Correlates of African American and Latino Parents' Messages to Children About Ethnicity and Race: A Comparative Study of Racial Socialization

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Recently, social scientists have become increasingly interested in the nature of communications from parents to children regarding ethnicity and race. Termed racial socialization, race-related messages to children may have important consequences for children's identity development and well-being. This study examined the frequency and correlates of two dimensions of racial socialization—messages about ethnic pride, history, and heritage (Cultural Socialization) and messages about discrimination and racial bias (Preparation for Bias) among 273 urban African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents. Parents reported more frequent Cultural Socialization than Preparation for Bias. There were no significant ethnic group differences in the frequency of Cultural Socialization. However, African American parents reported more frequent Preparation for Bias than did Dominican parents who, in turn, reported more frequent messages of this sort than did Puerto Rican parents. Ethnic identity was a stronger predictor of Cultural Socialization among Puerto Rican and Dominican parents than among their African American counterparts. In contrast, perceived discrimination experiences was a stronger predictor of Preparation for Bias among African American and Dominican parents than among Puerto Rican parents. Finally, race-related phenomenon accounted for more variance in both Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias among parents reporting on their behaviors with children 10-17 years old as compared to parents reporting on their behaviors with children 6-9 years old.

KEY WORDS: racial socialization; ethnic socialization; parenting; ethnic minorities; families.

INTRODUCTION

As the population of the United States has become more racially and ethnically diverse, scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and parents have become interested in identifying processes that shape children's understanding of, and attitudes toward, their own and other racial/ethnic groups. Parents' messages to children have been of particular interest in this regard, due to parents' roles as primary socializing agents. Families constitute children's first and primary learning environment and parents are children's first

and primary teachers. Parents' attitudes and behaviors transmit world views about race and ethnicity to children by way of subtle, overt, deliberate and unintended mechanisms. In the scholarly literature, the term *racial socialization* is commonly used to reference these sorts of transmission processes.

Although racial socialization occurs in all families, it is thought to be particularly relevant to ethnic minority families, due to the fact that social stratification and negative group stereotypes complicate the child rearing tasks that they need to accomplish. Accordingly, scholars have described the strategies ethnic minority parents use to promote children's positive identification with their racial or ethnic group and to prepare them to succeed in the face of racial bias. For instance, Boykin and Toms (1985) specified three

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potentially conflicting socialization agendas that ethnic minority parents negotiate: (a) ensuring children's success in mainstream settings, (b) preparing children for experiences based on their minority status, and (c) teaching children about their cultural history and heritage. Sanders Thompson (1994), Stevenson (1995), and others (Marshall, 1995; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990) also described racial socialization themes related to positive identity development, equity, racial barriers, and egalitarian views—themes especially relevant to ethnic minority groups. Thus, racial socialization has commonly been viewed as a class of adaptive and protective practices that ethnic minority parents use to promote children's functioning in a world that is stratified by ethnicity and race.

Recent empirical studies support theorists' views that racial socialization is a salient feature of child rearing in ethnic minority families that has important consequences for youth's identity development and well-being. In studies based on African American, Mexican, Chinese, and Japanese samples, the majority of parents report efforts to foster children's cultural pride and to teach them about their groups' history and cultural practices (e.g., Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993; Ou & McAdoo, 1983; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Parents' efforts to teach children about racial bias and discrimination have also been well documented, but primarily in studies involving African American parents (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Peters, 1985; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). In turn, children whose parents emphasize their group's culture, history, and heritage have been found to report more knowledge about their group (Knight et al., 1993), more favorable in-group attitudes (e.g., Knight et al., 1993; Marshall, 1995; Stevenson, 1995), and more positive self-concepts (Ou & McAdoo, 1993). However, parents' emphasis on racial bias and discrimination has been associated with both favorable (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997) and unfavorable (Marshall, 1995; Ogbu, 1988) youth outcomes, with findings varying depending upon the source of information and the assessment procedures used. Thus, the exact form of relationships between discussions about discrimination and youth's well-being and development is unclear.

Limitations of Research on Racial Socialization

Despite scholars' recognition that racial socialization is a salient and influential component of child rearing among ethnic minority parents, empirically-based knowledge about the phenomenon is still limited. For one, although researchers have documented the range of racial socialization strategies parents use, less is known about the prevalence or frequency of these strategies, due to the ways in which racial socialization has been operationalized and measured. In several studies, racial socialization has been assessed by coding inductively parents' responses to open ended questions about parenting. Such inductive coding precludes an assessment of the multiple practices in which parents might engage, because dimensions of racial socialization are not assessed independently. Further, the binary indicators that inductive coding yields do not provide information about the frequency with which parents' communicate racial socialization messages to their children. Studies that have examined racial socialization by assessing racial attitudes or beliefs (e.g., Ou & McAdoo, 1993; Stevenson, 1995) also provide limited information on parents' actual behaviors or the frequency with which they engage in them. Although attitudes and beliefs are important determinants of behavior, there is not a direct correspondence between the two, particularly when it comes to sensitive topics such as race. Overall, then, empirical information about the frequency of racial socialization is limited. In order to more fully understand its role in ethnic minority families, it seems important to establish its prominence as an aspect of child rearing.

A second limitation of existing literature is that there has been little systematic investigation of the determinants of racial socialization. We know that parents vary in the types of racial socialization strategies they use (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Peters, 1985; Thornton et al., 1990). We also know that child rearing is shaped by a complex set of factors including intergenerationally transmitted belief systems (Ogbu, 1988), parents' concurrent attitudes and values (Holden, 1997), sociostructural conditions (McLoyd, 1990), and parents' ecological experiences (Belsky, 1984). Although the notion that racial socialization emanates from these sorts of factors is implicit in current writings, only a few studies have examined this notion empirically (see Hughes & Chen, 1997; Thornton, 1997; Thornton et al., 1990). In light of findings that different sorts of racial socialization messages have distinct consequences for children's identity development and well-being, it seems important to build a more complete knowledge base regarding their antecedents.

A final limitation of the literature is that little is known about similarities and differences in racial

socialization across diverse groups. Most published studies have focused on racial socialization among African American parents. The few related studies within other ethnic minority groups have focused primarily on the transmission of cultural practices and knowledge (e.g., Knight et al., 1993; Ou & McAdoo, 1993; see Quintana & Vera, 1999 for an exception) whereas studies of African American parents have also emphasized teaching about racial bias. Thus, the components of racial socialization examined across diverse groups have not been completely parallel. Comparative studies of racial socialization are even more rare: only one published study, to date, has yielded data across multiple ethnic groups using a single measure. Phinney and Chavira (1995) found that African American parents were more likely than were Mexican American or Japanese American parents to discuss racial bias with their children: African American and Mexican American parents were more likely than were Japanese American parents to teach children about their cultural history and ethnic pride. Thus, additional comparative data that identifies common and unique components of racial socialization across multiple ethnic groups is needed to understand the origins of the process and the functions it serves. For example, evidence that racial socialization is similar across disadvantaged ethnic minority groups might indicate that racial socialization practices derive from group disadvantage. In contrast, evidence that groups who are similarly disadvantaged report different racial socialization practices might indicate that such practices are embedded instead in indigenous cultural traditions and normative practices.

In summary, although scholars have suggested that racial socialization is an important component of parenting within ethnic minority families, more empirical information is needed on the topic. Little is known about the frequency with which parents transmit particular messages about race to children, or about how such messages are shaped by parents' attitudes, beliefs, or experiences. In addition, little is known about variation in racial socialization and its correlates across ethnic minority groups. In order to learn more about racial socialization, information regarding these sorts of issues is needed.

The Present Study

The present study examined the frequency and correlates of racial socialization among a diverse sample of urban African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents. Two components of racial so-

cialization were examined: emphasizing one's group's culture, history, and heritage (termed Cultural Socialization) and preparing children for encounters with racial bias (termed Preparation for Bias). The overarching objective of the study was to contribute to researchers' understanding of racial socialization in terms of its centrality as a component of child rearing across multiple ethnic minority groups and to explore its antecedents. The inclusion of African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents facilitated both of these goals. First, it provided an opportunity to examine the prevalence and frequency of racial socialization across groups that are similarly located at or near the bottom of the U.S. social structure. However, because these groups have equatable attitudes, beliefs, and experiences but distinct cultural histories and origins, it also permitted an examination of hypotheses regarding the relative importance of these factors in predicting racial socialization.

In the United States, African Americans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans are each disadvantaged relative to European Americans on a range of social indicators and encounter negative group stereotypes, discrimination, and interpersonal prejudices in their day-to-day interactions. However, they also differ from each other in important ways. African Americans have a long history of group subordination and oppression based on a caste-like system of racial stratification (Ogbu, 1988). Although Puerto Ricans in the United States have also experienced subordination and oppression, their presence in the mainland United States is largely a function of voluntary migration for economic opportunity, albeit disproportionately into low wage and unskilled jobs (Feagin & Feagin, 1999; Rodriguez, 1991). Moreover, Puerto Ricans have been racialized to a lesser extent and in different ways than African Americans, due to their mixed European, Indian, and African American ancestry (Urciuoli, 1996). Multiple factors, including an indigenous racial classification system that varies widely from that found in the mainland United States, circular migration, and access to large ethnic enclaves help sustain ethnic identity and cultural traditions (Rodriguez, 1991). Dominicans share with Puerto Ricans their voluntary immigrant status, an indigenous racial classification system that is distinct from that in the United States, and access to bounded ethnic enclaves. However, not only are they a more recent and economically disadvantaged ethnic group, but they are more likely than are Puerto Ricans to be racially marked, due to their phenotypic similarity to African Americans (Pessar, 1995). Thus, in focusing

on these groups, the present study permits an examination of both the frequency of racial socialization and of hypotheses regarding individual- and cultural-level factors that may shape it.

The study was organized around several specific goals. The first goal was to examine the prevalence and frequency of Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias among African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents. Based on the findings of Phinney and Chavira (1995), it was expected that African American parents would report more frequent racial socialization than would Dominican or Puerto Rican parents, especially in terms of Preparation for Bias. African American parents may be especially likely both to anticipate that their children will experience racial bias, due to the intractableness of racial bias against African Americans in the United States, and to have been exposed to racial socialization messages during their own upbringing. Accordingly, they may be especially likely to organize their child rearing in ways intended to protect children from the inevitability of racial bias. Although Puerto Ricans and Dominicans also experience racial bias, and may anticipate their children's exposure to it, they may be more optimistic that hard work and education will ultimately result in children's success, because racially based discrimination is less deeply embedded in their cultural history. Moreover, because indigenous racial classification systems are organized differently from those found in the United States (Pessar, 1995; Rodriguez, 1991; Urciuoli, 1996), Puerto Rican and Dominican parents are less likely to have been exposed during their own upbringing to the cultural repertoire of behavior that constitutes racial socialization in African American communities. Without working models provided by families and communities of origin to guide them, parents may be less comfortable engaging in discussions about racial issues with their children.

A second goal of the present study was to examine the extent to which parents' race-related attitudes, beliefs, and experiences predicted their racial socialization practices. Parents' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences provide the interpretive lens through which they view their own and their children's worlds. It was expected that parents' subjective identification with their ethnic group (ethnic identity) would be especially important in predicting Cultural Socialization, due to the likelihood that parents for whom ethnic group membership is salient also emphasize developing children's pride in, and knowledge about, their group. Parents' beliefs about discrimination against

their group (perceived group disadvantage) was expected to be especially important in predicting Preparation for Bias, due to the likelihood that parents who believe discrimination is more prevalent also anticipate their children's exposure to it, and socialize them accordingly. Similarly, parents' own discrimination experiences, which are distinct from perceptions of group discrimination (e.g., Ruggiero, 1999), were expected to be especially important in predicting Preparation for Bias, following Kohn and Schooler's argument that parents' experiences shape their ideas about which skills are necessary for success in adult social roles, prompting them to promote such skills in their children (Kohn & Schooler, 1973). To the extent that parents' experiences require them to cope with racial bias, they may be likely to anticipate their children's need to develop requisite skills.

A third goal of the study was to examine whether hypothesized ethnic group differences in racial socialization were accounted for by ethnic group differences in ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences or, conversely, remained once these sorts of factors were held constant. A finding that African American, Dominican, and Puerto Rican parents report similar racial socialization under conditions of similar ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination would suggest that racial socialization emanates from these sorts of ecological phenomena. In contrast, although no direct measures of cultural or intergenerational transmission processes were included in the study, a finding that ethnic group differences in racial socialization remain when differences in ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences have been controlled would be consistent with cultural formulations, which suggest that groups develop indigenous formulas for child rearing, transmitted intergenerationally, that are adaptive to their collective experiences and to their shared cultural knowledge about skills needed for success (Ogbu, 1988).

Finally, the study examined the extent to which relationships between parents' ethnic identity, beliefs about group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences and their racial socialization practices were equivalent across groups. Scholars who have emphasized the importance of culturally anchored research have argued for understanding intragroup variation in the processes leading to particular outcomes (Hughes, Seidman, & Williams, 1993). Thus, even if the frequency of racial socialization were identical across groups, it is important to determine

whether isomorphism exists in factors that produce such socialization. In this regard, no a priori hypotheses were formulated regarding ethnic group differences in Cultural Socialization. However, it was expected that perceived group disadvantage and discrimination experiences would be more strongly associated with Preparation for Bias among African American parents than among their Puerto Rican or Dominican counterparts. To the extent that African Americans are more likely to believe that racial bias is inevitable, perceived group disadvantage and discrimination experiences may more readily prompt Preparation for Bias within this group.

Although not a central focus of this study, analyses examined the extent to which hypothesized relationships were more evident among parents with children ages 10-17 as compared to parents with children ages 6-9. As has been argued elsewhere (Hughes & Chen, 1999), parents' racial socialization practices are likely to be sensitive to age-related differences in children's ability to understand racial issues. Researchers have argued that there are critical shifts in children's understanding of race between the ages of 7 and 9, when the majority of children demonstrate an understanding that race is immutable and constant despite changes in superficial features such as clothing and hairstyle (e.g., Abound, 1988). Thus, we reasoned that parents may be less likely to translate their own racerelated attitudes, beliefs, and experiences into conversations about race with children until children show a mature understanding of the concept. In a prior study, parents' perceptions of workplace racial bias were more highly associated with racial socialization among parents of children 10-12 years of age than among parents of children 4–9 years of age, consistent with older children's more sophisticated understandings (Hughes & Chen, 1997).

In sum, the current study sought to examine the following hypotheses: (1) that African American parents would report more racial socialization than would their Puerto Rican and Dominican counterparts; (2) that racial socialization would be more frequent among parents who reported stronger ethnic identity, more perceived group disadvantage, and more discriminatory experiences; (3) that perceived group disadvantage and discriminatory experiences would be more strongly associated with racial socialization among African American parents than among their Puerto Rican or Dominican counterparts; and (4) that hypothesized relationships would be more evident among parents of older as compared to parents of younger children.

In all analyses, demographic and socioeconomic variables on which Dominicans, African Americans, and Puerto Ricans in the present sample differed, and which have been associated with racial socialization in prior research, were statistically controlled. These included parents' age, educational attainment, gender, and family income. Studies among African American and immigrant Latino samples have found that higher income and better educated participants are more likely than are their lower income or less well-educated counterparts to perceive racial bias (Moghaddam, Taylor, Lambert, & Schmidt, 1995; Portes, Parker, & Cobas, 1980). Studies of African American parents have also documented that racial socialization is more frequent among socioeconomically advantaged, older, female, and married respondents as compared to their respective counterparts (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Thornton et al., 1990). Thus, these variables were controlled in the present analyses to diminish the plausibility of alternative explanations for study findings. Neighborhood ethnic composition was also controlled, due to the possibility that ethnic identity attitudes, perceived group disadvantage, discrimination experiences, and racial socialization each vary according to the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity of neighborhoods. English language fluency and immigrant status were not associated with either dimension of racial socialization within ethnic group and were not included in the analyses.

METHOD

The data for this study were drawn from The MacArthur Study of Diversity in Mid-life, a study of midlife experiences among urban ethnic minority adults conducted under the auspices of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Network on Successful Midlife Development. The objective of the larger study was to investigate neighborhood processes, discrimination and other stressful life events, social network factors, and a range of intrapersonal constructs as they influence ethnic minority adults' midlife experiences. Participants were recruited from two urban areas-New York City and Chicago. In New York, the targeted sample included Dominican, African American, and Puerto Rican adults ages 25 and older. In Chicago, the targeted sample included Puerto Rican and Mexican adults ages 25 and older. Because the goal of the present study was to test hypothese regarding African American, Dominican, and Puerto Rican parents,

only the New York City sample was included in the analyses.

Procedures

The MacArthur Study of Diversity in Mid-life was designed to obtain samples of ethnic minority respondents in ethnically and socioeconomically diverse urban neighborhoods. In New York, using information from the 1990 U.S. Census, Census Block Groups were categorized and selected according to whether they were high (>30%) or low (10-30%)ethnic concentration for a particular ethnic group and according to whether the median household income for the neighborhood was higher or lower than the median household income for each respective group in the city. Quotas were established that directed interviewers to recruit approximately equal numbers of target group members in each of four types of neighborhoods in a 2 (low vs. high concentration) \times 2 (low vs. high SES) design. An additional strata was added to include African American adults living in "hypersegregated" (>70% Black) neighborhoods. Within selected Census Block Groups, interviewers identified eligible respondents by screening residents door to door. The sampling procedure was not designed to yield a representative sample of African American, Puerto Rican, or Dominican populations in New York, but rather to permit a test of hypotheses regarding ethnicity and social context during midlife.

Respondents participated in 1.5–2-hr structured interviews, conducted in English or Spanish according to respondents' language preferences. Interviewers were fluent in English and Spanish and had received 20 hrs of training in standardized interviewing procedures. Standard back-translation procedures were used to ensure the comparability of English and Spanish protocols. Interviewers asked respondents who had children ages 6-17 questions about their racial socialization practices with a designated target child. However, interviewers only recorded whether parents had any children in each of the following age categories: 0–2, 3–5, 6–9, 10–12, 13–15, and 16–17. In order to compare relationships among parents of 6-9-year-old target children versus parents of 10–17-year-old target children, parents with children in both age categories were excluded from the analyses, including 14 Puerto Rican, 23 Dominican, and 8 African American parents. Also excluded from the analyses for purposes of parsimony were six Dominican parents who were born in the United States.

Sample

The sample consisted of 97 Puerto Rican, 98 Dominican, and 79 African American men and women with a target child 6-17 years of age. Demographic characteristics are shown in Table I. As the table indicates, there was considerable demographic diversity within and across groups. Virtually all African American parents were born in the mainland United States as were almost 59% of Puerto Rican parents. All Dominican parents were foreignborn. Within the immigrant subsample, there was also substantial diversity in age and period of immigration. Whereas 88% of island-born Puerto Rican parents migrated to the United States as children and prior to 1960, most Dominican parents immigrated to the United States as adults after 1980. Corresponding to this, more than two thirds of Puerto Rican parents

Table I. Sample Characteristics

	Puerto Rican $(n = 97)$	Dominican $(n = 98)$	African American $(n = 79)$
% born in mainland United	59.2	0.0	100.0
States			
Immigration history			
% immigrated under age 18	70.0	34.7	_
% immigrated before 1970	68.4	25.3	_
English language fluency ^a			
% yes	68.0	15.3	100.0
Gender (% male)	41.2	44.9	44.3
Age			
Mean	39.6	40.3	38.2
SD	8.5	8.2	7.4
Family structure (%)			
Never married	26.8	14.3	35.4
Currently married	49.5	45.9	40.5
Target child's age (%)			
6–9	47.4	46.9	43.0
10–17	52.6	53.1	57.0
Years of schooling (%)			
Eigth grade or less	9.3	32.6	2.6
Some high school	33.0	17.3	17.7
High school diploma	23.7	15.3	32.9
Some college	23.7	21.4	32.9
Four-year college degree	10.2	13.3	19.0
Average household income			
Mean	\$29,425.5	\$20,002.2	\$30,800
(SD)	23,226	16,193	29,279
Neighborhood ethnic composition			
<30% own group	27.8	18.4	46.8
<30% non-Hispanic White	9.3	12.2	11.4
Ethnically mixed	62.9	69.4	41.8

^aRespondents were categorized as fluent in English if they indicated that they spoke English and Spanish equally, mostly English, or only English.

reported that they were equally competent in English and Spanish compared to 15% of Dominican parents. Most (45%) respondents were under 45 years of age (range = 25-64 years) and 40-50% of respondents in each ethnic group were married. The majority of African American and Puerto Rican parents, and about 50% of Dominican parents, had completed a high school diploma, although a relatively small proportion had completed a 4-year college degree. Consistent with national trends, Dominican parents had completed fewer years of schooling than had their African American and Puerto Rican counterparts. Correspondingly, although a broad range of incomes was represented in each ethnic group, the average household income of Dominican parents was lower than that of their Puerto Rican or African American counterparts.

Measures

Demographic Background Characteristics

Individual and neighborhood-level demographic variables that were statistically controlled in all analyses included parents' age, marital status (0 = not married;1 = married),gender (0 = female; 1 = male), educational attainment (1 =less than 8th grade; 6 = schooling beyond the B.A.), and annual household income (measured in \$10,000 increments). Based on 1990 Census Block Group data, two dummy variables were constructed to represent three neighborhood types (>30% non-Hispanic White; <30 non-Hispanic White and <30% same-race; >30% same-race).

Racial/Ethnic Group Membership

Respondents answered three questions regarding their ethnicity and racial group membership: "How would you describe yourself in terms of your ethnic background?"; "What race do you consider yourself to be?"; and "As far as you know, what are your main racial origins, that is, what race or races are your parents, grandparents, and other ancestors?" Respondents answered the latter two questions using categories from the 1990 U.S. Census (1 = White; 2 = Black; 3 = Native American or Aleutian islander/Eskimo; 4 = Asian or Pacific Islander; 5 = Other). Although the sample is likely to have included White and Black Latinos, the data do not permit a distinc-

tion between them because 95% of Puerto Rican parents and 93% of Dominican parents identified their race as "other." Thus, race/ethnicity was represented in all multivariate analyses by two dummy variables that compared Puerto Ricans and Dominicans to the reference group of African Americans based on their self-reported ethnicity in response to the initial openended question.

Parental Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences

Ethnic Identity. Respondents answered singleitem questions regarding their subjective identification with their ethnic group (e.g., How closely do you identify with being [racial/ethnic group]; 1 = $Very\ closely$; $4 = Not\ closely\ at\ all$) and their preference for associating with their ethnic group (e.g., How much do you prefer to be with other people who are [racial/ethnic group]; $1 = Not\ at\ all$; $4 = A\ lot$). Although these questions serve as only a global indicator of ethnic identity, obscuring the complexity that other scholars have described (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), they permitted an examination of relationships between parents' ethnic attitudes and their racial socialization practices. The correlation between the items was adequate (r = .78).

Perceived Group Disadvantage. The measure of perceived group disadvantage consisted of respondents' answer to a single-item question concerning discrimination against one's ethnic group. The item was embedded in a matrix of items regarding multiple ethnic groups. Respondents answered each item with regard to each ethnic group (e.g., How true is it that [Puerto Ricans/Dominicans/Mexicans/Whites/African Americans/Foreign-born Blacks] are discriminated against?). Respondents' answers for their group served as the measure of perceived group disadvantage.

Discrimination Experiences. The measure of discrimination experiences was adapted from the Detroit Area Study's measures of acute and everyday racism (Williams, Spencer, & Jackson, 1999). Two sets of items were included in the measure. For the first set, respondents indicated whether or not five discrete events (e.g., being hassled by the police; being discouraged from seeking higher education) had ever happened and, if so, the number of times in the past year ($1 = Never \ or \ not \ in \ the \ past \ year$). For the second set of items respondents indicated on a 5-point scale (1 = Never; $5 = Very \ Often$) how often each of

eight mundane stressors occurred in their daily social interactions (e.g., How often are you treated with less respect than others?; How often do people act as if they think you are not smart?). Because of the correlation between the two measures (r = .53), and the absence of theoretically derived hypotheses regarding differential relationships to racial socialization, items were combined into a single measure $(\alpha = .88)$. Notably, neither set of items mentioned racial bias explicitly but, rather, reflected experiences that have been central to researchers' descriptions of it (Feagin & Feagin, 1999). However, in the full sample the measure was significantly correlated with respondents' ratings of race-relations 10 years ago, r(1302) = .11, p < .001, and currently, r(1296) = .13, p < .001. Among workers, the measure was correlated with explicit measures of race-related institutional discrimination, r(633) = .28, p < .001, and interpersonal prejudice, r(633) = .38, p < .001.

Racial Socialization

Ten items measuring racial socialization were adapted from items generated for a study of dualearner African American families that was being conducted concurrently (Hughes & Chen, 1997). The set of items asked about behaviors and activities with children such as promoting awareness of history and culture, emphasizing ethnic pride, communicating the value of diversity, and discussing racial bias and unfair treatment. Items focused on behaviors, rather than on attitudes and values, due to the likelihood that parents' reports about their behaviors better reflect what they actually do. Items were worded so that they were applicable to multiple ethnic groups. For each item, parents reported whether or not they had ever engaged in the particular behavior with the target child (0 = No) and, if so, how often in the past year (1 = Never; 5 = Very Often). Construct validity for measures of racial socialization was evaluated using principal components factor analysis. Results suggested that a two-factor solution, as indicated by the scree criteria, best represented dimensions underlying the set of items. The first factor, which accounted for 48.0% of variance, consisted of items concerning teachings about history, culture, ethnic pride, and diversity (e.g., Have you ever said or done things to encourage your child to be proud of his or her culture?). The second factor, accounting for an additional 16.9% of variance, consisted of items pertaining to discussion with children about unfair treatment and bias based on ethnicity or race (Have you ever told your

child that others might treat him/her badly because he/she is [ethnic group]?). Two unit-weighted measures were developed to represent Cultural Socialization (5 items; $\alpha = .87$) and Preparation for Bias (4 items; $\alpha = .74$).

RESULTS

The Prevalence and Frequency of Racial Socialization

Table II provides information regarding the prevalence and frequency of Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias. For descriptive purposes, the table shows (a) the percentage of respondents from each ethnic group who reported any Preparation for Bias or Cultural Socialization in the past year (e.g., mean values greater than 1); (b) the average frequency of Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias among respondents who reported it in the past year; and (c) the overall group mean. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with post hoc contrasts were used to evaluate the extent to which there were ethnic groups differences in racial socialization. Coefficients were adjusted for parents' age, education, marital status, annual household income, gender, and neighborhood ethnic composition.

Beginning with Cultural Socialization, results indicated that most respondents reported Cultural Socialization within the past year, including 95% of Puerto Rican, 91% of Dominican and all African American parents. The difference in the percentage of African American and Dominican parents reporting any Cultural Socialization was statistically significant. However, there were no ethnic group differences in the frequency of Cultural Socialization among parents who reported it within the past year or in the average overall means.

Table II also shows that a substantial proportion of parents reported Preparation for Bias within the past year, including 62% of Puerto Rican parents, 68% of Dominican parents, and 88% of African American parents. Here, group differences in the prevalence of Preparation for Bias were statistically significant. African American parents were more likely than were Puerto Rican or Dominican parents to report any Preparation for Bias within the past year. Among parents who reported it, the mean values were higher among African American and Dominican parents than among their

		Dominican $(n = 98)$		F (df)
Cultural Socialization				_
% reporting any Cultural				
Socialization within the past year	94.5 _{ab}	91.3 _a	$100.0_{\rm b}$	3.02*(2,273)
Mean Cultural Socialization among	uo			
parents reporting any in the past year	3.85	4.01	3.97	0.83(2, 259)
Overall Mean Cultural Socialization	3.40_{a}	3.49_{a}	3.93_{b}	1.76(2, 273)
Preparation for Bias				
% reporting any Preparation for Bias				
in the past year	61.9_{a}	67.8_{a}	88.3 _b	6.24**(2, 273)
Mean Preparation for Bias among				
parents reporting any in the past year	1.47_{a}	1.79_{b}	2.07_{c}	7.33***(2, 195)
Overall Mean Preparation for Bias	1.06_{a}	1.38_{b}	1.87_{c}	15.03***(2, 273)
Race-related attitudes, beliefs, and				
experiences				
Ethnic identity	3.68_{a}	3.65 _{ab}	3.52_{b}	2.24(2,273)
Perceived group disadvantage	3.91_{a}	4.12 _a	4.44_{b}	4.52(2, 273)
Discrimination experiences	1.44_{a}	1.19_{b}	1.61_{c}	15.46***(2, 273)

Table II. Mean Racial Socialization and Race-Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences Among Parents of Children 6–17 by Racial/Ethnic Group

Note. Rows with different subscripts are significantly different at p < .05.

Puerto Rican counterparts, indicating that the former groups engaged in it more frequently. Accordingly, the overall mean values for Preparation for Bias were significantly higher among African American as compared to Dominican parents, and among Dominican as compared to Puerto Rican parents.

Table II also shows the relative frequency of Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias. Paired samples t-tests indicated that, within each group, parents reported more frequent Cultural Socialization than Preparation for Bias, Puerto Rican, t(96) = -22.78, p < .001; Dominican, t(97) = -18.00, p < .001; African American, t(78) = -13.86, p < .001. Thus, teaching children about culture, history, heritage, and the equality of all groups was the most common form of racial socialization that parents reported.

Group Differences in Parents' Race-Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences

In the bottom rows of Table II, mean values for parents' ethnic identity, beliefs about group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences are presented. Coefficients were adjusted for parents' age, education, marital status, annual household income, gender, and neighborhood ethnic composition. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with post hoc contrasts

were used to examine group differences: demonstrating such group differences is a prerequisite for testing whether they mediate group differences in racial socialization. Findings indicated that African American parents, on average, reported significantly lower ethnic identity than did Puerto Rican parents, although ethnic identity across all groups was relatively high. African American and Dominican parents each reported significantly greater perceived group disadvantage than did Puerto Rican parents. African American parents reported more discrimination experiences than did Puerto Rican parents who, in turn, reported more discrimination experiences than did Dominican parents.

Parents' Race-Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences as Predictors of Racial Socialization

To examine hypotheses regarding relationships between parents' ethnic identity, beliefs about group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences and their racial socialization practices, a series of ordinary least squares regression equations were estimated with Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias used as criterion in turn. In the equations, ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences were entered simultaneously, after controlling for

p < .05. p < .01. p < .001.

individual/neighborhood demographic characteristics and respondents' race/ethnicity. Group differences in patterns of relationships were examined by entering a set of six cross-product terms into the regression equations at the final step. The product terms consisted of the two race/ethnicity coefficients multiplied by values for each of the three predictor variables. Variables included in the product terms were centered around the mean in order to reduce collinearity with the main effects.

To simplify presentation, separate equations were estimated for parents of children 6-9 years old and parents of children 10-17 years old. However, it should be noted that supplementary analyses were also conducted in which equations were estimated for the full sample. These equations included the main effects of all variables, 11 two-way crossproduct terms (child's age × 3 substantive predictor variables; child's age × 2 race contrast codes; 2 race contrast codes × 3 substantive predictor variables) and 6 three-way cross-product terms (2 race/ethnicity contrasts × child's age × 3 substantive predictor variables). Results of the separate regression equations are shown in Tables II and III. The ΔR^2 at each step represents the incremental variance explained at that step. The standardized coefficients are estimates of the relationship between each predictor and the criterion variables independent of all other variables in the model.

Cultural Socialization

Parents of Children 6-9

Table III shows results of the regression of Cultural Socialization on ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences among parents of children 6-9 years of age. Results from Steps 2 and 3 of the equation are particularly relevant to the study hypotheses. At Step 2, entry of ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences resulted in a nonsignificant 4% increment in explained variance. Only the coefficient for ethnic identity was statistically significant. At Step 3, entry of the set of multiplicative interaction terms resulted in a significant 10% increment in explained variance. However, only the interaction term comparing the slope for ethnic identity among Dominican parents to that among African American parents was statistically significant. Slopes for parents in each ethnic/racial group were estimated and plotted graphically 1 SD above and below the sample mean for ethnic identity. As Fig. 1 shows, ethnic identity was unrelated to Cultural Socialization among African American parents but was positively associated with Cultural Socialization among Puerto Rican and Dominican parents. However, only the slope for Dominican parents was reliably different from that for African American parents.

Table III. Standardized Coefficients for the Regression of Cultural Socialization on Parents' Race-Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences

Experiences									
	Par	Parents reporting on children 6–9				ents reporting on children 10–17			
	ΔR^2	В			ΔR^2	В			
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Race/ethncity	.01				.02				
Puerto Rican		-0.11	-0.16	-0.03		-0.14	-0.18	-0.16	
Dominican		0.00	-0.06	0.07		-0.18	-0.21*	-0.15	
Attitudes, beliefs, and experiences	.04				.09**				
Ethnic identity			0.19*	0.24*			0.31*	0.33**	
Perceived group disadvantage			0.00	0.04			0.04	0.03	
Discrimination experiences			-0.06	-0.05			0.00	0.06	
Interaction terms	.10*				.09*				
Identity × Puerto Rican				0.14				0.34**	
Identity × Dominican				0.27*				0.19**	
Disadvantage × Puerto Rican				-0.09				0.08	
Disadvantage × Dominican				0.23^{+}				-0.01	
Discrimination × Puerto Rican				-0.14				0.08	
Discrimination × Dominican				-0.09				0.05	

Note. Equations control for parents' age, educational attainment, gender, annual household income, marital status, and neighborhood ethnic composition.

 $^{^{+}} p < .10. * p < .05. ** p < .01.$

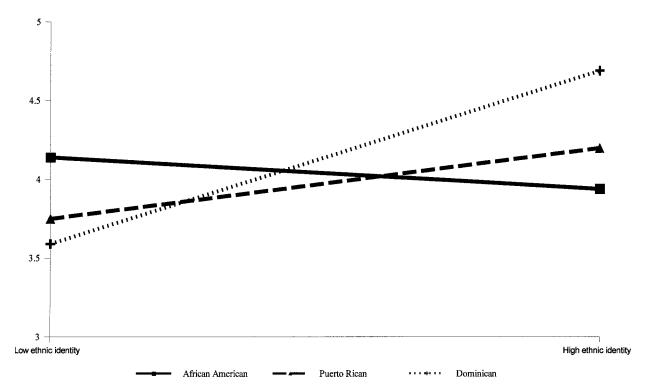


Fig. 1. Relationships between ethnic identity and Cultural Socialization: African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents of 6–9-year-old children.

Parents of Children 10-17

Results for the regression of Cultural Socialization on ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences among parents of children 10-17 years of age are also shown in Table III. Again, coefficients at Steps 2 and 3 of the equation are of particular relevance. At Step 2, entry of ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences resulted in a significant 9% increment in explained variance. In particular, parents who identified more strongly with their ethnic group reported more frequent Cultural Socialization. The significant interaction terms at Step 3 indicated that slopes for this relationship were significantly different for African American versus Dominican and Puerto Rican parents. Slopes for parents in each ethnic/racial group were estimated and plotted graphically at 1 SD above and below the sample mean. As Fig. 2 shows, Cultural Socialization among African American parents did not vary according to their ethnic identity. However, Puerto Rican and Dominican parents who reported higher ethnic identity reported also more frequent Cultural Socialization than did their less strongly identified counterparts.

Preparation for Bias

Parents of Children 6-9

Results for the regression of Preparation for Bias on ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences among parents of children 6–9 years of age are shown in Table IV. Entry of these variables at Step 2 did not result in a significant increment in explained variance, and none of the individual coefficients were statistically significant. Moreover, controlling for ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences did not attenuate the greater frequency of Preparation for Bias among African American parents as compared to their Dominican or Puerto Rican counterparts. At Step 3, entry of the set of cross-product terms did not increase the explained variance in Preparation for Bias significantly, indicating that relationships

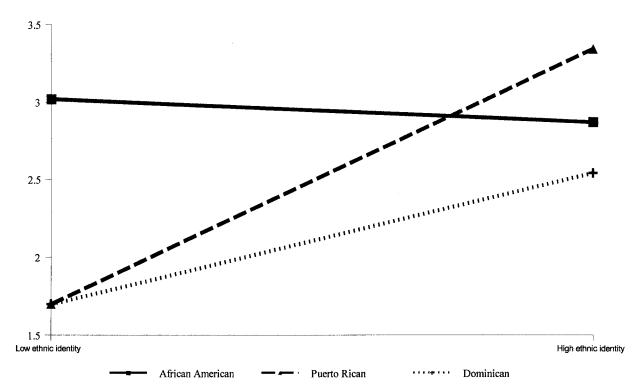


Fig. 2. Relationships between ethnic identity and Cultural Socialization: African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents of 10–17-year-old children.

between these variables and Preparation for Bias did not differ across ethnic groups.

Parents of Children 10–17

Findings for the regression of Preparation for Bias on demographic variables and race-related predictors among parents of children 10-17 years of age are also presented in Table IV. Findings indicated that entry of ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences at Step 2 resulted in a 7% increment in explained variance. Of the three predictors, only discrimination experiences was significant. Controlling for discrimination experiences attenuated the greater frequency of Preparation for Bias among African American parents as compared to Dominican parents, but the coefficient comparing Puerto Rican parents to African American parents remained significant. That group differences in Preparation for Bias was accounted for by discrimination experiences, and not by ethnic identity or perceived group disadvantage, was verified in subsequent analyses in which equations were estimated with each of the three predictor variables entered separately. Entry of the set of cross-product terms at Step 3 resulted in a 14% increment in explained variance. Three of the six cross-product terms were significant, including both terms involving ethnic identity and one of the terms involving discrimination experiences. Slopes representing relationships between these variables and Preparation for Bias within each ethnic group were estimated. As shown in Fig. 3, Puerto Rican and Dominican parents who identified more strongly with their ethnic group reported more frequent Preparation for Bias than did their less strongly identified counterparts. However, the frequency of Preparation for Bias among African American parents did not vary according to their ethnic identity. Figure 4 shows that, among African American and Dominican parents, discrimination experiences was positively associated with Preparation for Bias. However, discrimination experiences was not associated with Preparation for Bias among Puerto Rican parents.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the frequency and correlates of racial socialization in a diverse sample of

	Par	Parents reporting on children 6–9				Parents reporting on children 10–17			
	ΔR^2		В		ΔR^2	В			
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Race/ethncity	.14**				.05*				
Puerto Rican		-0.50**	0.50**	-0.48**		-0.29**	-0.29**	-0.22*	
Dominican		-0.31**	-0.36**	-0.33**		-0.20*	-0.09	0.02	
Attitudes, beliefs, and experiences	.02				.07*				
Ethnic identity			-0.02	0.04			0.05	0.03	
Perceived group disadvantage			0.08	0.13			0.06	0.08	
Discrimination experiences			-0.13	-0.13			0.27**	0.38**	
Interaction terms	.05				.13**				
Identity × Puerto Rican				0.01				0.29**	
Identity × Dominican				0.12				0.19*	
Disadvantage × Puerto Rican				-0.25^{+}				-0.10	
Disadvantage × Dominican				-0.20				0.01	
Discrimination × Puerto Rican				0.10				-0.22**	
Discrimination × Dominican				0.02				0.03	

Table IV. Standardized Coefficients for the Regression of Preparation for Bias on Parents' Race-Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences

Note. Equations control for parents' age, educational attainment, gender, annual household income, marital status, and neighborhood ethnic composition.

African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents. The overarching objective was to contribute to researchers' understanding of the nature of messages parents transmit to children about race as well as of the various influences on this component of parenting in ethnic minority families. Two types of racerelated messages were of particular interest: (a) messages about ethnic pride, cultural history, heritage, and diversity (Cultural Socialization), and (b) messages about potential encounters with racial bias (Preparation for Bias).

Overall, the findings of the present study suggest that racial socialization is an important mechanism that parents use to transmit to children their understanding of what it means to be a member of their ethnic group. Most parents reported racial socialization and, as with other aspects of parenting, their practices were shaped, in part, by their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. They also appeared to be embedded to some extent in indigenous cultural practices that vary across groups. However, the frequency and correlates of racial socialization depended on (a) the dimension of racial socialization examined, (b) parents' ethnic group membership, and (c) children's ages. Thus, in the remaining paragraphs, I discuss findings regarding Cultural Socialization and Preparation for Bias separately. In doing so, I highlight the ways in which differences in patterns of relationships varied across ethnic groups and according to children's ages.

Cultural Socialization

Prevalence and Frequency of Cultural Socialization

In the present study, a substantial majority of African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents reported efforts to instill group pride in children and expose them to their culture, history, and heritage. Moreover, the frequency of Cultural Socialization was relatively high, with few significant differences across groups. The prominence of Cultural Socialization as an aspect of parenting in this sample is consistent with findings from prior studies. In the National Survey of Black Americans, messages emphasizing racial pride, cultural heritage and historical tradition, and development of a positive self-image were among the most frequent examples of racial socialization that participants described (Thornton et al., 1990). Qualitative studies of Dominican (Pessar, 1995) and Puerto Rican (Urciuoli, 1996) communities also emphasize parents' efforts to embed their children in ethnic traditions, values, and norms. Thus, Cultural Socialization appears to be a normative component of child rearing across multiple ethnic minority groups.

Predictors of Cultural Socialization

Differences According to Parents' Ethnicity. In an effort to understand the sorts of factors that prompt

 $^{^{+}}p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01.$

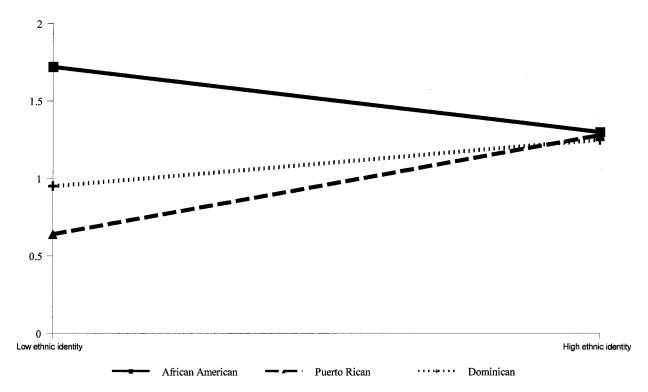


Fig. 3. Relationships between ethnic identity and Preparation for Bias: African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents of 10–17-year-old children.

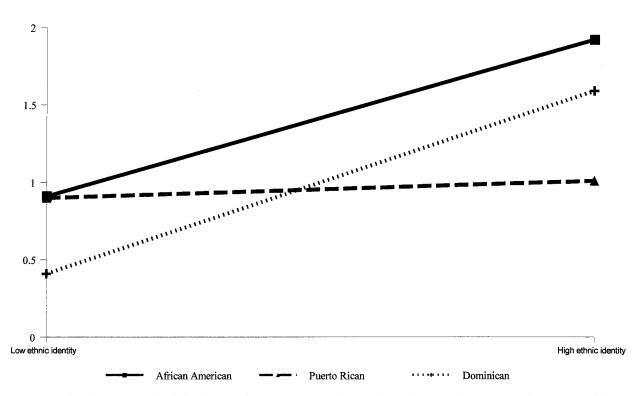


Fig. 4. Relationships between discrimination experiences and Preparation for Bias: African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents of 10–17-year-old children.

some parents to emphasize cultural history and heritage in their child rearing more frequently than others, this study examined the extent to which parents' Cultural Socialization was associated with other racerelated phenomenon such as parents' ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences. It was expected that parents' ethnic identity would be an especially important predictor of Cultural Socialization, perhaps because both reflect the salience of ethnicity to parents. Findings were consistent with this expectation among Dominican and Puerto Rican parents, although not among African American parents. Among Dominican and Puerto Rican parents of 6-9- and 10-17-year-old target children, those who identified more strongly with their ethnic group reported more frequent Cultural Socialization. However, African American parents reported high levels of Cultural Socialization regardless of their ethnic identity.

The absence of a significant relationship between ethnic identity and Cultural Socialization among African American families was surprising and its interpretation is complex. Both theoretical and artifactual interpretations are possible. On the one hand, African American parents reported weaker ethnic identity than did Puerto Rican or Dominican parents, but reported more frequent Cultural Socialization. It may be that African American parents view messages about ethnic pride and cultural heritage as nondiscretionary, due to the ubiquity and persistence of negative group images that African American children encounter. Thus, they may believe that developing ethnic pride in children, and teaching them about cultural history and heritage is essential, regardless of their identification with and preference for their ethnic group. It is also possible, however, that the restricted range in Cultural Socialization within the African American subsample precluded identification of significant predictors within this group: For each of the Cultural Socialization descriptors examined, the range and standard deviation among African American parents was smaller than that among Dominican or Puerto Rican parents. Thus, the absence of a relationship may reflect a lack of sensitivity in the measure to true variation in Cultural Socialization among African American parents. In future studies, researchers need to develop and utilize more extensive measures of Cultural Socialization that better capture true variation in the types of things African American parents engage in to socialize their children about ethnic pride, culture, and history.

The finding that ethnic identity was positively associated with Cultural Socialization among Puerto Rican and Dominican parents, albeit consistent with a priori hypothesis, is notable in its contrast with findings for African American parents. The finding may reflect the degree of flexibility these parents have in choosing whether or not to accentuate their ethnicity. In particular, those for whom ethnic identification is less salient may actually downplay ethnic and cultural issues in rearing their children in order to facilitate chidren's assimilation into mainstream settings, as described by Rodriguez (1991) based on work with Puerto Ricans in the United States. Several authors have also noted that Hispanics in the United States underscore their ethnic and cultural identification as a way of resisting racialization within the U.S. categorization system. For instance, Urioculi (1996) described the ways in which the Puerto Rican youths' and adults' she studied organized their linguistic patterns to emphasize boundaries between themselves and African Americans. Pessar (1995) also observed that the unsettling experience of being confused with African Americans and of discrimination based on skin color prompted Dominicans in New York to emphasize their "Latino-ness." Thus, the fact that ethnic identity plays an important role in predicting Cultural Socialization among Puerto Rican and Dominican parents may also reflect this dynamic to some extent.

Also notable is that Cultural Socialization was not reactive to parents' perceptions of group disadvantage or to their own experiences with discrimination within any ethnic group. This finding is consistent with other findings that Cultural Socialization is a proactive phenomenon. In prior writings on African American parents, Cultural Socialization has been described as a protective aspect of child rearing aimed at ensuring children's pride in the face of negative societal images about their group (Boykin & Toms, 1985). Among Dominican and Puerto Rican parents, Cultural Socialization has been described as a mechanism for ensuring children's retention of cultural values, norms, and traditions (Pessar, 1995; Rodriguez, 1991). Thus, the proactive nature of Cultural Socialization that emerged in the present study is consistent with prior formulations of the phenomenon.

Differences According to Target Child's Age. Findings indicated that relationships between ethnic identity and Cultural Socialization among Puerto Rican and Dominican parents were stronger among parents of 10–17-year-old target children as compared to those of 6–9-year-old target children, although the relationship was significant in both groups. It is

likely that Cultural Socialization is more sensitive to parents' own racial attitudes among parents with adolescents because of unique features of this developmental stage. Adolescence is a period during which youth attempt to consolidate and integrate various components of self, including their ethnicity and race, into an integrated whole. As well, values and attitudes become increasingly independent from those of parents. Thus, Dominican and Puerto Rican parents who maintain a strong identification with their ethnic group may be especially likely to emphasize Cultural Socialization messages during this period in order to ensure adolescents' positive group identification as they exert their independence and become oriented toward the larger world of peers. By the same token, parents for whom ethnicity is least salient may be especially unlikely to engage in Cultural Socialization, both because they spend less time with adolescents than with younger children and because they may view ethnicity as less important than other issues that emerge during this developmental period.

Preparation for Bias

Prevalence and Frequency of Preparation for Bias

Findings regarding the prevalence and frequency of Preparation for Bias indicated that a substantial proportion of African American, Dominican, and Puerto Rican parents reported some socialization around issues related to racial bias within the past year. This contrasts with scholars views that ethnic minority parents are especially unlikely to discuss these sorts of issues with their children (Spencer, 1983). However, the percentage of parents who reported Preparation for Bias was indeed lower than the percentage of parents who reported Cultural Socialization within each ethnic group. Moreover, parents reported less frequent Preparation for Bias than Cultural Socialization, a finding that is consistent with findings of other studies. In the National Survey of Black Americans, parents were more likely to describe messages related to group pride and selfdevelopment than they were to describe messages related to group discrimination. Phinney and Chavira (1995) also found that more parents reported messages about cultural heritage than reported messages about discrimination, as did Hughes and Chen (1997).

Why would Preparation for Bias consistently emerge as a less prominent aspect of parenting than Cultural Socialization? One plausible explanation is that discussing the potential for discrimination with children is more difficult and threatening than are exchanges based on Cultural Socialization goals. Peters (1985), during the course of in-depth interviews with African American parents, found that many parents were ambivalent about discussing prejudice and discrimination with their children. Although most parents believed that their children needed to learn about the racial realities they are likely to encounter, fewer reported discussions with their children about these realities in practice. Thus, as Peters (1985) suggested, parents may be concerned that messages about prejudice or discrimination will have harmful consequences for their children's self-esteem or for their feelings about their own or other racial/ethnic groups. A second possibility is that parents view messages to children about racial bias as being more potent than are Cultural Socialization messages. As with communications concerning drugs and alcohol, they may believe that even subtle and infrequent messages about racial bias alert children to, and prepare them to cope with, discriminatory experiences. Thus, the infrequency of Preparation for Bias relative to Cultural Socialization may not reflect the relative importance that parents assign to the functions these messages serve. Finally, parents may underreport Preparation for Bias more so than Cultural Socialization, due to social desirability and other issues. In addition, they may be unaware of the subtle and inadvertent ways in which they communicate the existence of racial bias to their children.

There were also significant ethnic group differences in both the prevalence and frequency of Preparation for Bias. Whereas almost 9 in 10 African American parents reported any Preparation for Bias within the past year, only about 6 in 10 Puerto Rican or Dominican parents did so. However, among parents who reported Preparation for Bias, the average frequency was comparable among African American and Dominican parents, both of whom reported more frequent messages of this sort than did Puerto Rican parents.

In an effort to understand more fully ethnic group differences in the prevalence and frequency of Preparation for Bias, analyses examined whether ethnic group differences in parents' ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences explained differences in Preparation for Bias. On the whole, findings suggested that Dominican and Puerto Rican parents of younger children, and Puerto Rican parents of older children, reported less frequent discussions about racial bias with their children than did African

American parents, even when their ethnic identity, their beliefs about discrimination against their ethnic group, and their own discrimination experiences were held constant. The exception was that, among parents of 10-17-year-old children, the greater frequency of Preparation for Bias among African American as compared to Dominican parents was accounted for by African American parents' greater exposure to discrimination. Nevertheless, the overarching pattern of relationships suggested that greater frequency of Preparation for Bias among African American parents is derived—least in part—from normative patterns within African American families and communities. Because of the ubiquity and persistence of discrimination against African Americans in the United States African American parents may view messages that inform children about racial bias as more central to ensuring children's success in the larger social structure than do Puerto Rican or Dominican parents, for whom overt discrimination is less deeply embedded in their groups' history. In addition, African American parents may be more likely to have heard similar messages from their parents during the course of their own development.

Predictors of Preparation for Bias

In light of ethnic group differences in the frequency of Preparation for Bias, it is noteworthy that ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences explained a significant proportion of variance in this aspect of racial socialization. However, there were differences in patterns of relationships across groups as defined by target children's ages and parents' ethnicity. Both sets of findings are considered further in the paragraphs below.

Differences According to Children's Ages. Parents' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences were, overall, more strongly associated with Preparation for Bias among parents of older as compared to parents of younger children across all groups. Whereas none of the race-related predictors were significant in the equation for parents of children 6–9 years of age, the set of race-related predictors and corresponding interactions explained 20% of variance in Preparation for Bias among parents of 10–17-year-old children. Notably, there were no significant differences according to target children's ages in parents' ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, or discrimination experiences. Thus, the finding that only parents of older children translated these into messages

about discrimination to children suggests that parents' communications to children about racial bias and discrimination are sensitive to children's ability to integrate and understand race-related information (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Children do not uniformly demonstrate a mature understanding of race (e.g., racial constancy) until they are 8 or 9 years of age (Aboud, 1988). Understandings of the sociostructural correlates of racial group membership emerge even later. Although it is unlikely that parents recognize the mechanics underlying children's development of racial knowledge, they may recognize the difficulty that younger children may have in comprehending experiences of racial discrimination. Thus, parents own experiences may be unlikely to prompt such discussions until children are old enough to understand them.

Differences According to Ethnicity. Within the subsample of parents of 10-17-year-old children, relationships of ethnic identity, perceived group disadvantage, and discrimination experiences to Preparation for Bias differed according to parents' ethnicity. Consistent with a priori expectations, discrimination experiences were especially salient in predicting Preparation for Bias among African American parents, but only weakly associated with Preparation for Bias among Puerto Rican parents. In this regard, it is likely that, within African American communities, both historical patterns of oppression and the availability of blueprints for having discussions with children about racial bias facilitate the probability that parents will engage in Preparation for Bias in the face of their own encounters with discrimination. In contrast, among Puerto Rican parents, who reported the lowest Preparation for Bias of any ethnic group, discrimination experiences may be less likely to prompt Preparation for Bias either because Puerto Rican parents are less likely to associate discrimination with their ethnicity, per se, or because they lack conversational models for sharing these sorts of experiences with children. Importantly, the finding that discrimination experiences was significant in predicting Preparation for Bias among Dominican parents presents some challenges to cultural formulations. However, Dominicans share with African Americans the experiences of being "Black" in the United States to a greater extent than do Puerto Ricans. Thus, although Dominican parents in this sample reported far less discrimination experiences than did African American parents, those who perceive themselves as having experienced discrimination may use the contemporary and historical experiences of African

Americans in the United States as their point of reference in anticipating children's experiences. That is, they may anticipate that others will define their children as African American and socialize them accordingly.

The finding that ethnic identity was associated with Preparation for Bias among Dominican and Puerto Rican parents of 10-17-year-old target children, although not among their African American counterparts, mirrors findings for Cultural Socialization. The absence of an association among African American parents is likely to be a function of limited variability in Cultural Socialization within this group. Moreover, even African American parents with moderate subjective group identification may believe that it is critical to prepare children for discrimination. In contrast, Puerto Rican and Dominican parents who identify strongly with their ethnic group may accentuate their groups' distinctiveness, including the probability of discrimination due to their "Latino-ness." Conversely, those who identify less strongly with their ethnic group may downplay issues such as discrimination to facilitate children's assimilation into the dominant culture.

Study Limitations

In closing, it is important to acknowledge methodological limitations of the present study. First, the study utilized cross-sectional self-report data, which do not permit one to establish the causal direction of hypothesized relationships. Thus, alternative interpretations of the findings are possible. Among the most likely is that parents' self-reported attitudes, beliefs, and experiences do not precede their racial socialization practices but, rather, emanate from a common source, such as sensitivity to racial issues. Self-report data are also subject to common method variance, which may have inflated observed relationships.

A second but related issue concerns the use of self-report survey items to assess parents' racial socialization practices. Although items were worded to assess parents' discrete behaviors, rather than their beliefs about the importance of racial socialization or their own racial attitudes, this sort of measure presents its own set of limitations. For example, the specific set of behaviors assessed may not fully capture the ways in which parents orient children towards ethnicity and race or to potential encounters with discrimination. Moreover, parents' self-reports capture only

one component of parents' racial socialization behaviors due to the fact that inadvertent and unintended elements of the racial socialization process, which parents may be unable or unwilling to report, may be as common as these more explicit behaviors. In future studies, researchers need to employ a wide variety of tools and methodologies to capture the phenomenon adequately.

The special nature of the sample is a third limitation of the present study. Because of the study's focus on obtaining a socioeconomically and ethnically diverse sample, rather than a representative one, participants in the present study may differ from the general population of urban African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican parents in a number of ways. For instance, individuals who are available and willing to participate in extensive in-depth interviews may represent experiences that are distinct from those of participants who are unavailable and unwilling in terms of experience of stressors, competence in parenting, and views on race-relations. Correspondingly, the literature on racial socialization would benefit from studies that utilize representative samples of respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

Racial socialization appears to be a salient feature of parenting across multiple ethnic minority groups. Parenting around issues related to ethnic culture, history, and pride appears to be more common and more frequent than is parenting aimed at preparing children for racial bias. However, the majority of ethnic minority parents report both types of racial socialization, suggesting that they view each of them as being important for children's well-being and development. Important ethnic group differences in parents' racial socialization practices that emerged in the present study should serve as an impetus for further research in this area. For instance, the finding that socialization about racial bias was a more common feature of parenting among African American as compared to Dominican or Puerto Rican parents, and is more reactive to their experiences with discrimination, is especially noteworthy and merits further investigation. Future comparative studies might also investigate the extent to which there may be other dimensions of racial socialization that are especially relevant to non-African American ethnic minority groups. The practical and theoretical implications of a better understanding of racial socialization is especially relevant, given increasing diversity

of populations with whom today's youth will likely interact.

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