

The Importance of Racial Socialization: School-Based Racial Discrimination and Racial Identity Among African American Adolescent Boys and Girls

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This study examined various parental racial socialization messages as mediators between school-based racial discrimination and racial identity formation over 4 years for African American boys ($N = 639$) and African American girls ($N = 711$). Findings indicated that school-based racial discrimination was associated with racial identity beliefs. For African American boys, behavioral racial socialization messages mediated the relation between school-based racial discrimination and racial centrality over time. Mediation also resulted for African American girls, but for a different set of race-related messages (negative messages and racial barriers) and racial identity beliefs. The developmental significance of the findings and implications for future research are discussed.

An important task in adolescence is to develop a secure sense of one's self. For adolescents of color, a significant part of developing a secure self-concept involves exploring and learning what it means to be a member of a racial group (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Racial socialization represents family communications to youth about how to feel and think about their racial group membership and how to understand and cope with discrimination, whereas racial identity is adolescents' crystallization of those messages and other communications about how they think of themselves as a person of color. Positive racial socialization messages may provide adolescents with a mental framework for understanding discrimination experiences and may allow them to cope with negative race-related experiences and develop connected and positive racial identities.

Empirical research links racial socialization messages to higher adaptive coping with discrimination (e.g., Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, &

Rowley, 2007; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Scott, 2003). Additionally, racial socialization has been linked to racial identity (e.g., Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee, & Eccles, 2014; Seaton, Yip, Morgan-Lopez, & Sellers, 2012). However, different types of messages likely relate to racial identity beliefs in different ways. For instance, socialization messages that explicitly focus on the meaning of being Black, whether focusing on group pride, group barriers, group cultural behaviors, or negative messages, likely increase the normative salience of race to youth such that race becomes more central. Parents seeking to help their children understand and deal with discrimination are particularly likely to draw on pride, barriers, and behavioral message strategies (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguy en, & Sellers, 2009). Racial pride and behavioral messages also communicate and demonstrate, respectively, to adolescents the positive attributes attached to their racial group and encourage youth to feel good about being Black. As such, these messages likely positively influence racial identity over time (Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009). Similarly, messages about equality, racial harmony, and positive self-worth messages are intended to support youth in feeling good about their personal identities, which may also elicit positive affect about being a member of their racial group.

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This study examined the impact of school-based racial discrimination experiences on racial identity formation among African American boys and girls through parental racial socialization messages. Much of the research on adolescents' parental racial socialization has focused on messages that can be categorized into cultural socialization. For instance, cultural socialization messages can include the promotion of adolescents' racial pride, knowledge about their group's history, or preparation for racial bias (e.g., Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). However, parents may convey a variety of messages concerning the meaning of their racial group in society that may not fall into these two over-arching racial socialization themes. This study contributed to extant literature by examining a broader range of racial socialization messages as mediators. Finally, we explored gender differences in the associations among racial discrimination, socialization, and identity, given theory and research emphasizing variation between boys and girls in their discrimination and socialization experiences (e.g., Cogburn, Chavous, & Griffin, 2011; Richardson et al., 2015; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003).

Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity

This study used the multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998) as a conceptual framework for defining African American racial identity as individuals' beliefs about the importance and the meaning of being African American (Sellers et al., 1998). The MMRI uses a phenomenological approach in describing the content of individuals' racial identity beliefs. Thus, the model allows for adolescents to define what it means to be Black and how important an identity it is. As such, the MMRI acknowledges that there is diversity in adolescents' racial identity beliefs and this heterogeneity may depend on how they make meaning of their previous race-related experiences and exposures. In our examination, we focused on two dimensions of the MMRI: *racial centrality* and *racial regard*. Racial centrality is the importance of being Black to one's self-concept. Racial regard includes two subdimensions, *private regard*, individuals' personal affective feelings about being Black, and *public regard*, individuals' perceptions of societal views of Blacks.

African American Adolescents' Parental Racial Socialization Experiences

This study uses Lesane-Brown's (2006) comprehensive definition of racial socialization 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 relations, and personal and group identity" (p. 402). African American adolescents report receiving a range of racial socialization messages from their parents (e.g., Coard & Sellers, 2005; Neblett et al., 2008; Neblett et al., 2009; Thomas, Hoxha, & Hacker, 2013). African American parents report that they primarily intend for their racial messages to instill a positive sense of self in their children (e.g., Hughes & Chen, 1997, 1999), to prepare them for the potential of racial discrimination and allow them to cope with such experiences, and to teach them about equality (e.g., Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Hughes, 2003). However, messages about race can be communicated to adolescents from parents implicitly, explicitly, intended, and unintended (e.g., Hughes et al., 2009). As such, parents may also communicate negative messages, which emphasize negative stereotypes to their adolescents, in addition to more positive messages (e.g., Coard & Sellers, 2005). Research suggests that the absence of positive racial messages and messages that make adolescents aware and prepared for the potential of racial discrimination is especially detrimental for youth who experience racial discrimination (Neblett et al., 2008; Riina & McHale, 2010).

We focus on six distinct racial socialization messages: *racial pride messages*, *racial barrier messages*, *egalitarian messages*, *negative messages*, *behavioral messages*, and *self-worth messages* (Lesane-Brown, 2006). These messages represent the diverse range of racial socialization parents provide. Racial pride messages focus on positive feelings toward the racial group by emphasizing group unity, African American heritage, and their accomplishments.

Racial barrier messages emphasize awareness of discrimination and prejudice toward African Americans in the United States. Egalitarian messages promote interracial harmony, equality, and coexistence. Negative messages highlight negative experiences with and stereotypes of African Americans. Behavioral messages promote active involvement,

knowledge, and understanding of the African American community. Finally, self-worth messages emphasize the worth and positive attributes of the individual, regardless of race.

Guiding Framework

This study draws on García Coll et al.'s (1996) integrative model for the developmental competencies in minority children. The model suggests the unique role of how one's social position status (e.g., race, class, and gender) predicts experiences with racism, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression and how specific environments such as schools promote/inhibit positive developmental outcomes. We use this model to address the importance of racism, gender, and context in the lives of African American adolescents.

Racism. The instances of racial discrimination that youth have reported in schools include receiving a lower grade than deserved from teachers, being discouraged from joining advanced level classes, being the recipient of unusually harsh discipline, being excluded from social activities with peers, and being the target of verbal, psychological, or physical abuse from peers (e.g., Benner & Graham, 2013; Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006). There is also substantial cross-sectional research on the negative associations between discrimination and academic and psychological outcomes among adolescents (e.g., Cogburn et al., 2011; Dotterer et al., 2009; Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015; Mroczkowski & Sánchez, 2015); however, the longer term influences of discrimination on identity beliefs has been understudied. The developmental stage of adolescence encompasses youth exploring and learning what their racial identities mean (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). This may make them particularly vulnerable in stigma-based experiences in which they feel mistreated, thereby threatening identity (Ethier & Deaux, 1994).

Gender. Compared to African American girls, African American boys are more likely to be viewed and stereotyped as threatening and anti-intellectual (e.g., Stevenson, Herrero-Taylor, Cameron, & Davis, 2002b; Swanson et al., 2003), increasing their risk for racial discrimination in school by peers. Indeed, studies have demonstrated that African American boys are more likely to report experiencing racial discrimination than girls

(e.g., Chavous et al., 2008; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Riina & McHale, 2010; Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002a). Some recent findings highlight that boys and girls report some differences in their frequencies of school-based racial discrimination from teachers and peers and differences in frequencies of parental racial socialization messages in response to discrimination (Richardson et al., 2015). Furthermore, the authors found that boys' and girls' profiles of frequencies of discrimination and parental messages about coping with discrimination related to adolescents' racial identity beliefs 3 years later (Richardson et al., 2015). Thus, although girls may not experience these types of racial discrimination as frequently as boys, it is still important to understand the ways it is impactful in girls' racial identity development.

Promoting/inhibiting environments. Adolescents spend a substantial amount of time in school and around peers as compared to younger children (Benner & Graham, 2013; Fisher et al., 2000). Ethnic minority youth report more perceived discrimination as the schools they attend become more ethnically diverse, as the numerical representation of their own group declines, and as the diversity of the teaching staff members does not reflect the students (Benner & Graham, 2011, 2013; Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2009). Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2009) found that the percentages of minority students reduce academic achievement, while other studies indicate that the greater concentration of minority students leads to students having higher academic expectations (Frost, 2007). Goosby and Walsemann (2012) also found that school racial composition predicted later adult health outcomes. More specifically, an increase in White students at school was associated with poorer self-rated health for Black respondents later on. In our current study, we build on this work by examining three distinct school districts: predominantly Black, predominantly White, and racially and ethnically diverse school districts to understand how these environments shape the racial identity beliefs of African American adolescent boys and girls over time.

Our study's unique contribution to the literature is that we build on the work of Stevenson and Arrington (2009) as we explore racial socialization messages as a mediator of racism and racial identity development for African American adolescent boys and girls over the most critical years of development. Parents give multiple types of messages to their children about race, both positive and

negative; thus, we posit that racial socialization is an interpretive process through which school-based racial discrimination and identity formation are perceived and developed, that racial identity beliefs are also developed through racial socialization messages, and that racial socialization messages cannot be understood without the context in which a stressor (e.g., school-based racial discrimination) is present.

Hypotheses

We examined the direct associations between school-based racial discrimination and three aspects of racial identity (centrality, private regard, and public regard). We hypothesized that racial discrimination experiences will draw adolescents' attention to race more frequently and influence increased importance of race to the adolescent; that is, we expected that over time adolescents who experienced racial discrimination would develop a belief system that includes their Black identity being an important part of who they are (i.e., higher racial centrality). We further hypothesized that discrimination likely alerts adolescents to societal devaluation of African Americans, influencing lower public regard beliefs, consistent with prior work (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2009; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). Additionally, racial discrimination may relate to private regard in positive or negative ways. Discrimination may also function as an identity threat (Ethier & Deaux, 1994) and relate to adolescents feeling less positive about being African American (i.e., lower private regard). Alternatively, adolescents might emphasize positive group attributes despite discrimination (i.e., higher private regard) (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

Although we expected racial discrimination to relate directly to adolescents' identity beliefs over time, we also expected that knowledge of adolescents' racial discrimination experiences would prompt parents to provide their adolescents with racial socialization messages. Previous cross-sectional research shows a positive relationship between adolescents' discrimination reports and parental racial socialization reports (e.g., Dotterer et al., 2009). Our study expands this work to examine, across time, how racial discrimination functions to influence racial identity beliefs through particular racial socialization messages. We believe that African American adolescents' discrimination experiences and their parents' racial socialization messages teach adolescents about the significance of race, what it means to be African American, and

how others view African Americans. Because adolescents are still "in process" of exploring and learning about what their race and ethnicity means to their self-concepts (e.g., Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), we believe that parents' racial socialization messages are essential in the development of adolescents' positive racial identity beliefs, especially when they experience an identity threat of racial discrimination. Thus, we expect the discrimination-socialization-identity process to vary depending on the type of message adolescents receive.

We hypothesized that all six racial socialization messages examined (racial pride, racial barrier, egalitarian, self-worth, behavioral, and negative messages) may function as mediators between racial discrimination and racial identity. In addition to discrimination, parents' racial socialization messages may function to heighten the salience of race for adolescents and increase the significance of race; thus, we expected that all racial socialization messages would help explain the positive association between racial discrimination and racial centrality. We expected that racial discrimination experiences would relate to lower public regard beliefs and we expected this association to be mediated by racial barrier messages (those that teach adolescents of racial bias against African Americans in society). However, we also explored the ways other messages contributed to the association between discrimination and public regard. If discrimination is experienced as an identity threat and relating to lower private regard, we expected that parental negative messages (those that emphasize negative stereotypes of Black people) and racial barrier messages may further contribute to adolescents' development of lower private regard beliefs. However, discrimination experiences may motivate adolescents to feel more positive about and connected to their racial group, relating positively to private regard. In this case, we expected that the positive-laden messages that are affirming of adolescents' personal characteristics (i.e., racial pride, self-worth, behavioral) and messages that teaches them about equality (i.e., egalitarian) would function to develop adolescents' positive feelings about their racial group membership (i.e., higher private regard).

Lastly, we examined whether the discrimination-socialization-identity process varied between African American girls and boys. We hypothesized that racial pride, self-worth, behavioral, and egalitarian messages will be especially important for African American boys' development of connected and positive identities (higher centrality and private

regard) due to the likelihood that they have more frequent discrimination experiences compared to girls. Overall, this study expands on this work by examining multiple types of messages, as was not the case in previous research.

METHOD

Participants

Data were drawn from a larger longitudinal study that examined how cultural, racial, and socioeconomic contexts influenced the developmental trajectories of Black adolescents. The study followed self-identified Black/African American adolescents in their seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade school years across four waves of data. Adolescents' age ranged from 12 to 16 years of age at Time 1. The final analysis resulted in a sample of African American boys ($N = 639$) and girls ($N = 711$) across four waves.

Procedures

During the academic years between 2010 and 2013, African American adolescents were recruited from three socioeconomically diverse school districts located in the Midwest. School district 1 was racially diverse: 46% of its students were White, 36% African American, 14% Asian American, and 4% other. School district 2 was predominantly African American (93%), and school district 3 was predominantly White, with 63% of the students reporting as White, 21% African American, 8% Asian American, 7% Hispanic, and 1% other. Information packets were sent home and parents and/or legal guardians gave consent by signing and returning the consent form before administration of the survey. Adolescents also signed assent forms the day of the survey administration. Students who participated were given a \$20.00 gift card for taking a 30–45-min survey. Measures were collected across all four waves of data.

Measures

Racial identity beliefs (Times 1, 2, 3, 4). Adolescents' racial identity beliefs were measured with items from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity–Teen scale (MIBI-t) (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008). Three subscales were used: racial centrality, private regard, and public regard. The racial centrality subscale was comprised of three items ($\alpha .55$; e.g., “Being Black is an important

part of who I am”) [Correction updated on March 18, 2019, after initial online publication: “≤ symbol was changed to alpha throughout the article]. The private regard subscale was comprised of three items ($\alpha .78$; e.g., “I am happy I am Black”). The public regard subscale was comprised of three items ($\alpha .73$; e.g., “Most people think that Blacks are as smart as people of other races”). The responses ranged from 1 = *really disagree* to 5 = *really agree*. Higher mean scores were indicative of higher centrality, private regard, and public regard beliefs.

Racial socialization messages (Times 1, 2, 3, 4). Adolescents' perceived racial socialization messages from parents were measured with the Racial Socialization Questionnaire–Teen (RSQ-t) (Lesane-Brown, Scottham, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2006). The scale consists of 26 items and six subscales: egalitarian messages, negative messages, racial barrier messages, racial pride messages, behavioral messages, and self-worth messages. The egalitarian subscale consists of four items ($\alpha .69$; e.g., “In the past year, how often have your parent(s)/caregivers told you that Blacks and Whites should try to understand each other so they can get along?”). The negative messages subscale consists of five items ($\alpha .80$; e.g., “In the past year, how often have your parents told you that being Black is nothing to be proud of?”). The racial barriers messages subscale consists of four items ($\alpha .73$; e.g., “In the past year, how often have your parents told you that some people think they are better than you because of their race?”). The racial pride subscale consists of four items ($\alpha .66$; e.g., “In the past year, how often have your parents told you that you should be proud to be Black?”). The behavioral messages subscale consists of five items ($\alpha .72$; e.g., “In the past year, how often have your parents bought you books about Black people?”). The self-worth subscale consists of four items ($\alpha .70$; e.g., “In the past year, how often have your parents told you that you are somebody special, no matter what anybody says?”). The scale was based on the frequency of responses that ranged from 0 = *never* to 2 = *more than twice*. The RSQ-t has been used in published work with Black adolescents (e.g., Neblett. et al., 2008, 2009).

School-based racial discrimination (Times 1, 2, 3, 4). Adolescents' perceptions of racial discrimination from teachers and peers was measured with items from the school-based discrimination scale developed by the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) primary investigators (see Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006). Adolescents

reported on seven items about the frequency with which they feel this way in school (e.g., “Teachers call on you less often than they call on other kids because you are Black.”). The scale ranged from 1 = *never*, 2 = *a couple of times each year*, 3 = *a couple of times each month*, 4 = *once or twice each week*, 5 = *almost every day*. The alpha for this scale is .90. We averaged responses to these seven items with higher scores representing adolescents with more racial discrimination experiences. The school-based racial discrimination scale has been used in previous studies to assess classroom discrimination of peers and teachers (e.g., Butler-Barnes, Chavous, Hurd, & Varner, 2013; Chavous et al., 2008).

Demographic and control variables. All adolescents completed a demographic background questionnaire requesting information about their school district and adolescent’s age.

Data Analysis

This study analyzed longitudinal data using linear mixed models (LMMs) procedure in SPSS 24.0 statistical package software. LMMs enable researchers to examine change over time and may include both fixed and random effects. The advantages of LMMs include the following: time-variant and time-varying covariates, accommodation of available data, covariance structures, inclusion of random effects, and unbalanced longitudinal data sets (West, 2009; West, Welch, & Galecki, 2007). The metric of time is the occasion of the study that was added to the model to test the linear effect of time on racial identity beliefs. To test the linear effect of time on racial centrality, private regard, and public regard, Time 1 = 0 (initial status) at Wave 1, Time 2 = 1 at

Wave 2, Time 3 = 2 at Wave 3, and Time 4 = 3 at Wave 4 (at final assessment). Centering of time allows the intercept to be estimated at the initial status (Peugh & Enders, 2005).

RESULTS

Means and correlations are presented for boys and girls separately (see Tables 1 and 2). There were significant differences between boys and girls. African American boys ($M = 1.82, SD = 1.06$) reported higher levels of school-based racial discrimination in comparison to African American girls ($M = 1.52, SD = 0.85$) ($t = 5.69, p = .001$) at Time 1. This was a similar pattern at Time 2, with boys ($M = 1.78, SD = 1.02$) reporting higher discrimination experiences than girls ($M = 1.62, SD = 0.82$) ($t = 2.62, p = .003$). At Time 1, boys ($M = .36, SD = 0.47$) reported more negative race-related messages than girls ($M = .22, SD = 0.37$) ($t = 6.19, p = .001$). This was also a similar pattern at Time 2, with boys ($M = .34, SD = 0.46$) reporting higher negative race-related messages than girls ($M = .25, SD = 0.42$). Boys ($M = 1.04, SD = 0.58$) also reported higher perceived racial barriers messages than girls ($M = .95, SD = 0.59$) ($t = 2.86, p = .004$) at Time 1. At Time 1 girls ($M = 1.35, SD = 0.49$) reported higher racial pride messages in comparison to boys ($M = 1.29, SD = 0.52$) ($t = -2.11, p = .035$). Lastly, there were significant gender differences between boys and girls perceiving self-worth messages. At Time 1, girls ($M = 1.69, SD = 0.46$) reported higher self-worth messages in comparison to boys ($M = 1.54, SD = 0.53$) ($t = -5.64, p = .001$). This was a similar pattern at Time 2, with girls ($M = 1.62, SD = 0.52$) reporting higher self-worth messages in comparison to boys ($M = 1.55, SD = 0.50$) ($t = -2.38, p = .017$).

TABLE 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables for Boys ($n = 639$)

<i>School-Based Racial</i>	<i>M (SD) Time 1</i>	<i>M (SD) Time 2</i>	<i>M (SD) Time 3</i>	<i>M (SD) Time 4</i>
Discrimination	1.82 (1.06)	1.78 (1.02)	1.76 (1.17)	1.77 (.72)
Racial socialization messages				
Egalitarian messages	2.98 (1.16)	3.04 (1.21)	3.55 (1.17)	2.00 (1.10)
Negative messages	0.36 (0.47)	0.34 (0.46)	0.32 (0.60)	0.43 (0.45)
Racial barrier messages	1.04 (0.58)	1.10 (0.58)	1.03 (0.73)	1.08 (0.65)
Racial pride messages	1.29 (0.52)	1.37 (0.53)	1.26 (0.67)	1.21 (0.60)
Behavioral messages	0.97 (0.52)	1.04 (0.57)	0.99 (0.69)	1.04 (0.66)
Self-worth messages	1.54 (0.53)	1.55 (0.50)	1.57 (0.59)	1.41 (0.56)
Racial identity beliefs				
Private regard	4.35 (0.77)	4.32 (0.80)	4.37 (0.97)	4.11 (0.72)
Racial centrality	3.43 (0.85)	3.49 (0.88)	3.62 (0.90)	3.37 (0.84)
Public regard	3.28 (0.94)	3.18 (0.99)	3.30 (1.08)	2.96 (0.85)

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables for Girls ($n = 711$)

<i>School-Based Racial</i>	<i>M (SD)</i> <i>Time 1</i>	<i>M (SD)</i> <i>Time 2</i>	<i>M (SD)</i> <i>Time 3</i>	<i>M (SD)</i> <i>Time 4</i>
Discrimination	1.52 (0.85)	1.62 (0.82)	1.67 (1.01)	1.80 (0.72)
Racial socialization messages				
Egalitarian messages	1.18 (0.53)	1.19 (0.50)	1.18 (0.73)	1.06 (0.62)
Negative messages	0.22 (0.37)	.25 (0.42)	0.27 (0.51)	0.41 (0.46)
Racial barrier messages	0.95 (0.59)	1.10 (0.62)	0.99 (0.71)	1.06 (0.65)
Racial pride messages	1.35 (0.49)	1.36 (0.54)	1.29 (0.68)	1.22 (0.61)
Behavioral messages	0.97 (0.52)	1.02 (0.58)	0.97 (0.71)	1.03 (0.64)
Self-worth messages	1.69 (0.46)	1.62 (0.52)	1.60 (0.60)	1.43 (0.58)
Racial Identity beliefs				
Private regard	4.33 (0.81)	4.32 (0.80)	4.24 (0.94)	4.15 (0.70)
Racial centrality	3.92 (0.86)	3.40 (0.82)	3.36 (0.90)	3.41 (0.91)
Public regard	3.06 (0.95)	2.99 (0.95)	3.15 (1.05)	2.98 (0.86)

Unconditional Mean Model (Model 1)

Boys. There were significant interindividual differences in the unconditional model. Thirty-six percent of the total variation in racial centrality was due to interindividual differences. Thirty-one percent and 32% of the total variation in private regard and public regard was due to interindividual differences, respectively.

Girls. Forty-four percent, 45%, and 35% of the total variance in racial centrality, private regard, and public regard was due to interindividual differences, respectively. Thus, an individual growth model is required because the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) is above 25% of the variance for all racial identity beliefs of both boys and girls (see Heinrich & Lynn, 2001).

Unconditional Linear Growth Model (Model 2)

Boys. Time was added in model 2. The findings indicated that for racial centrality linear growth was constant over time ($\beta = .01$, $SE = .03$, $p > .05$). For private regard ($\beta = -.08$, $SE = .02$, $p < .01$) and public regard ($\beta = -.10$, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$), the significant values in both the intercept and slope indicate that the initial status and growth rate were not constant over time. The mean initial status and linear growth for private regard was 4.46 and $-.08$. For public regard, the mean initial status was 3.27 and $-.10$. This suggests that the mean of private and public regard decreased over time.

Girls. The findings indicated that for racial centrality ($B = .02$, $SE = .02$, $p > .05$) and public regard ($B = -.02$, $SE = .02$, $p > .05$) the individual growth curve was constant over time. However,

for private regard, the significant values in both the intercept and slope indicate that the initial status and growth rate were not constant over time ($B = -.05$, $SE = .02$, $p < .05$). The mean estimated initial status and linear growth rate for the sample was 4.33 and $-.05$. This suggested that private regard was 4.33 and decreased over time.

Linear Growth Model (Adding Predictors)

Two separate models were computed for boys and girls. In the final model, demographics (school district and age), school-based racial discrimination, and perceived racial socialization variables were added.

Boys. The results revealed that African American boys in predominantly White school districts reported lower racial centrality in comparison to those attending a predominantly Black district ($B = -.22$, $t = -3.29$, $p = .01$). School-based racial discrimination and behavioral messages ($B = .20$, $t = 3.07$, $p = .01$) was associated with higher levels of racial centrality.

Private regard. Younger African American boys reported lower private regard ($B = -.07$, $t = -5.09$, $p = .01$). Perceived negative messages ($B = -.31$, $t = -5.29$, $p = .01$) was associated with lower levels of private regard. Additionally, racial pride ($B = .23$, $t = 3.28$, $p = .01$) and self-worth ($B = .26$, $t = 4.37$, $p = .01$) was significantly positively associated with private regard.

Public regard. Egalitarian messages ($B = .36$, $t = 4.91$, $p = .01$) and negative messages ($B = .19$, $t = 2.48$, $p = .01$) were associated with higher levels

of public regard. Lastly, perceived messages around racial barriers was associated with endorsement of lower public regard beliefs ($B = -.34, t = 5.48, p = .01$) (see Table 3).

Girls. The findings revealed that Black girls attending racially and ethnically diverse ($B = -.21, t = -2.76, p = .01$) and predominantly White school districts ($B = -.12, t = -2.06, p = .04$) reported lower levels of racial centrality in comparison to those attending a predominantly Black school district. School-based racial discrimination ($B = .08, t = 2.46, p = .01$) was associated with higher levels of racial centrality. Racial barriers ($B = .17, t = 3.41, p = .01$), racial pride ($B = .24, t = 3.23, p = .01$), and behavioral messages ($B = .11, t = 2.03, p = .04$) were associated with higher levels of racial centrality.

Private regard. African American girls in predominantly White districts ($B = -.13, t = -2.33, p = .02$) reported lower levels of private regard. Negative messages ($B = -.25, t = -3.54, p = .01$) was associated with lower levels of private regard. Racial pride ($B = .30, t = 4.33, p = .01$) and self-worth messages ($B = .22, t = 3.22, p = .01$) were associated significantly and positively with private regard.

Public regard. African American girls in predominantly White school districts ($B = .21, t = 3.14, p = .01$) and racially and ethnically diverse school districts ($B = .25, t = 3.02, p = .01$) reported higher levels of public regard. School-based racial discrimination was associated with lower levels of public regard ($B = -.14, t = -4.13, p = .01$). Egalitarian ($B = .36, t = 5.44, p = .01$) and negative messages ($B = .49, t = 5.67, p = .01$) were associated with higher levels of public regard. Lastly, racial barriers ($B = -.39, t = -7.02, p = .01$) was associated with lower levels of public regard (Table 4).

Multiple Mediation Model

For this study, we used the PROCESS software (Hayes, 2012) to analyze a parallel multiple mediation model with all six of the racial socialization messages variables. School-based racial discrimination is modeled as affecting the six mediator variables (egalitarian, negative, racial barriers, racial pride, behavioral, and self-worth) and the six mediator variables are linked to the three racial identity beliefs (racial centrality, private regard, and public regard). PROCESS Model 4 allows for the multiple mediators between X and Y to operate in parallel. Using PROCESS and as recommended by Preacher

TABLE 3
Fixed and Random Effects of School-Based Racial Discrimination, Racial Socialization Beliefs, and Racial Identity Beliefs for Boys ($n = 639$)

	Coefficient (SE)	t Statistic	p
Fixed effects			
Racial centrality (intercept)	3.05 (0.15)	19.97	***
School district			
Racially and economically diverse	-.127 (0.07)	-1.60	
Predominantly White	-.222 (0.06)	-3.29	***
Time	.037 (0.03)	.948	
Adolescent age	-.030 (0.01)	-1.81	
School-based racial discrimination	.064 (0.02)	2.19	*
Egalitarian messages	-.107 (0.06)	-1.63	
Racial pride messages	.131 (0.08)	1.57	
Self-worth messages	.124 (0.07)	1.74	
Racial barrier messages	.102 (0.05)	1.80	
Behavioral messages	.207 (0.06)	3.07	**
Negative messages	.036 (0.07)	.521	
Fixed effects			
Private regard (intercept)	3.74 (0.13)	28.27	***
School district			
Racially and Economically diverse	.022 (0.06)	.331	
Predominately White	-.074 (0.05)	-1.28	
Time	-.001 (0.03)	-.041	
Adolescent age	-.076 (0.01)	-5.094	***
School-based racial discrimination	-.044 (0.02)	-1.73	
Egalitarian messages	.022 (0.05)	.404	
Racial pride messages	.233 (0.07)	3.28	***
Self-worth messages	.266 (0.06)	4.37	***
Racial barrier messages	.024 (0.04)	.505	
Behavioral messages	.063 (0.05)	1.11	
Negative messages	-.313 (0.05)	-5.24	***
Fixed effects			
Public regard (intercept)	2.78 (0.17)	16.23	***
School district			
Racially and economically diverse	.091 (0.08)	1.04	
Predominantly White	.085 (0.07)	1.13	
Time	-.101 (0.03)	-2.61	**
Adolescent age	-.028 (0.01)	-1.47	
School-based racial discrimination	-.059 (0.03)	-1.81	
Egalitarian messages	.360 (0.07)	4.91	***
Racial pride messages	.062 (0.09)	.677	
Self-worth messages	.097 (0.07)	1.25	
Racial barrier messages	-.346 (0.06)	-5.48	***
Behavioral messages	.116 (0.07)	1.56	
Negative messages	.190 (0.07)	2.48	*

Note. Reference group for school district are students attending predominantly Black schools.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .010$; *** $p < .001$.

and Hayes (2008), a bootstrapping was used approach in which a point estimate of the indirect effect was based on the mean of 5,000 estimates

TABLE 4
Fixed and Random Effects of School-Based Racial Discrimination, Racial Socialization Beliefs, and Racial Identity Beliefs for Girls ($n = 711$)

	Coefficient (SE)	t Statistic	p
Fixed effects			
Racial centrality (intercept)	2.99 (0.15)	19.28	***
School district			
Racially and economically diverse	-.211 (0.07)	-2.76	**
Predominantly White	-.126 (0.06)	-2.06	*
Time	.040 (0.03)	1.14	
Adolescent age	-.011 (0.01)	-.660	
School-based racial discrimination	.080 (0.03)	2.46	*
Egalitarian messages	-.117 (0.06)	-1.90	
Racial pride messages	.248 (0.07)	3.23	***
Self-worth messages	-.008 (0.07)	-.108	
Racial barrier messages	.175 (0.05)	3.41	***
Behavioral messages	.118 (0.05)	2.03	*
Negative messages	.001 (0.08)	.013	
Fixed effects			
Private regard (intercept)	3.87 (0.14)	27.08	***
School district			
Racially and economically diverse	.004 (0.07)	.069	
Predominantly White	-.132 (0.05)	-2.33	*
Time	.002 (0.03)	.084	
Adolescent age	-.011 (0.01)	-.724	
School-based racial discrimination	-.036 (0.02)	-1.21	
Egalitarian messages	-.080 (0.05)	-1.42	
Racial pride messages	.306 (0.07)	4.33	***
Self-worth messages	.221 (0.06)	3.22	***
Racial barrier messages	-.090 (0.04)	-1.94	
Behavioral messages	.062 (0.05)	1.16	
Negative messages	-.254 (0.07)	-3.54	***
Fixed effects			
Public regard (intercept)	2.54 (0.16)	15.04	***
School district			
Racially and economically diverse	.251 (0.08)	3.02	**
Predominantly White	.212 (0.06)	3.14	**
Time	.040 (0.03)	.11	
Adolescent age	-.026 (0.01)	-1.37	
School-based racial discrimination	-.147 (0.03)	-4.13	***
Egalitarian messages	.367 (0.06)	5.44	***
Racial pride messages	.128 (0.08)	1.53	
Self-worth messages	.014 (0.08)	.176	
Racial barrier messages	-.390 (0.05)	-7.02	***
Behavioral messages	-.015 (0.06)	-.245	
Negative messages	.493 (0.08)	5.67	***

Note. Reference group for school district are students attending predominantly Black schools. [Correction updated on March 18, 2019, after initial online publication: '0.84' was moved under 't Statistic' column]

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .010$; *** $p < .001$.

and 95% confidence intervals. These intervals were computed using the cut-offs of 2.5% highest and lowest scores. Indirect effects are considered significant when the confidence intervals do not include a zero. The mediation model was averaged across all four time points.

Multiple mediator models were computed separately for boys and girls, while controlling for adolescent age and school district. According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), there are several advantages to testing a multiple mediation model as opposed to a simple mediation model, including (a) if a total indirect effect is found, it can then be determined that the set of variables mediates the effect on y ; (b) it is possible to determine what specific mediator variable mediates the X and Y effect, taking into account the other mediators; (c) parameter bias is reduced which decreases biased estimates as a result of not testing each variable; and (d) one can determine the magnitude of specific indirect effects associated with the mediators in the model (see Figure 1).

Additionally, we report complete mediation only. Defining the significance in terms of the degree of mediation (i.e., full or partial) is problematic (Hayes, 2018; Hayes & Rockwood, 2017; Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, & Petty, 2011). For instance, Rucker et al. (2011) indicates methodological concerns with reporting the degree of mediation as "full" or "partial." The concerns are (a) full or partial mediation does not provide any information about the presence or absence of other possible mediators of X 's effect, (b) claiming that M partially mediates X 's effect is assuming that part of X 's effect on Y has not been accounted for by M (which is not present in the model), and (c) partial and full mediation is contingent on sample size (e.g., limit sample size to establish complete mediation). Because of the concerns with reporting partial or full mediation and the use of a multiple mediation model in this study, complete mediation will be reported.

Boys. Results are summarized in Table 5. For boys, total effects (c) indicated a significant relation between school-based racial discrimination and racial centrality. Behavioral messages mediated the relation between school-based racial discrimination and racial centrality, accounting for 22% of the variance.

Private and public regard. There were no significant mediating variables for private regard or public regard.

Girls. Racial barrier messages mediated the relation between school-based racial discrimination and racial centrality for African American girls,

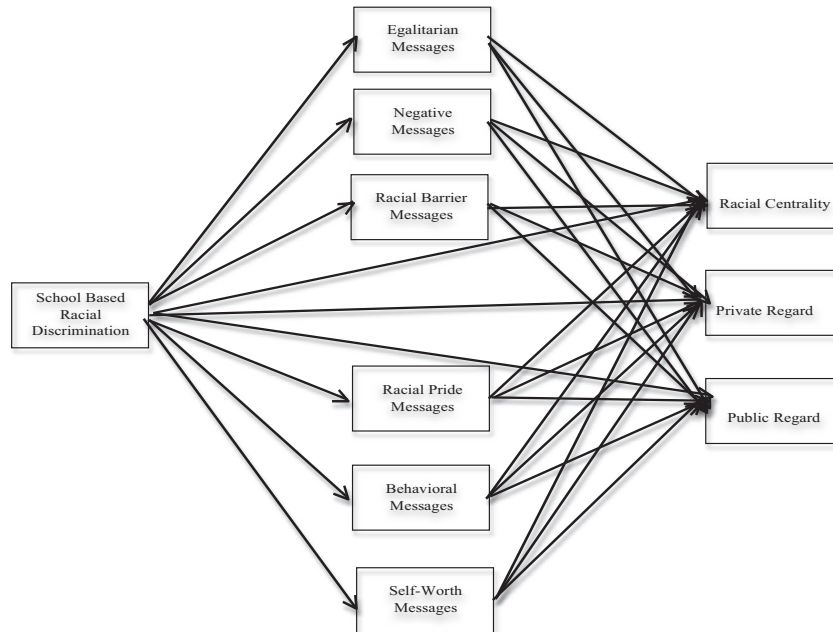


FIGURE 1 Conceptual multiple mediator model.

with racial barriers accounting for 32% of the variance. Behavioral messages also mediated the relation between school-based racial discrimination, accounting for 21% of the variance in racial centrality.

Private regard. There were no significant mediating variables for private regard.

Public regard. Negative and racial barrier messages mediated the relation between school-based racial discrimination and public regard, accounting for 47% and 32% of the variance, respectively.

DISCUSSION

This study was able to test school-based racial discrimination and various parental racial socialization messages on boys' and girls' racial centrality, private regard, and public regard. Specifically, we examined the ways in which adolescents' reports of racial pride, racial barrier, egalitarian, negative, behavioral, and self-worth messages mediated associations between adolescents' reports of school-based racial discrimination and their centrality, private regard, and public regard over time. Due to African American boys' and girls' different racial and gendered experiences, we also explored the ways in which discrimination may elicit different racial socialization messages for boys and girls and how this may impact their racial identity

developmental process. We utilized García Coll et al.'s (1996) integrative model to examine these pathways and found that racial discrimination experiences in the classroom shape racial identity development. Additionally, the formation of racial identity is further complicated by adolescents' experiences related to gender and parental messaging around race. The multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI) provided a complementary framework for describing adolescents' racial identity as developmental outcomes of the significance attributed to and the meaning adolescents make of messages related to the self via discrimination and parental racial socialization perceptions (Sellers et al., 1998). We found that school-based racial discrimination related differently to racial socialization messages and racial identity beliefs for African American boys and girls and specific racial socialization messages served as mediators and differed by gender.

Racial Discrimination, Racial Socialization Messages, and Gender

Boys in our sample reported experiencing more school-based racial discrimination compared to girls. This is consistent with previous research with other African American youth samples (e.g., Chavous et al., 2008; Cogburn et al., 2011) and is likely due to negative stereotypical views of African American boys within educational settings (e.g.,

TABLE 5
Summary of Multiple Mediator Model Analyses in Boys ($n = 639$) and Girls ($n = 711$)

	Independent Variable IV	Mediating Variable M	Dependent Variable DV	Effect of IV on M a	Effect of M on DV b	Direct Effect c'	Indirect Effect		Total Effect (c)
							(a × b)	95% CI	
Boys	SBRD	EM	RC	.02	-.09	.06*	-.00	-.01, .00	.09***
				NM	.22***	.02	.01	-.02, .03	
				RB	.10***	.10	.01	.00, .02	
				RP	.02	.12	.00	-.00, .02	
				BM	.10***	.21*	.02	-.00, .01	
Girls	SBRD	EM	RC	-.06***	.12	.08*	-.01	.01, .04	.12***
				NM	.18***	.01	.01	-.02, .03	
				RB	.15***	.18***	.02	.01, .05	
				RP	.02	.26***	.01	-.00, .02	
				BM	.07***	.12*	.01	.00, .02	
Boys	SBRD	EM	PR	-.08***	.01	-.04	-.01	-.01, .01	-.12***
				NM	.22***	-.33***	-.07	-.10, -.04	
				RB	.11***	.01	.00	-.01, .01	
				RP	.02	.25***	.01	.00, .01	
				BM	.11***	.07	.01	-.00, .02	
Girls	SBRD	EM	PR	-.06***	.25***	-.04	-.02	-.03, -.01	-.11***
				NM	.18***	-.26***	-.05	-.08, -.01	
				RB	.16***	-.07	-.01	-.03, .00	
				RP	.02	.33***	.01	-.01, .02	
				BM	.08***	.04	.00	-.03, .00	
Boys	SBRD	EM	PUR	-.08***	.20***	-.06	-.01	.02, .08	-.03
				NM	.22***	.18*	.04	.01, .08	
				RB	.10***	-.36***	-.03	-.05, -.02	
				RP	.02	.08	.00	-.00, .01	
				BM	.10***	.14	.01	-.00, .03	
Girls	SBRD	EM	PUR	-.07***	.04	-.17***	-.00	-.01, .01	-.13***
				NM	.18***	.48***	.08	.05, .13	
				RB	.15***	-.36***	-.05	-.09, -.03	
				RP	.02	.14	.00	-.00, .01	
				BM	.07***	-.03	-.00	-.01, .01	
		SW		-.08***	-.04	-.00	-.01, .01		

Note. BM = Behavioral messages; EM = Egalitarian messages; NM = Negative messages; PUR = Public regard; RB = Racial barrier messages; RP = Racial pride messages; SBRD = School-based racial discrimination; SW = Self-worth messages.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

Miller & Bennett, 2011; Swanson et al., 2003). It is also important to note that discrimination frequencies were low for both girls and boys.

With regard to parental socialization, boys' and girls' frequencies were consistent with some prior research (e.g., Bowman & Howard, 1985; Neblett et al., 2009; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Both girls and boys reported receiving positive racial socialization messages from parents (i.e., self-worth and racial pride). Girls and boys reported a similar frequency of egalitarian messages from parents, although girls reported slightly more. Consistent with previous findings, parents' messages of racial barriers may be given in reaction to boys' more

frequent racial discrimination experiences (e.g., Stevenson et al., 2002a; Swanson et al., 2003). For instance, boys reported getting more racial barrier messages compared to girls. However, both boys and girls reported low frequencies of behavioral messages and the least frequent type of message received was negative. This finding is consistent with prior work (Neblett et al., 2009; Peck et al., 2014) and highlights that, overall, African American parents aim to provide their developing adolescents with messages that emphasize racial pride, self-worth, connections to the Black community, egalitarian intergroup relationships, and an awareness of discrimination.

Racial Discrimination and Racial Identity

The findings from the study reveal that, for both boys and girls, racial discrimination at school impacted the importance adolescents placed on race (i.e., centrality) over time, supporting our hypotheses. This finding supports the notion that experiencing discrimination can lead adolescents to become more racially cognizant, thereby, deeming race as more salient in their self-definitions (e.g., Sellers et al., 1998). This finding is consistent with previous research that shows links between racial centrality and racial discrimination perceptions (e.g., Operario & Fiske, 2001; Sanchez & Awad, 2016; Sellers & Shelton, 2003); however, this study's finding fills an important gap in the literature as relatively little research has examined how racial discrimination experiences relate to later racial identity beliefs. It is noteworthy that reported school-based racial discrimination was not associated with other racial identity variables (e.g., private regard and public regard) for boys. However, for girls, school-based racial discrimination was associated with lower levels of public regard. In other words, African American girls experiencing school-based racial discrimination reported that society as a whole viewed their racial group less favorably. This finding is somewhat consistent with previous work showing associations between discrimination experiences and lower public regard beliefs among adolescents (e.g., Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2017; Rivas-Drake et al., 2009). However, this study provides evidence that adverse treatment on the basis of race has a more influential impact on our sample of girls' perceptions of how others value their group.

Racial Discrimination, Racial Socialization, and Racial Identity

Racial centrality. In the multiple mediation models, there were direct positive associations between discrimination and centrality for both boys and girls. Additionally, discrimination related to all six messages for boys and girls. This may provide some support for the different types of racial socialization messages and the notion that parents' efforts to racially socialize their adolescents may be more likely to occur in reaction to their adolescents' discrimination experiences (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016).

Behavioral racial socialization messages mediated the positive association between discrimination and centrality for both boys and girls. There has been less conceptual and empirical research on the

functions of behavioral messages, compared to other types of racial socialization messages (Lesane-Brown, 2006). However, this finding underscores its value in helping influence adolescents' racial centrality when they have experienced racial discrimination. It is understandable that parents may respond and provide support for youth after experiencing discrimination by exposing them to Black culture and knowledge and promoting an active involvement in the Black community. These experiences, in turn, help to promote the significance of race and positive attachment to one's racial group (Neblett et al., 2009; Richardson et al., 2015). In addition to behavioral messages, racial barrier messages also mediated the positive association between discrimination and centrality for girls. This finding highlights how gender may influence how parents respond differently to boys' and girls' discrimination experiences (Brown, Tanner-Smith, Lesane-Brown, & Ezell, 2007; Varner & Mandara, 2013). It is interesting that racial barrier messages did not mediate associations with centrality for boys, although they reported more frequent discrimination and racial barrier socialization than girls. This could suggest that African American boys in our sample are not incorporating information about barriers from parents into their centrality beliefs, as are girls. Racial socialization practices that include both cultural socialization as well as teaching about the existence of racism and discrimination in society are both important in African American adolescents' developmental competencies (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Neblett et al., 2009; Richardson et al., 2015; Seaton, 2009; Tang, McLoyd, & Hallman, 2016).

Private regard. Pathways were similar between boys and girls in relation to private regard. For girls and boys, discrimination was not related to private regard. Partially supporting our predictions, racial pride and self-worth messages related to higher private regard and negative messages related to lower private regard. Racial pride and self-worth messages affirm who adolescents are, instill beliefs of equality, and connect them with the Black community and their accomplishments, likely leading to positive feelings about being Black (Miller, 1999; Rivas-Drake et al., 2009). As noted with centrality, negative messages did not mediate the associations between racial discrimination and private regard. However, negative messages did contribute to adolescents feeling less positive about being Black (lower private regard). Adolescents' reports of racial barriers were unrelated to their private regard. This finding is important in

highlighting that parents raising negative issues related to African Americans is not deleterious to youth in and of itself. Instead, findings are consistent with our expectations that parents' negative messages emphasizing African Americans' group deficits are more likely to decrease youths' racial group affect than messages highlighting African Americans' negative experiences as a function of societal bias. Furthermore, findings highlight that knowledge of others' negative views and mistreatment of African Americans does not necessarily influence how adolescents feel about their group. This may be a reason racial barrier messages did not influence adolescents' affective beliefs about being Black in the same ways as other positive messages that were more tied to the self.

Public regard. School-based racial discrimination related to girls' lower public regard beliefs. Also, girls receiving parents' egalitarian and negative messages was associated with higher public regard, while racial barriers were associated with lower public regard. Egalitarian messages may promote equality and interracial interaction in which girls of color perceived society as viewing them favorably. We did find some support for our hypothesized mediational associations for public regard, but only for girls. Negative and racial barrier messages mediated the relation between school-based racial discrimination and public regard for girls. Parents may respond to girls' discrimination experiences with messages of racial barriers and these messages can further communicate society's devaluation of their racial group to girls (lower public regard). Unexpectedly, negative messages, which focus on negative deficits and stereotypes of African Americans, related to girls' higher public regard beliefs. Although there was no significant mediation, negative messages impacted boys' perceptions of society's views of African Americans in the same way as in girls.

In reviewing the types of questions that were asked of adolescents about negative messages (i.e., how often have . . .parent(s) told you learning about Black history is not that important, told you it is best to act like Whites, told you that being Black is nothing to be proud of, told you that White businesses are more reliable than Black businesses, and told you that Blacks are not as smart as other races), we speculate that for African American girls, they may be developing a racelessness persona, disassociating with Black culture, and over time feel that society views them favorably. For instance, Fordham (1988) examined high-

achieving Black students and found that Black girls were more likely to adopt a dominant culture (anti-Black; racelessness) belief system believing it to position them to be academically successful. Fordham also found that Black boys tended to adopt a "duality of socialization" for academic success, fitting within both dominant and Black cultures. However, although our study did not explore academic achievement, we do wonder if African American girls are internalizing what they believe are dominant culture beliefs of behaviors or attitudes as a result of hearing negative race-related messaging. That said, these findings must be taken with caution because of the dearth of research exploring the way in which negative racial socialization messages impact the racial identity formation of African American early adolescent boys and girls. Further research is also necessary to explore the mental health outcomes of adolescents who perceive negative race-related messages over time.

School Context

Other interesting findings were associated with adolescents' racial identity beliefs and the racial and ethnic composition of the school districts. For instance, Black girls attending racially and ethnically diverse schools and Black boys and girls in a predominantly White school district reported lower racial centrality than those in a predominantly Black school district. Black girls attending a predominantly White school district reported lower private regard beliefs. Lastly, Black girls in predominantly White and racially and ethnically diverse schools reported higher levels of public regard than in Black schools. These findings highlight the complex relationship of racial and ethnic composition of the school district on adolescents' identity (e.g., Brown et al., 2007). Previous literature notes the impact of the racial composition of the school setting on the academic and psychological outcomes of African American adolescents (e.g., Frost, 2007; Goosby & Walsemann, 2012; Hanushek et al., 2009). However, what has not been well established in the literature is the role of school racial composition on racial identity formation over time. García Coll et al. (1996) indicate that the social position of adolescents, experiences with racism/discrimination, and the school setting matter in promoting healthy development. Our findings contribute to this work and warrant further research into the role of school racial composition on adolescent's identity development. Future research would also benefit from examining

classroom level (e.g., teacher ethnicity) data and the impact of school climate on girls of color's racial identity development.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study examined school-based racial discrimination and multiple parental racial socialization messages as pathways by which adolescents' develop racial identity beliefs. Our focus on multiple aspects of racial socialization, including positive and negative messages, and attention to the ways gender may influence adolescents' race-related experiences and subsequent racial identities are major strengths of our study. However, we note limitations. First, the internal reliability estimate for the racial centrality subscale was low ($\alpha .55$) and this decreases the power of the analyses and increases the chance of underestimating the true relationships between the variables of interest in this study (Ponterotto & Ruckdeschel, 2007). However, the fact that we found significant mediation for centrality, may suggest that these are robust findings, despite the low reliability. Additionally, in Scottham et al.'s (2008) development of the MIBI-teen scale, despite the low reliabilities the items were internally consistent with items from the MIBI-R scale. Future research should reevaluate the internal reliability of this scale. Another limitation was that race-related messages were based on adolescents' self-report ratings. Perhaps, the inclusion of parents' report of racial socialization messages would provide more knowledge in the congruence of messages. Also, this area of research could be strengthened by the inclusion of qualitative techniques that probe adolescents about the messages they received about race from their parents. This information could provide some explanation for some of the gender differences found in our study. Furthermore, this could provide additional insights into the context of messages received. For instance, we could better understand what types of racial discrimination experiences prompt particular messages from parents. Lastly, the findings illustrate the complex mediational role of racial socialization messages over time for African American adolescent boys and girls. However, we do note that these findings be interpreted with caution and note the need for replication.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the literature on the importance of racial socialization messages in racial

identity formation for African American adolescents. Additionally, we explored ways the identity formation process varies for boys and girls. Our study found that boys and girls perceive specific race-related messages from parents in response to school-based racial discrimination. Some important study outcomes were that behavioral messages mediated the positive association between discrimination and centrality among boys. For girls, behavioral and racial barrier messages served as mediators for school-based racial discrimination and racial centrality. Also, for African American girls, negative messages served as mediators for public regard. Messages about active involvement and knowledge of the Black community, awareness of racial bias, and negative stereotypes of African Americans indicate the positive and negative implications of messaging for African American adolescent boys and girls over time. These findings underscore the diversity in parental messages and the importance of racial experiences in home and school contexts that shape adolescents' development. Adolescence is a crucial developmental period and, for African American youth, the positive and negative messages about the self they receive matters. In moving forward, research should continue to explore the racial, cultural, and familial influences that help African American adolescents cope with racial discrimination and develop connected, positive, and affirmed identities.

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