


RESEARCH ARTICLE

They raised me to resist: Examining the sociopolitical pathways between parental racial socialization and Black youth's racial justice action

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Abstract

In a sample of 500 self-identified Black adolescents from across the United States, this study investigated the pathways between youth's experiences of parental racial socialization (RS) and their sociopolitical development. Findings from structural equation modelling reveal that RS messages and actions were positively associated with youth's awareness of racial inequality (critical reflection) and confidence and motivation in addressing racism (critical agency). Further, there were direct and indirect associations between RS and multiple forms of racial justice actions (interpersonal, political/communal, and online). Racial barriers messages were directly positively associated with political/communal and indirectly positively associated with interpersonal and online action, while cultural socialization actions were directly positively associated with all three forms of action. These findings support theoretical contentions that RS messages and actions may be powerful tools for cultivating Black youth's understanding and capacity to transform racially unjust systems. Further, parents' behaviours to racially socialize their children may be more impactful than their verbal messages in cultivating multiple forms of racial justice action. Finally, recommendations for future research and practice related to Black youth's consciousness and activism are presented. Please refer to the Supplementary Material section to find this article's [Community and Social Impact Statement](#).

KEYWORDS

Black youth, critical consciousness, racial socialization, social justice, sociopolitical development

1 | INTRODUCTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic strips the lives of millions of people across the world, Black people in the United States are reminded of an all too true reality: that racial systems within this country have consistently threatened their quality of and right to life for generations. During a global pandemic and racial uprising, Black people have simultaneously navigated the fears of death due to COVID-19, police violence, and white terrorism (Liebman, Rhiney, & Wallace, 2020). Indeed, generations of Black people have had to contend with racist policies and social systems (e.g., chattel slavery and Jim Crow laws) that have denied the humanity of and systematically disenfranchised people of African ancestry from American political and social life. Despite changes in policies (e.g., affirmative action), symbols (e.g., state flags), and attitudes (e.g., a president can be Black) over the past century with respect to race (B. Stevenson & Wolfers, 2012), racial oppression persists (Comas-Díaz, Hall, & Neville, 2019). To survive and support the healthy development of their children in a racially oppressive society, Black families have used cultural practices in addition to general parenting strategies (Ward, 2000). One such practice is racial socialization (RS), or the use of protective and affirmational messages and behaviours to support children's ability to navigate a challenging racial terrain (Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007; Lesane-Brown, 2006; H. C. Stevenson, 1995).

Scholars have identified the utility of RS in supporting Black youth in emotionally *coping* with racially stressful experiences (Anderson, Jones, Anyiwo, McKenny, & Gaylord-Harden, 2019); however, less is known about how RS can support youth's ability to *challenge* racism. Black Americans have maintained a legacy of cultural empowerment and resistance to racism (e.g., the Black Arts movement, Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter). Black youth have been instrumental in these movements through massive protests, participation in youth-led organizations, and, more recently, the use of digital technologies (e.g., hashtag activism; Anyiwo, Palmer, Garrett, Starck, & Hope, 2020; Hope, Keels, & Durkee, 2016). Given that scholars have identified activism as a mechanism to cope with and heal from racism (Ginwright, 2010; Hope & Spencer, 2017), it is plausible that the same RS messages that support youth's psychological wellbeing as they navigate racism also work to strengthen their ability to understand and resist racism. However, limited research has assessed associations between RS and youth sociopolitical outcomes (Anyiwo, Bañales, Rowley, Watkins, & Richards-Schuster, 2018). Drawing on the Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST; Anderson & Stevenson, 2019) and a sociocultural framework for sociopolitical development (Anyiwo et al., 2018), this study investigates the sociopolitical pathways between RS and Black youth's racial justice action.

1.1 | Racial socialization

RS, or "The Talk," includes messages and behaviours that cultivate racial identity and prepare youth for the racial landscape (Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Lesane-Brown, 2006; H. C. Stevenson, 1995). RS typically encompasses four major themes: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism (Hughes et al., 2006). Two of these themes—racial barriers (also called preparation for bias) and cultural socialization—are used most frequently among Black families (Hughes et al., 2006). Racial barriers socialization informs children about racism and strategies to respond (Bowman & Howard, 1985; H. C. Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Cultural socialization includes teaching children about their racial and cultural history, ancestry, and heritage (Hughes et al., 2006). Cultural and racial barriers socialization are positively associated with desirable

psychosocial outcomes (e.g., affirmed racial identity) and appear to mitigate adverse outcomes (e.g., depressive and anxiety symptoms; see Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012).

RS occurs most intensely during early to mid-adolescence as youth are beginning to form their sense of racialized self (H. C. Stevenson et al., 2002). Prior research has established that cultural socialization provides a buffer to the dehumanization faced by Black youth while racial barriers messages teach them what to expect and how to respond appropriately (Lesane-Brown, 2006). Although RS is posited to be an early developmental catalyst to Black youth's racial cognition and action brought about by parent-child processes (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019), few studies indicate how this dyadic process predicts youth's individual behaviours to execute those skills. Therefore, establishing a connection between racial messages, societal, and political thought, and actions to contest racism are critical for better understanding fundamental mechanisms to Black youth's sociopolitical development and ultimately the improvement of their psychological wellness (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016; R. J. Watts & Guessous, 2006).

1.2 | Sociopolitical development

We ground our analysis of youth action in sociopolitical development theory (SPD)—the process of developing the knowledge, skills, and emotional capacity to analyse and respond to sociopolitical systems (R. J. Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999; R. J. Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). Drawing on Black racial justice movements, SPD theory identifies processes that facilitate the ability of marginalized people to liberate themselves from multifaceted systems of oppression (Hope et al., 2022; R. J. Watts et al., 1999, 2003). Similar to other social justice theories (e.g., SIMCA; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008), SPD highlights the roles of interpersonal and structural beliefs in influencing one's desire and ability to engage in social change and suggests that individual and collective action is a response to perceived injustice, and is a result of a sense of efficacy and identity.

As SPD advances, people are thought to develop the competencies associated with critical consciousness—the capacity to critically reflect on the root of social inequities and engage in informed resistance to transform oppression (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Freire, 1970; R. J. Watts et al., 1999; R. J. Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). *Critical reflection* (also called critical analysis) is the ability to identify inequality and challenge social structures that create marginality (Diemer et al., 2016; R. J. Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). *Critical agency* is a form of individual and group efficacy that includes the motivation to act and belief that one and their community can make change (Bagci & Canpolat, 2020; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016; Van Zomeren et al., 2008; R. J. Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Finally, *critical sociopolitical action* includes individual or collective behaviours that challenge unjust systems (R. J. Watts et al., 2011; R. J. Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Critical reflection is often described as a prerequisite to action, such that individuals must be able to recognize inequality to engage in behaviours that dismantle and transform it (Diemer et al., 2016; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Furthermore, agency is often described as an intermediate factor necessary to translate critical reflection into action (Bagci & Canpolat, 2020; R. J. Watts & Guessous, 2006).

The capacity to understand and challenge racism is core to Black youth's SPD (Anyiwo et al., 2018; R. J. Watts et al., 1999, 2003). Systemic racism and perceptions of racial inequality and discrimination can have damaging developmental (e.g., self-esteem; Nelson, Syed, Tran, Hu, & Lee, 2018), psychological (e.g., depression; English et al., 2020), and social (e.g., delinquency; Burt, Simons, & Gibbons, 2012) consequences (Bagci & Canpolat, 2020; Hope, Hoggard, & Thomas, 2015). However, actions to promote racial justice may support youth in healing from racism (Ginwright, 2010; Ortega-Williams, 2021). In their theoretical model, Anyiwo et al. (2018) sought to disentangle the complex relations between racial identity, RS, and experiences of racial discrimination to inform how each influences the nature of Black adolescents' critical reflection and action. This paper focuses on examining the role of RS in Black youth's SPD. We focus on identifying the pathways between youth's experiences of RS and sociopolitical action to challenge racism, which can be considered racial justice action.

1.3 | RS informing sociopolitical development

Parents play a significant role in promoting youth sociopolitical beliefs and behaviours through discussions about policies, politics, and the US political structure (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003; Diemer, 2012). Black parents navigate the additional complexity of preparing their children for a racially unjust and biased sociopolitical system. Thus, Black parenting is described as a “political act,” and RS as a tool for which caregivers can provide “intergenerational transmission of race-related resistance strategies” (Ward, 2000, p. 51). The process of RS may operate as a form of political socialization that can stimulate or impede youth's SPD around issues of race (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Bañales, Hope, Rowley, & Cryer-Coupet, 2021; Flanagan, 2013; Ward, 2000).

In their integrative model, Anyiwo et al. (2018) contend that Black youth's experiences of cultural and racial barriers socialization can enhance their awareness of the structural issues that shape racial inequality (i.e., critical reflection), motivating racial justice action. Early qualitative work in education found that Black youth identified RS from their parents as influential in their awareness of racism and in their resistance strategies (O'Connor, 1997; Sanders, 1997). Recent research has found parental RS messages to be positively associated with Black youth's critical reflection and critical agency (Bañales et al., 2020; Bañales et al., 2021). However, more research is necessary to empirically explore how parental RS may not only be associated with youth's awareness and confidence but also their participation in racial justice behaviours.

RS is also likely to support Black youth's critical agency and, subsequently, their action. RECAST (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019) provides a theoretical foundation for the relations between parental and adolescent behavioural responses to racially discriminatory stressors, particularly concerning adolescents' efficacious usage of coping strategies. Scholars posit that communication and emotional support garnered from RS yields greater *racial coping self-efficacy*, the belief that they can successfully challenge a stressful racial encounter (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). We contend that critical agency can operate as a form of racial coping self-efficacy, particularly for Black youth navigating structural racism. Racial coping self-efficacy allows Black youth to perceive more coping tools to employ emotionally and behaviourally when faced with a racially discriminatory event (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Engaging in behaviours to challenge racism can serve as active coping that Black youth employ to manage the stress produced by structural racism (Hope & Spencer, 2017; Hope, Smith, Cryer-Coupet, & Briggs, 2020). Thus, adolescents' development of racial coping self-efficacy may be crucial for challenging racism.

1.4 | Present study

This study examines the pathways between RS and racial justice action. Previous work has identified that racially marginalized youth often engage in three forms of sociopolitical action: (1) individual/interpersonal actions that include individual actions to challenge people and systems that perpetuate injustices (2) collective actions that involve organizing with others to advocate for social change, and (3) digital media actions, such as actions online that build virtual communities and shape sociopolitical narratives (Anyiwo et al., 2020). Each of these forms of action uniquely shapes the spectrum of Black youth's resistance. Thus, we examine the pathways between RS and each form of racial justice action (see Figure 1).

First, we examine direct associations between Black youth's experiences of RS and indicators of their SPD (e.g., critical reflection, critical agency, and racial justice action). Consistent with Anyiwo et al.' (2018) model, we anticipate that racial barriers socialization and cultural socialization actions will positively relate to critical reflection and racial justice action. Consistent with RECAST (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019), we anticipate that RS will positively relate to critical agency. Given that racial barriers socialization alert youth to the presence of racial inequity (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006; H. C. Stevenson et al., 2002), youth who receive such messages may be more motivated to challenge and contest racism, thus reporting a higher critical agency. Concerning cultural socialization actions, previous work has identified how parental modelling of political behaviour can facilitate youth

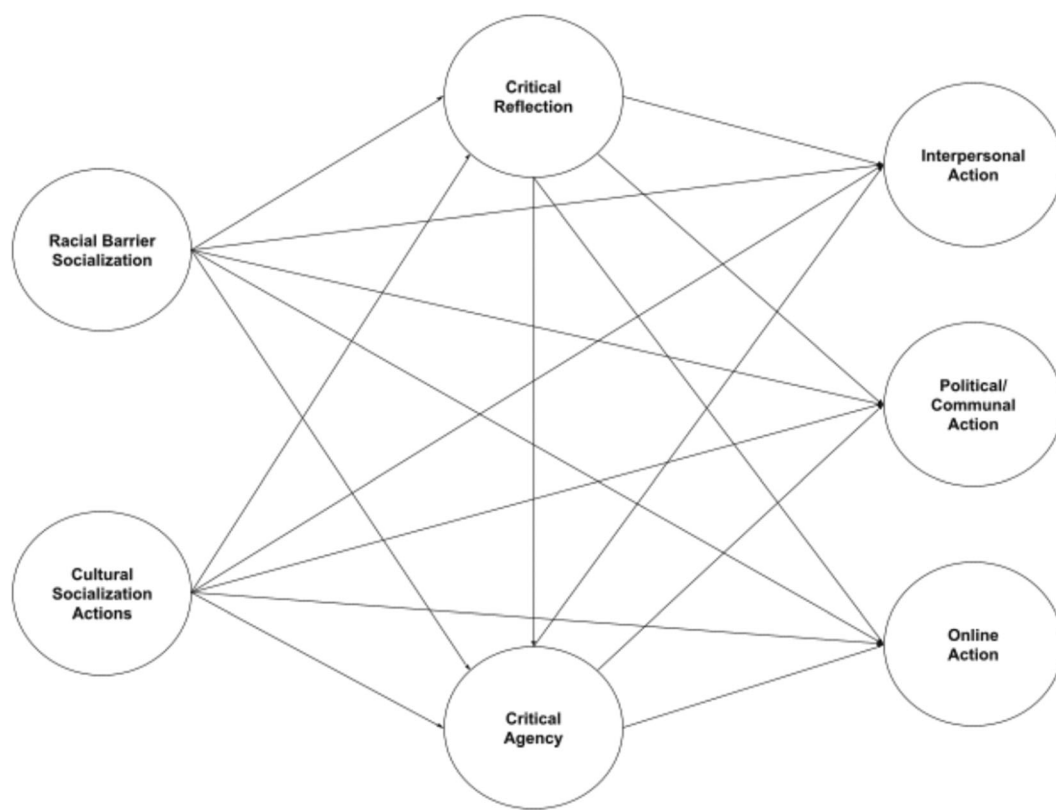


FIGURE 1 Hypothesized model

agency (O'Connor, 1997; Watson, 2020; J. M. Watts, 2018). Accordingly, we hypothesize that cultural socialization actions will be positively associated with youth's critical agency.

Hypothesis 1. *RS will be directly positively associated with indicators of Black youth's SPD.*

Our second aim is to identify the pathways between RS and racial justice action. Models of SPD often identify critical reflection and critical agency as precursors to Black youth's engagement in sociopolitical action (R. J. Watts & Guessous, 2006). Accordingly, we anticipate that critical reflection and agency will influence the associations between RS and racial justice action.

Hypothesis 2. *Critical reflection and critical agency will partially mediate the associations between RS and racial justice action.*

2 | METHODS

Our participants were assessed from a sample of 500 Black youth (ages 13–17; $M = 14.97$, $SD = 1.46$) recruited from across the United States. About half of our participants reported living in the Southern region (52%) of the United States. Other participants lived in the Midwest (15.4%), Northeast (14.2%), and the West (7.2%) or did not report their region (11.2%). A majority of youth identified as African American (88%). The remainder of participants identified as Caribbean American (3.4%), Afro-Latina (2.8%), African (2.2%), Multicultural (2.8%), and Other (0.8%).

Most youth in our study identified as female (61.6%), followed by male (37.2%), and transgender, nonbinary, or other (0.8%). Due to the age and socioeconomic dependency of our participants, we used the average of youth's reports of their primary and secondary guardians' education to indicate socioeconomic status (Diemer, Voight, Marchand, & Bañales, 2019). Less than a quarter (21.2%) of youth reported that their primary guardian did not have a high school diploma, the remainder reported that their primary guardian received a high school diploma (20.2%), attended some college (18.4%), received a college degree (18.4%), attended some graduate school, or attained a post-secondary degree (15.6%), and 6.2% of participants were unsure. Of the 500 participants, 23% did not respond to the level of education for their secondary guardian. For those who did, the response options included that their secondary guardian did not have a high school diploma (16.1%), received a high school diploma (27.0%), attended some college (17.4%), received a college degree (16.1%), attended some graduate school, or attained a post secondary degree (15.9%), and 7.5% were unsure.

2.1 | Procedure

Participants were recruited through a Qualtrics Survey Panel. Parents who indicated having an eligible child in previous screening applications via Qualtrics were invited to have their child participate in the study. Youth who received parental consent and who provided assent were allowed to participate. Participants completed a 30-min survey assessing their experiences of RS and their sociopolitical racial beliefs, motivations, and actions.

2.2 | Measures

2.2.1 | Adolescent-reported parental RS

Racial barriers socialization and cultural socialization actions were measured using two subscales from the Racial Socialization Questionnaire-Teen (RSQ-T; Lesane-Brown, Scottham, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2006). The RSQ-T assesses adolescents on a 3-point Likert-type scale (Never-More than Twice) regarding the frequency of RS messages and behaviours their parents provided in the last year. The racial barriers subscale ($\alpha = .74$) has four items that assess the messages that alert Black youth about the racial discrimination and inequality that they may encounter (e.g., [Parent (s)] "Told you that some people try to keep Black people from being successful."). We removed one item from the racial barriers' subscale "Told you that some people may dislike you because of the color of your skin" because, in the preliminary analysis, it cross-loaded onto another subscale.

Cultural socialization actions were measured using the Behaviours subscale ($\alpha = .85$), which includes five items that measure the activities that Black parents engage in to expose their children to Black culture, such as "Gone with you to Black cultural events (i.e., plays, movies, concerts, museums)." Although commonly assessed through messages, scholars contend that behaviours such as celebrating cultural holidays, reading books, or visiting cultural museums or events—are inherent in the process of cultural socialization (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Thus, we focus our analysis of cultural socialization on parents' behavioural actions to foster youth's cultural awareness and pride. In addition, we added an item from the racial pride subscale, "Been involved in activities that focused on things important to Black people," because it theoretically aligned with our conceptualization of cultural socialization actions.

2.2.2 | Critical reflection

We measured youth's critical reflection using three items from the Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality subscale in the Critical Consciousness Scale (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). The Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality

subscale assesses youth's perceptions of inequality based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status on a 6-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). In this study, we specifically used the three items that assess perceptions of racial inequality (e.g., "Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs"). This subscale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$), particularly for a three-item scale.

2.2.3 | Critical agency

We used the Critical Agency subscale from the Measure of Adolescent Critical Consciousness (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016). The Critical Agency subscale ($\alpha = .89$) includes seven items on a 4-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) that assess youth's beliefs that they can make changes in their community and their motivations and agency to combat racism (e.g., "I am motivated to try to end racism and discrimination").

2.2.4 | Racial justice action

We measured youth's interpersonal and political/communal action using the Anti-Racist Social Action Scale (ARSAS) (Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019). The ARSAS consists of 22 items developed emically with youth to assess youth's strategies to resist racism. The measure consists of three subscales: Interpersonal Action, Political Action, and Communal Action. Interpersonal Action ($\alpha = .88$) consists of five items that assess youth's actions to challenge friends, family members, and strangers who make racist remarks. Political Change Action consists of seven items that assess youth protest actions and engagement with political institutions (e.g., elected officials and media outlets). Communal Action consists of four items that assess collective action in youth's school and community. Our sample's composite scores for Political Change Action and Communal Action were highly correlated ($r = .94$). Therefore, we combined these items to create a latent construct that assesses youth's Political/Communal Action ($\alpha = .96$). In the original ARSAS, youth indicated *yes* or *no* to whether they participated in behaviours in the last year. We modified this response scaling to use a 5-point Likert Type scale (Never-Very Frequently) to assess the extent to which youth engaged in action.

Youth's online action was assessed using eight items. We use six items adapted from Kim, Russo, and Amnā's (2017) study on youth online political action. Participants were prompted to think about their online behaviours related to race and ethnicity and indicate, on a 5-point Likert type scale, how frequently (Never-Very Frequently) they engage in actions such as "Connected to a group on social media that is concerned about societal issues." In addition, we added two items: "Used hashtags on social media to raise awareness about an issue (e.g., #blacklivesmatter)" and "Shared art online that you created to address social issues (e.g., music, graphics)" to capture strategies used in online racial justice movements. These items showed evidence of good internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$).

2.3 | Data analysis strategy

We conducted Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analyses in MPlus Version 8. SEM allowed us to account for measurement error while simultaneously examining the direct and indirect associations between RS and youth's SPD (Kline, 2015). First, we conducted a measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis) to determine which indicators accurately load onto latent constructs. We used a weighted least square estimator (WLSMV) designed for categorical items (e.g., ordinal scales like the RSQ and Critical Agency scales that have few categories) (Kline, 2015). The quality of the model's fit was assessed using common fit indices (e.g., CFI, TLI, SRMR, and

RMSEA) considering thresholds (e.g., above 0.95 for CFI and TLI, below 0.06 for SRMR, and below 0.05 for RMSEA). Second, we conducted a structural model to assess theorized relations among RS and Black youth's SPD.

Our dataset had minimal missing data on key variables (0–2%). We address missing data using Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) via the default setting in MPlus. FIML is a rigorous model-based missing data strategy that maximizes present data (Schlomer, Bauman, & Card, 2010). After accounting for missing data, our final SEM analytical sample included 475 Black youth.

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Preliminary analysis

See Table 1 for descriptive statistics on key study variables and Table 2 for a summary of our correlation analysis between key study variables.

We included gender, guardian education, and the demographics of participants' neighbourhoods as control variables in our study, guided by previous theory and empirical evidence (Neblett et al., 2012; R. J. Watts et al., 2011). There are no gender differences across any key variables. However, Black youth's guardian's education was positively associated with youth's reports of parental cultural socialization action and youth's critical agency and negatively related to youth's online action. Furthermore, Black youth in neighbourhoods with more Black residents reported higher critical agency, interpersonal action, political/communal action, and online action.

3.2 | Measurement model

Preliminary analyses reveal high correlations across our three outcome variables (interpersonal, political/communal, and online action). Thus, we modelled the outcomes as one aggregate action factor in one measurement model (chi-square = 2,543.76 RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.06, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95) and as three separate factors in another. Our analysis revealed that the three-factor model had the best fit and therefore, we present those results here.

The confirmatory factor analysis was a good fit (chi-square = 1,635.07, RMSEA = 0.04, SRMR = 0.05, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.98). Each indicator of RS and SPD loaded significantly and highly ($\beta = .73$ –.94) onto their

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics for key study variables

Measure	Mean	SD	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis	Alpha	IIC	% Missing
Racial barriers socialization (3 items)	2.16	0.64	1–3	–0.34	–0.92	0.74	0.49	1%
Cultural socialization actions (6 items)	2.00	0.60	1–3	–0.03	–1.00	0.85	0.50	1%
Critical reflection (3 items)	3.68	1.50	1–6	–0.26	–0.83	0.85	0.65	2%
Critical agency (7 items)	3.12	0.67	1–4	–0.91	1.21	0.89	0.53	2%
Interpersonal action (5 items)	2.41	1.05	1–5	0.47	–0.52	0.88	0.60	2%
Political/communal actions (11 items)	2.07	1.11	1–5	0.83	–0.45	0.96	0.70	2%
Online action (8 items)	2.07	1.09	1–5	0.84	–0.29	0.94	0.67	2%

Abbreviation: IIC, inter-item correlations.

TABLE 2 Correlations across key study variables

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Racial barriers socialization										
2. Cultural socialization actions	0.57**	–								
3. Critical reflection	0.25**	0.15**	–							
4. Critical agency	0.24**	0.34**	0.19**	–						
5. Interpersonal action	0.14**	0.30**	0.17**	0.14**	–					
6. Political/communal action	0.14**	0.32**	0.14**	0.12*	0.70**	–				
7. Online action	0.16**	0.29**	0.17**	0.15**	0.61**	0.78**	–			
8. Guardian education	0.03	0.15**	0.04	0.16*	–0.04	–0.04	–0.13**	–		
9. Neighbourhood Black population	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.10*	0.10*	0.20**	0.20**	–0.05	–	
10. Gender	0.09	0.04	–0.07	–0.01	–0.03	–0.03	–0.06	–0.04	–0.02	–

Note: Gender was coded as 1 for female and 0 for male. Bolded correlations are significant.

* $p \leq .05$,

** $p \leq .01$.

respective latent variable. The measurement model analysis suggested strong associations between ($\beta = .71$) the cultural socialization actions and racial barriers socialization predictor variables (please see leftmost variables in Figure 1). In subsequent structural models, we discovered evidence of multicollinearity (e.g., “flipping signs” or positive relationships in models that separate out these collinear predictors that “flip” to negative relationships in models that include these two collinear predictors, inflated standard error estimates) between cultural socialization actions and racial barriers socialization, which can increase the likelihood of a type two error in SEM models (Grewal, Cote, & Baumgartner, 2004). In this case, these problems led to a model that provided unstable and untrustworthy estimates.

Thus, we proceeded in our analysis with our larger structural model broken down into two submodels that removed one of the collinear predictor latent variables: model one included racial barriers and excluded cultural socialization actions, and model two included cultural socialization actions and excluded racial barriers. This submodel approach has been used in previous work to address latent variable multicollinearity (Diemer, 2007). The submodels examined relations among constructs depicted in our hypothesized model in Figure 1.

3.3 | Structural submodel 1: Racial barriers

The structural model assessing the associations between racial barriers socialization and Black youth's SPD had a good fit (chi-square = 1,265.56, RMSEA = 0.04, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98, and SRMR = 0.05) (see Figure 2 for full model). Critical reflection was positively associated with critical agency, interpersonal action, political/communal action and online action. Critical agency was positively associated with online action but not any other form of action. The default Sobel method was used to probe mediation. There was a significant yet modest, indirect effect of critical reflection on online action through critical agency ($\beta = .02$, $p = .032$).

In line with our first hypothesis, racial barriers messages were directly positively associated with youth's critical reflection, critical agency, and political/communal action. Critical reflection partially mediated the

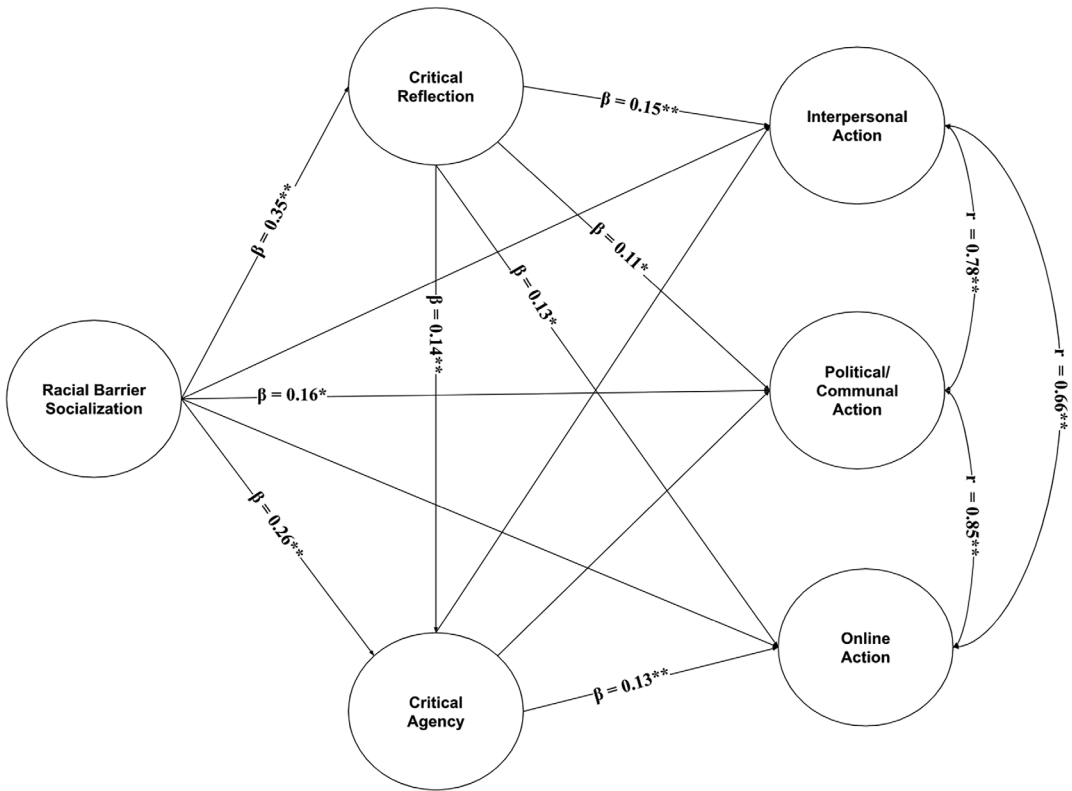


FIGURE 2 Racial barriers submodel. Model includes standardized coefficients on significant associations. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

associations between racial barriers and critical agency ($\beta = .05, p = .007$). Inconsistent with our first hypothesis, racial barriers were not directly associated with interpersonal or online action. However, in line with our second hypothesis, our analysis found that critical reflection mediated the associations between racial barriers and interpersonal action ($\beta = .05, p = .009$) and racial barriers and online action ($\beta = .05, p = .027$). Critical agency mediated the associations between racial barriers and online action ($\beta = .04, p = .018$). Furthermore, there was a significant pathway from racial barriers to critical reflection to critical agency to online action ($\beta = .01, p = .044$).

3.4 | Structural submodel 2: Cultural socialization

The structural model assessing the associations between cultural socialization actions and Black youth's SPD had a good fit (chi-square = 1,606.52, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.98, and SRMR = 0.05) (see Figure 3 for full model). Critical reflection was positively associated with critical agency, interpersonal action, political/communal action, and online action. Critical agency was not associated with any form of action.

In line with our first hypothesis, cultural socialization actions were positively associated with youth's critical reflection, critical agency, interpersonal action, political/communal action, and online action. In line with our second hypothesis, critical reflection partially mediated the associations between cultural socialization actions and youth's critical

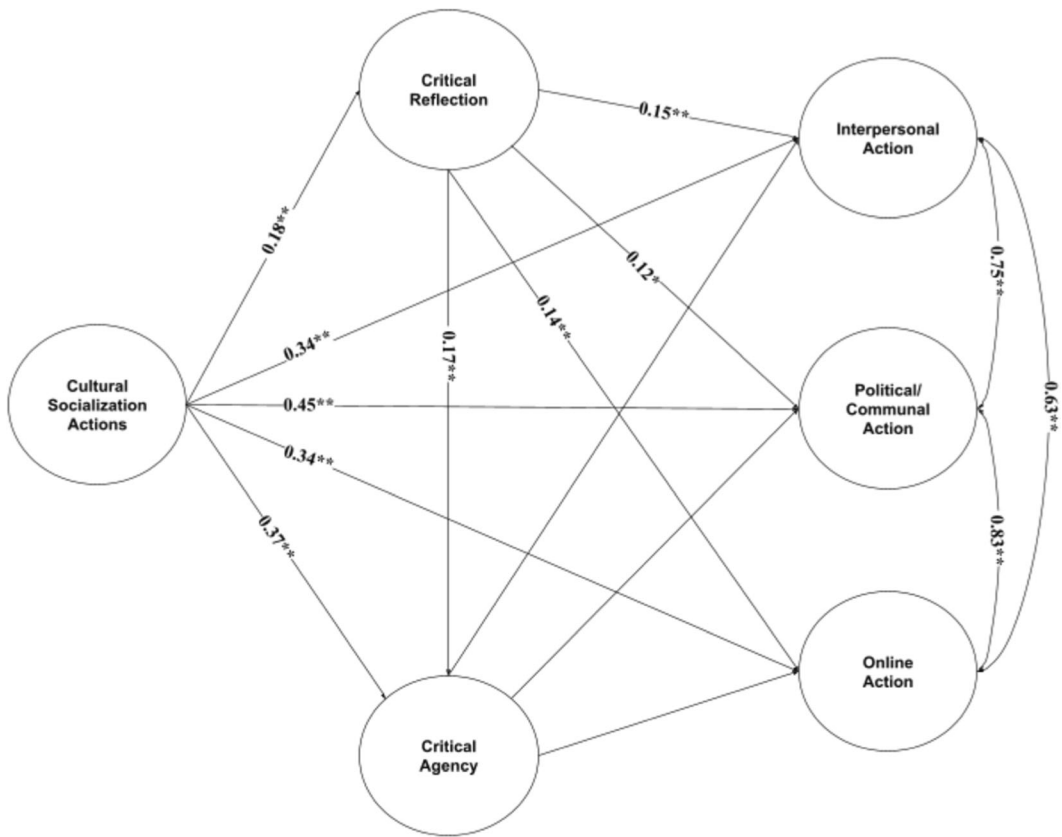


FIGURE 3 Cultural socialization actions submodel. Model includes standardized coefficients on significant associations. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

agency ($\beta = .03$, $p = .009$), interpersonal action ($\beta = .03$, $p = .016$), political/communal action ($\beta = .02$, $p = .035$), and online action ($\beta = .02$, $p = .024$).

4 | DISCUSSION

Black youth have been at the forefront of social justice movements that aim to eradicate racist policies and systems. A large body of research has highlighted RS as a protective and promotive factor for Black youth's healthy psychological development in racially unjust societies. However, theoretical and empirical research is only beginning to examine how sociocultural factors, like RS, can support youth's ability to understand, challenge, and transform racially unjust systems. The present study builds on this emerging body of research by integrating and empirically testing SPD (Anyiwo et al., 2018; R. J. Watts & Guessous, 2006) and RS (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019) theories to examine the pathways between Black youth's experiences of parental RS and their actions to contest racism. Our first hypothesis was that there would be positive direct associations between Black youth's experiences of RS and their SPD. Our second hypothesis was that critical reflection and critical agency would partially mediate the association between RS and racial justice action.

Our findings supported our hypotheses concerning the direct associations between RS and youth's critical reflection and critical agency. Youth who received more messages preparing them for racial discrimination and

experienced more behaviours from their parents to promote their cultural enrichment had a higher awareness of racial inequality (i.e., critical reflection) and higher motivation and confidence to address racism (i.e., critical agency). The findings of our study provide evidence to theoretical contentions that racial barriers messages may cultivate youth's ability to understand racial discrimination not only as an individual slight but as reflective of a broader system of racial inequality (Anyiwo et al., 2018). Cultural socialization actions expose youth to culturally enriching content, experiences, or spaces (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Such actions may cultivate an understanding of the uniqueness of Black cultural expressions and arm youth with knowledge about the legacy of Black socio-political resistance (Anyiwo et al., 2018; R. J. Watts et al., 2003).

In line with RECAST theory (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019), our hypotheses regarding RS and critical agency were also supported. Racial barriers messages and cultural socialization actions were positively associated with youth motivation and confidence in addressing racism, described in SPD as critical agency and in RECAST as racial efficacy. The recognition that youth and their community face racial barriers may motivate them to contest such barriers. Further, youth may draw upon the cultural legacy of Black resistance to build their confidence in their capacity to challenge racism (Neville & Cross, 2017).

Our findings partially supported our hypothesis concerning the direct associations between RS and youth's racial justice action. Racial barriers socialization was only directly associated with Black youth's political/communal action. However, consistent with our second hypothesis, critical reflection and critical agency mediated the associations between racial barriers socialization and other forms of racial justice action. Youth who received more racial barriers messages had higher awareness of racial inequality, higher critical agency and, thus, engaged in more online action (e.g., racial justice hashtagging, sharing information about racial injustice). Similarly, racial barriers messages were associated with youth's interpersonal action through their critical reflection of racial inequality. Youth who received more racial barriers messages had a heightened awareness of racial inequality and thus engaged in more actions to challenge friends, adults, and strangers who made racist remarks.

The individual and collective dynamics of different types of youth action may give insight into our findings. Political/communal actions often reflect actions that take place in community with peers or others who have similar investments in racial justice work. Youth may not necessarily have to have a comprehensive understanding of racial inequality or agency to *begin* their engagement in political/communal action (Diemer et al., 2021; Neville & Cross, 2017). Racial barriers messages may function as an entree to youth' interest in social justice issues, thus prompting them to explore and learn more through engagement in communal forms of action. Racial barriers messages alone may not directly relate to interpersonal and online action as these forms of actions may require competencies derived through reflection and agency (Watts & Guessous, 2006). Both these interpersonal and online actions position youth to be vulnerable by independently asserting themselves. For interpersonal action, youth must identify comments as racist or offensive to challenge others who make racist remarks. Similarly, youth must be able to identify racial inequity to engage in critical dialogue online. Thus, the enhanced critical reflection that youth may gain from racial barriers messages may be essential in supporting their capacity for interpersonal and online action. Online racial justice action can also position youth as thought leaders who can drive dialogue about racial inequality (Cohen, Kahne, Bowyer, Middaugh, & Rogowski, 2012). Thus, the confidence and motivation that youth may gain from racial barriers messages may be instrumental in expressing views and boldly challenging others online.

Cultural socialization action was positively associated with all three forms of racial justice action. The associations between cultural socialization actions and racial justice actions partially occurred through critical reflection. Cultural socialization is often regarded as the RS tenet that is more behavioural (e.g., a family visiting an African American museum together; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Scholars have highlighted parental modelling of political action and activism as significant in youth's actions (Watson, 2020; J. M. Watts, 2018). The findings underscore the significance and unique contribution of cultural behaviours and modelling in shaping socio-political ideologies and behaviours for youth and support theoretical contentions that sociocultural processes like RS are likely integral to the SPD of Black youth (Anyiwo et al., 2018; R. J. Watts & Guessous, 2006).

4.1 | Implications

Given the barriers that racially marginalized youth experience, it is critical to understand how they develop the capacity to transform racially unjust systems. Our study reinforces previous work (Aldana et al., 2019; Anyiwo et al., 2020; Hope et al., 2016) that has highlighted that Black youth are engaged in a myriad of strategies to resist racism and contributes to the literature by identifying the role of parental cultural practices in shaping youth's multifaceted racial justice practices. Although traditionally examined as a mechanism to support youth's ability to cope emotionally with racism, our findings suggest that RS may be a powerful tool for cultivating their understanding and capacity to resist and transform racially unjust systems.

This investigation begs an essential question within the RS literature: does “The Talk” translate to “The Walk” in Black families? Anderson and Stevenson (2019) specified the importance of disaggregating communication strategies from parents from actions taken by adolescents. Our findings reinforce theoretical contentions that RS can be a tool for parents to strengthen Black youth's ability to identify, analyse, and contend with racism (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Anyiwo et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2016; Ward, 2000). Our study integrates theories in SPD and RS by identifying how RS promotes both the efficacy and agency essential to the ability of Black youth to respond to racial stress.

Scholars have discussed a need to identify the roles that Black parents' actions play in fostering their children's SPD (Marchand & Anyiwo, 2020). These findings help identify parental practices supporting children's ability to resist and transform racist systems. Although racial barrier messages are significant in supporting youth's action primarily through reflection and agency, cultural socialization actions that allow parents to expose youth to cultural enrichment may yield more substantial impacts in enhancing youth's racial justice actions. Indeed, SPD scholars have articulated that youth's activism is shaped by cultural context and opportunity structures—meaningful opportunities to engage in action with mentorship and support (R. J. Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Our findings suggest that cultural socialization actions may operate as a cultural opportunity structure for youth to develop the capacity to challenge racism. With these findings, practitioners and youth workers can intentionally incorporate culturally relevant behavioural modelling into family, school, and community interventions to facilitate Black youth's SPD.

4.2 | Limitations and strengths

In this study, we were not able to capture the full spectrum of diversity in Black youth's lived experiences that may shape the relations between RS and their SPD. Previous work has indicated that Black youth may receive different frequencies of RS messages across social identity and social class (Hughes et al., 2006). Further, SPD theory holds that action often requires opportunity structures, which includes tangible spaces, resources, and supportive mentorship (R. J. Watts & Guessous, 2006). Youth's opportunity structures for action may vary across social location and may play a role in how RS messages translate into action.

A strong correlation between racial barrier messages and cultural socialization actions variables (0.71) led to signs of multicollinearity, such as flipped regression estimates (e.g., from positive to negative). This precluded examining each of these predictors within the same structural model. Instead, these predictors were examined in separate submodels, limiting our understanding of how these variables may operate in concert to explain Black youths' critical action. Second, the cross-sectional design hampers our understanding of how these variables interrelate over time. For example, this design does not illuminate the nature of timing between key inputs, such as parental RS, and hypothesized downstream variables, such as critical action. Further, it leaves open whether critical action behaviours may, in turn, elicit parental RS—youths' engagement in collective protest may elicit racist responses, which in turn may lead parents to prepare their children for future racial discrimination. Third, this measurement strategy suffers from mono-method bias, in that only young people were surveyed about their parents' RS as well as their thoughts and actions. Although surveying young people is an under-utilized strategy and youths' reports on parents' RS may

be less prone to social desirability bias, triangulated reports from parents or other actors would enrich this measurement strategy. However, the use of SEM mitigates this concern to some degree.

Despite these limitations, this study boasts several strengths. First, many studies point to the differences between racial and general socialization strategies (Anderson et al., 2019; Ransom & Urichuk, 2008) and racial and general activism (Anyiwo et al., 2020). This paper focuses on racially and culturally relevant measures that identify processes significant to Black youth's psychosocial development. Second, concerning RS, this work is one of few studies that assess cultural socialization actions rather than assessing verbal cultural pride messages. This action-oriented measurement is important when evaluating the actions of Black youth. Finally, this work adds to a growing literature showing how the sociocultural processes integral to Black youth's psychological wellbeing may also be essential to cultivating SPD.

4.3 | Future directions

Future research can build upon the current study to identify the racially specific processes and practices inherent in SPD and the sociopolitical processes inherent in RS. For example, qualitative work with Black youth and Black parents can clarify the implicit and explicit manners through which dialogue and family practices relevant to cultural and political empowerment can shape youth's SPD. Future research should also consider how youth's experiences of RS and aspects of their SPD converge to shape other psychosocial outcomes. For example, RS might moderate the relationship between SPD and psychological or educational outcomes, given the conceptualization of RS as a coping process for racially stressful experiences (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Further, in line with Anyiwo et al. (2018), other sociocultural factors, such as racial discrimination or racial identity, are likely complicit in shaping the associations between RS and Black youth's SPD.

Employing longitudinal analysis would help explore RS and SPD processes throughout Black youth's maturation. As such, a broader age range throughout adolescence (e.g., younger than 13, older than 17) will allow for a greater understanding of how SPD actions play out in varying social contexts (e.g., at middle vs. high school, during voting periods) and overtime. In addition, given the US context for the current sample, future research exploring how RS impacts youth's SPD in other countries with a history of racial stratification and racial justice movements will benefit our understanding of the utility of this construct in varying cultures (e.g., Canada, South Africa, and European nations; Anyiwo et al., 2018; Neville & Cross, 2017). Black liberation movements have historically been and continue to be cross-national, as evident by the prevalence of Black Lives Matters protests globally during the 2020 uprising (Westerman, Benk, & Greene, 2020). However, more work is needed to understand the culturally unique features of RS of Black youth in different sociopolitical contexts with different histories of racial marginalization (Anderson et al., 2022; Lalonde, Jones, & Stroink, 2008; Thelamour & Mwangi, 2021). Finally, it will be important to understand the relations between other outcomes in SPD (e.g., political engagement that reinforces injustice) and other forms of RS messages and actions (e.g., egalitarianism, negative messages, cultural legacy appreciation; Lesane-Brown, 2006; H. C. Stevenson et al., 2002).

5 | CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to clarify the relationships between RS and SPD applying SEM to a large sample of Black youth. Broadly, cultural socialization action was more facilitative of racial justice action than racial barriers socialization—yet both were predictive of Black youth's understanding of and motivation to challenge racism. Collectively, these findings advance our understanding of how RS may also be considered sociopolitical socialization and how RS may foster sociopolitical action against racism among Black youth. Furthermore, synthesizing the RS and SPD literatures holds promise in understanding how Black families seek to foster their children's capacity to recognize, resist, and challenge racism and anti-Blackness. Given evident manifestations of anti-Blackness, this research is timely and speaks to our current political moment.

Subsequent research should continue illuminating how Black (and other minoritized) families prepare their children for a racist society and foster the capacity of young people to create a more just world.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

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