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Profiles of Racial Socialization Among African American Parents: Correlates, Context, and Outcome

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Abstract

Self report and observational data on racial socialization practices in a sample of 218 African American parents of young children were used to determine whether or not parents could be characterized in terms of their pattern of racial socialization practices. Parents fell into four groups: silence about race, emphasis on cultural socialization, emphasis on cultural socialization and coping strategies, or a balanced approach. Silence about race was more common among parents of boys, whereas an emphasis on cultural socialization was more common among parents of girls. Silence about race was less common in neighborhoods with high levels of negative social climate, and a combination of cultural socialization with coping strategies for discrimination was more common in neighborhoods with high neighborhood potential for community involvement with children. The *coping emphasis/cultural socialization* approach was associated with significantly lower child problem behavior, although some gender differences were evident. A cultural socialization emphasis was associated with higher cognitive scores among girls, and a combination of cultural socialization, coping with discrimination, and promotion of mistrust was associated with higher cognitive scores among boys. Implications of this profile approach for the study of racial socialization practices in ethnic minority families are discussed.

Keywords

Racial socialization; Neighborhoods; Cognitive development; Child behavior problems; Parenting

Introduction

Racial and ethnic socialization practices of parents play an important role in the development of children of color, and there is empirical evidence that differences in such practices are associated with differences in child and youth outcomes. Much of the work in this area has focused on associations between racial socialization and the development of

racial identity among African American adolescents, with results indicating that higher levels of racial socialization are positively associated with youth racial identity (Branch and Newcombe 1986; Demo and Hughes 1990; McHale et al. 2006; Stevenson 1995). Although most of this research has focused on adolescents, there is a small body of research demonstrating that racial socialization practices are also important for the development of younger children of color (Caughy et al. 2002a, 2006; Hughes et al. 2006; Marshall 1995).

Researchers have examined the association between racial socialization practices and child academic and cognitive outcomes, but the findings are mixed. Some have reported that children who receive more racial socialization perform better in school or have higher cognitive scores (Bowman and Howard 1985; Caughy et al. 2002a, 2006) although some researchers have reported no association (Phinney and Chavira 1995) or a negative association (Marshall 1995). The findings regarding the association of racial socialization practices and socioemotional outcomes such as depression or problem behaviors have been more consistent, with racial socialization negatively associated with such outcomes (Arroyo and Zigler 1995; Bennett 2006; Caughy et al. 2002a, 2006; Davis and Stevenson 2006; McHale et al. 2006).

Recent reviews by Hughes et al. (2006) and Lesane-Brown (2006) address the conceptual and methodological issues of the growing research literature that documents the frequency with which ethnic minority parents engage in racial socialization, the predictors and correlates of parental practices, and the relation between racial socialization and child outcomes. One concern is the definition of racial socialization. Although various definitions have been used in the literature, Lesane-Brown (2006) proposes that racial socialization be defined as “specific verbal and non-verbal ... messages transmitted to younger generations for the development of values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race and racial stratification, intergroup and intragroup interactions, and personal and group identity” (p. 403). Hughes et al. (2006) distinguish between *racial socialization* and *ethnic socialization*, the former term being primarily used in research with African American populations and the latter used in research with multiple ethnic groups, including African Americans. Due to ambiguities in differentiating between racial versus ethnic socialization, Hughes et al. (2006) propose that the combined term of *ethnic-racial socialization* be used when referring to the breadth of empirical literature regarding these socialization practices.

Hughes et al. (2006) propose four dimensions of racial socialization practices that have emerged consistently in the literature: *cultural socialization*, *preparation for bias*, *promotion of mistrust*, and *egalitarianism*. *Cultural socialization* refers to socialization messages which teach children about their racial/ethnic history and cultural customs or traditions. *Preparation for bias* involves educating children about discrimination and providing them with guidance regarding coping strategies. *Promotion of mistrust* emphasizes distrust of and separateness from other race/ethnic groups. Although similar to preparation for bias in terms of messages regarding discrimination, the difference lies in that promotion of mistrust does not include information regarding coping strategies. Finally, *egalitarianism/silence about race* focuses on encouraging children to value individual characteristics rather than membership in a particular race/ethnic group (Hughes et al. 2006). Surveys of African American parents

indicate that the majority engage in racial socialization practices, with cultural socialization messages being the most common and promotion of mistrust being the least common (Bowman and Howard 1985; Caughy et al. 2002a; Hughes and Chen 1997; Thornton et al. 1990).

Ethnic- racial socialization research has documented the complexity of racial socialization practices in terms of differences by child age, child gender, parental gender, and community context. Hughes and Chen (1997) found that the content of ethnic-racial socialization messages changed with child age, with older children more likely to receive messages of preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust than younger children. Differences in racial socialization messages by child gender have been reported by some researchers (Bowman and Howard 1985; Branch and Newcombe 1986) but not others (Caughy et al. 2002a, 2006). Data from the National Survey of Black Americans indicate the frequency of racial socialization differs by parental gender, with mothers more likely to engage in racial socialization than fathers (Thornton et al. 1990). In one of the few studies with racial socialization data from both mothers and fathers, McHale et al. (2006) reported that the type of racial socialization message differ by both parent and child gender. Using data from a sample of siblings between the ages of middle childhood and adolescence, McHale et al. (2006) identified within-family gender differences in socialization messages for fathers but not mothers with fathers engaging in more socialization regarding preparation for bias with sons versus daughters.

Community differences in racial socialization practices have also been reported. At the regional level, Thornton et al. (1990) found that African Americans living in the Northeast were more likely to report engaging in racial socialization than those living in the South. Marshall (1995) reported that parents living in predominantly black neighborhoods were more likely to report engaging in racial socialization practices, and Bennett (2006) reported that racial socialization practices were negatively associated with neighborhood risky conditions. Similarly, Caughy et al. (2006) found that African American parents living in predominantly white neighborhoods were less likely to convey messages regarding promotion of mistrust than African Americans living in black or racially mixed neighborhoods. Furthermore, Caughy et al. (2006) found that neighborhood negative social climate was positive associated with preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust.

The relation between racial socialization and youth competence is moderated by both child gender and neighborhood characteristics. For example, Davis and Stevenson (2006) found that cultural pride reinforcement (i.e., cultural socialization) was associated with lower depressive symptoms for male adolescents but not female. Stevenson (1995) also reported that the association between racial socialization and ethnic identity in African American adolescents was moderated by gender. In a study with African American 3–4½-year olds, Caughy et al. (2002a) identified gender differences as well, with cultural socialization positively associated with factual knowledge and negatively associated with behavior problems for boys but not girls. Caughy et al. (2006) found that cultural socialization was more important for the cognitive development of 6–7-year-old children living in high risk neighborhoods and that promotion of mistrust was associated with higher behavior problems in low risk but not high risk neighborhoods. Davis and Stevenson (2006) found that cultural

socialization was associated with fewer depressive symptoms in high resource neighborhoods but not low resource neighborhoods.

Previous research has almost exclusively characterized parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices in terms of their mean levels on a variety of measures intended to tap different types of racial socialization messages. Less is known about how profiles or patterns of ethnic-racial socialization practices are related to healthy child development. For example, whether or not high levels of promotion of mistrust are associated with poorer child socioemotional outcomes may depend on whether or not parents simultaneously engage in high levels of cultural socialization and/or promotion of racial pride.

A focus on mean levels in comparing outcomes has been referred to as a *variable-based* approach in contrast to a *person-oriented* or *pattern-based* approach. The utilization of a person-oriented approach is often seen in the personality development, child psychopathology, and substance abuse literatures (Cairns et al. 1998; Hart et al. 2003; Hinde and Dennis 1986; Windle and Wiesner 2004), although Coatesworth et al. (2005) apply this approach to acculturation strategies among Hispanic youth. Windle and Wiesner (2004) describe a person-oriented approach as an attempt to identify subgroups of individuals who share a certain pattern of characteristics. Most commonly, this is accomplished through the use of latent class or latent profile analysis (Hagenaars and Halman 1989). In this paper, we extend the ethnic-racial socialization literature by examining different *profiles* of racial socialization practices. We apply latent profile analysis to parental reports of ethnic-racial socialization practices to determine whether or not we can identify distinct groups of parents who vary according to the content of their racial socialization messages across a variety of domains. Furthermore, we address two questions regarding racial socialization groups. First, are such groups distinguishable by any demographic, child, or neighborhood characteristics? Second, are racial socialization profiles differentially associated with child cognitive and/or behavioral outcomes?

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study were drawn from a larger study of first graders and their families. Families with a child entering first grade in Fall 2002 were recruited from Baltimore City neighborhoods as defined by census block group boundaries. Families were recruited either in person, by letter, or by phone through door-to-door-canvassing, targeted mailing lists, and referrals from other participants. Eligibility criteria including residence in the neighborhood for at least 6 months, an ability to complete the interview in English, and absence of significant disability in the target child. Of the 1904 residences or individuals contacted for the study, 535 (28.1%) were eligible for participation. Of these 535, 31 (5.8%) refused to be screened, 95 (17.8%) were eligible but refused participation, and 409 (76.4%) completed the interview. Of these 409, 4 were excluded from the final sample because significant child disabilities were identified during the interview (2 reported as mentally retarded and 2 reported as autistic). Of these 405 families, 241 children were living with a related caregiver who self-identified as being at least partly African American. Of these 241, 23 participants were excluded from the analysis because they were missing one or more of the racial

socialization variables, leaving 218 participants included in the analysis. The 23 participants excluded due to missing racial socialization variables did not differ from those included in terms of family demographic characteristics, child behavior or cognitive ability, or neighborhood characteristics.

The demographic characteristics of the sample are displayed in Table 1. Of the 218 primary caregivers, 185 (84.9%) were mothers, 11 (5.0%) were fathers, and 15 (6.9%) were grandparents. A total of 197 (90.4%) of the primary caregivers self-identified as only African American and non-Hispanic, while 21 (9.6%) identified themselves as multiracial/multiethnic. Half of the families lived in poverty, whereas one quarter (24.5%) were living above 180% of the federal poverty level.

Measures

To address the study aims, we utilized both parent report and observational measures of racial socialization practices, neighborhood measures which tap not only structural differences but also differences in social processes between neighborhoods, and a broad-based assessment of child competence that includes both cognitive and behavioral competence. *Racial socialization practices* were measured using the Parent's Experience of Racial Socialization (PERS) scale (Stevenson 1999). The scale consists of 40 items asking parents how often they communicate the following messages to their children. Responses were rated on a 3-point Likert scale as either 1 (never), 2 (a few times), or 3 (lots of times). For this study, we used only three of the subscales. The *Preparation for Bias* scale consisted of five items such as "Black slavery is important never to forget" and "Racism is real and you have to understand it or it will hurt you." The *Racial Pride* subscale included five items such as "Never be ashamed of your color", and the *Promotion of Mistrust* scale included six items such as "Whites make it hard to get ahead". The internal reliability coefficients were .88, .86, and .64, respectively.

The racial socialization context of the home environment was measured using the Africentric Home Environment Inventory (Caughy et al. 2002b). This is a 10-binary-item scale and includes such items as the presence of culturally appropriate toys, pictures of African American family members, and/or clothing and household items made of African prints or fabrics. Each item was scored as positive if it was observed by the interviewer or if the respondent reported that the item was in the home. Positive items were summed, with higher values indicating the presence of a greater number of Africentric items in the home ($\alpha = .92$).

Neighborhood variables included concentrated economic disadvantage, racial composition, social capital, and negative social climate. *Concentrated economic disadvantage* was comprised of percent of individuals below poverty, percent receiving public assistance, percent unemployed, and percent of households that were femaleheaded with children (Sampson et al. 1997, 1999). All variables were drawn from the 2000 Census and standardized and averaged to create the concentrated economic disadvantage composite. *Neighborhood potential for community involvement with children (CIC)* and *negative social climate* were measured using the Neighborhood Environment for Children Rating Scales (NECRS) (Coulton et al. 1996). Four subscales of the NECRS were used as indicators of

neighborhood CIC: willingness of adults in the neighborhood to intervene in acts of delinquency, willingness to intervene in acts of child misbehavior, willingness to assist children in need, and level of social interaction in the neighborhood. These scales were averaged to create a composite measure of neighborhood CIC ($\alpha = .76$). *Neighborhood negative climate* included perceived physical/social disorder, fear of retaliation, and fear of victimization. These three scales were averaged to create a composite measure of neighborhood negative social climate ($\alpha = .76$).

Child cognitive competence was measured using the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT) (Prewett 1995; Prewett and McCaffery 1993). The K-BIT was chosen because of the short administration time required and the fact that it can be administered by paraprofessionals in a field setting. In addition, concurrent validity of the K-BIT is demonstrated by high correlations with the Stanford-Binet, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children III, and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test—Revised (Childers et al. 1994; Prewett 1995; Prewett and McCaffery 1993). The K-BIT consists of two subtests: Vocabulary, a measure of crystallized thinking and knowledge of words and their meanings; and Matrices, a measure of problem solving ability. We used the total standardized score for this analysis.

Child behavioral competence was measured using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) (Achenbach and Rescorla 2001) which yields scores for internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing problems (e.g., aggression). The CBCL is one of the most widely used measures of child behavior problems and displays high test–retest reliability, interparent agreement, and discriminatory validity between referred and nonreferred children (Achenbach and Edelbrock 1981). T-scores were used in this analysis with higher scores reflecting greater problem behaviors.

Data Collection Procedures

Home visits were conducted by paraprofessionals who participated in 40 h of classroom-based training over the course of 5 days. Training methods included didactic instruction, mock interviews, and administration of assessments to children of the same age as those in the target range for the sample. During training, child assessments were observed and jointly coded by study investigators, and data collection staff were not certified for field work until administration had achieved at least 85% agreement with the study investigators. During the first several weeks in the field, home visits were videotaped in their entirety and reviewed by project staff to evaluate accuracy of administration.

Analysis Methods

The first step of the analysis involved using latent class analysis to determine whether parents clustered into two or more racial socialization “profiles” based on their responses to the three self report racial socialization scales and their scores on the observational measure of the home. Demographic differences between profile groups were examined using chi square tests, and differences in neighborhood characteristics and child outcomes were tested using analysis of variance. Finally, multivariate linear regression was used to examine the relation of racial socialization profiles with child behavioral and cognitive competence as

well as interactions between profiles and neighborhood characteristics and between profiles and child gender.

Results

Identification of Racial Socialization Profiles

The first aim of this study was to determine if we could identify profiles of parents based on their racial socialization practices in a variety of domains. To examine this question, we conducted a latent profile analysis of the four racial socialization measures. Latent profile analysis (LPA) is a statistical method of creating unobserved typologies based on observed data (Gibson 1962). It differs from latent class analysis in its use of continuous, rather than categorical, variables to create the typologies. A probabilistic approach, latent class analysis allows researchers to test several models that result in typologies with increasing numbers of categories. Within each model, each individual is assigned a probability score of falling within a particular category. The individual is assigned to the category with the highest probability. The BIC-statistic is used to compare results across models. The BIC-statistic and theory are used to help define the final number of meaningful categories that result from the analyses. For a more detailed description of LPA, see Beadnell et al. (2005).

We tested three LPA models using version 4.1 of MPlus (Muthén and Muthén 1998–2006). Using the four racial socialization measures described above, we tested models that resulted in typologies consisting of two, three, four, five, and six groups. Except for the last model with six categories, each model with n groups showed a better fit than the model with $n - 1$ groups. However, because two of the five groups in the five-category typology consisted of fewer than 4% of parents, we chose the smaller four-category typology (BIC = 1999.75).

The four groups resulting from the latent profile analysis are displayed in Fig. 1. We labeled Group 1 ($N = 10$) *Silence about race* parents (heretofore referred to as the *Silence* group), as these parents did not endorse any of the racial socialization messages and had very low scores on the Africentric Home Environment inventory. Group 2 ($N = 68$) was labeled *Cultural socialization emphasis* because the average score for racial socialization messages pertaining to cultural pride was much higher than other racial socialization messages. Group 3 was the most common group with 112 of the parents falling into this profile. We labeled Group 3 *Balanced* as both scores for racial socialization messages of cultural pride and preparation for bias were similarly elevated. Furthermore, the average score for promotion of mistrust for the parents in this group was the highest of the four groups. Finally, we labeled Group 4 ($N = 40$) the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group as these parents included all messages but were more attenuated in their messages regarding mistrust compared to the *Balanced* group.

Individual and Neighborhood Differences in Racial Socialization Profile Groups

Differences in the distribution of these racial socialization profiles by family and child characteristics are displayed in Table 2. There were no differences in racial socialization profiles by caregiver educational attainment, employment status or family poverty level. There was a significant difference in parental racial socialization profile by child gender,

however, $\chi^2(3) = 9.68, p < .05$. Although the *Silence* profile was least prevalent for all children, parents of boys were more than three times as likely to fall into this group than were parents of girls. Parents of girls were more likely to fall into the *Cultural socialization emphasis* group compared to parents of boys, whereas parents of boys were more likely to fall into the *Balanced* group. It is important to note that these gender differences in racial socialization profiles were not reflected by differences in mean scores on the individual racial socialization scales. There were no significant differences in the mean scores of individual scales for boys versus girls.

Differences in neighborhood characteristics for each of the profile groups are displayed in Table 3. The profile groups did not differ with regards to the concentrated economic disadvantage of the neighborhoods in which families lived. However, there were significant differences in levels of neighborhood community involvement with children (CIC) and neighborhood negative social climate. Post-hoc comparisons indicated that parents in the *Balanced* group lived in neighborhoods with higher levels of CIC as compared with parents in the *Cultural socialization emphasis* group. Parents in the *Silence* group lived in neighborhoods with significantly lower levels of negative social climate compared with parents in the other three profile groups.

Relation of Racial Socialization Profiles to Child Behavioral and Cognitive Outcomes

Multivariate analysis of variance was used to examine differences in child behavioral and cognitive outcomes by racial socialization profile groups, and the results are displayed in Table 4. Children whose parents fell into the *coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group had significantly lower CBCL Total Problem behavior scores than children whose parents fell into the *Balanced* group, with differences being driven primarily by lower internalizing problem scores. Total problem and internalizing problem scores for the *coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group were also lower than the *Silence* and *Cultural socialization emphasis* groups, but these differences were not statistically significant.

Regression analysis was used to examine the association between racial socialization profiles and child outcomes while adjusting for the effects of child gender, neighborhood community involvement with children and neighborhood negative social climate. For the purpose of the regression analyses, neighborhood variables were dichotomized such that those in the highest quartile were coded one based on our previous findings that there is a threshold effect in the relation between these neighborhood characteristics and child behavior problems (author reference). For the racial socialization groups, the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group was used as the reference. Results of these regressions for all four child outcomes are displayed in Table 5. For Total problems, children whose parents were in the *Balanced* group had scores that were on average almost four and half points higher compared with children whose parents fell into the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group. The effect size, estimated as the standardized difference, was .43, which would be considered a moderate to large effect size (Cohen 1988). For Internalizing problems, *Cultural socialization emphasis* was associated with a 4.06 point higher and *Balanced* was associated with a 3.82 point higher score compared with the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group, representing an effect size of approximately .40–.42.

Adjusting for differences in neighborhood characteristics did not change the association between racial socialization profile group membership and CBCL Total or CBCL Internalizing problem scores.

Gender Differences

Bivariate analysis results indicated that girls were more likely than boys to be socialized in a manner which emphasized cultural socialization, and boys were more likely than girls to be socialized with an emphasis on cultural socialization plus the development of coping skills for discrimination and the promotion of mistrust. Because of this finding, we explored the possibility that racial socialization profile was differentially associated with child behavioral and cognitive competence for girls versus boys. In order to examine whether *Cultural socialization emphasis* was more important for girls, we regressed each of the outcomes (CBCL Total problems, Externalizing problems, and Internalizing problems, K-BIT performance) on a dummy variable indicating membership in the *Cultural socialization emphasis* profile group, gender, and an interaction variable for *Cultural socialization emphasis* by gender. To examine whether *Balanced* messages were more important for boys, we conducted a similar set of regressions but with the *Balanced group* as the reference group and interacted with child gender. There was a significant interaction between *Cultural socialization emphasis* and gender for the K-BIT, $b = 8.40$, $SE = 3.63$, $t = 2.31$, $p < .05$, as well as a significant interaction between *Balanced* and gender for the K-BIT, $b = -.812$, $SE = 3.29$, $t = -2.46$, $p < .05$. These interactions are displayed in Fig. 2. For girls, an emphasis on cultural socialization was associated with higher K-BIT scores compared to other approaches, whereas an emphasis on cultural socialization plus coping skills for discrimination, and promotion of mistrust was associated with significantly lower K-BIT scores compared to other approaches. For boys, although the pattern of mean scores suggested that *Balance* in the three messages was associated with higher K-BIT scores compared to other approaches and cultural socialization emphasis was associated with lower K-BIT scores, these differences were not significantly different.

Neighborhood Interactions

Next, we examined whether the association between racial socialization profile and child outcome differed by neighborhood context. Based on findings from our previous research (author reference), we focused on interactions between racial socialization profile and neighborhood CIC and negative social climate. We also examined three-way interactions with child gender based on our previous findings as well as the results presented above regarding gender differences. Interactions were tested by entering a series of product variables into regressions for each of the four child outcomes (K-BIT, CBCL Total problems, CBCL Internalizing problems, and CBCL Externalizing problems). Only one interaction between neighborhood factors and racial socialization profile was significant, the interaction between *Cultural socialization emphasis* and high neighborhood CIC for CBCL Externalizing problems, $b = 8.12$, $SE = 3.92$, $t = 2.07$, $p < .05$. The direction of the coefficient would indicate that cultural socialization emphasis in high CIC neighborhoods was associated with higher externalizing problem scores. However, due to the number of interactions that were examined, this single significant finding should be interpreted with caution. None of the three way interactions with child gender were significant.

Discussion

In this study, we identified several different profiles of racial socialization messages utilized by African American parents in our sample. Parents in our sample fell into one of four different groups: silence about race, emphasis on cultural socialization, emphasis on cultural socialization and coping strategies, or a balanced approach. Most of the parents fell into the group which emphasized balance among cultural socialization, coping strategies, and promotion of mistrust, and the least common profile was silence about race. Although silence about race was least common, it was more common among parents of boys than parents of girls, and an emphasis on cultural socialization was more common among parents of girls compared to parents of boys.

Our results extend the racial socialization literature by examining profiles of racial socialization rather than focusing on mean levels of messages in different domains. Such an approach, referred to as *person-oriented*, differs from a variable-based approach. Whereas differences may not be evident when comparing mean levels in single domains, there may be differences in patterns of racial socialization across domains. For example, although there were no significant gender differences in our sample with regards to mean levels of messages related to cultural socialization, preparation for bias, or promotion of mistrust, there were differences in the patterns of what parents of boys versus parents of girls emphasized. Parents of girls were more likely to emphasize cultural socialization, whereas parents of boys were more likely to strongly emphasize a combination of cultural socialization, coping skills for discrimination, and promotion of mistrust. These findings echo those of other researchers who reported more frequent use of messages related to coping with discrimination for African American boys (Bowman and Howard 1985; McHale et al. 2006; Thomas and Speight 1999). The youth included in the studies reported by Bowman and Howard (1985) and McHale et al. (2006) were teenagers, whereas the age of the children of participants in the Thomas and Speight (1999) was not reported. Although there are a number of studies reporting no gender differences (see Hughes et al. 2006, for a review), these null findings may be the result of looking at mean differences rather than differences in racial socialization profiles. The present study is the first to report gender differences in parental racial socialization at a very young age.

Although patterns of racial socialization practices were not significantly associated with differences in neighborhood economic position, there were differences associated with neighborhood social characteristics such as neighborhood potential for community involvement with children (CIC) and neighborhood negative social climate. Silence about race was less common in neighborhoods with high levels of negative social climate, and a combination of cultural socialization with preparation for discrimination and promotion of mistrust was more common in neighborhoods with high neighborhood CIC. That African American parents talk about issues of race with their young children differently depending on the conditions of the neighborhoods in which they live is consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Garcia Coll et al. (1996) to guide thinking regarding processes of minority child development. According to this integrative model of minority child development, Garcia Coll and her colleagues argue that the societal influences of racism and discrimination shape both the communities in which families are raising children as well as

the adaptive cultures of families that shape decisions regarding socialization priorities. Parents living in a neighborhood high in negative social climate may consider messages regarding ways to avoid victimization important to transmit; this may make it less likely for African American parents to consider silence about race to be an appropriate strategy for raising their young children. The reason why high levels of neighborhood CIC would be related a greater emphasis on cultural socialization combined with messages related to coping with discrimination and promotion of mistrust may be that such neighborhoods, with greater levels of community cohesion and collective socialization of children, have more opportunities for interaction among parents and mutual sharing of parenting strategies, or have a higher level of collective pride in African American culture. Future research should examine these neighborhood influences on socialization priorities of African American families in other urban and rural areas to determine if these findings are generalizable or if they are unique to the context of this particular study.

Another aim of this study was to examine whether child outcomes in behavioral and cognitive domains differed by racial socialization profile group. Results indicated that problem behaviors, particularly internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety, were higher for children whose parents were in the *Balanced* group compared with the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group. After adjusting for child gender and neighborhood conditions, the difference between these two groups remained statistically significant, with the internalizing behavior score for children in the *Balanced* group almost 4 points higher than the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group. This represents an effect size of approximately .40, which would be considered a moderate effect size according to Cohen (1988). However, it should be noted that the majority of the children in the study sample had CBCL scores in the normal range, with only 16% of the sample scoring above the “worrisome” cut-off *t*-score of 60.

A clue as to why a combination of messages would be associated with higher levels of internalizing problems may be evident in an examination of the mean levels of different racial socialization messages for each of the profile groups. As shown in Fig. 1, the primary difference between the *Balanced* and the *coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group is that the former has a greater emphasis on promotion of mistrust and preparation for discrimination compared with the latter. The levels of cultural socialization in messages and the home environment are similar for the two groups. It may be that messages regarding discrimination and racism above a certain level function to increase levels of child anxiety and/or depression, at least in very young children. What that threshold may be and whether this is true at other ages or in other geographic areas awaits further investigation.

Although there were no main effect differences in cognitive outcomes associated with racial socialization profile group, there were differences by gender. An emphasis on cultural socialization was associated with higher cognitive scores among girls, whereas a combination of cultural socialization, coping with discrimination, and promotion of mistrust was associated with higher cognitive scores among boys. This is consistent with previous studies with samples of adolescents or unspecified age groups which show that parents of girls are more likely to emphasize racial pride (Bowman and Howard 1985) and parents of boys provide more messages regarding strategies for coping with discrimination (Thomas

and Speight 1999). In light of the findings regarding behavioral outcomes, future research should examine if these findings are generalizable and, if they are, if there is an optimal level of racial socialization messages regarding discrimination and racism which balances cognitive benefits for boys with increased risk of internalizing problems.

Save for one significant finding, we did not find any compelling pattern of interactions between racial socialization profile and neighborhood factors or any three-way interactions with child gender. These findings are in contrast with our previous reports using data from this same sample, in which we reported numerous interactions between mean levels of racial socialization in a number of domains with neighborhood factors and child gender (author reference). These disparate findings may be the result of differences in methods. Creating profile groups based on racial socialization measures resulted in four groups ranging in size from 10 for the *Silence* group to 112 in the *Balanced* groups. The other two groups, *Cultural socialization emphasis* and *coping emphasis/cultural socialization*, were intermediate in size with 68 and 40 members, respectively. This points to a limitation of the study: groups of this size may not have provided us with sufficient power to examine interactions with neighborhood and gender, much less neighborhood by gender, since such stratification resulted in numerous cells with small or nonexistent sample sizes. Therefore, conclusions regarding whether certain profiles of racial socialization messages are better for children living in different neighborhood contexts will require data be collected from a larger sample.

Another limitation of the study which should be kept in mind derives from the nature of the racial socialization items themselves. The racial socialization measure developed by Stevenson (1999) and used in this study does not address a specific child. That is, the items ask the parent to report whether s/he communicates these racial socialization messages to his/her children, not whether or not s/he communicates these messages to the target child specifically. Based on evidence that the content of racial socialization messages changes as children age (Hughes and Chen 1997), it is possible children in our sample who had an older sibling received different racial socialization messages compared with children without older siblings. We examined this possibility in several ways. First, using household roster information collected during the home visit, we determined whether or not the child had a sibling in the home in one of the following two age groups: 11–17 years and 18+ years. There were no differences in the mean levels on the racial socialization scales nor the profiles of racial socialization based on presence of a sibling in either age group. Second, we examined whether having an older sibling age 11 years or older of a specific gender was associated with different racial socialization messages depending on gender of the target child. Racial socialization profiles did not differ for either male or female target children in the presence of an older brother or an older sister age 11 or older. Mean levels for the separate racial socialization scales did not differ for girls in the presence of either an older brother or an older sister nor for boys in the presence of an older sister. However, male target children with an older brother age 11 years or older in the house were more likely to receive messages related to promotion of mistrust as compared with male target children without an older brother, $t(117) = -2.30, p < .05$. Because of sample size limitations, we are unable to completely explore the role of older siblings in influencing the racial socialization climate in the household. Future research should examine more comprehensively the dynamics of racial socialization in the household not only in terms of older siblings but also in the

presence of other socializing adults such as the other parent and/or other adult household members. Although we have a few fathers in our sample, their numbers were too few for us to draw meaningful conclusions regarding differences in racial socialization by parental gender.

Another limitation of this study is the sample itself. Because participants were drawn from a single urban area (Baltimore), the findings may not be generalized to African American families living in other urban areas or in rural areas. As proposed by Garcia Coll et al. (1996), differences that exist in different cities or rural areas are important factors shaping the adaptive cultures of ethnic minority families. Profiles of racial socialization practices may differ in other urban or rural contexts, and the relation of these profiles to child outcomes may differ as well. Likewise, there may be differences between those who agreed to participate and those who refused participation, further limiting generalizability of the study findings.

Overall, the findings indicate that patterns of racial socialization are associated with neighborhood conditions and with behavioral and cognitive outcomes in young, school aged children. The *Balanced* and *Coping emphasis/socialization* patterns were highly similar in their levels of component messages. The *Balanced* group was associated with higher cognitive scores in boys and the *Coping emphasis/cultural socialization* group with lower total problem behavior scores. These findings demonstrate the importance of considering the totality of parents' racial socialization practices as opposed to examining individual measures of racial socialization messages in isolation. As recommended in the Hughes et al. (2006) review, future research on racial socialization practices must examine these practices within the broader context of parenting as well as the dynamics of the household. A holistic approach to studying racial socialization practices will enhance our understanding of the unique factors important for the healthy development of African American youth and facilitate the development of supportive interventions for African American families.

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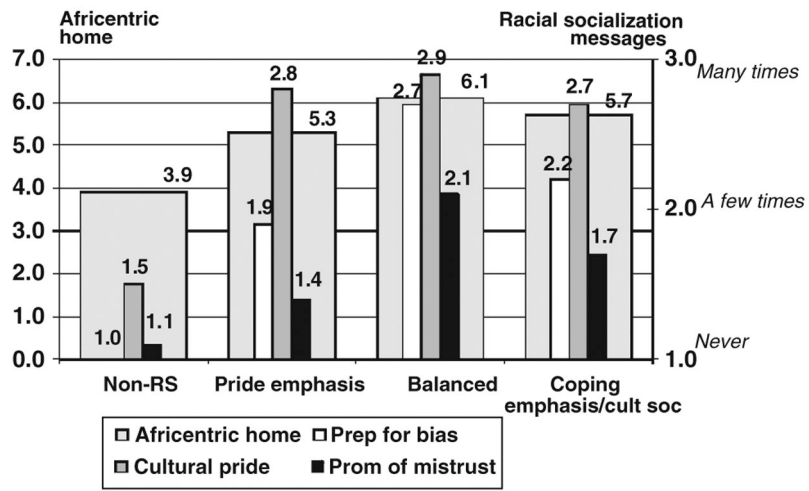


Fig. 1. Mean scores on racial socialization measures for four racial socialization profile groups



Fig. 2.
Average KBIT scores by child gender and racial socialization profile group

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Table 2

Differences in racial socialization profiles by parent and child characteristics

	<u>Silence</u>		<u>Cultural soc emphasis</u>		<u>Balanced</u>		<u>Cultural soc/coping</u>		χ^2
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Caregiver education									
Less than high school	3	5.5	12	21.8	28	50.9	12	21.8	7.88
High school/GED	5	5.2	24	25.0	50	52.1	17	17.7	
More than high school	2	2.5	32	40.5	34	43.0	11	13.9	
Caregiver employment									
Never employed	1	3.4	4	13.8	16	55.2	8	27.6	11.03+
Employed last 5 yrs	6	9.7	17	27.4	28	45.2	11	17.7	
Currently employed	3	2.4	42	33.1	64	50.4	18	14.2	
Family poverty status									
<100% poverty	7	6.4	26	23.9	56	51.4	20	18.3	5.53
100–179% poverty	1	2.1	18	37.5	23	47.9	6	12.5	
180% + poverty	2	3.8	18	34.6	22	42.3	10	19.2	
Child gender									
Boy	8	6.8	26	22.2	64	54.7	19	16.2	9.68*
Girl	2	1.8	42	37.2	48	42.5	21	18.6	

Table 3

Differences in neighborhood characteristics by racial socialization profiles

	<u>Silence</u>		<u>Cultural soc emphasis</u>		<u>Balanced</u>		<u>Cultural soc/coping</u>		<i>F</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Concentrated economic disadvantage	.14	.61	.15	.86	.30	.83	.46	.83	1.17
Community involvement w/children	2.46	1.11	2.48 _a	.76	2.82 _a	.90	2.49	.70	2.84 [*]
Negative social climate	2.94 _{a,b,c}	1.23	3.69 _a	.66	3.79 _b	.77	3.77 _c	.54	4.23 ^{**}

Means sharing the same subscript differ at $p < .05$ based on a Bonferonni test

^{*} $p < .05$,

^{**} $p < .01$

Table 4

Differences in child outcomes by racial socialization profiles

	<u>Silence</u>		<u>Cultural soc emphasis</u>		<u>Balanced</u>		<u>Cultural soc/coping</u>		<i>F</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
CBCL total problem behaviors	52.90	7.93	48.78	11.38	51.59 _a	10.02	46.46 _a	10.73	3.43*
CBCL internalizing problems	51.20	5.51	48.90	9.79	50.08 _a	9.61	45.51 _a	9.12	2.73*
CBCL externalizing problems	50.60	8.98	49.52	10.12	51.81	9.67	49.08	10.73	1.43
KBIT	99.30	9.26	96.60	12.89	95.94	13.00	92.22	9.26	1.37

Means sharing the same subscript differ at $p < .05$ based on a Bonferroni test

* $p < .05$,

** $p < .01$

Table 5
Multivariate regression analyses of child outcomes on racial socialization profiles and neighborhood variables

	CBCL total		CBCL internalizing		CBCL externalizing		K-BIT	
	b (SE)	t	b (SE)	t	b (SE)	t	b (SE)	t
Constant	48.45 (1.91)	25.34	46.13 (1.70)	27.14**	51.16 (1.83)	28.00**	96.83 (2.30)	42.07**
Child gender (girl)	-2.90 (1.42)	-.14	-2.79 (1.26)	-2.21*	-3.16 (1.36)	-2.33*	-3.44 (1.69)	-2.03*
Silence	5.22 (3.66)	1.43	4.88 (3.25)	1.50	.29 (3.50)	.08	3.30 (4.35)	.76
Cultural soc emphasis	2.33 (2.08)	1.12	4.06 (1.85)	2.19*	.37 (1.99)	.19	2.63 (2.50)	1.05
Balanced	4.35 (1.94)	2.24*	3.82 (1.73)	2.21*	2.09 (1.86)	1.12	1.04 (2.34)	.45
High conc econ disadvantage	-.09 (1.56)	-.06	1.07 (1.38)	.78	.78 (1.49)	.52	-4.44 (1.87)	-2.38*
High CIC	-4.37 (1.80)	-2.43*	-2.26 (1.60)	-1.41	-3.73 (1.72)	-2.17*	5.71 (2.16)	2.64**
High negative social climate	3.56 (1.75)	2.03*	4.38 (1.56)	2.81**	1.46 (1.68)	.87	.24 (2.12)	.11
R ²	.103**		.112**		.070*		.076*	

* $p < .05$,

** $p < .01$