents reported using. The racial socialization types included in the RSQ-t are: Racial Pride, Racial Barriers, Egalitarian, Self-Worth, Negative (messages about Black people), and Socialization Behaviors.

Dr. Clark. Prior to our interview, I had never met Dr. Clark, a social science researcher. However, she had attended two of the large-scale community events hosted by my organization, Village of Wisdom. She arranged for us to meet at a co-working facility (i.e., a building, usually an office space typically used by people who work as freelancers, contractors, and small business operators) that also offers childcare. Dr. Clark was the only parent of color on site at the time of our interview. She smiled when she greeted me at the door. When we talked over the phone prior to our interview, Dr. Clark remarked that she was interested in my study because her own research focused on racial disparities and health. She found out about the research study from an email that was shared over a listserv she receives due to her engagement with a national organization for moms of color named Mocha Moms, which consists of city-based chapters. Dr. Clark has two boys ages seven and five. During Dr. Clark's interview, I asked her to focus her responses to her 7 year-old-son, although she often referred to both of her children.

During our interview, Dr. Clark shared several key points about her past and present experiences that have affected the racial socialization decisions she makes. Dr. Clark's experiences and decisions differed from those of the other participants. Using her own words, I have framed her approach to socialization as ongoing, non-verbal and unsure. I have organized my description of Dr. Clark's lifeworld into three themes that emerged during my analysis of her

interview data: Self-Reflection, Voice of Family, and Historically Black College and University (HBCU) experience.

Self-reflection. While reflecting on her own experiences with experiencing racial bias and racism, Dr. Clark acknowledges that conversations with her son about race will be necessary.

Because he, at some point in life, will experience, even if it's just being really aware, "Wow, I'm the only Black person in this room, in this space." What does that feel like? That's like me personally, I haven't really experienced... I have but I haven't experienced a lot of instances in my life of, "Wow, that person really was racist towards me." It's only been a few times that I can really honestly say that, but I have more of the experience of "I don't feel included in this space" or "I'm in a space where I'm highly aware that I'm the only Black person here." What's that like and how to navigate that. Even if it's just some of those I guess racial instances, I think having some of those conversations with him would be really cool.

Dr. Clark also described talking to her children about race as a process that is one task in a long list of parent priorities.

Yeah, I think so. We struggle with so many other little things in our world that to sit down and have this conversation feels like that feeling that has to be a really good thing. You're just dealing with day-to-day stuff, "like get up, go brush your teeth, get dressed." It's like you get in the weeds of parenting so that sometimes it's hard to save room or space for these types of conversations. We will have some of these deep conversations sometimes in the car. Sometimes it's funny because he had that conversation, sometimes he will bring up certain things about God or spirituality. He has, in the past, brought up stuff. He's a deep thinker, I just think especially at home in the day-to-day you have to do this and you have to get this, it's hard to leave space and time to have this conversation. Then you wait until, it's probably never the perfect time, you wait until something happens where you're like, "Okay, let's talk about that now." You know what I mean? It's nice to reflect on that.

Dr. Clark also reflected on the emotional toll societal expectations she believes require her to shift or change her identity to gain acceptance in certain social spaces have had on her. Dr. Clark provided the following explanation for her reluctance to racially socialize her children:

I think for me, and there's this book called "Shifting" I don't know if you've heard of it before but it's the idea of shifting between parts of your identity. I think I do that. It's a difference of who you're around, right? Right? I think that's probably my biggest hang up when it comes to these issues. It's just . . . I feel like it's tiresome and sometimes it's like why do I do that and why do I feel like I need to do that? Why can't I just be constant or

more constant? I think that's probably my biggest. I want him to be fluent in both worlds. I feel like it is a survival strategy to use but then it's like I would love to just feel comfortable and I want him to feel that way. I want him to feel comfortable.

HBCU experience. The questions Dr. Clark raises about feeling comfortable with herself and not having to change herself are also reflected in her description of how her undergraduate experience at a HBCU shaped her self-perception:

I just feel like there's a lot of intangibles that go into that. Me coming from a predominately White high school, going to FAMU [Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University], I just think that was, in a lot of ways, a really formative experience. I didn't even stay there as long as I probably should have. I graduated early and looking back I'm like, "What were you thinking? You should have stayed to just enjoy it." Anyway, yeah that could be something. At the same time, I feel like if they didn't it's not the end of the world either. Maybe they will have to get that some other way, from somewhere else."

For me, it was seeing the diversity within a group of Black people for the first time in that way. You just had a lot of diversity in terms of both people who were there straight for academics, people who were there to party. I don't know, I just think I gained a great appreciation for my Blackness and I felt like I could fit in, it was a space for me. Maybe I didn't fit in all the spaces for different reasons but there was a space for me. Then the sense of connection in private you then carry with you. I think I underestimated.

Family voices. Dr. Clark went further back into her life history and shared how her parents approached socializing her:

It's hard because I feel like my parents raised me to be a little bit more sheltered. I think that's the place I'm coming from. How do I protect them [her sons], right? It's not like my parents were always like [you are Black and this is how folks will treat you because of it], I don't think they ever really said it to me. They were more of just always do your best. Always try your best. Always do your best work. Always shoot for an A. I have done that, but I don't know.

Based on the data Dr. Clark provided during our interview and her verification of this information through member checking, I confirmed the following conclusions about the types of racial socialization messages Dr. Clark used. She does not often talk with her son about race. Consequently, she participates in few, if any, racial barrier or racial pride conversations at this point in her children's lives and never shares negative messages about Black people. She does

participate in socialization behaviors as evidenced by her sharing positive images of Black people with her sons, but, based on her interview, this sharing of positive images is through exposure to people and cultural events but not explicit verbal communication about Blackness. She also stated she does not talk about sharing egalitarian messages with her children, and, in fact, referred to colorblind messages as “useless.” Most likely, she frequently shares messages of self-worth with her children. When I reached out to Dr. Clark for member checking, she confirmed receipt of the data and analysis I presented to her based on her interview, and she provided no feedback suggesting she disagreed with this presentation.

Nzinga. Prior to this meeting, I had never met Nzinga. She arranged for us to meet at her home on a weekend. Nzinga works for a tech company and frequently transports her children from school to after-school activities during the week. Nzinga lives in a suburban neighborhood with well-manicured lawns, newer model cars, and well-maintained home exteriors. Upon arriving, I noticed her two sons were outside playing while their father watched over them. I also noticed a couple of White children playing outside in the neighborhood. When Nzinga arrived home, she seemed to be driving a fairly new, well-maintained mini-van. She was a few minutes late for the interview because her daughter, who is 9 years old, was getting fitted for braces.

Nzinga welcomed me with a smile into her home. Upon entering, I met her two sons, ages five and seven. The younger of the two sons struck me as especially confident; unprompted by his mother, he looked me in the eye and stretched out his hand for me to shake. On the other hand, Nzinga had to remind her older son, “to look at whom you are speaking to.” As I walked into Nzinga’s home, I noticed a rather large, professionally shot family portrait on the wall. In the picture, each of the five members of the family was wearing Ankara print (i.e., a printed fabric originating from west African fashion) clothing. While walking to the dining room table

where we held the interview, I observed Black art, Black Literature, and pictures of Black people spread across the entire home. It was nice, neatly kept and very spacious. Before the interview began, Nzinga and her husband told the children they would need to find some sort of work to do upstairs for the next two hours. After some final discussion, grabbing of snacks, and other movement, the children and their father all filed upstairs.

I have organized the perspectives Nzinga shared with me during her interview to provide a sense of her lifeworld as it relates to racial socialization. At the time of this interview, she had three children, her aforementioned sons and a nine-year-old daughter. For the purposes of this study our conversation centered on the experiences of her seven-year-old son. Nzinga, like two other study participants, reported frequently checking-in with her children as well as pursuing teachable moments. For example, Nzinga, like the two other two parents (Mansa and Thurgood, yet to be introduced), stated that she regularly asked her children how they were feeling and how people were treating them. She also stated she continuously searched the children's environment for opportunities to share facts and ideas related to racial socialization. Like another, yet-to-be introduced parent, Assata, Nzinga reported she began introducing pro-Black messages to her children before they had reached their third birthdays. When I analyzed the transcript of my interview with Nzinga, I noted three recurring themes about her lifeworld that seemed to inform her racial socialization decisions: family voices, consistent check-ins, and HBCU experiences.

Consistent check-ins. During our interview, Nzinga described regular efforts to check in with her sons: "I'm more like 'Is everyone nice to you? Is anyone saying crazy things to you?' It's probably, you know, every other day check in, that's how frequently I check in. I don't want him to not remember an incident if I wait too long. We have like a 20-minute drive to school so it's plenty of time for conversation."

Family voices. Nzinga also made it clear that her mother is the source of her desire to share Black pride messages with her children. "My mother is pro-Black to the nth degree..." Nzinga also explicitly stated she did not want to be just like her mother in socializing her own children as she indicated her mother took the socializations messages she received past the point of racial pride.

And my mother, who was actually a Black Panther in college, who grew up in Chicago . . . My dad was from New York, and they met in college and relocated to New York and that's where they raised my sister and me. Her . . . She's experienced so much racism that she grew up really hating White people and, I hate to say it, she raised us hoping we would hate White people. We didn't; we made our own decisions. Still, you know how . . . That's how you have so many racist White people because their parents did what she [her mother]' did, and they raised their children to hate Black people. Then they grew up mistreating Black people.

This statement provides more contexts about her mother and her mother's skin color; it also illustrates the distinctions between the ways Nzinga and her husband talk to their children about race, an issue she raised several times during the interview.

They now know there are certain features that are more common among Black people. They know we have thick hair, they know that we are browner in complexion, the majority. I mean, my mother is very light-skinned; I've explained why granny's light-skinned . . . her great-great, great-grandfather, you know, her great, great, great-grandmother was raped by her slave master. I said that, and that's why my husband was like looking at me like, "Don't go any deeper." So I've explained why granny is so light.

HBCU experience. Finally, the time Nzinga spent at an HBCU also appears to have affected the way she approaches racial socialization.

I did the dual degree program. I have an engineering degree from Georgia Tech and I have a chemistry degree from Spelman. I had a fantastic GPA from Spelman, and my GPA from Georgia Tech was mediocre. When I graduated, companies were more excited that I had gone to Georgia Tech and graduated with this mediocre GPA than that I had attended Spelman with this superb GPA. They weighted that lower GPA more than the entire GPA based on it coming from Georgia Tech. It was amazing.

After a while I just started pushing that at the top of my résumé. It was like "I've got to go with what's working." It was amazing how companies, interview after interview after interview, were like . . . They would peruse your résumé and say, "Wow, you went to

Georgia Tech." Like, literally, I graduated Spelman at like 3.5, at Georgia Tech my GPA was a 3.1, 3.0 maybe. But they were like, "Wow." I don't say it was bad, but, you know, 3.5 is way better than a 3.0. They were like, "Wow, you went to Georgia Tech." I'd be like, in the beginning, I explained to them that because you are Black, you have to work twice as good as your White friends.

When I analyzed the transcript of my interview with Nzinga, I found evidence that she frequently promoted her children's racial pride and participated in socialization behaviors, but, unlike the other participants, she does seem to promote some mistrust of White people. But I found no evidence Nzinga has ever shared egalitarian messages or negative messages about Black people. Based on my analysis of my interview with Nzinga, I assumed that she did not share messages of self-worth outside of those that also affirmed her children's racial identity. Nzinga confirmed my conclusions through member checking.

Thurgood. Thurgood, a married attorney who has two children, lives in a quiet, well-kept, suburban neighborhood in a home that has at least three bedrooms and two baths. He frequently works from home, so I interviewed him just before noon during his break between meetings. Thurgood and I initially met at church at least four years ago, and our familiarity led him to provide much detail during our interview. I should also note that Thurgood responded to one of the recruitment flyers for this study I circulated in the community; however, when he initially contacted me about participating in it, I did not realize we already knew each other.

Thurgood, dressed in a casual jogging suit, welcomed me into his home. We quickly began the interview because I was under the impression that we had a fixed amount of time before his next phone meeting. We met in his dining room, which seemed to double as his office, and I noted many work-related books on his dining room table. After the interview, we discussed the impending birth of my first child, and he shared some tips about preparing for this event.

When I analyzed my interview with Thurgood, I detected four themes from his lifeworld that supported his racial socialization decisions: religion, consistent check-ins, analysis of oppression, and HBCU experience. Our interview focused on his son Martin, who was six years old at the time of this interview. Despite of our focus on Martin, Thurgood also frequently referred to conversations he had with his daughter, Ruby age 10, about some of her experiences.

Religion. At several points in his interview, Thurgood reflected on the role his faith and religion play in his approach to racially socializing his son. In the section below, Thurgood discusses how his beliefs interact with the conversations he has with his son about Black identity.

So, from the museums and things like that, so we've talked about it from an historical standpoint, what Blacks have achieved, how Blacks have been treated because of the color of their skin, and where we are now. There's family, there's churches, et cetera. I haven't had that conversation with him about what it means to be Black. I guess if I did, I would start from the Bible. I would start from God's perspective and how the issue of race, in my opinion, really wasn't prevalent, from God's point of view, and how you had the creation of color in order to enslave, in order to divide and separate and segregate.

It may have been regional differences [that gave people a basis to mistreat those who differed from them]. It may have been language differences. It may've even been colors, you know, in terms of color of skin, but the actual, in the, I guess, the race identification kind of thing, I think came about from more evil forces [and led to] this idea that White is better, and anything other than that is less than.

That's why I think, from my conversations with them [his children], the spiritual conversations are just as important when it comes to who they are and how they identify themselves and others. I haven't gotten to those conversations with them yet, but we do talk about how we fit into the world and how we may be treated or not treated because of the color of our skin, [by] anybody [including members] within the African American community.

Consistent check-ins. Thurgood stated that he likes to check-in with his children frequently so that he can get a sense of how they understand the world and make certain they are safe and not being violated by anyone. I often say to them, "You may be going on a field trip, whatever, or just be at school, someone at the playground, to try to revisit so it [the idea that

someone could harm you anywhere] lets you know that, okay, we talked about it six months ago, and we're going to talk about it again.”

Thurgood also explained why he considers check-ins useful socialization tools. He stated that he uses check-ins

To keep them aware, but also to empower [them], so that the more we can talk about it, [so] when situations do come up, [they will] be a little prepared for it, and be able to feel empowered on how to respond, because, children learn through repetition. That's why I try to go over stuff again and again, whether it's school, whether it's sports, it's the same thing with a song. A nursery rhyme says same thing over and over again.

HBCU appreciation. Thurgood also expressed his appreciation for HBCUs in general and expounded on his reverence for the one he attended:

I experienced that coming from an HBCU and going to a predominately White, you know, for grad school, and then even in law school, the same way, is that you have people that, because you know, I went to Bethune-Cookman and I'm in the room with people from UC Berkeley and Harvard and all these other things, and the fact that, you know, I found that my education was more profitable.

Later in the interview, Thurgood provided more detail about his experience at his HBCU.

Now, the professors and all that kind of stuff may have come from [Predominantly white universities], you know, had advanced CVs or whatever, but the fact that my preparation [from an HBCU] was better to compete in the marketplace than some of my Black and White peers who went to these [Predominately White] universities. I was very proud of that. That gave me a different perspective when I got to grad school, and they were like, you know, we hadn't submitted a thesis, we hadn't did ... I did that undergrad, you know what I mean?

A lot of these things that we had in terms of preparation that I learned [at Bethune-Cookman] taught me a lot about education in general, and that the name didn't signify that it was better, and so, not to feel like because I'm in this room, that I can't compete with these other folk. I think the same thing with my kids, especially where they are. Ruby [Thurgood's Daughter started Montessori. Martin's school [Local Black- Led Private School], and so, they had different foundations, but the foundations that they did have were very good for them and where they are right now.

I think part of it is that education, but my goal, again, for him, is to become more educated about who he is, about his existence in this world in different environments, whether it's church, whether it's school, whether it's athletics, whether it's another

association that he's in, to recognize race, and to recognize how it impacts those environments, and how it impacts him. It could be different in every environment.

Analysis of oppression. At several points in the interview it became apparent that Thurgood has a systemic understanding of how racial oppression works. That is, Thurgood talks about racism not on just an interpersonal level but also frequently refers to the policies, societal norms, and laws that reinforce racial bias in this country.

With Martin, he hasn't encountered that [racism] just yet. I anticipate that he will, at some point, because you just still, you know, the school is a microcosm of our environment. As he gets older, I think, I think right now, I have to be the one to kind of determine whether or not there is some kind of racial component to this. When I say racial component, I mean the actual interaction, because I think that race is involved in everything, but I don't think he's encountered it as much as Ruby [has], and I think it's because of the hue of their skin [His daughter has darker-skin, while his son is lighter-skin].

In addition, Thurgood offered the following systemic analysis of the oppression that exists in our society:

The more people talk about they don't see race and all this kind of stuff, I think, you know, it just perpetuates the problem, and makes it worse, because race is in everything that we do, all the decisions that are made, whether it's from the federal government, local government, schools, et cetera, jobs, employers, promotions, demotions.

Race is who you love, who you can't love, who you won't love, who you won't start a family with, where you go to church, who you go to church with, it's involved in everything [including] who your friends are. To be able to just acknowledge it, and to be able to be honest about where we are with this issue . . . I think, . . . if we had more conversations like that with parents as well as the children, I think we would be better off then, and that's why I like that some of the, [actually] a lot of the conversations and people that we interact with of all races, and you know, faith-based organization, et cetera, racial equity and OAR [hosting racial equity conversations].

I think, you know, those conversations need to be had, in order for us to co-exist and to break down some of these issues that we're having, and we can't do it by ourselves. Well, I mean, Black people can't do it by themselves--we never have. We've always had other races join in support, because these other races are also a part of the races that are the oppressors. You know what I'm saying?

While reviewing Thurgood's transcript, I found evidence that he frequently discussed African American history with his children and looked for opportunities to build his son's racial pride. There was no evidence that Thurgood promoted mistrust in White people with his children. In addition, Thurgood did not mention sharing egalitarian or negative messages about Black people with his children but did say he conveys messages of self-worth to them. Thurgood has corroborated these observations through member checking.

Ms. Bethune. At the time of my interview, I had known Ms. Bethune for about two years because she waits tables at a local café I frequent. Ms. Bethune decided it would be best that we meet at the local library. She was pursuing a degree in early childhood education from a local community college at the time of our interview and talked about taking classes online and having a packed schedule. She was excited about the prospect of nearing the end of the program and one day opening her own childcare center. Just before our meeting she called to let me know she would be a few minutes late because she needed to tie up some loose ends at work.

After the interview, I organized Ms. Bethune's lifeworld into themes of immigrant status, the voice of family, and having her color-blindness disrupted. Although I was uncertain of Ms. Bethune's nationality prior to our interview, I soon learned she was from the Ivory Coast and was raised in the United States. Ms. Bethune is the mother of two children, a boy and girl. Her daughter is 11 and her son is seven. Our interview focused on Ms. Bethune's son, Biko.

Immigrant status. Ms. Bethune told me she often reflects on her immigrant status and how it impacts her understanding of race in the American context. She referenced her citizenship at several points in the interview but this quote best captures how her status contributed to how she racially socialized her child.

I think my mentality is different than an African American's. I know my mentality is different [from] African American's. At the end of the day, he [my son] is an African

American and I think the best [person] will be for somebody who was born here, who grew up here, who did all that [and] could be able to answer those questions better than I can at the end of the day because I didn't grow up with racism. It's kind of hard for me.

Voice of family. For this theme, I will provide greater detail about Ms. Bethune's data and what it suggests to me and use her words to show how her family members and relationships have influenced her perspective on racial socialization. I identify two specific ways her family and family history influences how she addresses issues of race with her son: 1) Ms. Bethune will often call upon her family members to address her son's social justice and race-related questions. 2) Ms. Bethune frequently reflected on her White brother-in-law, who helped to raise her.

When he asked me about slavery, especially with the Rosa Parks thing. He said "She used to be a slave. "What does it mean to be a slave?" I answered a couple of questions. "Yeah, well, slaves, there are people here and they made them do work that they didn't want to do and didn't pay them and beat them." I told him go ask Grandma. (Grandma is Ms. Bethune's sister, who is 20 years older).

Also, her sister has had an influence on the socialization of her children as can be seen here:

I've asked her "Are you mad because you're Black?" She was like, "No. The color of my skin is beautiful. I'm proud to be Black." I said, "What does that mean? Proud to be Black?" She said, "Because I like myself for who I am, so it doesn't matter." That's what she told me. [Interviewer: "Where do you think that came from?"] Probably my sister. Probably my sister.

The following comments also reveal her sister's impact: "She's [Ms. Bethune's sister] always made that clear to them [her sister's children] and I think she feels that society has a view of Black people, and she never wanted her kids to be that statistic. She's always talked about it. Even with my kids, she has, too."

Ms. Bethune also explained the relationship she has with her brother-in-law. "For one thing, like I said, my sister's husband is White. This is a man who has taken care of me since I was a kid. He took care of my whole family back home."

Color-blind. During the interview, Ms. Bethune often referred to her preference not to discuss race. However, she also discussed how she felt that her color-blind understanding of the world increasingly did not seem to match various current day situations.

When I came here and I'd say, I didn't see color. I would talk to anybody Oh, one thing I didn't like when I came here was most of the African Americans would always say that "Oh, White people think they're superior to us. White people think that and think this." I didn't want my kids growing up having that mentality, so I never really talked about race because I wanted them to think that there was no difference.

Ms. Bethune's understanding of racism has recently changed.

I promise you, I was one of those people who would go around and say "there's no racism." A lot of people like African Americans always want to hold grudges and are always talking about racism. I'm one of those (who), never liked talking about racism. I always say it was in the past. Let's leave it in the past. But, the world we're dealing with now . . . Yeah.

In addition, Ms. Bethune addressed the reasons why she needed others to explain racism to her son.

I need somebody unbiased to be present to explain [this issue] to him more and better than I can. Yes, I was gullible. Yes, I believed there was no racism for the longest time. It wasn't until Obama came along that I really started to see how racist this country was. I think I'm learning racism with him.

Based on my interview, I concluded that Ms. Bethune offers her son little to no positive racial affirmation. However, she did seem to communicate frequent messages of self-worth to him. In addition, some of Ms. Bethune's statements about Black people seemed negative for example, "Oh, one thing I didn't like when I came here was most of the African Americans would always say that 'Oh, White people think they're superior to [us]. White people think that [and] this.'" I am unclear if the sentiment that engendered her two previous statements ever manifests itself during her discussions of race with her children. Finally, due to her focus on raising color-blind children, I assume she does not frequently share racial barrier messages but does convey

egalitarian ones. Due to challenges with scheduling I was unable to corroborate these observations through member checking.

Assata. Prior to interviewing Assata I had not met her. She found out about my study via Facebook, a social media site. Assata asked me to meet her at a local hotel that has some meeting rooms. Due to the gravity of the interview topic, Assata, wanted to be in a place she enjoyed and also one where she could get a drink if she wanted to. Early in our interview, two White men walked into our room, and Assata quickly directed them to go elsewhere. From the onset of the interview, it became clear that she seizes control of situations when she can.

Two themes – immigration and systemic oppression - emerged as Assata talked about her origins and the experiences that seemed to most directly affect her racial socialization decisions. This interview focused on Assata's only child, her eleven-year-old son.

Immigration. Assata reflected on her cultural background both in terms of how it impacted her understanding of her own racial identity when growing up and also how this background has contributed to the way she has guided her son's racial identity development.

Yeah. I guess, my mother made it a point to let me know that in this country, I was going to get treated differently from my sister. She didn't say why, and as time passed I would see people treat my sister differently. I thought, why are they treating us differently? I could never put my finger on it.

I don't think my child would ever [identify as white], my child has only seen a picture of my mother and his father's father. He's never seen my father. I don't communicate with my father anymore, and I won't ever. I talk about him in passing, but just kind of like he's in the distance. My father is Dominican, I have an Italian last name, a Sicilian last name, but he's White. I just didn't want my kid to have that whole, "I'm part White," whatever. I let him know that because of the slave trade everyone in the Dominican Republic is mixed. Therefore, everyone is Black. I default to Black. (Laughing) Even if Dominicans are in denial themselves, and I say, "Well, those people that don't say that, they don't know any better than to be proud of themselves." That's how I picture that narrative. They don't know to be proud of themselves.

Assata's cultural background has contributed to feelings of solitude and exclusion.

Yeah, I don't really know. Yes, I'm a person of color, but I've never really been fully accepted anywhere. I've always been given shade by everybody, I'm always on the fringe of everything. I would love to find other Dominicans like me. Unfortunately, I think, they're all in New York [Laughing]. I like that North Carolina has four seasons, I like that my ex-husband is co-parenting with me, so I just got to suck it up.

Analysis of oppression. Assata's understanding of systems of oppression seems to arise from educational experiences she had after high school. As an artist and media maker Assata is familiar with movie, television and performance art spaces. The excerpt below includes her observations about the way racism interacts with that space.

I just started looking up more information and then, by the time I got to college I had access to all these books. Then when I read stuff I was like, "so that weird feeling that I had? Okay, they're teaching the wrong history. Why are they teaching the wrong history?" I think I started to formulate those ideas when I was probably 18 or 19. Then through my 20s I started to notice that if I presented myself in one manner I would be treated one way in corporate America then if I presented myself in another manner. It's all about how people see you. Then I took screen writing, and then I started studying characters, and then I started seeing how people were cast, people of color were cast, and then I started to look at the news. Then I started to see that people of color are always cast in a negative light.

Assata's systemic analysis conveys a deep understanding of how oppression impacts both racial situations and those involving gender.

Men aren't told the things that women are told, and Black men aren't told the things that Black women are told. You show any kind of emotion if you're a Black woman then you're a crazy Black woman or the angry Black woman. There really is no equivalent to that. Because we're in a patriarchal society we figure, "well, at least he's a man. He's a Black man, but at least he's a man." It would be harder to raise a strong Black woman in this country.

Assata also offered an analysis of colorism.

Yeah, I remember we were very nervous as to what gender the child would be and how the child would look because we know that society treats you based off of how you look. We were so grateful we had a boy because it's easier to raise a boy than a girl, we think. Yeah, we were happy to know we were going to raise a boy instead of a girl. Then after he was born, skin tone is a thing, we started to see where he would lay in the spectrum of skin tone, and my now ex-husband would joke and say, "He's light skinned, he's going to be fine" [laughs]. I would say, "Don't say that." He said, "It's true." I'm like, "All right. You're right, but okay." It would always be something that we would talk about.

From the data collected it is apparent that Assata frequently affirms her son's Blackness. She does not share egalitarian messages nor does she support negative messages about Black people in any form. More than likely, she often sends self-worth messages to her son daily. In addition, she discusses racial barriers with her son but only when events occur to him directly. Assata verified these conclusions via member checking.

Mansa. Mansa asked me to meet him at a local library for our interview. Mansa is the husband of a colleague of mine whom I have known for about three years. We communicated by text leading up to the interview to figure out the logistics of our impending interview. Mansa and his wife share a car so he needed to meet at a time that was convenient for his family. That said, Mansa does not over-communicate; I would characterize his communication style using the common refrain "What's understood doesn't need to be said." Accordingly, during our interview, I had to ask Mansa several times to unpack his explanations.

Mansa has two children, a son Freelon, age 9, and a daughter Cleopatra, who is 8. Our interview focused on his son, Freelon. He is very involved with the male mentoring group at his church. Prior to working with his church's mentoring group, Mansa was involved in a number of mentoring organizations and jobs where he frequently engaged with Black boys from low-income neighborhoods. Mansa proudly told me about all the connections he had made in the city because of his community engagement and continued relationships with several of the young people with whom he previously worked, who are now adults.

Two themes, *race in sports* and *logic and science*, emerged as Mansa talked about the experiences and goals he had for his son related to racial socialization. The race and sports theme manifests itself in Mansa's use of stories, he presented as case studies to illustrate how race

works in America. Mansa frequently used allegories, metaphors and similes to communicate his ideas. He also referenced his background in Biology multiple times during his interview.

Race in sports. Here Mansa describes a situation that happened in sports that was well covered by the media involving a former Black professional basketball player and how he found the situation to be symbolic of how Black people must navigate racial bias in this country.

It's just like the Charles Oakley [former Knicks basketball player, who is Black] situation. When he got kicked out of Madison Square Garden the other night. He was there . . . next thing you know you've got twelve people around. And, he got sucked into it, and next thing you know he got on the ground [being forced to stay there by the police]. When you've got a situation like that, calm is the only way out. No need to get upset 'cause you're outnumbered [By White people who see you as a threat]. Stay cool. Relax. It'll die down.

You trying to deescalate or are you trying to escalate? Either way you wanna go it's on you. That's what I learned. I don't fight because fighting is just like, "I gotta take you out . . . I gotta get ya." Lemme just stay cool, man, and just get out of the way. I'm not gonna take it there with you and I'm not gonna let you make me go there with you.

So just chill out. Chill out. There's 360 degrees in a circle, man. You've got any way you wanna go. When you're ready to go find your peace and fun, but don't get caught up into that

Logic and science. The passage below provides an example of how he used science allegorically to explain the complex demands of his responsibility to prepare his son to confront racial bias and discrimination.

Let me put it to you like this ... I'm real good for making [analogies] . . . It's like, okay. So, say for instance, that is like an illness, right. Racism. It tries to intersect in your child's life. I'm just the antibody. I'm inoculating him. I'm making him aware, when you feel like there is or see something like this, this is how you respond. This is how you cope with it. This is how you deal with it. This is how you live with it, right?

It's just like getting a knock of flu vaccine. I'm going to hit you with some weakness, but that weakness is gonna help you defend the real deal. I'm going to give you a little bit of this knowledge, man. 'Cause I'm hearing you talk to me about it again. It's infiltrating you. It's trying to insult you in a sense, right? So, here is the antibody for what it is you're dealing with. This is gonna help you out. That's how I'm thinking. I'm just trying to give him a little bit of antibody.

Mansa's data also demonstrate that he frequently shares messages of self-worth with his son. In addition, he stated that he frequently participates in socialization behaviors, especially by exposing his children to various events and books about Black history. Some of his messages probably qualify as egalitarian, but he explained that those messages will likely turn into racial barrier messages as his son gets older. Mansa does not seem to share negative messages about Black people with his son, but more than likely he does share racial pride messages with him on a regular basis. Due to scheduling challenges, I was unable to get Mansa to confirm these conclusions via member checking.

Results

The following breakdown is based on several rounds of coding to pinpoint meaningful units of information in transcripts followed by analysis of these codes to identify salient structures that emerged from the study. In this chapter, I present, list and define the themes this process generated by introducing each one with the research questions that generated it. This plan of organization aims to enhance readability and enable readers to recall the themes and their definitions. At the end of the chapter, I review all of the data and list the themes again.

Situations that surround racial socialization. The responses to my first research question and the first sub-question (*What situations influence parent racial socialization?*) revealed the following themes: 1) *The News and Popular Media* determined when parents would reflect on racial topics. News coverage of the recent election of the 45th president, Black people unjustly murdered by police, and other stories that had significant impact on communities of color led parents to initiate racial socialization conversations. 2) Parents also consistently reflected on how *Observant and Aware* their children were. Therefore, I define this theme as when parents discussed their general shock and pride in what their child could perceive about their environment, especially in terms of racial issues. 3) *Finding Black Friends* also emerged as

a common theme. Many of the participants lived in communities where their children were a part of a small minority of Black children in their neighborhoods and schools. Consequently, I defined reflection on their child's friendships with other Black children as finding Black friends.

News and popular media. During the parent interviews, this theme emerged in a variety of ways; each participant offered a unique approach to using racial socialization in response to coverage of events involving race. For example, Dr. Clark offered the following perspective on how media impacts her racial socialization decisions in a very direct way:

I don't always listen to Tom Joyner [radio show], but I just happened to be that morning. I think he was talking about their boycott or something. Part of me feels like it was the content because it felt like it was something that would be okay for him to hear versus when they talk about the police shootings. I think that's when I'd turn the station or when they talk about those details about, "Well, here's another shooting. This is what happened. Here's the fallout and all that."

In addition, Nzinga commented on a topic most participants discussed: the impact of the election on her socialization practices.

I guess this election being so controversial they [her children] understand why people hate Obama so much and love Trump, or love anyone but Obama. I wanted them to understand that because I think this might be the first election that they remember. Well, actually, Obama's been in office eight years and he's [my son] only seven, so this is the only president he knows. He doesn't really have a history of that.

Race-wise, I've also talked to him about current events- what's going on in the world between cops and Black men. I have talk talked to him about Black-on-Black crime. I have not talked to him about the number of Black men in jail. I haven't gotten into that. We have the news on, so if he sees any of the shootings and things like that, we'll touch on that.

Similarly, Thurgood stated, he, too, had engaged in socialization conversations stemming from the media messages he knew his son had received. However, Thurgood's decisions differed from those the other participants described because he chose to discuss the media and use it as a launching point for a conversation without controlling his son's exposure to current events by limiting access to the media or not mentioning racially charged incidents.

I can't recall a particular moment. I think it may have just been a culmination of a lot of things happening in this country. Oh, now that you say that, yeah, it was really around like the Michael Brown killing. From that, there were a couple of people who had camps dealing with racial identity, racial inequities, things like that, for his age group. He went to one event last summer.

This theme came up again during my interview with Thurgood.

Martin and Ruby [Thurgood's children], particularly Martin, as a young Black man, how these things [instances of racial injustice and implicit bias] are important to know at an earlier age to dispel some of these things that he's reading, because when he's reading these things and looking at these pictures, is he able to identify people that look like him? Otherwise, he will develop that same kind of mindset, that he isn't all that, that he is inferior, you know what I'm saying? That's [something] to look at, because they're [Thurgood's children] very savvy right now with the iPads and iPhones, and so, to look up, to type in words, to Google words, and see what comes up when these things, you know, not that everything on the internet is true, but it can be information.

Thurgood also talked about broadening the pathways his son could pursue to counteract the limited media images. "Right now, he's in the Steph Curry age, so everything is Steph Curry, and so, you know, wanting him to understand that we're [Black people] not limited to athletics."

Assata took a more personal and direct situation head on after her son encountered a troublesome meme that negatively characterized Black children.

Yes. He has an iPod I bought him a year ago. He is now 11. In the past year he sent me a text message, and it was a meme and it was a side-by-side comparison of what Google images pulls up when you search for Black teenagers and White teenagers. The [image] of Black teenagers were mug shots and the White teenagers were *Holding Mills* styled, sports shots [appearing as harmless and interested in sports].

He sent me the meme, and then I said, "Good morning. Is this the first time you're seeing this?" Because he was at his father's house. And he said, "Yes." I said, "How does it make you feel?" He said, "Angry and frustrated." I said, "Okay, well, the first time that I felt like this dad helped me a lot. I want you to talk to dad about this today."

Assata also provided a unique perspective because her decision about socialization in relation to the media was perhaps the most proactive in that she sought to dramatically shift the type of media her son typically has access to.

I am constantly trying to fill him up with as much love as I can to counterbalance all the media he may be exposed to. I also don't have a television in my home. I don't have a TV, so I don't allow any news. Then when we go on vacation or to someone else's space, I make them turn off the news. I curate what is being watched. If it's a movie, a person of color has to be the lead. We're not going to watch any White guys saving the day.

Similarly, Mansa stated he is vigilant about remaining aware of the “underhanded ways” Black people are often discredited in the media. In the passage below, he described one conversation during which he pointed out an example of these situations to his son while the two of them were watching sports.

We saw the Super Bowl. Tom Brady has won five championship rings, and all we hear on the TV and in the newspaper, is that Brady is the first guy to hold five championship rings.

That's a teachable moment for Freelon [Mansa's son]. Now, "hey look, man, Brady has five championship rings. He's the first one to do it." So I'll look up, Charles [Haley] ... what's his name? It's an African American guy. First guy ever, player, to win five championship rings. Two for San Francisco and three for the Dallas Cowboys. The first player! But watch how they separate and make Brady the first one. But he's the first quarterback. He's not the first player.

I share that with him. This guy did it a long time ago. Brady is now the second guy. He's the first quarterback. I give you that, but don't say he's the first player. You've got to hear that little underhandedness. See how they [media] said that? That's recognition.

Ultimately, what is seen here is that the media parents and children are exposed to consistently present themes of race that the Black parents in this study wrestle with internally. When these parents think these themes could have an adverse effect on their children, they frequently decide to discuss concepts that their child has been exposed to.

Observant and aware. The second theme that arose came from parents' descriptions of their recognition of their children's observation skills. Clark and Clark (1939) and many researchers after them have demonstrated that Black children can assign positive and negative value to race. Therefore, parents' observation of children's ability to perceive racial concepts at ages after four align with previous findings from the research literature.

Nzinga provided a brief statement about her child's observational skills: "Also, he's a lot more observant, so he'll look at Obama and say, you know, 'We've got a Black president.'"

Dr. Clark also discussed her child's ability to perceive racial issues:

I think, with our election and stuff, it's [my child's ability to perceive race] slowly happening . . .

Even to the point of we didn't really talk a whole lot about the election but I took him and a friend on a field trip and they're discussing the election. Two six, almost seven year olds in the back seat, they're having a discussion about the election and about which candidates and things that they had heard. It's like, "Okay, we haven't talked about it directly but they know." It occurred to me, "Okay, we probably need to have conversations with him at some point but I don't know when." I don't [know] when to really sit down and how much. I feel like, for me, it's more about planting seeds along the way--at least at this age. I feel like seven is early to really just lay a whole lot out there. Yeah.

I also saw this theme in Ms. Bethune's following observation about her son's inquisitive nature:

And, he does a lot of research, too. When people tell him stuff, he does a lot of research . . . he'll go and start Googling stuff. Oh yes. Oh yes. One day he asked me a question about something. I said, "I don't know. Let me find out." He said "Never mind. Let me ask Google." Yeah. Oh yeah! He'll get on his tablet and he asks questions [to google].

Ms. Bethune's son's perceptiveness also comes through in the following passage in which Bethune described her son's sensitivity:

Even he knows about Black kids getting killed, bad cops, all of it. He'll see things on the news and he'll come and ask questions. Then, he'll cry on like my pillow. Yeah, he cried. He was like "Why are, they're killing all the Black people." He's very sensitive, so when something touches him [it touches him] dearly, [and] he's got to talk about it.

Assata made similar comments about her son's ability to observe situations carefully.

Yeah, in the moments where I noticed that he observes his father very closely and he observes me very closely. He's seen me lose my patience and temper with people, and he then understands how to mimic the posture and the behavior of someone that is confident and that won't get tried or tested, or played, or anything like that.

Finding black friends. Assata shared a connection her son made with a peer, and she was excited about that connection.

I said to my son at that time. "Why do you like Shawn so much?" He said, "You know, mom, his dad is like dad, and his mom is like you, and in the YMCA there were only a few of us." That was the best way he could articulate it back then. I said, "Yeah. It kind of feels like you see family when you are in a space where this is a lot of beige and then some brown, right?" He says, "Yeah! Yeah!" I said, "Yeah. That's what it's like."

Nzinga shared a similar story about her son but indicated that she took some control over whom he interacted with when the opportunity arose.

It's funny because when Malcolm [Nzinga's son] had a birthday party, I let him fill out his own birthday list, and it was like White kid, White kid, White kid, White kid. I was like "Why did you choose them? Why are we inviting them?" He was like "They're all in my class and I don't want to leave them out." I gave him a cap; I said, "You can have 10 friends." He chose 10 of his White classmates over picking 10 [Black] kids on his track team, because there's like about 50 of them. Instead of inviting maybe his two favorite [from his class] and then five or six from the track meet because he felt after talking to them, that they didn't even know each other. He wanted to either keep it in his Black circle or keep it in his White circle. So he is actually conscious of mixing these two circles. He was very conscious of mixing these two circles

Nzinga also spoke about her son's interactions with his track team friends.

He also runs track, and there's an all-Black team. He's actually been excited to be on this all-Black team. We have a couple of White kids that come after a cross-country season, but for the most part they vanish around the end of December, and we normally don't see them until the next cross-country season. He's been very excited to have a little Black pocket of friends. I can tell, he's very comfortable.

Likewise, Dr. Clark discussed her son's friendships but raised another significant issue related to race and relationships. According to her, her son had been unable to make a connection with another Black boy in his class.

This year, I had already actually met the parents of the other Black boy in his class. They're great but they haven't quite connected, Alex and the other boy. In the classroom, they haven't connected and that's interesting to me and one of those things where I don't know what to make of that. Maybe that's just my stuff that I want you to be friends with the only other little Black boy in your classroom--yeah, they haven't quite found each other yet. I've been trying to figure out how much to push that. Whether it's to set up an

outside of school play date or whatever. Yeah, I haven't quite decided what to make of that.

In addition, Thurgood discussed his son's interaction with peers and how those conversations influenced his approach to talking to him about race.

I think that he was made aware. I think there were some situations in dealing with sports clubs and things like that, that we kind of noticed some behaviors from other people who were not African American. Also, you know, and since that time, we just started to have discussions with both of our children, particularly Martin, about who he is, and started to incorporate the cartoons, the things that he watches, but also, especially during Black History Month.

Yeah, also, you know, and just with playing, that, you know, Martin can be looked at, I believe, as an issuant of play. He's not. We [society] don't look at him as [human] being, as having any, you know, being smart or intelligent, but he's good because he's fast. He's good, let's you know, "Let's play him because he's this." When it comes to academics, they don't believe that he's on the same level as them, or that he should be as smart. If he is, there's something wrong with me, as a White person.

School-based situations racial socialization decisions. In this section, I present my analysis of the second portion of my first research question: *What school-based situations influence parent racial socialization?* The following two themes emerged from this breakdown:

- 1) *School lessons and other educational opportunities* played a major role in inspiring parents to introduce and discuss race-centered conversations. This theme is defined as any opportunity parents used to continue the racial socialization their children were receiving from school curricula as well as school-related camps, activities, or projects that fostered discussions of racial justice, Black history or Black culture; 2) The theme *Teachers, Peers, and Blackness* includes events related to teachers or peers that made the concept of race salient for either the parent or child and situations that both parent and child noticed that were precipitated by elements of race.

School lessons and other educational opportunities. In this section, I highlight parent statements that illuminate what school-based situations lead to racial socialization conversations. For example, Dr. Clark discussed using some information her son received at preschool as a springboard to discuss race and justice with her son.

He attended a small preschool here in the city. Actually, part of the curriculum focuses, they focus more on skin color at first. They do a whole unit called "The Colors of Me." They all observe each other's skin colors or their own skin colors. They will match it to like paint chips or to paints. They will do a self-portrait. Then they do a whole diversity/impact bias/they talk about the Montgomery bus boycott and Martin Luther King in a way that three to five year olds can understand. That's a part of their curriculum. I think for us, it's hard to explain because I feel like that's, to answer your question directly, I feel like that's when he definitely pays attention to it. I imagine that he may have noticed sooner but in terms of us actually having conversations around race, I think that's when it really required more of a direct conversation.

They will give you that information. Especially during the first year, they will say, "Okay, we're beginning our unit on cultural diversity. This is what we cover." We do a parents' discussion night. It's annual, usually like January or February. It's very much planned and organized as part of their curriculum, which I think they really work to improve over time. To the point where they have the kids, they act out a scene. It's part of their curriculum in general to act certain things out, but they act out a boycott scene and each child, from different backgrounds, gets a chance to play the different roles in the story.

Dr. Clark offered the following assessment of the quality of the activities her son's school used to explore the issue of diversity:

I thought it was good. I was a little interested and kind of, I don't want to say skeptical, but curious [about having] two White women teachers to do this. My initial thought was, "Okay. Wondering how this will be." That's why I say I think it's a good foundation to start. I know we have worked and we will continue to do it [work] with them but I think it [the teachers' efforts] comes from a genuine place and I think it's well thought out. I think the way they package it feels right for that age group. It's just a matter of at what point do you move beyond some of that and fill in the gaps on your own. I don't think he will necessarily get that type of direct curriculum at the school that he's at [now] to be honest with you.

Dr. Clark also mentioned that she struggled to determine how far to take the conversation about race with her son due to his age.

Well, yeah probably so. I mean, just our own knowledge about Black history and the civil rights. Our own lived experiences I guess. I think that helps us to feel prepared. It's weird because I feel like we shift between different worlds right? The world's personal life, African American community versus being the majority White situation. I feel like we both have become really adept at navigating those things. For us, for him to be learning about it in that context felt okay. We go, "Okay, we know how to talk about it in this more majority White world." How much do you talk about it from that other perspective I guess? I don't know if that makes sense. Yeah, I didn't feel unprepared. We did have a parents' night where we talked about those issues and that made me feel a little less prepared in that scenario because it's all adults talking about things that could be a little more uncomfortable and actually a little realer.

Dr. Clark explained how she and her husband acquired the knowledge that informs the discussions about race they have with their children.

Talking about our own experiences with racism and how that then impacts our kids and how we raise them. Again, you grapple with a lot of the questions of how soon do you really say some of these things about how you need to behave in case you encounter a police officer or whatever. I think for us it's just more about when versus if those conversations will happen.

Similar to Dr. Clark, Thurgood reflected on the positive experiences his children had at a local camp and with school activities centered on issues of racial justice.

I think the camps that are more age-appropriate, like WE ARE, I think, and what the school is trying to do with girls of color and maybe boys of color, from an educational standpoint, I think more of that needs to happen, to prepare...

Thurgood shared his opinion of the Racial Justice summer camp.

That was a really good one . . . they had to write narratives and things like that, but it kind of put him in a position where he was really analyzing situations, and he spoke about what the police in those situations did not have to do. They didn't have to shoot. They could have put him in handcuffs and taken him to jail. He was being able to from his eyes, being able to articulate racial injustices, or even just in interpersonal relationships or interactions, when something, well, you know, something a person could have done alternatively from what they did do.

When he came home, though, to kind of talk about some of the stuff that happened with the We Are camp. He was kind of insulated from that, and so we kind of talked about those environments that he was in and how people look. He started to speak in those terms, that that person was not like my color, or the person was White, and so, to talk about interactions in school or at camps, when he said that someone threw a ball and hit

him in the face, you know. "Was it an accident?" Well, you know, what were the circumstances surrounding it, those kind of things, so that's how it started.

In addition, Ms. Bethune discussed how a school assignment led to a discussion with her son about a Black historical figure.

Yeah. He didn't know Obama was the first Black President. He didn't know none of that stuff. When Black History Month came along and they were talking about it at his school, that's when I was like "Yeah, he is the first Black President." He was like "All these years and he's the only Black?"

She also talked about the following situation in which a lesson from school sparked a conversation at home about America's racial history. "Rosa Parks. I remember when he learned about that. He was like "Why did Black people have to sit on the back of the bus? Why did Black people have to be slaves?" Those were kind of questions he asked. Yeah. [Interviewer: Does this come from school?] Yeah, he's bringing it from school." In response to my asking if she were used to these conversations, she replied, "I'm never used to it." With this statement, Ms. Bethune made it clear she does not feel well prepared to talk about America's history of racial strife.

On the other hand, Nzinga did not recall a situation in which a school event or a camp initiated this conversation. Instead, she described a practice with her children that every take-home project or homework would be an opportunity to investigate a Black person.

What I do all year long, is, first of all, if they have any assignment from school, they know hands down like if they have to do any book reports, they know hands down they have to choose a Black person. It's not even an option. I do not give them the freedom to choose. There are so many Black people, they have the freedom within that. I don't care what the project is. My daughter is like "We have to pick a fire-fighter." I'm like "All right, let's go talk about our finest adventurers." My son is like "We have to do a sports project." So, school wise, every month is a Black history month in this house because any homework is signed and our project is going to be Afrocentric focused. That's year round.

Peers, teachers, and Blackness. Unlike many of the themes discussed up until this point, many of the interactions and situations recounted by parents related to this theme were not associated with positive child or parent experiences. More often, discussions about interactions

with peers and teachers indicated the children were likely experiencing some sort of racial bias or disparate treatment.

Nzinga reflected on a conversation her son brought to her about the comments his peers made about his hair. Initially, the conversation was not about his school peers but as the interview progressed, Nzinga picked up on a small cue and figured out how her son's conversation with peers led to an idea about race, image, and hair.

Sometimes I hear the comments that he makes, like he got a haircut recently, and it was the lowest we've ever cut his hair; he usually have a pretty decent back row. Really cut it low because the barber actually messed up so we had to go lower to correct the mistake. He looked in the mirror and I said ""Do you like it?" He said, "I like it, it's not so big." I was like "What do you mean, big?" He said, "My friends always say I have big hair." I was like "They do?"

You know, so that tells me that there are little digs that his friends make, but they may not make it in a malicious way, but just the fact that his friends are noticing his hair is different than theirs. I want him to make sure that he knows that an Afro is just fine. A low-cut is fine, too. Just know that if your hair is big it's all right; and that's what our hair does, it grows out, it doesn't just go limp. That kind of proved to me that what I was doing was not too early. My husband thought it was too early to have these conversations but I'm like "You don't know what these little kids are saying.

Assata also shared a story involving an interaction her son had with peers about his hair.

I know once we talked about hair, and he said, "I don't let anybody at the school touch my hair, because I don't see them going out of their way to touch the White kid's hair, so that's not cool. My friends respect me, they get me, so they don't do it." He even did this face, and I said, "Has anybody actually tried to?" And he's like, "Yeah, they're not going to," he put his hand up like, "They're not getting past this, no." I was like, "Okay." That was really it. I can't really think of any other times.

Dr. Clark raised another issue: Black boys are often subjected to harsher discipline than other students. She recalled a situation involving her son in which he was repeatedly getting in trouble and teachers began to document his misbehavior.

No, not yet, no. He's in first grade now and I'm trying to think. No instance of anything has come up. No. I don't think. I don't know if you mean specifically for him or for me as a parent or both because I know kindergarten he had a rough transition. That was last fall. I took it there. It wasn't really where I felt like he had been done wrong but it was more, "Okay, this is where I'm coming from." From that perspective, he's having some issues

with behavior and stuff in the beginning and I'm just like you know. That and they do these little write ups, these incident reports, right? That came home. My husband, he went through the roof. He was just livid at the idea that as a kindergartner he already has a record. He already has this paper trail of he hit or bit. I don't remember exactly what it was, but it was altercations with other kids.

Dr. Clark offered the following explanation when asked what caused her son's behavior

It was several things that just kept happening. Later we put it all together. He had had lots of medical issues and I think medication based. I think that played a role in his behavior and acting out. At the time it was just like, "Okay, this can't go on like this." Just the ramifications and just wanting to make sure that he wasn't being treated differently because of who he was. Other than that, I don't really feel like there's been other racial incidents that have come up. We talked to his teacher and I think she became more sensitive to that when I talked to her about, "Hey, he's a little Black boy. We're being sensitive to him being in a school environment and some of the issues that stereotypically come up." Yeah, after that he didn't have any other issues. Again, part of I think is because he was having some health issues but also, she came to find out that he just really needed to be challenged a lot more so she started really challenging him in the classroom.

Mansa illustrated the unfair treatment his son received by sharing a story about a situation in which his son's teacher seemed to imply his son might have stolen a book.

That incident happened before the taking the cookie out of his mouth situation. He was aware of the fact because I believe . . . she asked and he answered, "No I don't have the book." So, when it became a reoccurring question, you know, a week later, you know, "Man, I can't find that book," or you know, emails to us . . . specifically. And the same response, "No, we don't have the book."

When we processed with Freelon in the afternoon, [he said,] "I think I answered you, and I guess my answer is not gonna change." That's how he was feeling, and you know, shared that with us. It didn't rub us, but we was happy that he was able to tell her the same thing twice. He kind of raised some flags, but he didn't just pull it right out, you know. He was like, "What's she talking about?" he felt uncomfortable, but like ... "You asked me that and I told you."

Unfortunately, Mansa's son, Freelon, has been involved in multiple situations with teachers at his school. In the following passage, Mansa describes a situation in which a teacher physically touched his son while attempting to discipline him. It is also important to note that according to Mansa, this situation led his son to his first recognition of his Blackness.

So Freelon was in second grade. His behavior had gotten him switched to a different class. And that teacher's class was a little bit more structured. And, the incident is where it was lunchtime – snack time and he was eating his cookies. And [then] lunchtime was over. And I guess she ended lunch, but she uh... he still had a cookie in his mouth. Or, he put a cookie in his mouth. And she took it out of his mouth. Which, her taking it out of his mouth. I don't know if it was her finger or the cookie, but his mouth got scratched. So . . . you know . . . then you know... [His mother and I had] questions about how does she handle and work with other kids? And situations like that. So that's what happened. And you know, [Mansa's son says] "She [the teacher] doesn't tell so-and-so to do something but she tells me to do something.

In this case not only does Mansa's son get physically harmed but at the end this statement his son alludes to his understanding of how race played a part in the incident.

Ms. Bethune's son also experienced a negative racial event in school but his experience involved one of his peers, not a teacher.

He was six. He came home and he told me this kid told him that he was going to be a robber when he grows up because all Black people are robbers. Yeah, I remember that day. I was so sad. I went to the school and spoke to the teacher. She was like "I saw who the kid is. Then, I spoke with his parents plenty of times, but he makes those kinds of comments."

Here it is interesting that the teacher offered no additional support to Ms. Bethune or indicated that any real consequences existed for the student who seems to repeatedly harm other students with racially harmful statements.

Parents' understanding of their racial socialization. During my analysis of the second overall research question and the first sub-question: *How do parents explain their reasons for racial socialization?* I found the following three themes 1) *Don't take it in (protecting self-esteem)* is defined as parents demonstrating concern about their children's emotional capacity and health after hearing the realities of racism explained or being exposed to racial bias; 2) *Gender* as a theme is defined as how parents consider their child's gender as they share socialization messages with their children; and 3) *Checking-in or Still Thinking* is defined as the processes and strategies parents used to actually deliver racial socialization.

Don't take it in (Protect self-esteem). The following passages exemplify the different ways in which parents demonstrated concern for their child's self-esteem being negatively affected by knowledge of how they might be treated differently due to their skin color. What I observed is that this shared concern led parents to make very different racial socialization decisions.

Dr. Clark shared her apprehension by describing her trepidation about allowing her children to watch certain news stories

Like on the news, if I watch the news and they're showing the footage or showing just the protest and all that. Those are times where I would turn the station off because it's [the information] heavy and I don't know, part of me just doesn't want them to be afraid. You know what I mean? To come at it from a place of fear at this age.

Dr. Clark also talked about how she discussed innocence and the protection of it with other parents here:

I just actually had a conversation with some friends on Friday. A good group of Black mothers. Many of us, I think all of us with Black sons, at least one Black son, well no, not all of us, but the dilemma is how much do you . . . What's the word? Right now, in some ways it's like you're happy that your kids can be innocent and that they are freed of some of the burden, at least in their minds that we experience. The questions are "How soon do you talk about racism? How soon do you bring up those issues versus focusing on "yes, we're Black and that's a source of pride and source of strength versus not everybody views you that way?" It's a lot of layers that you go through and how long do you keep your kids sheltered from some of the negative issues around race? That's something that I struggled with.

Consistent with her approach to learning, Dr. Clark expressed some of the questions she had about the effects presenting information about racial discrimination could have on her sons' emotional wellbeing.

... I feel like it [knowledge of racial bias] could be burdensome sometimes. They're in spaces that are culturally and racially diverse so it's like they have a lot of friends that are from different backgrounds. How does that play out to be around their peers that are not like them? I think that's part of it too. At a young age, what do you do with that information? Part of me feels like, especially after the election, I'm just angry. I don't want them to go around angry or feeling something's wrong with them.

Like Dr. Clark, Nzinga also expressed some reservations about the negative effects racial socialization could have on her sons. For example, she addressed the possibility that some messages about race could instill fear in her children or adversely affects their self-esteem.

It's upsetting. It's very upsetting because I realize I can't protect them forever, and I never want them to be sad over not even being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I want them to be sad, rightfully so, if you've [her children] done something bad but not just for being Black. That's upsetting to me that I even have to have this conversation with him, and it's also upsetting that he had to take it in and feel this kind of way about it.

Nzinga continued to explore her apprehension, speaking directly to her concern about her children's self-esteem.

I'm concerned about his self-esteem. I want him to be proud of the skin he's in; I'm also concerned if, for whatever reason, someone picks another friend over him, he doesn't think it's because of his skin color that they may just prefer the other child. You know, just the friend they prefer. Kids can be mean. I want to make sure . . . He's a sensitive child, so I guess in my mommy mode I want to make sure he's not crushed in some way over some mean comment or something. I'm all about the self-esteem building

In addition to wanting to protect her children's self-esteem, Nzinga also seemed worried about how racial socialization could negatively impact her children's relationships with non-Black friends. She stated that the goals of racial socialization and the maintenance of interracial friendships could conflict.

No, I want them to genuinely care for their other racial friends, and I want them to genuinely like them and be liked by them without feeling some kind of way. I am currently trying to balance how much to expose them without turning them on their friends. I want to keep the balance where they feel good about themselves, and the skin that they're in, and confident enough to have both Black and White friends; and navigate those waters appropriately. I felt like I try to make my conversations positive without making it negative.

Consistent with Nzinga's overall perspective, she was not concerned about her son potentially being too young to talk to about race but more concerned about how outside narratives might slowly tear away at his self-esteem. She stated, "There was nothing that warranted the

conversation that early but I still decided to just start building him up and letting him know who he was before he asked and before he was confused.”

In response to my question asking if she thought her son would have picked up on racial differences without her making him aware, Nzinga replied,

I honestly think that they may not have connected those dots. I think because the majority of his friends are White, I think he probably wouldn't even have paid attention. Another reason why it was important for me to talk about them being Black is because I guess part of me is like I'm not with him 24 / 7 and I wanted to make sure his little White friends weren't taking little secret digs and he wasn't catching them ... That kind of proved to me that what I was doing was not too early. My husband thought it was too early to have these conversations but I'm like "You don't know what these little kids are saying." Whatever is going on in the house is how it's coming out. The fact that he was saying My hair . . . My friends always say I have big hair. They haven't got the point of view like you've got nappy hair, or you've got this or that, but they have said it "You have big hair." And "Why is your hair always so big?" I mean that's a mild case but those are the little sort of digs that I'm thinking may be happening; and I'm not there to help him process it, so I want to make sure that he has the tools and he has the confidence to either brush it off . . . Or confidently say it's all right.

Unlike Nzinga, Thurgood did not get the chance to explain race to his son before he experienced a negative racial event. However, based on our interview, I deduced that Thurgood pays close attention to what his son's tell him and seizes every opportunity presented to him to deepen his children's understanding about race in order to make certain they do not feel inferior to anyone.

We talk about it in the store, and talk about it in places, you know what I mean, so try to incorporate education everywhere, from their school. The things that they have an interest in that they have fun with in terms of engagement with others, with the ballet and arts and painting and all the other kind of stuff, I think, it will help them be more well-rounded, but also to be in situations where they don't feel like they're less intelligent. I try to, like with the bee [competition where his daughter was very successful and some of her White peers became jealous], I try to tell, "Okay, listen, the people that you are competing against, predominately, they were White, but you achieved more than them."

Mansa echoed Thurgood's concern about teaching his children to handle racial invalidations. In accordance with Mansa's style, he did not use the word race.

Right. Because once you let that seep into your mind then you start forming opinions. Then when you form opinions. Then you start clicking up like, "Hey, I ain't hanging with you cause I know how you'll be." When you're confident in who you are, it's a wall. You can throw all that hate salt all you want to over there. You can throw it, but it's not getting to me. Since you're throwing it, I've got the option. I can turn and say, "nope," or I can say, "yeah." You just have to be able to be aware of it. Don't let that influence you, man, because you are an individual.

Don't let that tarnish who you are. Stay true to who you are, but also be . . . See, we try to teach that, but it's not like we're trying to keep ourselves separate. It's just that we're trying to keep ourselves together because it's always gonna be . . . You want to work with other people, you just don't want their ways to get over on you to affect you negatively.

Thurgood recounts a story to illustrate the type of situations that could cause his children to question their abilities and reduce their self-esteem.

Ruby went to a camp for electronics and stuff like that, so they had to build these robots and stuff like that. One of the White girls didn't want to work with her, so we talked about that, and talked about how, you know, [my daughter] was figuring everything out that needed to go on with the robot, and the other girl couldn't, so to really encourage them to continue, but to know that they can be in a room with anyone, academically, and be able to compete, and not have to feel like, because someone tell them something that's different from what they've heard, that isn't even true, but to know what you know and to feel confident in that, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise.

Thurgood also discussed the ways educational programs have helped him to identify some goals for his son that target self-esteem protection.

I think my goal for him, particularly after coming out of the We Care camp and seeing how he is very compassionate, how he's very thoughtful, and how he's, he appears to be an advocate for injustice, based on some of the ways he articulated the Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, all those kind of things, about the interactions with law enforcement, and being killed, and stuff like that. My goal for him is to increase his awareness and be able to protect his, not only his intelligence, but his heart, protect his social and emotional posture, and how he deals with situations.

On the other hand, Dr. Clark seemed to be at an earlier racial socialization stage with her son in comparison to other parents in the study; she is still waiting for the right moment to talk to him about race, but in the following remarks she indicated that she knew that his self-esteem could be negatively impacted if she did not address the topic of race with him.

It occurred to me, "Okay, we probably need to have conversations with him at some point but I don't know when." I don't know when to really sit down and how much. I feel like, for me, it's more about planting seeds along the way, at least at this age. I feel like seven is early to really just lay a whole lot out there. Yeah.

It is important to note that Dr. Clark's sons were one of the few children in this group whose parents did not report experiencing some form of implicit bias or racism. Other parents from this study discussed events that involved their children that seemed to necessitate conversations about race.

Assata shared a story about some Facebook posts a mother of one of his former friends posted. Through this story, Assata's propensity to remove potential sources of Black invalidation and hate from her son's environment are also seen again.

The first time he felt frustrated and upset was two years ago. We had befriended a mom and her son at a chess tournament, and we got to know them slowly over time and then as we got to know them, I kind of felt like I don't think they have a lot of interactions with people of color. This feels a little strange, and I slowly started to back away a little bit. Because my son and the boy were still friends, though, that mom could schedule play dates with my ex-husband. My ex-husband then sent me an Email saying, "Please, cease all communication with this mom. I'm very concerned with the way she sees people of color based off these posts that she put on Facebook."

There were two posts that were disturbing. One was she dressed up her son as a Hitler-zombie. Then the other one was a post where she had said, "You all need to walk on the sidewalks, that's what they're there for. Black youth doesn't matter to me if you get in my way." Insinuating that because she's driving her car, that Black youth need to get off the road. My son was friends with the boy through Xbox, and I heard the boy pop on the Xbox and say, "Hey dude! Let's play, let's play!" And I said, "Turn it off. Now. Immediately." He did and he's like, "What did I do mom?" I was like, "You didn't do anything, but I need to talk to you about your friend and his mother." He said, "Okay." Then I showed him the posts and I said, "Do you know who Hitler was?" He was like, "Yeah, he was a terrible person, and he killed a lot of Jews." I said, "Okay." That's one thing. Then I showed him the next post and his face crumbled. He was filled with rage, his eyes watered, his lips were trembling, and he said, "So she means that I don't matter? If I'm walking down the street, she's going to hit me with her car? My life matters, I'm Black youth." I said, "Yes, that's right. Your life matters, you are Black youth, and this is why your father and I don't want you to be friends with her son, because she is apparently crazy. She is going to teach her son craziness. As your parents, it's our job to protect you." He said, "Okay, but what if my other friends don't want to be friends with me and

they want to be friends with him?" When he said his other friends, he meant his online White friends. I said, "Okay, then they shouldn't either." He said, "Okay."

Then he sat down and he blocked the boy, but then another boy, his friend that is White, was like, "Dude what happened?" I was like tell him I will Email his mom. He was like, "Dude, I can't talk about it; my mom is going to Email your mom." He's still upset. I said, "Okay, just tell him we will tell him. I'm going to tell you what to say and you repeat what I say exactly to him. Then that way once you tell him, he can understand." Then I told him, and he told the friend, and there was silence on the other end, and my son is just looking at me upset, like terrified, and he's like, "Dude, that's racist. I'm not down with racism. I'm going to block him now, I'll be right back." Then he went and blocked that boy. Then got back online and then they built their little empire in Minecraft. In 10 minutes, all that happened. All those feelings.

[Interviewer: How did you know he wasn't sad due to internalizing those ideas?] When I saw his face crumble like that, I know that I needed to allow him to process the information and to go through the feelings, but I didn't want him to hold onto anything that would hurt his self-esteem. There was nothing there that was hurting his self-esteem; he was more offended. Which taking offense to that kind of behavior is fabulous, as opposed to internalizing it and then thinking, "Maybe I am less than."

Assata also talked about simplifying racial situations to "eliminate the grey" so that it's easier for her son to reject negative ideas about Black people and himself.

Yeah, I set a framework that, because he's either going to be at school, which is a good positive space, with his father, which is a good positive space, with me. Then we only interact with people that value us as people of color. That way when we interact with other people that aren't doing that, it's very simple, "You're crazy. I stay away from crazy." We don't even use the term racist or racism. That's a mental illness. That person is mentally ill. It's very easy to just delineate from that. Then people start talking about race, it's not really racism and the nuance, and they try to pacify you. It's like, "That makes no logical sense. What you're saying make no logical sense. You're basing it off outdated ideas, and fear, when you want to discuss logic with me, we can discuss that."

During a different part of the interview, Assata shared similar thoughts. "No, it's typical. I try to make it just a matter of yes, no, Black, White. No shades of grey. If there is a lot of shades of grey, it's very easy for someone that's semi quasi-racist to get you to second guess yourself as a person of color."

Ms. Bethune talked about being challenged by the need to determine how to talk to her son about race and said she has been avoiding this topic to limit harm to his emotions.

Like I said, it's hard. It's really hard. Especially when it comes to race, you don't know what to tell your kids. It's either, how can I put this? Okay. If he were to ask his dad, he'd say, "They're all racist." Then, with me, it's like, "Just do your best. If somebody says something, don't worry about that. Worry about you. Worry about what you can do for you."

When asked directly about her either/or prescription for racially socializing her son, she talked about his young age.

I think if he was older . . . I would be able to speak to him and not worry how badly it's going to affect him up here. With him, he keeps a lot of stuff inside. I don't know what I can tell him right now that he wouldn't always think about.

Gender. During interviews, I asked specific questions to better understand how parents handle their boys in comparison to how they engaged their daughters or would engage girls if they had daughters. In this section, I review parents' responses to the specific questions I outlined above as well as parents' statements about gender that emerged organically during our conversations. The following findings elucidate that gender seemed to deeply impact some parents' thought processes related to racial socialization.

Five of the six parents in this study mentioned feeling specific pressure to address the common American narrative that Black boys experience racial bias in more severe and broad ways than Black girls. Dr. Clark analyzed her own identity and its effects on her racial socialization decisions and also commented on the how the broader context of race and gender in America has affected her self-concept.

It's interesting being a Black woman, and not to say that obviously Black women have our own troubles, but, it's like reasons like raising Black boys when I came from a family of girls. It's also been like a shift for me to try to figure some of this stuff out. I just think it feels like that's what we're supposed to do. That we're supposed to think about these things and not be blind to it. I think sometimes it's easy to be like, "That won't happen to us."

I guess it would be the gender piece on top of that. It's interesting because I probably should worry as much but I don't know. I feel like I would worry less. I say that but I'm like that's silly because there's plenty of instances of Black girls and Black women

experiencing racism or struggling with both race and gender issues. I think we hear so much about Black boys, Black men, and it's almost like you buy into some of those stereotypes. Even though I feel like around me, my personal life, I have countless positive examples of Black boys, Black men in my life. It's like this weird (thing) being affected by the portrayals. I don't know, I think if I had girls I'd probably be worried about different things. I think I would worry more about images around beauty and hair and skin tone. I think I'd worry more about those things that probably have a little bit more of the gender piece to it than I do with my boys.

The initial thoughts Thurgood expressed in the passage below suggest that he did not believe gender impacts his racial socialization, but he also talked about how key outcomes related to school suspensions and discipline differ for Black boys:

How it'd be different based on gender. Not much, in my opinion. I mean, I think that they're, you know, again, with males, when you look at suspensions, discipline, and stuff like that, I think males are going to be treated differently than females. Sometimes it's depending on the context. If it's just an environment with females, then the Black female may be positioned to be the aggressor or less intelligent, less beautiful. Those things have come up with hair. Wanting to, the females wanting to have weaves because they want to have long, straight hair versus their natural hair, kinky hair, whatever, you know, twists, and how, and I think my wife has done a good job in going the natural route, and teaching her and being able to be in those environments where now people are commenting about how beautiful your hair is, versus you thinking, "I want to have straight hair like my peers." It's so easy for them to do x, y, and z, and it will, but you know, that's who God made you, so deal with it. . .

Like Thurgood, Nzinga discussed society's mistreatment of Black men as a factor that impacts the racial socialization of her boys in particular:

The conversations are a lot more Black because, I think, that he's a boy. I also think that society is harder on Black men than Black women. I think if they're going to be blunt I need to be blunt. I try to treat them how society's going to treat them.

Mansa shared similar thoughts about how he changes his messages about race depending on gender.

[Interviewer: Do you change the messages your children hear about race based on their gender?] Yeah, because I'm on it hard with him [his son] because he's a male and I know that's just how they get looked at, personally from experience, as a male. Now, for Cleopatra, we do talk about it, but it's not as intensified because she's the baby or even she's a female. But, there is a difference she hears in conversations that we have, but it's directed to Freelon. I don't know if that's good or bad, but that's a good thing to think

about. Should she get the same dose? But, I mean from her perspective. You know, she hears just the same, she gets the same. She doesn't get the same, but at the same time, she hears it. It's just intensified with Freelon. Why? Because he is a male and I guess bias in the family from our perspective. Well, for me personally, because I'm talking about it, but yeah that's a good point. She hears it but definitely not as potent as he gets it. [Interviewer: Does Cleopatra get the same level of potency from her mom?] She probably gets it more from her mom, from Malia [Mansa's wife]. And, that goes again to, and it might be because she hasn't had any situations come up and Rawlins already had two of those situations to come up and I . . . but Cleopatra has not had situations where that has come up, whereas Freelon's already had two of those situations happen, so we had to get a little deeper in the conversation with him about that. You know about that second conversation.

Now, with Cleopatra, it's more or less. She was at the WE ARE [summer camp]. So she knows a little more. She's a little bit more observant, color, shades, how different people get [different] types of responses. She has a White friend, and a Black girl, so that's how she is, but as far as her actually having situations where we had to talk about it specifically with her. We haven't had that yet.

It's just girly stuff, like bathroom issues. I wouldn't say bullying but just being smart about not grabbing girls and just be smart, they [his daughter's female peer group] push. I think they pushed the bathroom door in on a girl. That was a situation we had, which we dealt with, but that was a sister-to-sister [between Black girls] type thing. You know?

Assata demonstrated her understanding of the systems of oppression that impact gender dynamics when reflecting on how she would have to socialize her son if he were female. "I think that American society is patriarchal, and men earn more than women, and their performance is quantified based off of their performance." At another point in the interview Assata made the following point about raising Black girls: "Well one thing that is the same is that if you have a Black daughter, you have to make sure that she can affirm herself in her beauty in her Blackness, not assimilating to a White standard of beauty."

A few of the mothers in this study discussed dating as well as their sons' present and future interactions with girls. Dr. Clark commented on the elements of racial socialization she considered unique to raising a boy.

Yeah. I think for me that the root of it is me being really conscious and maybe overly conscious about how much I'm projecting on him that are my own bias or my own

feelings about things. How do I say this? I feel like there's still this level of political correctness that sometimes I toe that line, you know what I mean? . . . Do I tell him "you better bring a Black girl home?" Do I say that? "Don't bring any White girls home." Those are things that are in my mind but that's probably the best example that I have of what's in my mind but what I filter. In today's time it's like, "Okay, you can have those beliefs but those are unpopular among a lot of people, maybe not everybody but I feel like they're unpopular in some ways to have that or to explicitly express that." Especially when I'm sending him to a multi-racial, multi-ethnic school.

Nzinga also discussed how having a daughter might lead her to her use different racial socialization strategies, specifically with the issue of dating.

He [her son] hasn't talked about dating yet because he's only seven, but I don't think there'll be any hesitation in what mommy would prefer he bring home. I'm happy to say that. He may choose to bring home other . . . but he may have to hide her from mommy for a little while.

Assata shares similar thoughts about her son dating members of other races.

I don't want to be like most Black moms who say don't bring home a White girl. But I can feel myself getting to that point. Yeah, I don't, because I feel like because of the way I look, because of the way my son looks, I feel like White people tend to approach us because we're they're token Black friends. We're just a stitch Black, we're not too Black for them. They can dip their toe into the pool. You know what I mean? Because of how I look, they have no idea that I'm really militant. They don't know that.

Assata shared Dr. Clark and Nzinga's reservations about their sons dating White women in the future; however, Assata provided more context when she explained the reasons for her apprehension.

I'm concerned that there are going to be these White girls that are coming from a totally White family that they wouldn't mind dating Andrew because he's "not like the other Blacks." Because that's what I would get [when I was dating], and that's a terrible feeling to have. That's a terrible feeling. It's like, "Oh, well, you know I've always been attracted to Black people, but you're not like the rest of them." What the hell's the rest of them mean? What is that? I've been grappling with that and trying to figure out how to help him if he does have feelings for somebody that's White.

Assata also acknowledged that for gender-specific issues such as whom her son may date in the future she would turn to her ex-husband for parental support.

Before the Internet, do you remember how you guys used to pass notes – “do you like me, yes or no? That's what the song is, mom. It's just with modern technology [laughs]. I thought it was a very respectful way to describe a hook up to your mother. [laughs] I said, "Well, do you get DMs?" He says, "I do." And I said, "From your friends?" And he says, "Yes." I said, "Any of them girls?" He says, "No, it's just my friends that give me cheat codes for video games. God, mom!" He got a little embarrassed. Then I pulled my ex-husband to the side and was like, "He knows what DM is. It goes down in the DM. He knows. You need to talk to him." He's like, "Okay, okay. Calm down."

On the other hand, Ms. Bethune stated that she did not consider gender when talking to her children about race.

Interviewee: [How are the messages that you share with your daughter different?] Yeah, I tell her the same. My daughter is very proud of being Black. She's proud to be Black? Yeah. She's older, so she's 11. She had a kid tell her the other day he didn't want any Black people in the field. They know what racism is. Racism is when you talk. I've asked her "Are you mad because you're Black?" She was like "No. The color of my skin is beautiful. I'm proud to be Black." I said "What does that mean? Proud to be Black?" She said "Because I like myself for who I am, so it doesn't matter." That's what she told me. ([Interviewer: Where do you think that came from?]) Probably my sister. Probably my sister. [Interviewer: What has your sister told her?] My sister's always saying that. You need to be proud to be [Black].

When I reviewed what participants said about gender I noted several other concepts emerged in conjunction with gender as a theme. The gender-based topics parents discussed included dating, disproportionate treatment of Black boys, and being more direct. Parents also described how their messages were consistent across gender, suggesting boys and girls do not receive significantly different messages.

Checking in or still thinking. This theme helps to elucidate a dichotomy that emerged during the interviews that frequently governed whether parents talked about race once this concept became salient in situations involving their sons. Some parents reported they had embraced situations in which race became salient and used these events as learning opportunities or teachable moments to discuss how race played a part in the situation as well as to evaluate their children's emotional state. Parents who were not seeking these teachable moments were

either deeply thoughtful about finding a right time to talk to their children about race or dismissed the importance of talking to their children about race altogether. Finally, it did seem that all parents shared a desire to be present for and supportive of their children if a racial situation had the potential to hurt their children's self-esteem.

Thurgood shared the following thoughts on how he creates and looks for opportunities to share racial socialization messages with his son.

You know, books that were age appropriate, and trying to introduce [the topic of race], or scenarios that come up. I always say you can use anything as a teachable moment. As things come up, we just, you know, if we're riding in the car, where he poses questions, off the cuff kind of thing, and so, in terms of us being prepared, it was just, we're kind of navigating our way through. I don't think there was any one thing that spoke to preparing a Black child for, you know...

Thurgood also spoke about taking advantage of situations that come up to engage his children in a conversation about race. He also elaborated on the importance of these moments, citing these opportunities as ways to ensure his children had ample opportunities to learn race-related concepts.

To keep them aware, but to also empower, so that the more we can talk about it, the more, when situations do come up, you'll be a little prepared for it, and be able to feel empowered on how to respond, because, just like when children learn through repetition. That's why I try to go over stuff again and again, whether it's school, whether it's sports, it's the same thing with a song. A nursery rhyme's the same thing over and over again.

In addition, Thurgood also explained why he believes it is important to check in with his children consistently and frequently.

You may be going on a field trip, whatever, or just even in school, someone at the playground, to try to revisit so it lets you know that, okay, we talked about it six months ago, and we're going to talk about it again just to reinforce that I haven't forgotten, and, in case, because the attention spans are so short sometimes, that I want to kind of bring them back to that remembrance in case something is happening, that I want them to know that I'm still here, involved.

Nzinga also consistently checked in to ensure her children were not experiencing harassment due to race.

I'm more like "Is everyone nice to you? Is anyone saying crazy things to you?" It's probably, you know, every other day check in, that's how frequently I check in. I don't want him to not remember an incident if I wait too long. We have like a 20-minute drive to school so it's plenty of time for conversation.

The way Assata said she approached checking in seems less relevant because she stated she has exerted great control over the kinds of the information her child has received.

However, in her description of one situation, Assata did imply that she consistently looked for cues from her son that indicated he might have had an experience that could negatively impact his self-esteem.

In a different situation, it was teacher appreciation day, and I said, "Oh, it's teacher appreciation day." And he said, "I'm not giving my teachers anything." I said, "Oh, okay. You don't have to, but can I ask why?" He's like, "Because I'm offended." "Why are you offended?" "I didn't like the tone of voice that they used talking to us about this and that. They don't know how hard it is to be a kid. I don't appreciate their tone of voice. They need watch their tone of voice with me. I'm not giving them anything. Let's go to school."

Another situation mentioned earlier during the review of the protect self-esteem theme provides contextual information about the relationship between Assata and her son and his willingness to share his negative experiences with her. Specifically, I am referring to the incident with the meme her son shared with her via text.

Dr. Clark described her approach to socialization situations as "contemplative" at this stage in her sons' lives. The foci of her socialization thoughts can be seen here.

It occurred to me, "Okay, we probably need to have conversations with him at some point but I don't know when." I don't when to really sit down and how much. I feel like, for me, it's more about planting seeds along the way, at least at this age. I feel like seven is early to really just lay a whole lot out there. Yeah.

Not that they don't know that they're Black, but I don't know how much they really feel that that's a limitation or that others will limit them because of that. It's just like how do

you lead into your conversation, "Hey, you think you're fabulous but not everyone will think you are." How do you navigate that? Yeah

The following passage provides the answer Dr. Clark gave in response to a question about when she plans to talk to her children about race.

We haven't yet. I say we because my husband and I talk about this. We haven't really decided yet.

You know, I honestly don't know. The way I think it might happen is one of two ways. I think they will have some sort of transformative experience that will probably make us sit down and really have a more in depth conversation with them or we will continue to slowly introduce some of these ideas over time so that it's not all at once. That's what I suspect. I really don't know. That's a really hard question.

Yeah, I think so. We struggle with so many other little things in our world that to sit down and have this conversation feels like that feeling that has to be a really good thing. You're just dealing with day-to-day stuff, like get up, go brush your teeth, get dressed. It's like you get in the weeds of parenting so that sometimes it's hard to save room or space for these types of conversations. We will have some of these deep conversations sometimes in the car. Sometimes it's funny because he had that conversation, sometimes he will bring up certain things about god or spirituality. He has, in the past, brought up stuff. He's a deep thinker. I just think especially at home in the day to day you have to do this and you have to get this. It's hard to leave space and time to have this conversation. Then you wait until, it's probably never the perfect time, you wait until something happens where you're like, "Okay, let's talk about that now." You know what I mean? It's nice to reflect on that.

Next, Dr. Clark reflected on her perception of the racial socialization practices she and her husband were using:

Yeah. I think we've done okay. I think we could be doing more, especially now. I guess I'm just thinking about how I put some of these ideas and issues into the conversation with a seven year old in a way that, first of all that he would be able to understand but then also then doesn't feel like it's too overwhelming for him. Yeah, I think we've done okay. I think there's still room for us to, before he hits a certain point where it's staring us in the face, for us to really engage him more.

Parent resources and experiences for racial socialization. For the second focus of my second research question: *What resources do parents use for racial socialization?* The following three themes emerge: 1) *Family and Parent Peers* defined as when non-primary caregiver family

members impacted the racial socialization messages the sons of the parents in this study received. Often these messages came directly from family members to children, but family members also impacted the messages parents shared with their children as well as when parents used family members as role models for children; 2) *Exposure by any means* is defined by when parents use various different resources and strategies to instill a sense of pride in their children; and 3) *More Resources* is defined as parent reflection on their desire and searches for additional resources to make conversations about race with their children more manageable and effective. In this section I provide exhaustive examples of each of the themes that emerged from my analysis.

Family and parent peers. Parents who participated in this study often discussed the impact of their own parents, partners, peers, and other family members on the racial socialization of their child. In this section I provide examples of this theme to demonstrate when the impact of family and peers on children was sometimes direct and at other times indirect. For example, indirect impact occurred when the socializing parent considered other people's ideas when making racial socialization decisions. An example of direct impact is when a family member directly conveys some idea about race to the child.

The influences Nzinga received from family and other parents came primarily from her husband and her mother. The following are examples of both indirect and direct impact socialization. Nzinga stated she has maintained a close connection with her parents and reflected on how her connection to them has impacted the racial socialization her children have received from her and others:

My dad and I were talking also about finding some Black stocks for them to invest in because he's over buying them all these crappy toys and they break them in a day. That was something . . . that wasn't a goal of mine, but now it is, and in conjunction with my dad. He's going to sit down and kind of work with them about that.

Her dad's socialization here is an example of direct socialization because he plans to talk directly to her children. It is also an example of indirect socialization because he is also impacting how Nzinga plans to socialize her children.

The next passage includes an explanation of how Nzinga analyzed the impact her mother's skin color has had on some socialization conversations she has had with her children. The passage also reveals some of the differences between the ways Nzinga and her husband have racially socialized their children.

I mean, my mother is very light-skinned, I've explained why Granny's light-skinned because her great great-great grandfather, you know, her great-great,-great grandmother was raped by her slave-master. I said that, and that's why my husband was like looking at me like "Don't go any deeper." So I've explained why Granny is so light.

The following statement also demonstrates the synergy between Nzinga and her mother on racial socialization decisions and the distance between Nzinga and her husband.

I do bounce it off my mom, and I think when I do that I know the answer I'm going to get, she reassures me that I'm doing good, I need to talk to them about the this or do that what I doubt sometimes is if I'm doing too much. I don't ever doubt that it should be done. I'm confident and comfortable that these discussions need to happen. Sometimes I doubt if I'm going too far over pro-Black side, over that fence, and too much too soon. I doubt that from time to time. Not often. Very, very, very infrequently and, because my husband is the complete opposite, they're not getting hit in the head by both parents. There's some balance. For all I know after I've been shouting Black Pride he might be in the room talking about love everyone. And everyone is equal.

The following statements further illustrate the differences between Nzinga and her husband's racial socialization decisions.

I just say that to say that our upbringings are so different. I'm not at all concerned about his supporting what I do, because I know he doesn't. The balance I agree is probably best, so I hit it hard and he softens the blow.

In addition, in the passage below, Nzinga considered whether or not her racial socialization practices have gone too far.

Well, they have said that. My husband feels like it's way too early. He feels like I'm raising these little baby Black Panthers. He feels like it's going to come back to bite me. I disagree, but he feels like they're going to be at school, and, like I said, they may say the wrong thing, they may give the wrong message and it may be misinterpreted. He feels like they may [become outcasts] or looked at differently. I don't know. Like I said, I don't know what digs the other kids are saying; I don't know what digs he's saying either. So I don't know how it's transferring into his school environment with his other racial friends, and how that's received.

Although Nzinga stated, "But I don't care so much that my husband thinks I'm doing too much because I realize we will never agree because of our upbringing was so different," at another point in our interview, she did express a desire to reach an agreement with him regarding how to talk to their children about race:

I would love more, for me as a husband and wife team, how to approach that and be one page because we are not, and the children sense it. They like to say "Daddy does not like to talk about Black stuff." They will say "Black stuff," and that's so broad. "Daddy does not like to talk about Black stuff." I feel like prior to engaging in these discussions with my children, I didn't do my homework [to find out how to work] as a husband wife team and as parents so that we can engage with each other. I just went all in, and he was like "I'm not on board," and it shows. So that's the one thing information wise.

Thurgood focused exclusively on the differences and similarities between the way his wife racially socialized their children. He did not mention receiving any input from family or friends.

I don't know what process my wife uses, but I go through my process, and because we come from different worlds, so [because] I'm used to being around violence or people who committed violent acts or were pedophiles [my conversations are not the same as my wife's], you know what I mean? My conversations and questions are going to be a little bit different than what she may have.

I may go into a little bit more detail than she does because of the people that I have been around, and that's why I have the conversations about the improper touching, and I don't care if it's Grandpa, I don't care if it's Grandma, I don't care who it is that, you know, let's talk about it. Is there a situation where you've felt that that's happened?

On the other hand, Thurgood did explore how his interactions with other non-Black parents have shaped his understanding of the race-related experiences his children have had in school. To

illustrate his point, Thurgood recounted an event involving a meeting he had at the school with the principal and the parents of the child his daughter had an altercation with.

It was remedied to my satisfaction. I mean, frankly, I did threaten to take legal action if nothing wasn't done because I thought it was very critical that, at some point, you know, you kind of meet people where the rubber meets the road. What are we going to do in this situation? . . . she [his daughter, Ruby] wasn't very aggressive, and I don't mean to try to get on Ruby [referring to the study being about boys] but just talking about the dynamic.

When you have the, meeting the parents and seeing who they were and knowing that this was coming from the home, and that, what were you going to do about this environment? Knowing that they're bringing this into your environment that's supposed to be a safe place? That's supposed to be a safe space. Supposed to be! You know what I mean? It's also educational.

Dr. Clark did not offer an in-depth consideration of how family and her partner have impacted the racial socialization of her children. She stated, "We haven't yet. I say 'we' because my husband and I talk about this. We haven't really decided yet." However, Dr. Clark did speak at length about discussing how to approach racial socialization with other mothers of Black children.

I just actually had a conversation with some friends on Friday--a good group of Black mothers. Many of us, I think all of us with Black sons, at least one Black son, well, no not all of us.

Yeah, the Mocha Moms' connection partly but then also a few other moms also joined us. It wasn't really just like the Mocha Moms. It was several things. It was the election, it is the film "13", and I feel like there was something else that folks wanted to discuss. All these issues kind of overlapped. One mom just put it out there, "Hey, is anyone interested in coming to my house just to talk?" I think she also invited a few of her own friends who aren't in the group. We just got together Friday night, and it was not really a guided discussion. It was more just a, "What do you think about this? How do you talk to your kids? How much do you tell them?" Her big thing was she had a big issue with telling your kids that he has to be twice as good. I think she's coming from a slightly different perspective. Her kids are bi-racial.

Ms. Bethune described her difficulties reaching an agreement with her partner about how to conduct racial socialization conversations and the race-related messages her children had

received directly from members of her immediate family. My analysis begins with a review of comments she made that illustrate the sources of disagreements between her and her partner.

I'm never used to it. It's really hard to figure out how you can speak. For one, he's very intelligent. Trying to find the right answers for him. It's hard, especially with his father there on the Black power side and me being trying to downplay it. His father's [always] trying to let him know this is how America's always been.

Ms. Bethune implied her child's father speaks to him about race and the racial history of this country despite her disagreeing with his approach. Indeed Ms. Bethune's disapproval is so strong she asserted that she hoped her partner does not talk to their children about race.

[Interviewer: Do you think his father is having race-based conversations with your son?] I would hope not. I don't know. I'm going to be honest. I don't know, but I would hope not. [Interviewer: Why do you hope he's not talking about race with him?] He [her husband] watches the Malcolm X speeches and the rebellious [Black leaders]. I would hope that he would learn more from the Martin Luther King side than the other, everything being always rebellious, everything being all about race. I try to teach him that one or two people out of a bunch, you can ignore those. His father tries to teach them that they're all like that. [Interviewer: Would you be comfortable with him talking to your son about race if it was different?] If we shared the same mentality about race.

However, Ms. Bethune and her partner do not disagree on every topic related to talking to their children about race.

The one thing I love about his dad, we don't use the N word at home. By using the N word, you are no different. That's my belief. You are no different than the person, regardless of the color of that skin. You say you're using that word to empower yourself, but you're using the word that they used to use to call. He doesn't know that.

She also noted that family members had provided an important lesson about race to her children.

Besides his grandparents, no. [Interviewer: What do you mean?] I say, "When you go to grandma's house, ask her." When he asked me about slavery, especially with the Rosa Parks thing [this refers to another conversation and not Rosa parks being a slave]. He said "She used to be a slave. What does it mean to be a slave?" I answered a couple of questions. "Yeah, well, slaves, there are people here and they made them do work that they didn't want to do and didn't pay them and beat them." And he was like, "Why do you think Rosa Parks didn't want to go to the back that day." [Ms. Bethune responded to here son], "I think because she was tired. "And he'd say, "But why?" And then I'd be like okay, "Ask grandma."

The reflections Assata shared about the impact family and friends have had on her children's racial socialization include alignment with her son's father and conflicts with family. For example, earlier I related Assata's story about her son's encountering a racially charged meme. Towards the end of her conversation with her son about this image, she reported saying "Okay, well, the first time that I felt like this Dad helped me a lot. I want you to talk to dad about this today." Throughout the interview, Assata frequently referred to the synergy between her and her child's father.

Yeah, I remember we were very nervous as to what gender the child would be, and how the child would look, because we know that society treats you based off of how you look. We were so grateful we had a boy because it's easier to raise a boy than a girl, we think. Yeah, we were happy to know we were going to raise a boy instead of a girl. Then, after he was born, skin tone is a thing. We started to see where he would lay in the spectrum of skin tone, and my now ex-husband would joke and say, "He's light skinned, he's going to be fine [laughs]. I would say, "Don't say that." He said, "It's true." I'm like, "All right. You're right, but okay." It would always be something that we would talk about.

The passage below also illustrates Assata's reliance on her ex-husband for racial socialization advice and support.

[Interviewer: Who do you look to for support related to racially socializing your child?] My ex-husband. [Laughs]. When Trump got elected, when I fell asleep, I was like, "Yeah, tomorrow we will have a woman president. I'm going to bed." Then I woke up and all my friends were like, "No! No!" on the internet, and I was like, "Oh, maybe this is an old feed," and then I saw Trump accepting the speech and then I texted my ex-husband and I was like, "Do we need to move? Do we need to leave the country? Do we need to get the baby a passport? What do we do?" He said, "No we don't. We stay and fight. We don't show them that we're afraid." I was like, "But I'm afraid. I'm now afraid. I'm afraid for you. I'm afraid for your girlfriend. I'm afraid for me. I'm afraid for the boys." He was like, "There's nothing to be afraid of. We just remain vigilant."

Although Assata and her ex-husband seem to be on the same page about racial socialization, Assata did confront her ex-husband's family about the way they talked to her son about good vs. bad hair.

Then I had to have the talk about hair with my husband's family, which I thought they were conscious [Aware of racial justice issues]. Oh, no. I had to explain to them, we're

not going to teach the baby about good hair, bad hair, this and that. It's all hair. They were kind of laughing and by the third time I brought it up they understood that it was a touchy subject, and that they should not say those words, and that was it; it was done.

Then I had the little book and I made them all sit and read the book to him. Then they were like, "Okay," because they could tell I would just keep going. I wasn't going to stop. Bookstores were a source for me and conversations with other moms of color. That helps a lot. "Has your child been through this? Is your child in a mostly White school?" Other moms help a lot.

Assata had a similar conversation with her own family about the media she did not want her child exposed to.

I am constantly trying to fill him up with as much love as I can to counterbalance all the media he may be exposed to. I also don't have a television in my home. I don't have a TV, so I don't allow any news. Then when we go on vacation to someone else's space, I make them turn off the news. I curate what is being watched. If it's a movie, a person of color has to be the lead. We're not going to watch any White guys saving the day. My family has had a really hard time with that.

And I had to explain that to my family because if you're digesting that media all the time, it's going to affect your self-esteem. I just turn the media off. If it's something to do with the President, absolutely. Only positive images.

Finally, when addressing the theme of the influence of family and peers on parents' racial socialization decisions, two of the parents mentioned that their children's older siblings have played a role in their racial socialization decisions. Thurgood made the following observation about this aspect of racially socializing his sons:

I say, he's cute now, but in three or four years, he's going to be the aggressor [in society's eyes]. It's going to be, "Martin did this," Just like with my daughter. Ruby said something and it made someone else feel uncomfortable. Really? Okay. Why were they uncomfortable when they were the aggressor? When she didn't back down, now she's the one who's the threat. With him, I think it's going to be the same way. I think it's going to be the same way because, I think, academically, they are on par and in some situations above their peers, their White peers.

Nzinga also shared the way situations with her oldest child have impacted her socialization decisions with her younger sons. "Well, I knew because of having an older daughter that the conversation would eventually come up, so when I finally had a son I decided to

approach it before he approached me with it.” Nzinga’s proactive approach to initiating conversations about race sits in juxtaposition to the approach some of the other parents who participated in this study. For example, Dr. Clark and Mansa said they wait for situations to arise in order to discuss them with their children.

Exposure by any means. The parents who contributed to this study used a variety of means and mediums to teach their children that pride in being Black was essential. Parents made great and small efforts to make sure their children were exposed to positive forms of Blackness. In particular, the use of socialization behaviors, for example, going to a Black history museum, was a theme that came up over and over again in parents’ accounts.

Dr. Clark talked about the actions she has taken to make sure her son was exposed to events, people and messages that helped him develop pride in his Blackness.

Right now it's just about him being proud of who he is. We've gone to events like the Black Genius stuff that y'all put on. I think now we're starting to talk a little bit more about what it means to be Black. More from a pride standpoint, I think.

Dr. Clark continued to describe her efforts to expose her son to positive portrayals of Blackness.

We try to expose [him] to things [during] Black History Month and books and films . . . Next week, we're going to the National African American History Museum that I'm excited about. Church. I don't know. I feel like right now that looks like being around other Black people and feeling comfortable in that space and in that Blackness. I don't know if we have a lot of conversations around it but I think that fits with some of the earlier things we talked about. I don't know if we're necessarily to the point of talking these things through but I think right now it's more of the exposure and just being around, being in those spaces.”

Nzinga shared that she encourages her family to participate in several different events, rituals, and activities to promote her child’s pride in Black culture and stated she frequently participates in socialization practices and conveys racial pride messages to her son, as evidenced by the following statements

We drive to [a nearby city] for some things. We try to do . . . We're charter members of the African American Museum in DC even though we haven't been up there yet. I did, I did make them [her children] charter members, and we're trying to go in the spring, based off our schedule. I have to find a weekend where we're all in town. I take them to things when we travel. I seek out anything called Black, culture-wise, that I can find. Going forward, if I say "culture" I'm referring to Black culture.

Nzinga continued to discuss the cultural events she attends with her family.

We went to the Kwanzaa celebration last night. It was fantastic; it was fantastic. I dressed them up in their African clothes; they don't have a lot, but I do. I put on their little dashikis. It's funny because my daughter, wears them with pride at the Kwanzaa celebration, but one day the school was having something like some kind of wear cultural garb, and she was like "No." The boys wore theirs without [complaining], but she was absolutely like "I'm not putting that thing on. That is for Kwanzaa only." She flat out refused.

The passage below includes Nzinga's description of the Kwanzaa ritual she leads her children through.

The Kwanzaa celebration is easy; we can talk about the principles and what they mean and how they apply to our life. We have a whole (Kwanzaa) ceremony . . . Every evening, I call them downstairs and what we do is we talk about the principle. We start off with this book, and what I do is I read. This book goes for each . . . What it does is . . . I don't want to torture them because they're young, so I [tell them] that Umoja means "Unity." [The book also contains] great quotes from famous Black people. Real short. They all kind of talk about unity. So they learn about who these people are. These are the same people I read about last year, and they didn't remember so this is reinforcement. They learn about Benjamin E. Mays and Howard Thurman and so each [year] . . . I read, it's just a couple of pages. After I read . . . They all can read so they take turns because we have different books. We read this one last night and I read it. . . It's short, and I read it from start to finish. Each book is different.

This next statement provides a good summary of the ways Nzinga has approached finding opportunities to affirm her children's Blackness.

Yes. That's year round. Then just in general anything that we do that I can incorporate it [racial pride] like any current events as the year goes on. If there's a cool new . . . I'm trying to think of a new example so I'm going to just give you . . . I cannot think of an example. For an example, say there we're driving in the car and there's a new stoplight and I'm like "Do you know who invented the stoplight? The first stoplight?" Any chance I get . . . any opportunity, I'm going in. My husband is like "can't they just notice the stoplight." And I'm like why not? That's a great opportunity. A Black person invented the

stoplight. I'm not a know-all so I try, for myself, to keep reading, to keep researching because I don't know all there is to know about Black culture.

Nzinga's commitment to affirming her children's Blackness is especially evident in her dedication to educating herself about the accomplishments of Black people.

Likewise, Thurgood stated that he pursues opportunities to share positive messages of Blackness including, but not limited to, trips to museums, media, and educational camps for children. He also emphasized that he incorporates socialization behaviors in conjunction with these educational experiences.

Also, you know, and since that time [since the racial equity camp his son attended], we just started to have discussions with both of our children, particularly Martin, about who he is, and started to incorporate the cartoons, the things that he watches, especially during Black History Month.

We found that that was an optimal time to talk about race, our racial inequities, racial tension, discrimination, and visit African American museums, civil rights museums, etc. to kind of make him more aware. At that time, he was at [son's school], so he was at a predominantly [Black], you know, kind of insulated, other than going to, being involved in football, basketball, other camps and stuff like that where you have [greater] diversity.

Thurgood also highlighted the success of his own family and himself to reinforce the point that Black people are successful and have a history to be proud of.

Right. Well, yeah, and so, from the museums and things like that. So we've talked about [what it means to be Black] from an historical standpoint, what Blacks have achieved, how Blacks have been treated because of the color of their skin, and where we are now. There's family, there's churches, etc. I haven't had that conversation with him about what it means to be Black. I guess if I did, I would start from the Bible. I would start from the God perspective, and how the issue of race, in my opinion, really wasn't prevalent, from God's point of view, and how you had the creation of color in order to enslave, in order to divide and separate and segregate.

You know what I mean? That's why, so we talk about our professional careers, and we take him to work, and so, talk about other people who are successful throughout history and even in the present. You look at, I forgot the name of the little girl who started her own lemonade stand or something like that, but they look at kids and how they are. They [Thurgood's children] look at, I guess, YouTube videos of young kids who are starting their own blogs.

Assata also has worked to create an environment that reinforces positive conceptions of Blackness and builds her child's confidence. She gave the following explanation of the way her personal networks have facilitated this goal.

A goal that I've had is to have him rooted in a foundation where he knows that we, as people of color, have contributed to society in more than the arenas of entertainment and sport. I've accomplished that because I'm a Black creative and his dad is a Black creative. He knows that we know filmmakers; he knows that we know actors; he knows that we know visual artists, painters, sculptors, poets. It's a little beyond just television and popular film.

I want to expand that to science and math. I dated an architect specifically so that he could be [my son's] his mentor. I've dated all the Black guys in [City of Study] basically so that he can have all these uncles. [Laughing] I need to. His dad's a musician, ugh, that's not stable. [Laughing] As boring as it was, I was like this is going to be an internship one day. [Laughing] Accountants, architects, and I'm trying to find high-level scientists.

Assata went on to explain how she arranges for her son to have at least one experience that provides positive messages about Black people each day.

I start his day off with music by Black artists. I make sure that he either watches my snaps on Snapchat, or I will FaceTime him with anything related to visual arts with Black artists. There's a show recently in Raleigh at the visual art exchange called, "Black On Black," and it was a show that a Black man and woman organized. And [in which] all of the artists are people of color. It was up for a whole month, and they had all these events and everything, and every time I would go I would snap or FaceTime him so he could see it.

There was a Prince tribute party here in [City of study], at [Public Park], and I FaceTime him from the dance floor with my friends and he was like, "Ah!" You know.

On the other hand, Ms. Bethune did not indicate that has sought or used any specific resources to ensure that her son is proud of his Blackness. The following statement clarifies her choice not to do so:

[Interviewer: What goals do you have to make sure your son understands his Blackness?] That's the thing. I don't want him to think [(that)]. Yeah. I just want him to think that to grow up and be like "I'm an American." At the end of the day, I'm an American. I don't care what color I am. I'm an American and I have the same opportunity as anybody in this country. Like I said, the color of your skin is just that.

However, it can be seen from other data presented in this chapter that her son has been receiving messages from other family members. In addition, her son has been conducting research on his own and finding information that seems to promote his pride in being Black. His independent pursuit of this kind of knowledge may have contributed to his mother's decision not to engage in efforts designed to affirm his Blackness. The passage below suggests that Ms. Bethune has made peace with her choice not to discuss race with her son about race because he seems so well equipped to handle instances of racial bias.

"I don't think I even need to [talk to him about race] . . . When he told me [what] he told that kid [the child that told him that all Black people were robbers] about all these people that had made it [provided examples of successful Black people] and he said "What about my dad? My dad goes to work. Comes home." He sees that. I think he sees Dorian owns his own business. His wife a Doctor. He [her son] knows a lot of Black folks that have made it."

Resources. Lastly, the theme of resources emerged from the data as parents shared resources they had access to and those resources they would like to have access to. Nzinga provided her own list in the passage below:

Okay. I couldn't go, but he was reading his work . . . so I can't speak on how that went, but they . . . That's where I saw it, through that EIE. Education Information Exchange, EIE for short. They are out of [City of study] and they just kind of share stuff. Those are things that I would love more of. I'd never heard of your organization, Village of Wisdom but it sounds like something similar to EIE. I would love to be in touch with more things that can notify me of things going on, that are beneficial for me as a parent, to get more tools, and for my children.

Thurgood provided some context as to which type of resources he has used and which ones he would like to use. He also spoke about the importance of tools that facilitate racial socialization conversations with his children:

I think the camps that are more age-appropriate, like WE ARE, I think, and what the school is trying to do with girls of color and maybe boys of color, from an educational standpoint, I think more of that needs to happen, to prepare, because the more people talk about they don't see race and all this kind of stuff, I think, you know, it just perpetuates

the problem, and makes it worse, because race is in everything that we do, all the decisions that are made, whether it's from the federal government, local government, schools, jobs, employers, promotions, demotions, etc.

Dr. Clark shared some ideas about what resources she has found to be helpful and what types of resources she would like to have greater access to:

For me, I'm about being around other Black people. I don't know what that's about. Maybe it's because I feel deficient sometimes in my own life, but I think just having a peer group for him would be good. I know there are ways that we could probably do more to facilitate that but it would be nice for him to be around other Black boys or even other girls on a regular basis. We have friends and family members and things, but, ideally, he would be around people like him more regularly, more frequently.

Thurgood offered the following response to an interview question about what resources he has used to support his racial socialization efforts:

I don't know if I've done a lot of looking up of resources. I think [I rely] more on conversations with friends and other parents. I think looking at the research [on racial bias]. It's not so much to a point where I'm trying to directly tie it [in] but just to get more of a context about things. I've done a little of that. I guess it's been more informal sources that I've used.

Assata also shared what types of resources she would like to have greater access to:

It helps me keep going, and I just find history interesting, but, specifically, I want to know. . . These are the resources I would like. I would like the history of local Black people to be preserved in a space where I can actually see how they lived, and then I want access to real Black people in different fields. I don't know if that makes sense.

[I'm looking to connect with other moms] usually in a social setting; once I determine how old someone, is I'll ask them if they have children or not, and then most people will introduce me and say, "Hey Assata, this so and so, and she's a mom of a boy too, around Andrew's age." Then they know to connect with people. Yeah.

Ms. Bethune spoke about having access to the following resources. "Is Facebook enough? I think, when he asks questions like that, I wish I had somebody that can actually sit down with him and talk to him [and] be able to answer those questions better than I can without being biased."

Site Visits and Field Observations

During this study, I conducted site visits at the homes and schools of the sons whose parents participated in this study. In this section, I provide a review of data from these site visits that corroborate and triangulate the interview data I collected. I visited the homes of two parents, Thurgood and Nzinga, and had the opportunity to thoroughly explore and observe Nzinga's home. I also visited the school both Mansa's and Thurgood's sons attend.

Home visit. When I visited Nzinga at her home, I observed many pieces of Black art as well as numerous Black cultural artifacts. These items included paintings, books, African Tribal masks and a Kwanzaa altar. There was some cultural artifact or art piece on every wall I viewed in Nzinga's home. As discussed in the interview data section, a photograph in the home displayed the entire family wearing West African clothing Nzinga referred to as Ankara print. These examples of Black culture align with Nzinga's overall socialization practices, which emphasized racial pride reinforcement.

School visit. My site visit at the school lasted a little longer than an hour. I have visited this school multiple times before and after conducting this study due to my work in the community. Upon entering the school, I was met by Mansa's son, who was sent to greet me at the front office and lead me to his classroom. As I walked through the halls, I looked for pictures of Black people and artifacts of African American culture. I noted the presence of many current pictures of students and their families. Based on these pictures, I concluded that this school was diverse because the photographs appear to depict children of African, Central and South American and European descent.

Although there were only a few artifacts of Black culture on the walls and in the classrooms, I did see several signs that suggested a culture of acceptance and inclusion. There was a large diversity sign comprised of the faces of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds

in the art class. In another teacher's classroom, a Black Lives Matter sign could be seen. However, most items on the school's walls are students' work and art.

As a snapshot of how Black culture is integrated in school lessons I observed the following: During the art lesson, the teacher presented three images as instructional tools for that day's lesson, but none of these images reflected Black culture or displayed individuals of African descent. However, I realize that if I were to observe this class on another day, more people of color might be displayed but on this day all of the images shared depicted White people.

At the time of my visit to this school, Mansa's son had a Black female teacher in her late 30s or early 40s. Before she let me observe the art class Mansa's son was in, she took me on a brief tour and explained how this school differed from traditional public schools. All the differences she pointed out had to do with general class management, student freedoms, building structure and pedagogical approaches. She never spoke about the school's practices and pedagogy being different in terms of culturally responsiveness or relevance to the students.

This visit neither confirmed nor conflicted with Mansa and Thurgood's description of their children's experiences in the school. Thurgood's observation that race is a concept that is all around us and affects every facet of American life did strike me as particularly poignant when I reflected on this visit. As, I also only saw a few artifacts indicating that the school had embraced a culture of equity and equality for all students. In addition, I saw no actions that were explicitly anti-racist. Consequently, I am not surprised in reflection that both Mansa and Thurgood's children have experienced instances of racial bias in this school because as Thurgood explained, race is in everything and when specific actions are not taken to ensure equitable actions for children of color, especially Black children, they will likely experience racial bias.

One observation did tacitly affirm Mansa's clear frustration with the school's teachers prior to our interview: the placement of his son in the classroom of one of the two Black teachers working in the school. During a follow-up conversation with Mansa he confirmed that his son was intentionally placed in the Black teacher's class due to his son's previous experiences.

Summary

The data outlined in chapter four revealed the various factors that impact how parents make racial socialization decisions related to their young sons. From the two research questions ten themes emerged. 1) News and popular media, 2) Observant and aware children, 3) School lessons and other education opportunities, 4) Peers, teachers, and Blackness, 5) Don't take it in (protect self-esteem), 6) Gender, 7) Checking-in or Still thinking, 8) Family and parent peers, 9) By any means necessary, and 10) More resources. The six parents interviewed provided a variety of examples of how racial socialization frequently intersected with school based situations. Data from home site visits corroborated findings from interviews. Implications and suggestions for research that emerged from this data are shared in Chapter five.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When I began this study, I wanted to know more about the various factors and situations that influence the racial socialization parents provide young Black boys. Through this investigation, I was able to deepen the current understanding of what factors, situations and conditions occur before and during racial socialization by parents of Black boys. In this chapter, I review the findings of this study, highlight additions to the current literature, and make suggestions for future research.

Review of Findings

My first research question -- *What situations influence the racial socialization conversations parents have with pre-adolescent Black boy?* -- had two sub-questions; these sub-questions focused on 1) child-initiated situations and 2) school-based situations. The second research question--*How do parents understand and interpret their racial socialization actions and conversations with pre-adolescent Black Boys*-- had two sub-questions that focused on 1) parents' reasons for racial socialization and 2) the resources parents used for racial socialization. Here I highlight the themes that emerged and give examples to summarize my findings.

Media exposure, observant and aware, and finding Black friends emerged as themes of child-initiated situations that influenced parents' racial socialization. Media exposure, such as coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign and police shootings of Black people, were frequently cited as situations that either preceded racial socialization or was used during it. This finding builds on previous research investigations such as Thomas and Blackmon's (2015) study that found Trayvon Martin's murder influenced parents' racial socialization practices. Parents

also often reflected on their children's surprising ability to *observe and be aware* of salient factors in various situations involving race. Parents cited their children's ability to notice elements of race or pick up on race-related ideas as a reason for talking to their child about race. Finally, the demographics of a family's neighborhood also influenced parent racial socialization, sometimes leading parents to encourage their children to *find Black friends*. For example, Nzinga drove her son to a nearby city to ensure that he had exposure to an all-Black track team to help him develop a sense of self informed by an all-Black space not available in his neighborhood or school. This finding reinforces those of prior research studies (e.g., Caughy et al., 2006; Saleem et al., 2016) that have investigated the impact of neighborhood dynamics on the type of socialization Black children receive.

School lessons, peers, teachers, and Blackness emerged as themes of school-based situations that initiated parent racial socialization conversation in this study. Ms. Bethune provided an example of how school lessons on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks brought the conversation of race into her home. Even more, these conversations led Ms. Bethune to call on the expertise of extended family to help her answer the questions her son would ask based on the school lessons he experienced. As an example of when the topic of race came up for Assata, she reported that her son confidently handles school situations when his peers wanted to touch his hair and how his recounting of these hair touching events prompted her to check in with him about how the situations made him feel. These findings give context to how parents may interpret and react to instances where their children experience racial bias as discussed in Hope, Skoog, and Jagers' (2016) recent study. The findings also mirror Holman's (2012) study where she discussed catalysts of racialized experiences that included teacher, peer, and police related situations.

Protecting self-esteem, gender, and checking-in or still thinking all emerged as concepts that parents would reflect on as thought processes that guided their racial socialization.

Protecting self-esteem was a clear concern of almost every parent in this study because they were concerned about the effect talking to their children about race-related topics could have on their children's emotional state. For example, Dr. Clark spoke about not sharing too much with her son too soon due to her desire to preserve his innocence. Parents' desire to protect the self-esteem of their children as it relates to racial socialization is a finding that has been confirmed repeatedly in the research literature (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes et al., 2006). Gender arose as a theme both organically during interviews and also because of question prompts. Often parents talked about how their approaches to the topics of beauty and dating would be different if they were raising girls instead of boys. Checking-in and still thinking emerged as themes that captured the method or approach to socialization parents used to govern how, when, and if they talked to their children about race. For example, Nzinga, Mansa, and Thurgood consistently mentioned searching for teachable moments or opportunities to share a fact or piece of knowledge that illuminated the accomplishments of Black people.

Finally, *family and parent peers, exposure by any means necessary*, and a desire for more *resources* all emerged as themes of what resources and experiences parents used to inform their racial socialization. Parents talked about how the messages they were sharing with their children often mirrored what their partners and their parents would share with their children. There were also situations in which these family members' approach to racial socialization greatly diverged from the parents' approach, especially in the case of Nzinga and Ms. Bethune. Several of the parents stated they used any resource at their disposal to ensure that their sons would learn to view their Blackness as an asset, not a deficit. For example, parents used personal networks,

jobs, books, and more to reflect positive images of Blackness to their children. However, parents also expressed a desire for more resources to help their children understand race and develop a positive sense of self based on their race. In particular, many of the parents reported wanting more age-appropriate resources for their children. Parent identification of the need for more age-appropriate tools to racially socialize young children is validated by Caughy and Owen's (2014) findings that high levels of cultural socialization in early childhood is linked to greater school readiness for children of color. Perhaps future scholarship could include translating the most promising cultural socialization interventions reviewed by Jones and Neblett (2016) into resources that are more accessible to parents.

In order to analyze all of the findings from the data collected from this study in concert, I have organized my discussion by topics that frame how the findings of this study add to the literature. These topics of discussion include digital media, children's first racially salient event, parent dyads and differences within individual dyads, socialization tactics, the dynamic nature of parent's racial socialization, family impact on socialization, older siblings, and school- and camp-initiated conversations about race. Through this analysis, it became clear to me that not only do the findings of this study add to what is known about how parents perceive their racial socialization practices but it also provides fodder for establishing more robust models for understanding the complexities of the racial socialization process.

Child's first race-salient event. In large part I pursued this study due to the paucity of qualitative studies assessing how Black parents react to their child's earliest experiences with realizing their racial identity. Caughy and Owen (2015) among other researchers have discussed and demonstrated the need for more study of how parents racially socialize pre-adolescent children. The parents in this study reported a variety of events that led to them engaging in

conversations about race with their sons at a young age. Three of the six parents (Mansa, Thurgood, and Ms. Bethune) reported that their children's first racially salient experience involved a negative interaction. Mansa's son had a negative experience at school with a teacher and Ms. Bethune's son's negative experience was with a peer. Mansa's son experienced a teacher snatching a cookie out of his mouth and scratching his lip. Ms. Bethune's son was told that he was going to be a robber because all Black people are robbers. Mansa's son was emotionally devastated by the incident and immediately ran away from the teacher in tears. In contrast, Ms. Bethune's son did not seem affected by his negative encounter with racial prejudice. Instead, he reacted to the taunt by retorting that his parents and President Obama were not robbers. Ms. Bethune's son's response suggests he had already had interactions that had made him aware of his race.

In contrast to Mansa and Ms. Bethune's stories of when their children first recognized their Blackness, Nzinga and Assata reported that their sons learned about their race in positive ways. These two parents stated that they began purposefully exposing their sons to positive perceptions of Blackness when their boys were young. Both mother's proactive racial socialization choices seem to have been motivated by their desire to keep their sons from internalizing any negative ideas related to Blackness as a result of situations the parents could not control. For example, Nzinga said her early conversations about skin color and race with her son stemmed from her awareness of her oldest daughter's experiences. Nzinga and Assata's decision to socialize their children during early childhood seems wise as Caughy and Owen's (2015) findings suggest that children that experience more cultural socialization at an early age begin school more school ready.

Although Nzinga and Assata asserted that they or another family member first addressed the topic of racial identity with their children, Dr. Clark reported that her son's first experience understanding of Blackness happened in a school-like setting. Both of her sons attended a preschool that intentionally introduced lessons and activities that encouraged children to explore social and racial justice. Schools that address racial injustices as early as kindergarten might guarantee a positive first experience with race in school and reduce the probability that later situations in which race becomes a factor do not negatively affect Black children. Arguably, those schools that promote such activities also actively look to address racial equity issues preemptively as opposed to addressing issues in a reactive manner.

Tactics. This study made it clear that parents use a variety of approaches that previously have not been nuanced in the research literature. I will refer to these approaches as racial socialization tactics. Racial socialization tactics are different modes of how parents communicate racial socialization concepts to their children. Previously, racial socialization has been mostly described by the the content of the message being delivered, such as, racial pride messages which occur when positive messages about Blackness are shared. Racial socialization tactics allow for the discussion of how racial pride messages are delivered, that is, are these positive messages delivered by watching a movie, limiting exposure to negative information, or taking an unplanned opportunity to discuss a topic. The recognition of racial socialization tactics builds on the work of Edwards and Few-Demo (2016) who discussed the use of various strategies within the various racial socialization types. Naming racial socialization tactics and adding this nuance to the research conversation may enable future researchers to evaluate how the process of delivering racial socialization messages moderates the impact of the content of racial socialization messages. In the future researchers could also explore the delivery of racial pride

messages in order to find out if parents present such information proactively or reactively. Investigation of racial socialization communication tactics could add to findings that Tang, McLoyd, and Hallman (2016) presented demonstrating that high rates of overall communication and racial socialization within families is predictive of children who have positive attitudes regarding school and positive perceptions of their competence. This study found evidence that the following racial socialization tactics exist: simplification, exposure, sequestration, teachable moments, and off-loading.

Simplification is the act of reducing the complexity of a racial idea to a framework that is easy for young children to understand. Assata provided a clear example of this practice when she designated any act of racism as “crazy” and behavior that her son should dismiss as inconsequential and irrelevant to him. The motivation behind simplification as described by the parents in this study was always straightforward as they cited their desire to protect their child’s self-esteem. Parents did not want their children misinterpreting the nuances of racism and potentially internalizing negative ideas about Black people implicit in the words and actions of others. Investigating the use of simplification and the types of racial socialization it accompanies could lead to future research. This tactic could be used as a vehicle for both socialization messages and also be its own independent type of socialization. For example, Assata’s use of simplification to discredit negative messages about Black people does not fit neatly into the previously identified categories of racial socialization but could also be considered a form of cultural socialization, racial socialization behaviors, or preparation for bias. As Caughy and Owen (2015) suggested more investigation, especially qualitative study, of racial socialization with young black children should be done to deepen the field’s understanding how parents simplify messages for young children to understand complex ideas.

Exposure is the act of allowing a child to experience some activity, media, art, or message that has content about race and provides information about the cultural or socio-political factors often associated with Blackness. This tactic is similar to the Lesane-Brown and colleagues' (2006) definition of racial socialization behaviors; however, I am suggesting that this exposure is not always related to racial pride reinforcement as implied by Lesane-Brown and colleagues measure. Indeed, exposure to activities, media and art could also communicate racial barrier messages, negative messages about Black people and any of the other racial socialization types. Framing *exposure* as a tactic allows for the reality that not all forms of racial socialization add to children's racial identity. Exposure could communicate racial barrier, self-worth, or even egalitarian messages depending on what content is at the center of the experience.

Nzinga, the participant who was most vocal about her exposure actions, described the explicit tactics she employed. For example, she enrolled her son in a sports club in an area outside of her neighborhood to increase the number of Black friends he had access to. In a separate action, Nzinga insisted her son invite the Black friends from his sports team to his birthday party. The tactics Nzinga used seemed similar to those Lesane-Brown and colleagues (2006) have presented, such as, taking a child to a museum or a festival celebrating Black culture. However, the variance between the types of activities Nzinga described may be qualitatively great enough to lead to varied outcomes. In addition, it seems plausible that some actions could imply that Blackness is negative, such as, avoiding the Black side of town or parents not allowing their children to play with other Black children. Parents could also engage in actions that also skew egalitarian pushing a child to be friends with children from many different backgrounds and races. All of these possibilities suggest that researchers should continue Edwards and Few-Demo's (2016) incorporation of socialization tactics in their analysis.

Analysis of exposure through the lens of various types of racial socialization content might also provide greater context to studies such as Cross's (2014) investigation of the various actions and cultural events Black families participate in that likely communicate different types of racial socialization messages

Teachable moments occur when situations arise without parents' planning them. Such moments often offer context or content that parents can use to explain racial dynamics to their children. This tactic commonly presented as reactive in nature in this study. Researchers such as Holman (2012) and Hughes and Johnson (2001) have discussed how parents often share preparation of bias messages reactively after their child has experienced some form of discrimination. However, unlike in prior studies, this study demonstrated that parents also respond to catalyst or cues to talk about the concept of race other than their child experiencing discrimination. Specifically, Thurgood and Mansa stated they used this tactic multiple times, including instances when TV stories or some other form of media could serve as fodder for analysis of racial dynamics in America. The parents in this study primarily cited employing this strategy to help children pick up on the racial invalidations commonly seen in the media that are implicit and thus difficult to detect. Participants stated that these invalidations could easily enter their children's psyche if left unchecked. Teachable moments were not only used for preparation of bias examples but also to reinforce cultural pride. Both Mansa and Nzinga described teachable moments involving everyday objects and activities, for example, pointing out during the daily ride home from school that a Black inventor created the stoplight.

The teachable moment tactic is reactive in nature because it depends on environmental factors, but also requires parents to call upon the proactive knowledge they have been amassing throughout their lives. For example, Nzinga described a teachable moment she seized that

initially sounded completely spontaneous, but during the course of her interview, she also mentioned her efforts to expand her knowledge so she can contribute to her children's awareness of Black people's accomplishments.

Sequestration is the action of limiting or eliminating a child's exposure to negative messages about ideas related to race. Three parents in this study used this tactic. Thurgood talked about how he and his wife had placed their son in an insulated environment while was in preschool. The preschool was run by Black educators and is known in the community for being a strength-based and culturally affirming environment for Black children. Thurgood intentionally put his son in this school to keep him from experiencing the potential invalidations Black youth often experience in typical preschools. Assata took a different approach to using sequestration. She explained that she actively limits the types of movies and TV shows her son watches, in order to ensure he only sees Black people in roles of power and leadership, thus insulating him from common media images that suggest all heroes are White and male.

Perhaps the most popular form of sequestration Black people have access to is attending HBCUs. Prior research has established that the environment created by HBCUs has an empirically different impact on Black students' racial identity and sense of belonging (Phelps, Tranakos-Howe, Dagley & Lyn, 2001). Multiple parents in this study talked about how their HBCU experience had a significant impact on their lives and identity. Dr. Clark best articulated the benefits of this form of sequestration including being in a racially safe environment where she found a community due to the diversity of Blackness that HBCU's uniquely foster. Future investigation could be done to see if sequestration is a tactic that can be used with different types of socialization, especially promotion of mistrust, negative, and self-worth messages.

Off-loading is a strategy that occurs when a parent leaves the process of delivering a racial socialization message to his or her partner or another trusted family member or a friend who belongs to the family circle. This tactic often proves useful when a race-related issue outside of the parent's range of experience or knowledge presents itself. For example, Mansa talked about offloading gender specific conversations with his daughter to his wife. Likewise, Assata reported a similar arrangement with her son's father when the subject of dating girls came up. Alternatively, Ms. Bethune used off-loading when her lack of knowledge about slavery prevented her from answering her son's questions about this institution. She stated she encouraged her son to ask his grandparents about this subject. Off-loading seems as if it could be used for any of the racial socialization messages and would most frequently be used in a reactive manner.

I am confident that I have not presented an exhaustive list of socialization tactics, but noting the variety of tactics parents use to communicate different types of racial socialization messages to their children does seem valuable. Future research and discussion should expand this list and push the current forms of socialization tactics I have suggested here to be as robust as possible. Naming the tactics used to deliver different messages may also facilitate methodological approaches that could elucidate how combining various tactics and racial socialization message types could have a differential impact on child outcomes. Such a methodological advance could advance the field of racial socialization similar to how the use of racial socialization profiles by Neblett and colleagues (2008) has. In addition, this identification also begins to call out the degree to which the strategies and methods of racial socialization are proactive, reactive, or both.

Parent racial socialization strategy is dynamic. Parents in this study demonstrated the ability to shift or change their racial socialization tactics. Previous research has not explicitly discussed socialization tactics parents use and how these tactics, when joined with types of racial socialization messages, could constitute a more comprehensive socialization strategy (Coard & Sellers & 2005; Howard, et al., 2013; Hughes et al. 2006). Because the majority of prior research has not explicitly discussed socialization tactics or strategies, the lack of detailed, precise investigations presenting ways parents might shift their socialization strategies comes as no surprise. In fact, my review of the literature found that Edwards and Few-Demo (2016) conducted the only study that has explicitly explored parent's socialization strategies and the factors that contribute to such a racial socialization strategy. Within this section I discuss the findings from this study that demonstrate how parents shift and change their racial socialization strategies and what factors parents considered as they reflected on changes in their socialization strategies.

Two of the parents in this study made it clear they had already changed or might change their approach to racially socializing their children. The modifications these parents had made or were considering to make extended beyond what prior researchers have documented such as changes related to parents' gender or age or differences in their children's gender or age (Howard et al., 2013; McNeil-Smith, Reynolds, Fincham & Beach, 2016; Saleem et al., 2016). Specifically, Ms. Bethune found that her initial approach to treating racism and race-related discrimination as a problem stemming from a small minority of people might not be as appropriate as she originally thought. News of numerous police killings of unarmed Black people and the treatment of Barack Obama during his presidency made her more aware of racism as a

systemic issue. Ms. Bethune's emerging understanding of racism as a systemic problem pushed her to consider how she might modify the way she was racially socializing her son.

Nzinga also went through a shift in her socialization strategy in response to experiences with her oldest child. She decided to begin conversations about race and racial pride with her two younger children at an earlier age because she felt her oldest child had developed some problematic beliefs about racial identity. Consequently, not only did her younger children undergo a different racial socialization than her eldest child but also her eldest has likely perceived a shift in his mother's socialization priorities. Future studies focused on determining what factors are most likely to cause parents to modify the types of racial socialization tactics, messages, and overall approach they use are needed. Longitudinal, quantitative, and mixed method studies designed to detect how socialization practices shift and what factors cause those shifts may be particularly illuminating. Parents from this study provided a perspective that has yet to be discussed in the literature as my findings suggest parents can and do shift their approach to racially socializing their children. Future study should incorporate a more dynamic perspective of socialization in recognition of this addition to the literature.

As researchers pursue future investigations of the dynamic nature of racial socialization, a phase mode of racial socialization may provide a useful framework for analyzing how parents shift their socialization practices. I propose that parents go through the three following phases when they deliver socialization messages to their children: 1) pre-thought or planning, 2) the actions of racial socialization and 3) reflection. During the pre-thought or planning phase, parents in this study talked to other parents, referenced resources, and reflected on prior experiences. I also noticed that during this initial phase, parents participating in this study accessed thoughts and situations that stretched back to their own childhood and the socialization

they received from their own parents, childhood peers, and environments. For example, Dr. Clark explained that the reasons she did not have racial socialization conversations with her son stemmed from her own upbringing. According to her, and her parents attempted to shield her from negative messages about Black people. Other parents, including Nzinga, Assata, and Thurgood, talked about how experiences they had as children, college students, and young adults impacted the type of racial socialization they engaged in and the frequency to which they participated in socialization.

The tactics discussed in the previous section of this chapter best characterize the actions that define the second phase of racial socialization. Parents in this study engaged in tactics or actions of racial socialization in either proactive or reactive ways. For example, Nzinga and Assata proactively explained the idea of Blackness to their sons before their children began to develop an understanding of their racial identity. All the parents in the study reported participating in reactive forms of racial socialization that were often generated by their children having experienced some form of racial bias themselves or by having witnessed someone else being similarly mistreated. News stories focused on race-related events such as an unarmed Black person being shot also sparked racial socialization conversations.

The third phase of racial socialization I noted during my study consisted of reflection. During this final phase, parents considered their previous racial socialization practices and how those practices had impacted their children. For example, Nzinga reported she often wondered if she was engaging in too much racial socialization and was especially concerned about sharing too many racial pride messages and racial barrier messages. Nzinga and Dr. Clark stated that they had met with other parents raising pre-adolescent Black sons to discuss the ways their own parents racially socialized them and to assess the practices they had been using with their own

children. The reflection phase often led the participants to return to the planning phase to alter their socialization practices based on observations and judgments they made when reflecting on the impact their previous racial socialization had on their children.

The three-phase model for racial socialization I have presented mirrors a similar phase-framed model seen in the self-regulated learning (SRL) literature. In particular, Zimmerman's (2002) process model of SRL has three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. Indeed, some of the parents in this study seemed to approach racially socializing their children as a process involving learning. All the parents in this study indicated that they desired additional resources presenting the best ways to teach their children about race and racial dynamics. Therefore, future researchers may find that models of SRL provide a useful lens through which they can better perceive the ways parents make small and large shifts in their approaches to racial socialization.

Digital media. Racial socialization researchers prior to this study have done very little research examining how digital media made available via the Internet might impact, initiate and even support racial socialization conversations. Multiple parents from my study cited the role technology and digital media had on how their children were beginning to make sense of race-related ideas. Specifically, parents talked about their children's ability to Google information or access socio-cultural ideas through social media apps like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Assata's interview reflects the numerous and rich ways that technology has already begun to have a major impact on racial socialization conversations. Assata explained how a fellow parent's comments on Facebook led to her telling her son to stop playing a video game with one of his friends online. In turn, this incident inspired her and her son to use the game platform to describe the issue to another one of her son's friends who had observed the

interaction between friends via the game's network. Ms. Bethune also spoke about the use of technology in racial socialization conversations. She stated that her son used Google to find the answers to questions he had about race. On the other hand, Thurgood highlighted his trepidation regarding the likelihood his children would encounter negative messages about Black people from the internet because their easy access to it limits his ability to shield them from potentially harmful images and information. He also underscored the need to prepare them to encounter negative messages before they confront disturbing portrayals of Black people.

The role of race-related messages in digital media has been investigated in the field of journalism and other media-related disciplines. But, even in those areas, the research remains in nascent stages (Nakamura, 2008). Although researchers such as Nakamura, (2008), Florini (2013), and Page, Duffy, Frisy and Perreault, (2014) have focused their research on how individuals contribute to constructions of race and racial identity online, they did not consider the impact of internet-based media on children or on parents' racial socialization of their children. Thomas and Blackmon (2015) has analyzed the impact of the Trayvon Martin murder and related media coverage on parents' racial socialization practices; however, the authors did not give significant attention to the role digital media play in racial socialization. For example, parents could use the Internet to communicate with other parents, have conversations about popular articles via platforms such as Facebook, or use platforms such as Snapchat to share racial socialization messages the way Assata did. As the millennial generation (i.e., people born between 1981 and 1999) continues to age and have children, it will be interesting to see how this group, the first generation to grow up with significant access to technology, will use that technology to inform and facilitate their racial socialization (Oblinger, 2003). Consequently,

there is an urgent need for future studies investigating how online environments impact and facilitate racial socialization practices.

This study demonstrated that digital media is becoming a part of parents' racial socialization conversations and behaviors in a variety of ways. Parents in this study often used digital media to encourage racial pride, but also parents expressed concerns about the racially biased messages their children are likely to encounter while independently connecting to the Internet. Digital media has become such a ubiquitous source of information that even researchers who are not looking specifically at the role of digital media in racial socialization should begin to methodologically account for how digital media messages might impact the results of racial socialization studies.

The significance of these findings seems magnified given the high level of racial tension generated by coverage of racially-charged events in traditional and non-traditional media outlets beginning with the death of Trayvon Martin. In addition, the election of 45th president of the United States appears to have added to the racial tensions in this country (Reilly, 2016). These tensions have been heightened because of the media coverage they have been given. Similarly, the racially biased treatment President Obama and his family were exposed to during his tenure in the White House also exemplifies the types of messages Black children have observed via online and traditional media sources (Tynes, Reynolds, & Greenfield, 2004). With these salient messages being circulated on television and digital media, it seems important for future studies to consider the impact these messages have on both parents' socialization approaches and the kinds of socialization children report being exposed to. In this study, Mansa reported using messages to point out this country's racial dynamics to his children. But, Dr. Clark reported avoiding these types of messages to maintain her son's innocence. Assata also approached

negative messages by reducing her son's exposure to the news. Due to the variety of approaches parents in this study used related digital media to facilitate racial socialization it seems important that future research explicitly investigates how media impacts the racial socialization process.

Gender differences. All of the parents in this study indicated that they had altered or planned to alter their racial socialization messages based on their child's gender. The influence of gender on the type and level of racial socialization a child experiences is reflected in studies conducted by Edwards and Few-Demo (2016), Brown (2008), and Caughey and Owen (2015). One concept that emerged related to racial socialization centered on boys receiving harsher socialization and preparation for bias messages than girls need. Parents also discussed the relevance of beauty standards and dating choices among their friends. Interestingly, these two gender specific socialization topics aligned with the gender of parents in the study.

Three parents talked about boys experiencing more bias. Nzinga spoke about her boys being Black males, and, as a result, they needed harsher, more direct messages about race. Although she did not state that she thought her sons would experience more racism than her daughter, this assumption seem viable because admitted to taking a different approach to socializing her boys. Howard and colleagues (2013) found that parents of boys made similar choices, asserting that parents tend to be more direct and harsh in their racial socialization of boys.

Thurgood did believe his son would experience harsher treatment than his sister due to gender. However, his claim is complicated because he also indicated that due to his daughter having a darker complexion than his son she was likely to experience more racial bias than her brother. In addition, Assata talked about the sexism young girls must learn to navigate and how she would be more worried about raising a girl considering the oppressive forces of both racism

and sexism. Previous studies have shown that gender is related to children receiving different types of socialization messages. However, I am unaware of studies that have explored the intersection of skin color, gender, and socialization message types (Caughy et al., 2011; Cooper et al., 2015; Holman, 2012; Howard et al., 2013).

It is interesting that more parents in this study did not talk about their sons being perceived as intimidating considering the findings of prior research studies focused on parents of Black boys (Cooper et al., 2015; Holman, 2012; Howard et al., 2013). Thurgood did refer to anticipating his young son being seen as intimidating in the future due to his race. Mansa also referred to his son's being perceived as physical or aggressive and stated that he felt that his son's teachers were already starting to develop this attitude based on their descriptions of Freelon's play during recess. Although this data cannot be generalized, it is interesting that the two fathers who participated in the study were the only parents who discussed their concerns about their sons' being perceived in terms of their physicality and intimidating demeanor. The fathers' sensitivity to this misperception suggests their own experiences have made them more attuned to the prevalence of this stereotype. Future investigation should investigate how fathers' experiences with being stereotyped impact their racial socialization actions.

Parent dyads: differences within. Although some researchers (e.g., Howard et al., 2013; McNeil et al., 2016) have conducted studies that illustrate that mothers and fathers tend to socialize their children differently. An interesting scholarly addition of this study is more detailed examples of how and why parents of the same children might choose very different approaches to socializing their child. This study provides some contextual examples of the variance that arise between dyads and how those dyads approach racial socialization.

Both Ms. Bethune's and Nzinga's situations provide examples of parenting dyads in which the parents of the dyad have extremely different opinions on what type of racial socialization children should receive. Both, Ms. Bethune and Nzinga also shared similarities in how they differed from the other parent in their respective dyad. For example, Nzinga stated that she frequently shares pro-Black thoughts that sometimes cross the line between pro-Black messages and communicating Black superiority. Nzinga's husband does not agree with the level of importance she places on instilling pride in Blackness. During our interview, she described a couple of situations that clearly indicated her husband believed her messages went too far. For example, her husband disagreed with the amount of detail she was willing to provide about racial violence Black people have experienced historically (e.g., rape of Black women by slave masters). Another part of Nzinga's husband's displeasure with her style of socialization is related to the fact that their children are young (i.e., ages 9, 7 and 5). He is concerned about their children's ability to handle the nuances and challenging ideas Nzinga shares with them as they participate in social spaces shared with White children. Nzinga also makes it clear that she and her husband grew up in very different houses. She attributes her own commitment to instilling pride into her children as a product of being raised by a former Black Panther. Nzinga asserted that her husband was raised in a religious home where family conversation rarely if ever focused on race and racism. The differences in upbringing between Nzinga and her husband seem to be a main factor in why their approaches to socialization are qualitatively different a finding that aligns with researchers' findings that parent experiences impact the content of their socialization (Caughy et al., 2002; Coard et al., 2004; Suizzo et al., 2008).

Ms. Bethune was essentially the opposite of Nzinga because Ms. Bethune's partner wants to share pro-Black messages with their children, but Ms. Bethune does not want her partner to

share those ideas with their children. Her concern seemed similar to Nzinga's husband's in that she felt her partner's messages went too far and would encourage her children to dislike and mistrust White people, a possibility Ms. Bethune was uncomfortable with due to the role her White brother-in-law had in raising her and supporting her family. She often referenced her relationship with her brother-in-law to substantiate her color-blind approach to life. This perspective seemed to be similar to that of Nzinga's husband in that most of his racial socialization avoided explicit conversation about race.

Another interesting finding that emerged from this study related to what actions or behaviors parents did agree on or allowed to happen within their dyads. Both Nzinga's husband and Ms. Bethune were not opposed to celebrating Black culture because there was evidence that both participated in or allowed such celebrations to happen with their children. Ms. Bethune would send her children to her older sister to talk about elements from Black history because Ms. Bethune was aware of her knowledge gaps in those areas. Nzinga's husband participated in many of the cultural appreciation events that Nzinga led her family to and even posed in African-inspired clothing for the family's most recent portrait. Interestingly, both Nzinga's and Ms. Bethune's sons behaved in ways that demonstrated pride in their race. As inferences cannot be made about why they seemed to endorse pro-Black attitudes, future studies should examine whether when there are noticeable differences in the socialization messages children receive from parents and close family members and which types of messages seem to have the greatest impact on racial identity development. It may be the case that when children hear conflicting socialization messages that include both racial pride and egalitarian messages, racial pride messages have more salience. Neblett and colleagues (2008) and other researchers have shown that parents who use egalitarian messages in high proportion related to how much they use other

socialization messages generally participated in less socialization overall (Granberg et al., 2012; Neblett et al., 2009b; Neblett et al., 2012). Parents who share racial pride in high proportions to other messages typically participate in more overall racial socialization than those who do not.

Another interesting issue that emerges is that power dynamics within families that likely impact the socialization messages children receive. For example, Ms. Bethune discussed how she could not control the messages her sister shared about race with her kids due to the nature of their relationship. However, Ms. Bethune spoke about her expectations of her children's father's messages for them in a very different way. She stated that their father should not be speaking to their children about race, suggesting that she felt control over what types of messages he shared with their children. Nzinga asserted that she accepted the messages her husband shared with their children because as she stated, "their differences would balance out." Regardless of outcome and desire, in both cases each mother spoke about her partner's racial socialization as an activity she had some control over. More research is needed to determine how a mother's racial socialization desires impact a father's racial socialization messages and vice-versa. Interestingly McNeil-Smith and colleagues (2016) found in their study that mothers' socialization desires indeed had a measurable effect on fathers' socialization messages while fathers' desires had no measurable effect on mothers' socialization behaviors.

After analyzing the data I collected during my interviews with my study's participants, I would argue that the lack of communication between parents and the potential challenge of finding common ground kept them from having conversations about racial socialization. Nzinga made it clear during her interview that the discrepancies between the ways she and her husband approached racial socialization with their sons resulted in part from their not discussing this process with each other. In addition, the comments Ms. Bethune made about her lack of interest

in talking about race and a few remarks she made about not knowing what her partner says to their children about this topic lead me to believe that she, too, had not addressed race-related issues in substantive detail with her partner. As Sellers and colleagues (1998) have pointed out, race comprises a core, sensitive part of a person's identity; consequently, I believe initiating conversations about race with a spouse when such communication has not played a significant role in a relationship could increase the stress between partners and strain relationships. As a result, fearing an irreparable fracture of their relationship, partners might understandably avoid discussing racial socialization with each other. Although investigators such as McNeil-Smith's and colleagues (2016) have discussed how parent dyads approach socialization, future studies should take a more focused look at how parents discuss their racial socialization approach with their partner.

Four of the Six of the parents in my study stated disagreeing with their partners about some aspect of racial socialization whether it be the timing, intensity, or detail of the messages being shared. They also differed about the need to build racial pride and to deliver promotion of mistrust messages. Parents found synergy on not talking to their children about socialization at an early age and also found common ground related to protecting a child's self-esteem. The factors that parents stated led to discrepancies between the ways they and their partners engaged in racial socialization strategies included different upbringings and disparate social experiences growing up. Thurgood noted that most of the distinctions between his and his wife's socialization practices were inconsequential but did cite their varied upbringing as a reason why their messages sometimes differed. Dr. Clarke referred to the similarities between her and her husband upbringings and racial experiences as reasons for the synergy in their approach to racial socialization.

A potential intervention that may reduce conflict between parents about racial socialization and help parents establish common ground may lie in parent workshops that explore the impact of different racial socialization messages on children paired with training to deepen parents' understanding of the systemic nature of racial oppression. I include training on racial oppression as a suggested intervention here because Adams and Edkins (2008) have shown that behaviors related to race are more malleable when individuals are encouraged to adopt a systemic understanding of racism. This finding also aligns with the paradigm shift that Ms. Bethune was going through during her interview as she wrestled with the fact that racism was more systemic than she previously thought. These reflections moved Ms. Bethune from being someone who admitted she never wanted to talk about race to becoming someone who wanted more resources to help her talk to her son about race.

Older family impact on socialization. This study demonstrates that parent dyads could differ in how they socialize their children to the idea of Blackness. Additionally, it provides examples of non-caregiving family members, most often grandparents and other older family members, sharing potentially influential socialization messages with children. These family members also seem to be able to influence the types of socialization parents share with their children in addition to giving socialization messages directly to children. Although researchers, such as McNeil-Smith and colleagues (2016) have begun to look at how parent dyads communicate varied socialization messages to their children, research has been particularly scant on how non-parent family members impact a child's racial socialization.

Three of the six parents--Nzinga, Ms. Bethune and Assata--talked at length about the impact family members were having on their children's racial socialization. Nzinga and Ms. Bethune discussed the effect grandparents and grandparent proxies (i.e., older family relatives

that have strong relationships with children) have had on their children's racial socialization. The description Assata gave of the way her extended family have impacted her child's socialization pertained primarily to her confronting family about perspectives and messages she did not want them to share with her son. Also, two of the six parents from this study discussed the impact their older children have had on their socialization practices.

The impact of Ms. Bethune's family on her children is interesting because her family's messages qualitatively seemed to be the most different from her own in comparison to the rest of the parents in the study. Indeed, Ms. Bethune shared that her daughter has developed a positive racial identity due to her sister's influence. Again, Ms. Bethune's sister, 20 years her senior, acts as a grandparent proxy for Ms. Bethune's children.

Another instance of grandparents affecting the messages children received also occurred during my interview with Nzinga. Nzinga talked about her father's socialization goals for her children. Her father emphasized supporting Black businesses, and he wanted to promote and reward her children for doing so. Interestingly, Nzinga discussed her goals for her children's socialization with her parents more frequently than with her husband. Nzinga asked her mother to tell her if her racial socialization messages were appropriate and discussed how she and her father had talked about racial socialization goals. Comparing how non-parent family members impact racial socialization practices in Ms. Bethune's family to Nzinga's family, Ms. Bethune's family may have had greater effect due to the alignment between racial socialization differences. That is, Nzinga's racial socialization messages are aligned with her children's grandparents and Ms. Bethune's racial socialization messages are not aligned with her children's grandparents.

The historical perspective grandparents bring to socialization is also significant. In this study, it was evident that most of the grandparents had participated in several racial socialization

conversations with their own children prior to talking to their grandchildren. Grandparents have the unique perspective of reflection on how they socialized their children and to use those experiences to inform how they later in life socialize their grandchildren. Additionally, grandparents will also amass significant historical life experience across different time periods marked by the distinct ways that race is discussed and operationalized in the public. An interesting question arises when reflecting on this: Do grandparents become more motivated to share socialization messages if they feel like the previous socialization with their own children worked well? Some prior research has included grandparents in racial socialization analysis (e.g., Caughy, et al. 2002; Caughy and Owen, 2015) and research (Strom, Collinsworth, Strom, & Griswold, 1993) has been conducted on Black grandparents as primary caregivers, but more research needs to be done to understand how grandparents are impacting the racial socialization experience of children.

Based on the interview data from Ms. Bethune and Nzinga, I hypothesize that the voices of extended family could impact the development of children's racial pride and identity. Even more significant, is the likelihood that grandparents' and grandparent proxies' racial socialization messages are impacting the mental health and academic outcomes of Nzinga's and Ms. Bethune's children. Neblett and colleagues (2009a) have shown that racial socialization can affect both health and academic outcomes. The potential impact of non-parent family members also suggests that more studies should be done to investigate the impact of extended family on racial socialization process as other researchers have suggested (Cross, 2014; Hughes, 2006). It seems important for future studies to explore whether or not grandparents and other adult family members can amplify or negate the impact of parent racial socialization.

Eldest children. Prior racial socialization research is largely devoid of studies that investigate the impact of siblings on parents' racial socialization choices or how children perceive racial socialization. However, Caughey and colleagues (2011) did find that when young boys have older male siblings they are likely to receive more promotion of mistrust messages than their peers. I found that similar to older family members influence on parent racial socialization experiences with older children also influenced parent racial socialization. Parents' reflection on the experiences with older children when considering race-related conversations with younger children also fits into the three-phase model of racial socialization I have proposed. Parents are likely reflecting simultaneously on their previous interactions with their older children and on plans for future racial socialization processes with their older children and their younger siblings. My finding that parents alter their racial socialization due to experiences with older siblings confirms Caughey and colleagues' findings about boys who have older brothers but complicates their findings that demonstrated that no other gender-sibling combination resulted in varied socialization experiences.

It was apparent from my interviews with Thurgood, Nzinga, and Mansa that the eldest children of these families greatly impacted the racial socialization messages parents shared with their younger children. The firstborn children of both Nzinga and Thurgood were females. Thurgood observed that his daughter's experiences with racial bias had probably made him more aware of the types of situations his son would experience in the future. Nzinga stated that she altered the way she socialized her younger children based on experiences with her daughter. For example, Nzinga said as a result of her experiences with her daughter, she started to talk about race with her oldest son as soon as he could make racial distinctions. Nzinga asserted because she "started late" talking to her daughter, Zahra, about race as Zahra was not as proud of her skin

color and hair her brothers. As a result, Nzinga took a more proactive approach to racially socializing her oldest son by encouraging him to see his skin color as an asset before he internalized implicit and explicit negative messages about race from media and his peers. Mansa reported that his daughter received more racial socialization messages at a younger age than her brother because she had listened to racial socialization conversations he and his wife had with their son, the older of the two children.

McHale and colleagues (2008) asserted that mothers are more attuned to the idiosyncrasies of individual children, resulting in varied socialization practices with each child. Therefore, it is interesting that Nzinga, a mother, was the parent in this study to most explicitly discuss how she altered her socialization practices across children. Furthermore, Nzinga did speak with great specificity about the differences between her children during her interview in a way unmatched by either Mansa or Thurgood. As a matter of comparison, Assata does not have other children, and Ms. Bethune avoided racial socialization, so it is unsurprising that Ms. Bethune did not discuss how children's idiosyncrasies influenced her racial socialization practices.

After reviewing the interview data from this study, I find the lack of research investigating how siblings impact racial socialization especially glaring. In addition to the influence older siblings have on how their parents racially socialize their younger children, older sibling may directly racially socialize their brothers and sisters. As with other learning experiences such as music and school lessons, siblings often help each other make sense of the world--and race is a part of the world of every Black child growing up in the US. Consequently, it seems important that future studies capture the impact that siblings have on each other's understanding of race and racial identity (Caughy et al., 2011; Gregory, 2001).

School and camp-based conversations on race. The results of this study strongly suggest that school and educational camps interacted with parent's racial socialization conversations with children. Previous research has discussed the impact of school and academic context on racial socialization through the frame of racial bias that children are or are not experiencing in school (Lambert, Roche, Saleem, & Henry, 2015; Saleem & Lambert, 2016; Tang et al., 2016). My study demonstrates that in addition to children experiencing discrimination at school, some schools proactively present concepts of racial equity and justice to their students. These contrasting experiences have distinctive effects on parents' racial socialization practices. Although previous researchers have investigated the impact of racial discrimination at school on racial socialization, these studies did not analyze how those experiences interact with parent racial socialization behaviors (Lambert et al., 2015; Saleem & Lambert, 2016; Tang et al., 2016).

Mansa, Thurgood, Ms. Bethune, and Dr. Clark all reported that school and camp activities sparked discussions of race at home. Both Mansa and Thurgood have children who went to a local camp run by the organization Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education (WE ARE). They stated that this camp increased their children's ability to discuss racial justice issues, thus facilitating more complex discussions about related topics with their children. For example, Thurgood noticed this camp had inspired his son to become passionate about justice and equity and began encouraging his son to pursue this newfound interest. Mansa noted that this camp had a similar impact on his daughter. These examples show that well-implemented, anti-racist education can also impact the overall racial socialization goals of a parent. Given this finding, it is also important to learn more about how systemic discussions of racism affect the overall mental health and social adjustment of Black children. Tang et al. (2016) found that high school

students can and do separate the systemic and interpersonal impacts of racism, but found that those students who experienced systemic racism were more likely to have maladaptive social behaviors. Despite this finding it might be possible that academic explanation of system-level factors might give children a sense of efficacy and perspective on potential ways to navigate these effects as opposed to learning about systemic racial bias through direct experience.

In addition, school lessons influenced racial socialization conversations in the homes of both Dr. Clark and Ms. Bethune. Dr. Clark and Ms. Bethune's descriptions of these lessons suggested their children's schools took a less sophisticated approach to presenting this information than presented by the WE ARE camp. For example, Ms. Bethune spoke about instruction her son received at school about commonly discussed Black history figures such as Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In Dr. Clark's case, her son participated a play at his preschool that enacted well-known events of the Civil Rights Movement through the lenses of fairness and justice. These school lessons were similar in impact to WE ARE because they encouraged children to have conversations with their parents, but also different in that Dr. Clark and Ms. Bethune did not indicate or suggest that the lessons and experiences enhanced their children's ability to talk about race.

Implications

The analysis of the data from this study reveals a complex web of factors that influence the racial socialization process of parents of young Black boys. The findings of this study raise interesting questions about how parents approach the socialization of young children and surprisingly revealed the dynamic nature of racial socialization more broadly. I presented a three-phase model of racial socialization that suggested parents first consider and plan the racial socialization they will initiate in the future, second they implement or carry out the racial socialization, and third they reflect on how what effect their socialization had. Hopefully, this

model helps to frame the dynamic and evolutionary nature of how parents racially socialize their children and make it more explicit. The implications of how parents racially socialize their children as both a process that continuously evolves and is executed by conveying a mixture of messages delivered using a variety of tactics has potentially infinite implications for the future of research and practice in the racial socialization space.

Likewise, the parents who participated in this study made it clear that they need more resources in order to facilitate early racial socialization conversations with young children. The findings from this study that indicated the various sources and actions that impacted the racial socialization young boys receive provide additional concepts to explore. Future work should expand upon Jones and Neblett's (2016) review of interventions that utilized ethnic protective factors to encourage positive development for children of color and translating those interventions into resources that are accessible to a large swath of Black parents. I introduce ideas for future study, suggestions for schools, and ideas for intervention designed for families.

Research studies. Previous research has established that parents of young Black children struggle to find the words to engage in racial socialization conversations (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Peters, 1985; Suizzo et al., 2008). Parents in this study reported that their children learned about their Blackness for the first time in dramatically different ways. And, although it seems logical to conclude that parents would rather take a proactive opportunity to introduce Blackness to their child through cultural pride reinforcement versus their child learning through some form of racial prejudice and having to reactively explain Blackness, it is unclear if given the option, parents would choose the former. More quantitative and mixed-method studies should be done to determine if children who experience a positive introduction to their Black identity have greater mental health or academic outcomes than children who experience negative introductions to

Blackness. Finally, reflecting on the proactive racial socialization strategies of Nzinga and Assata, I am curious about which messages most effectively prepare children to cope with racial bias. In addition, studies in which racial socialization messages work best to help children recover after a racial bias event has occurred, are also needed.

As already discussed, due to the influence of grandparents and siblings on the racial socialization choices parents in this study made, further investigation into how these factors may be impacting parents' approaches to racial socialization seems appropriate. Previous studies have highlighted the racial socialization parents received from their own parents impacts the messages they share with their children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990). However, my findings suggest analysis of a more direct relationship between grandparent messages and the racial socialization children receive may also be needed.

Reviewing the literature, I also noted the paucity of studies that investigate the influence of older siblings on how parents enact racial socialization. The data from this study suggest that older siblings' experiences influenced the racial socialization approach parents from this study took with their younger children. Few researchers (Caughy et al., 2011; McHale et al., 2008) have explored the possibility that siblings may have a differential impact on parents' racial socialization. Even more, my findings suggest that siblings may have a significant impact on parent's socialization messages. I suggest the following questions as potential frames for investigations to fill this current research gap: 1) Do parents frequently change their socialization patterns for younger children and if so what is the profile of parents who are likely to change their socialization approach; 2) Do children within the same family report experiencing different types of socialization from their parents across time? That is, when parents report changing their socialization practices with younger children, do children perceive these changes; and 3) How do

older children impact the socialization their younger siblings receive due to the older sibling demonstrating internalized oppression or experiencing racial bias? In order to address these research questions investigators will likely need to use both mixed-method and quantitative analyses.

Suggestions for schools. All the parents from this study suggested that they would like more age-appropriate resources for their children to facilitate conversations about race. Two of the six parents in this study had positive conversations about race following a school lesson or event that prompted the conversation. That said, three of the six families in this study had a poor race-based experience involving the school their children were attending at the time. The proportion of this study's participants who reported negative experiences is not surprising. Harris-Britt and colleagues (2007) found that 93% of Black youth in their study reported experiencing some form of racial bias in their school. Considering the data, it seems important for schools to adopt anti-racism and equity policies and invest in more training to create an anti-racist environment.

In addition to adoption of anti-racism and equity policies and professional development, the experiences of the parents in this study also suggest that schools need to find more opportunities to integrate ideas of fairness and racial justice into their curriculum. Dr. Clark's son attended a preschool where his class had a simple conversation about justice, being fair, and discussing the colors associated with race. Prior to that event, the school notified the parents that they would be initiating those conversations. Dr. Clark's positive reaction to the school's implementation of this event aligns with Ladson-Billings (1996) landmark study on culturally relevant pedagogy and the importance of allowing Black children to learn about the implicit and systemic injustices they face. Accordingly, schools should consider supporting programs such as

WE ARE that have made ideas of racial justice accessible to young children and curated resources for parents and children to facilitate difficult conversations about race.

Interventions. Several parents involved in this study indicated they would appreciate having more non-fiction books to share with their children to explore ideas of racial injustice and the challenging but amazing past of Black people in America. It is past time for researchers, historians and educators to come together to create accessible resources for pre-adolescent children to facilitate the types of conversations the parents in this study have requested. In addition, multiple parents from this study indicated that they would embrace more opportunities to speak to other parents and experts about how to talk to children about issues of race, especially those pertaining to the racial injustice Black children may face. Accordingly, more interventions need to be designed that are similar to Coard and colleagues' (2007) Black Parenting Strengths and Strategies program and studies exploring the impact of these types of programs on parents' socialization practices need to be explored.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study that can be address with future research. First, this study only focused on the parents of boys; future studies should look at both parents of boys and girls to compare how parents' racial socialization is qualitatively different across child gender. As well, studies should also provide a more intentional comparative analysis of how mothers and fathers differ in their racial socialization. Second, I only assessed parent experiences with racial socialization so the ideas and concepts that emerged from this analysis are only representative of half the total socialization experiences described as it does not include the child's perspective. Future studies should look to conduct interviews with young children to better understand their perspectives and understandings of phenomena they experience related to racial socialization. Third, the majority of this study's participants were Black parents from the

middle class, therefore future studies should focus on working class and high net worth parents. As well, future studies should include White parents raising Black boys.

Finally, I did not have parents respond to the survey instruments often used in quantitative studies that produce profiles of parents demonstrating the complex mixture of socialization measures they use, such as Neblett and colleagues (2008) and White-Johnson and colleagues (2010) have conducted. However, considering this was a qualitative study, I did discuss those racial socialization strategies that parents emphasized as most important and note which socialization strategies they did not discuss at all or described as unhelpful or even unwise to use. Finally, due to the qualitative nature of this study findings cannot be generalized to other populations.

Conclusion

Summer camps, school lessons, older siblings, extended family, socialization tactics and overall socialization strategy were important resources that emerged from this study and add to the current racial socialization literature. Previous studies have focused primarily on how the racial identity of parents and their experiences with racial bias have impacted their racial socialization. The emergence of resources in this study as tools that influence parents' racial socialization has implications for future research as well as for interventions with Black families, educators, and those who regularly engage Black parents.

Finally, the parents of this study showed extreme ingenuity, strength, persistence and creativity in orchestrating situations where they could inspire their children to find pride in their Blackness. In addition to this accomplishment, they managed this cognitively taxing feat while coping with the stressors of being Black in America and the stress of watching their own children come to terms with that same stress. As has been the tradition in the racial socialization literature since its inception, it is important to note the immense skill and self-control Black parents wield

as they prepare their children for the unfair treatment they will experience as a Black person in America. Indeed, expanding the current perception of racial socialization as not only actions that convey a mix of different socialization messages but also a process that parents continue to develop and refine their strategic approach to socializing their children will deepen current strength-based narratives about Black parents.

APPENDIX A. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interview Questions (Open):

Question 1: What situations influence the racial socialization conversations parents have with pre-adolescent Black boys?

- When did it first become clear to you that your son was beginning to understand that he was Black? What happened? How did you react? Were you prepared? How did these impact future conversations about race?
- What types of questions has your son asked you related to race? Have you felt prepared for these conversations? What did you talk about?
- When the idea of race has been brought up or made obvious with your son? How do you decide how to handle the conversation from that point? What have you talked about with them?
- Has your son ever come home excited, happy, sad or angry due to a situation related to race? What happened and how did you react?
- What situations have occurred at school or related to school that led you to have a conversation about race?
- Has your son ever become emotional (angry, sad, happy, joyous) about a race related event that happened at school?

Question 2. How do parents understand and interpret their racial socialization actions and conversations with pre-adolescent Black Boys?

- When deciding on how and when to talk to your son about his Blackness what ideas come to mind?
- Are their ideas related to race that you plan on talking to your child about, but have not yet? If so what ideas do you plan on talking to him about that you haven't?
- If you have avoided or hesitated to talk about race with your son, what causes this?
- Do you think you've avoided conversations about race with your child? If so why?
- What topics related to race do you feel like are appropriate for a child your son's age?
- How did you explain what it means to be Black to your child if you have?
- How do you feel about how you've decided to talk to your child about what it means to be Black? Why or Why not?
- How would your conversations about race be different if your child was a different gender?
- What goals have you had when talking to your son about race?
- What information would be good or would have been good to have if you wanted to have a conversation with your son about him being Black? (E.g., a book on race-based conversations, a blog, reference cards, etc.)
- What resources have you used to prepare for a conversation about race with your son?
- What knowledge, experience, tools or resources have you used to talk about race in situations where you did not anticipate or initiate the conversation with your son?

APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Parent	Job Type	Parenting Status	Marital Status	Education
Assata	Artist and Contract worker	Co-parenting	Divorced	Some college
Ms. Bethune	Waitress	Co-parenting	Unclear	Some college
Dr. Clark	Social Science Researcher	Co-parenting	Married	Ph.D
Mansa	Environmental Remediation Specialist	Co-parenting	Married	BS
Nzinga	Computer Engineer	Co-parenting	Married	BS
Thurgood	Lawyer	Co-parenting	Married	J.D.

Table 2. Family Composition and First Race Conversation*Ages of children, age of first race conversation, and type of racial socialization cue*

Parent	Age of Son	Siblings (Ages)	1 st Race Talk	First moment when your son knew he was Black
Assata	11	N/A	1-2	I'm Black and I'm proud call and response with parents
Ms. Bethune	7	Sister (11)	6	Peer tells child that he is going to be a robber when he grows up because all Black people are robbers
Dr. Clark	7	Brother (5)	4	Pre-K lesson on diversity and inclusion
Mansa	9	Sister (8)	7	Teacher snatching a cookie out of the child's mouth, scratching his lip.
Nzinga	7	Sister (9) Brother (5)	2-3	Mom led conversation about skin color while she and her son colored pictures with crayons
Thurgood	6	Sister (10)	5	Situations that arose while participating in sports clubs and parent conversation

Table 3. Coding Table*Themes and codes*

Code	Description	Theme
Traditional Media	Communications via TV and radio	News and popular media
Online and Social Media	Using online tools to engage ideas of race. In particular, from Facebook, Twitter, Periscope and Instagram	News and popular media
Election	Conversation related to the campaign and election of the 45 th president	News and popular media
Other parents on social media	Comments made by other parents via social media that imply or specifically address ideas related to race	News and popular media
Child observation ability	Child ability to notice issues of race is surprising to parent	Observant and aware children
Advanced peer conversations	Children discussing ideas frequently discussed in media at a higher level than their parents' expectations.	Observant and aware children
Aware of race	Child is aware that an element of race was present in a situation or conversation	Observant and aware children
School lessons	Teachers facilitate lessons, projects, conversations or presentations that address the topics of race, equity or justice	School lessons and other education opportunities
Camps	Educational camps focused on deepening children's understanding of our country's history with racial justice and how that legacy still remains today	School lessons and other education opportunities
Neighborhood racial demographics	Parent reflects on absence of Black children in their neighborhood or their child's school	Peers, teachers, and Blackness

Code	Description	Theme
Peer (not same race)	Child interaction with different race peer where race is either explicitly or implicitly discussed	Peers, teachers, and Blackness
Parent interactions with other parents (not with same race)	Parent interaction with other parents often involving other parent demonstrating some form of implicit bias	Peers, teachers, and Blackness
Teacher racial mistreatment	Teacher mistreats child and it is believed that racial bias motivated that mistreatment	Peers, teachers, and Blackness
Monitoring child interaction with Black peers	Parent observes child interactions with other Black children, typically this observation is due to their only being a few Black children their child gets to interact with	Peers, teachers, and Blackness
Limit racial confusion	Parent simplifies nuanced racial situations to clarify the simplicity of the injustice that is occurring in order to help child understand the situation.	Insulate / protect self-esteem
Reactive race conversation	Conversation with child about race after child has been exposed to race related event	Insulate / protect self-esteem
Proactive race conversation	Conversation with child that is done intentionally before the parent believes a child will have exposure to this race related idea	Insulate / protect self-esteem
Insulate / protect self-esteem	Parents reflecting on various tactics and strategies they are using or plan to use to protect their child's self-esteem from negative ideas related to race	Insulate / protect self-esteem
Beauty	Parents reflecting on how conversations about beauty and Blackness if they were raising a daughter as opposed to a son	Gender
Physical threat	Parents reflecting on society seeing their son as more of a physical threat as they get older.	Gender
Gender	Conversation about how they are talking to their children about intersection between the child's Blackness and their gender	Gender

Code	Description	Theme
Consistent Check-ins	Parent reports frequently asking child how their day went to assess if any type of harm has been done to the child	Checking-in or Still thinking,
Parent Experiences	Parent reflecting on personal events from their past where race was a salient factor in the outcome of the situation	Checking-in or Still thinking,
Black College reflection	Parents reflecting on experience at a Historically Black University in effort to process their own thoughts related to talking to their children about race	Checking-in or Still thinking,
Not sure what to say about race	Due to a variety of factors including child age and the desire to protect the child's self-esteem the parent is unsure of how to address race related topics	Checking-in or Still thinking,
Family used to talk about race	Non-parent family members participating or leading conversations about race with children	Family and parent peers
Immigration and Nationality	Reflection on family history and origin as parents discuss their understanding and perspective on race in this country	Family and parent peers
Partner has different views on race	Parents who are co-parenting who noticeably disagree on how they should talk to their children about race	Family and parent peers
Other parent peers	Peers of parents who are believed to have a positive impact on their child's perception of Black people	Family and parent peers
Older sibling experiences	Parents reflection on older sibling experiences influencing how they talk to their younger children about race	Family and parent peers
Parent peer advice	Parents discussed speaking with parent peers about how to approach conversations related to race	Family and parent peers
Family and Friends to look up too	Parents reflecting on those adults in their child's world that they could see as positive examples of Blackness. These adults often included the parents themselves, family members and parent friends	By any means necessary
Exposure to more Black children	Parents purposely working to increase their child's exposure to more Black children	By any means necessary

Code	Description	Theme
Social justice camps	Parents sending children to camp or other out-of-school learning opportunity to learn about social justice, racial equity, or Black history	By any means necessary
Making school projects about Black people	Parent makes children complete self-directed projects and assignments on Black people or Black culture whenever possible	By any means necessary
Museums, social media	Parents using social media, museums and other activities to teach children about Black history and culture, as well as instill as sense of pride in Blackness	By any means necessary
Cultural books	Parents using books to teach children about Black culture and instill a sense of pride Blackness	By any means necessary
Sharing culture through home environment	Parent has Black art, artifacts, and other cultural markers in home to help children learn about Black culture and history, as well as instill as sense of pride in Blackness	By any means necessary
Age appropriate resources	Parents expressing desire for more resources that are age appropriate for younger children	More resources
More opportunity to talk to partner about race conversations	Parents desire for more opportunities and support in talking to their partner about race	More resources
Notification of events	Parent desire for tools that would make it easier to stay aware of events that would benefit their child	More resources
More learning opportunities for children	Parent desire for more camps and school based opportunities for children to have age appropriate conversations about race	More resources

Figure 1. Reflexive Journal Excerpt

Thinking that parents that take a heavy egalitarian approach to socialization seem to be less aware of the systemic nature of racism works. Their descriptions of it will thus be expressed in more interpersonal ways.

It's interesting that parents will reflect on how their racial socialization is similar or very different from their partners.

I'm pretty shocked by the age at which kids are bringing home pretty complex ideas about race.

A parent's concept of how racism works (system/personal) seems to be un-correlated to what socialization strategy they pick. It's also unclear when parents talk about their co-parents if their constructions of them as more pro-black is all mistrust type socialization or would they see it as affirmation based socialization.

There is this inference in telling your child "just because your Black doesn't mean you can't..."

Preparation for bias comes up in things I want to talk about

I wonder how accessible parents' thoughts are for the answers to my interview questions. Many of these questions strike me as ones where answers would elicit more detail the more time parents have to respond.

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