

DOES SKIN TONE MATTER?: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SKIN TONE ON
COLORISM WITHIN FAMILIES, RACISM, AND RACIAL SOCIALIZATION AMONG
AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS

by

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(Under the Direction of Leslie Gordon Simons)

ABSTRACT

Colorism and racism have been part of the American discourse for over a century. Both have historically been two of the primary sources of differentiation and inequality among African Americans (Herring, 2004). Most scholars, however, have only examined the impact of racism on African Americans as a whole and have overlooked the impact of important intragroup differences such as skin tone on racism. Past research has also ignored whether colorism, as expressed through preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting to children based on skin tone, operates within African American families. In addition, no studies have investigated whether racial socialization processes vary by skin tone. Therefore, the present study advances previous findings and addresses unstudied areas of research by examining whether skin tone impacts family process and race-related outcomes. This study used a sample of 767 African American adolescents (350 males, 417 females) and their primary caregivers. Findings show no significant association between skin tone and racial discrimination suggesting that African American racial status is enough to engender discriminatory behaviors and lightness or darkness of skin does not either protect African Americans from or exacerbate the experiences of racial

discrimination. Findings also indicate that colorism operates through two processes within African American families. First, families displayed a preference for lighter skin in that lighter skin daughters received preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting. This may be due to historical preference for lighter skin— particularly among women. Second, there was higher quality of parenting for darker skin sons. This may be families’ attempt to counter discrimination or protect their sons from it. Lastly, results indicated that families transmitted more racial socialization messages to their darker skin sons. This socialization may occur in order to help prepare their sons for possible negative race- and skin-related experiences given that darker skin males receive fewer advantages than their lighter skin peers (Blair, Judd, & Chapleau, 2004). In summary, results undoubtedly reaffirm that colorism remains a salient issue among African Americans and show that skin tone is an additional status marker that exposes African Americans to differing degrees of family process and race-related outcomes.

INDEX WORDS: Skin tone, Colorism, African Americans, Parenting, Racism, Racial Discrimination, Racial Socialization, Adolescents

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DEDICATION

To commitment and perseverance.

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If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants.
— Sir Isaac Newton

This dissertation would not have been possible without *standing on the shoulders of many giants...*

To my first giant, my mother. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of education and that despite one's beginnings and or circumstances, to keep pressing forward towards your dreams. Your constant love and support is priceless.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In a recent *Journal of Marriage and Family* decade in review article by Burton and colleagues (2010), the authors highlighted some of the dynamic features of race, ethnicity, and colorism in families and called upon scholars to “remain vigilant” in the ways in which these racialized systems and differentiations are evaluated in the lives of contemporary families of color and to incorporate more discourse on colorism in future research. As a response to this charge, the current study investigates the impact of skin tone on two systems of discrimination affecting African Americans: *racism* in the larger U.S. society and *colorism* within African American families. Both have historically been two of the primary sources of differentiation and inequality for African Americans (Jones, 1997; Hall, 2005; Herring, 2004). In addition, this research examines whether skin tone shapes the racial socialization practices of African American families. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to advance previous findings and address unstudied areas of research on the impact of skin tone on racism, colorism, and racial socialization in the lives of African Americans and African American families.

In the past several decades, researchers have provided strong evidence for the relationship between racial status and experiences of racism (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Romero & Roberts, 1998), as expressed through practices of racial discrimination. However, only a limited number of studies have examined the association between skin tone and racial discrimination and the findings show conflicting results. For example, some research suggests that darker skin African Americans report higher levels of racial discrimination than lighter skin

African Americans (Herring, Keith, & Horton, 2004; Keith & Herring, 1991; Klonoff & Landrine, 2000), while others indicate no significant relationship between these two variables (Borrell, Kiefe, Williams, Diez-Roux, & Gordon-Larsen, 2006; Keith, Lincoln, Taylor, & Jackson, 2010). Though it is possible that the results in some of the previous studies suffer from measurement error due to use of a measure of racial discrimination that focused only on whether African American had ever experienced discrimination (Krieger, Sidney, & Coakley, 1998; Krieger & Sidney, 1996), the present study does not suffer from this limitation because it uses a measure of the frequency of racial discrimination. To this end, the current study will test the link between skin tone and racial discrimination to clear up the inconsistency in the research literature.

In addition, past studies have largely ignored colorism practices within families and the majority of the literature on colorism within African American families has been anecdotal and qualitative in nature (Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Golden, 2004; Wilder & Cain, 2011). Interestingly, there have been no quantitative studies on colorism within African American families. As a result, this study will address an unstudied area of research by focusing on how colorism within African American families may be expressed through preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting to children based on skin tone. I argue that just as gender, birth order, weight, and other individual traits of children influence parenting (Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005; McHale, Updegraff, Jackson-Newsom, Tucker, & Crouter, 2000; Simons et al, 2008), this may also be the case for skin tone. Thus, skin tone may be a new factor that can influence parenting.

Moreover, while a number of studies have investigated racial socialization in African American families, much less attention has been devoted to the possible link between skin tone and racial socialization. Research on whether racial socialization processes vary by skin tone is

none existent in the current literature. As a result, this study responds to Burton's call for research in this unstudied area by testing this possible association. Additionally, this study will examine whether the relationship between adolescent skin tone and both quality of parenting and racial socialization is moderated by primary caregiver skin tone. Despite the fact that colorism has been part of the American discourse for over a century, researchers have not only failed to include parent skin tone in study measures, no study has tested the potential moderating effect of parent skin tone. This study will examine these potential relationships.

Thus, taken together, the current study builds on previous literature and addresses unstudied areas of research by focusing on whether the distribution of advantages and disadvantages of African Americans adolescents are conditioned on skin tone. Just as being white and whiteness produces privileges and resources that may be otherwise unattainable for people of color, this study investigates whether lighter skin of adolescents also produces such advantages in family processes (i.e., quality of parenting) and race-related outcomes (e.g., racial discrimination, racial socialization) that may not be attainable for darker skin adolescents.

This study also addresses specific limitations of past research in several ways. First, while most studies have focused on skin tone for individuals who came of age during the Civil Rights Era (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Keith & Herring, 1991), the current study explores the effects of skin tone on individuals who came of age in the millennium. Although the past body of work has yielded valuable scholarship, the problem is that it has failed to examine such effects among a more contemporary sample of African Americans. Thus, it may be that the effects of skin tone seen a few decades ago may not be the same when tested on a younger cohort of African Americans. Second, this study explores gender differences. Some research has indicated that compared to African American males, African American females are more

profoundly affected by skin tone (Allen, Telles, & Hunter, 2000; Neal & Wilson, 1989; Russell, Wilson, Hall, 1992) given the strong association between skin tone and beauty and an “exaggerated preference for very light women” (Hill, 2002, p.84). On the other hand, findings on the significance of skin tone among African American males are mixed. Some researchers have suggested that darker skin for African American males may be considered an asset in certain contexts because it is often associated with dominance and status. Wade (1996) further supports this assertion by pointing out that many of the highest paid African American athletes and entertainers— such as Michael Jordan and Denzel Washington— have darker skin. Conversely, when involving aggression and crime, darker skinned African American males are seen as more aggressive and violent than their lighter skin counterparts (Harvey, 1995; Dixon & Maddox, 2005). However, despite these interesting differences, only a small number of studies focus on separating gender when examining the effects of skin tone. This study is interested in these gender differences therefore will examine each relationship separately by gender. Lastly, I control for adolescents’ physical attractiveness. Previous research suggests that attractiveness is a cultural construct significantly correlated with skin tone, especially among African American women (Hill, 2002; Mulford, Orbell, Shatto, & Stockard, 1998; Wade, 2008), therefore it is critical that the current study controls for this possible confounding variable given that past studies have illustrated a lack of adequate control variables.

Furthermore, it is also important to point out the relevance of the current study. As years of research indicate, in the United States, differences are often constructed on the basis of racial and ethnic group (e.g., African American, Hispanic, European American, etc.). Although this classification is important for making intergroup comparisons or examining one racial/ethnic group, the problem with this classification is that it does little to illustrate heterogeneity within a

racial/ethnic group. For decades, most scholars have only examined the impact of racism on African Americans as a whole and have overlooked important intragroup differences such as skin tone. To this end, the present study will not only examine the impact of skin tone on racial discrimination, but will also focus on the impact of skin tone on quality of parenting and racial socialization.

This research is also significant given the shifting racial landscape in America or what some call the “browning of America.” The U.S. is expected to experience significant increases in racial and ethnic diversity over the next four decades (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Ortman & Guarneri, 2009). In fact, recent data from the Census Bureau (2012) reported that as of July 1, 2011, 50.4 percent of babies younger than age 1 were minorities or of more than one race indicating that minority babies now outnumber white babies. This suggests that the U.S. is on its way to becoming “majority minority.” Census data also projects that by 2050, the majority of Americans will be from minority groups. The African American population is projected to increase from 41.1 million to 65.7 million by 2050 and the Hispanic population, 42 million in 2005, will rise to 128 million in 2050, tripling in size. In addition, the Asian American population is expected to increase from 15.5 million to 40.6 million. Among the remaining races, American Indians and Alaska natives are projected to increase from 3.9 million to 8.6 million and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders are expected to more than double, increasing from 1.1 to 2.6 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996). Thus, the color lines in America will shift “from a predominately biracial society with a large White majority and relatively small Black minority to a society composed of multiple racial and ethnic groups” (Lee & Bean, 2004, p.222). Additionally, research indicates an increase in interracial couplings and childbearing (Bean & Stevens, 2003; Childs, 2005; Qian & Lichter, 2011). A report from the Pew Research Center

found that a record number of all new marriages (14.6%) in America were interracial. Studies have also highlighted a growing number of interracial children in the U.S. (nearly 5% of children less than 5yrs old) (Lopez, 2003; Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Based on these shifting color lines, researchers need to move beyond only focusing on race and more closely investigate the complexity of colorism both within and outside the family context. This study accomplishes this task.

Interestingly, researchers have only recently begun to empirically examine the prevalence and effects of skin tone among other racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. such as Hispanic/Latinos (Allen, Telles, & Hunter, 2000; Hall, 2008; Murguia & Telles, 1996), areas outside the U.S. such as Latin America (e.g., Brazil) (Harris, Consorte, Lang, & Byrne, 1993) and South and East Asia (Edwards, Carter-Tellison, & Herring, 2004; Sahay & Piran, 1997). This dissertation, however, focuses specifically on the impact of skin tone on racism from the majority (white) U.S. population, colorism within the context of African American families, and the racial socialization messages transmitted within African American families.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Umbrella of Discrimination: Racism and Colorism among African Americans

For over a century, scholars have investigated the manifestation and effects of colonization, slavery, segregation, and racial oppression among African Americans¹ (Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Maddox & Gray, 2002; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992; Seeman, 1946) and have pointed to how decades of racial ideologies established during these periods have created two systems of hierarchy in America. A paper by Hunter (1998) articulated this issue. She suggests that there are two systems of discrimination in America that function on both a race and color level. The first and larger system of discrimination is through the level of racial categorization (e.g., Black, Latino, White, etc.). These racial categories determine an individual's role in the racial hierarchy. Thus, regardless of intragroup differences such as attractiveness and skin tone, all African Americans may experience this type of discrimination and denigration just on the bases that they are African American. It is this type of discrimination that may best explain the impact of race in the America.

The second system of discrimination is through the level of skin tone, or colorism. This system privileges lighter skin individuals over darker skin individuals both within and across racial categories. Given the general preference for whiteness and the advantages lighter skin individuals acquired during and after slavery, lighter skin individuals are valued on the bases of their skin tone (Glenn, 2009; Keith & Herring, 1991; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992).

¹ The terms *African American* and *Black* are used interchangeable given that both terms are used throughout the research literature.

Additionally, in regards to this level, the frequency and intensity of such discrimination may be considerably different based on one's skin tone. It is important to note however, that although these two systems are distinct from the other, the systems are inextricably linked. For instance, a light skin African American adolescent may experience racism and a dark skin African American adolescent may experience racism and colorism simultaneously.

Racism is defined as the effect of a dominant racial group to exclude a dominated racial group from sharing or gaining privilege and power (Cooper, McLoyd, Wood, & Hardaway, 2008; Hunter, 2002; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). It involves unfair behaviors, often justified by prejudice or negative attitudes towards members (Farley, 2005). Banton (1998) suggested that racism is the original "ism" of American discrimination. In fact, much of the literature on racism has shown this type of discrimination to be one of the most subtle but devastating social problems in the United States (Hall, 1998; Hall, 2010). Many African Americans believe that racism has, and will always, exist as a permanent condition and practice in the American culture (Fraizer, Margai, & Tettey-Fio, 2003).

Historically, race has been a social construct used in the United States to create levels of superiority and subordination between whites and people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). W.E.B Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett were important activist and sociological thinkers who were among the first to point out the pervasive white oppression of black people (Feagin, 2010; Zuberi, 2004). Central to the racial ideologies that were the foundation for racism were the ideas that Black people and blackness were defined as savage and ugly, whereas white people and whiteness were defined as civilized and beautiful (Hall, 2010; Wade, 1996). A review of the literature on racial discrimination shows both its historical legacy and its continued existence in American society (Gibbons, Gerrard, Cleveland, Wills, & Brody, 2004; Kluegel &

Bobo, 1993). In fact, despite the declining trends of whites' animosity towards blacks, in part due to the abolition of Jim Crow and era of equality by law, black Americans continue to experience and perceive racism (Laudrine & Klonoff, 1996; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). African Americans also experience deleterious outcomes as a result of such racism (Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008; Simons, Chen, Stewart, & Brody, 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003).

Colorism, on the other hand, is defined as "the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin" (Burke, 2008, p.17) and generally privileges lighter skin over darker skin individuals within and across racial and ethnic groups (Hunter, 2005). Colorism has also been referred to as "skin tone bias" and "color consciousness" (Hill, 2002; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987). Russell, Wilson, & Hall's (1992) work mentioned that when blacks displayed such bias, they were referred to as "color struck" or perceived as having a "color complex." Colorism frequently occurs independently of racism. Moreover, one study has suggested that colorism has as significant an effect on African American individual and family life course outcomes as race itself, when comparing Blacks to Whites (Wade & Bielitz, 2005). Thus, African Americans may very well live in the same society, but experience different outcomes depending on the complexion of their skin. It is important to note that colorism may also include hair texture, eye color, and facial features such as the shape of one's nose and lips. Hunter (1998) notes, however, that "African Americans are not the only subjects involved in making assumptions and discriminating on the basis of skin tone. All members of the society have a role, conscious or not, in making distinctions among African Americans, and other people of color, based on skin tone" (pp. 521).

In general, studies on colorism have found darker skin to be associated with stereotypical traits attributed to Black people such as poverty, criminality, meanness, and masculinity. In contrast, lighter skin African Americans were linked to counterstereotypical traits (Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004; Maddox & Gray, 2002). It is often these biases and stereotypes that are key elements that lead to differences in outcomes among African Americans. A popular rhyme from the first part of the 1900s summed up attitudes toward skin color.

If you're white, you're all right

If you're yellow, you're mellow

If you're brown, stick around

If you're black, get back. (Parrish, 1944, p. 90)

Colorism has been part of the Black community for more than a century. Despite its prevalence in the daily lives of Black families and social settings, however, Russell and colleagues (1992, p. 2) refer to colorism as the “last taboo” within the Black community. Interestingly, issues of colorism have been discussed in numerous literary and popular culture works for decades. In fact, in 1853, the first black American novel *Clotel* documented the complexity of skin tone among Blacks (Walker, 1983). There have also been several other examples of colorism within the black community in literary works such as *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *The Color Purple* (1983), *Don't Play in the Sun* (2004) and pop culture films such as Spike Lee's *School Daze* (1988) and CC Stinson's *Light, Bright, Damn Near White* (2007). More recent sociological evidence by scholars such as Michael Hughes, Bradley Hertel, and Mark Hill corroborate this work suggesting the continued presence of colorism within the Black community. Relatively few studies, however, have assessed the impact of colorism within the context of African American families.

In contrast, it should be noted that light skin African Americans face disadvantage as well (Hunter 2004). Although lighter skin African Americans experience more advantages and privileges than darker skin African Americans, this is not synonymous with maintaining that light skin African Americans do not experience racism or discrimination. As Hunter (2005) points out, race and complexion represent two different, but overlapping, systems of oppression. For example, lighter skin African Americans may be excluded from community events and organizations because they are typically not seen as a legitimate member of their ethnic group. Bates (1994) suggests that lighter skin African Americans feel more pressure to conform to the expectations that are unfairly projected onto them solely because of their skin tones. Thus, lighter skin African Americans experience negative psychological and emotional outcomes as a result of failing to successfully adhere to such expectations (Bates, 1994). Womack (2007) describes the complexity experienced by some lighter skin African Americans when she stated, “Many ‘near white’ Blacks have to not only defend themselves against racism among the Whites, who malign Blacks in private circles, they are assumed to be apart of, but also must prove their own blackness to those who feel they are benefiting from the privileges of white or fair skin” (p. 80). Nevertheless, many scholars would argue that the myriad of disadvantage experienced by darker skin African Americans far outweigh the disadvantage experienced by lighter skin African Americans.

Historical Perspective of Racism and Colorism among African Americans

An important part of understanding colorism in the United States and within the African American community is also understanding the simultaneous history of racism in the United States. Racism and colorism have historically been two of the primary sources of differentiation and inequality for African Americans and other people of color (Jones, 1997; Hall, 2005;

Herring, 2004). In fact, both can be traced back to slavery and racial oppression. Racism against Blacks is believed to have begun in the early 1600s when Europeans enslaved Africans and brought them to America. Following the slave trade and European colorization, white Americans discriminated against individuals of African descent based solely on their race and treated them as second-class citizens. In fact, the history of racism in American is most notable highlighted by the black-white dichotomy of race where racism manifests as discrimination by whites, particularly against blacks (Feagin, 2000). Frederick Douglass was among the first to articulate institutionalized racism and spoke about the ubiquitous impact of discrimination in an 1881 speech. He stated:

In nearly every department of American life [black Americans] are confronted by this insidious influence. It fills the air. It meets them at the work-shop and factory, when they apply for work. It meets them at the church, at the hotel, at the ballot-box, and worst of all, it meets them in the jury-box...[the black American] has ceased to be a slave of an individual, but has in some sense become the slave of society (Douglass, 1881).

The Jim Crow era, the period from 1876 to 1965, brought about immense prejudice against African Americans in a series of state and national laws enacted to segregate all public facilities for whites and blacks. During this time, millions of African Americans were brutalized and killed for voting and participating in formal education (Finkelman, 1992). Oliver Cox (1948) is believed to have written one of the first analyses of U.S. society as a system of racism and detailed how sustained labor exploitation of African Americans created a centuries-old structure of racial classes. In the preceding years, more black activists and scholars demonstrated in empirical and theoretical detail the patterns of racism that was built into major

institutions (Blauner, 1972; Delgado, 1996; Du Bois, 1940; Ture & Hamilton, 1967; Williams 1991).

Even after the end of Jim Crow segregation and the legal prejudice sanctioned by U.S. laws that blacks were subjugated to, the political and legal changes of the contemporary era did not eradicate white imposed racism. Studies have shown that although whites' race attitudes were more positive than in previous years, whites still did not fully support equality (Jaynes & Williams, 1989). For example, findings revealed that whites were reluctant to participate in school setting or live in neighborhoods where a large number of African Americans were present. Moreover, Kluegel and Bobo (1993) showed that most whites endorsed the idea of equality in principle, but opposed many of the policies designed to enhance opportunities for African Americans.

According to both popular press and empirical research, the prevalence and negative effects of racism against African Americans still remains. Racism, as expressed through practices of racial discrimination, is a virtually ubiquitous experience that can occur across a variety of situation and can be covert, subtle (e.g., racial slurs), or blatant (e.g., being watched closely by while shopping) (Devine, Plant, & Blair, 2001; Feagin, 2010; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003). A 2010 report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation found that of the total number of racially motivated hate crimes (4,057) that occurred in the United States in 2009, more than 71% were against blacks.

In more recent years, scholars have begun to discuss everyday racism in which the experience for people of color is not about one or two incidents of racial discrimination but rather a lifetime experience from which one cannot ordinarily escape (Feagin, 2010; Nuru-Jeter et al., 2009). For example, Landrine and Klonoff (1996) found that 98% of participants reported

perceiving racial discrimination in the past year. Similarly, a study of Black and White adults found that Black were 4 times more likely to perceive racial discrimination in their lifetime (Williams, Yu, & Jackson, 1997). To this end, research strongly supports the assertion that racial discrimination against African Americans is persistent and substantial.

All while racism was at the forefront of discrimination in the U.S., colorism was also present throughout the U.S. and within the African American community. Like racism, colorism among African Americans has historical implications. Plantation slave owners typically used skin tone differences among slaves as a means of creating a caste system (Harvey, LaBeach, Pridgen, & Gocial, 2005; Horowitz, 1973). Researchers have documented that during slavery, lighter skin slaves had a greater economic value than darker slaves and received more preferential treatment such as being assigned to work indoors, opportunities to learn to read, and more contact with white slave masters (Davis, 1991; Keith and Herring, 1991; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Based on various levels of African ancestry among slaves, terminology was developed to highlight these distinctions: mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon, which represents a Black person with three-eighths, one-fourth, and one-eighth of African ancestry, respectively. In Louisiana, over 80% of the free population was of mixed ancestry (Landry, 1987). Williamson (1980) states, “Affluent, free mulattos were treated as a third group by whites in the lower South, which placed them in an intermediate position between white and black, slave and free”(pp.15). Scholars have noted that due to this partial white heritage, lighter skin blacks were considered superior to darker skin blacks (Gullickson, 2005) and began to internalize these beliefs. Subsequently, lighter skin blacks received more advantages such as educational opportunities, manumission of slavery, and land acquisition (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992; Graham, 1999). Lighter skin blacks were also early business leaders and teachers who became the economic and

community leaders within the early African American community (Gatewood, 1990; Frazier, 1957).

Following emancipation, colorism within the African American community did not disappear. Wealthy light skin blacks became the Black Elite and, in many cases, were responsible for reinforcing colorism in the African American community. For example, lighter skin blacks began forming exclusionary social clubs (e.g., The Links, Jack & Jill, Blue Vein Society) that excluded darker skin blacks. In order to be eligible for membership into the “Blue Vein” society, a person’s skin color was required to be pale enough for visibility of “blue veins” on the underside of the arm (Okazawa Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987). These clubs established color bars such as the “brown paper bag tests” in order to deny membership to an individual if their skin tone was darker than a brown paper bag (Hall, 1992; Kerr, 2006; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Other clubs used “comb tests” in which potential members were required to run a comb through their hair and if the comb passed through their hair smoothly, admittance was granted (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1986, Parrish, 1944).

During the era of Jim Crow segregation, between the 1870s to the 1960s, colorism and social class among black Americans was the focus of many scholars. The first scholars to articulate skin color hierarchy within black communities were Ann Julia Cooper (1892) and W.E. B. DuBois (1903). In addition, research by scholars such as Drake & Cayton (1945), E. Franklin Frazier (1957), and Charles Parrish (1946) have been mentioned as classic sociological studies on colorism (Herring, 2002; Keith & Herring, 1991). For example, black sociologists St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton (1945) found that color stratifications among blacks predicted differences in occupation, employment, and mate selection. Similarly, the work by Frazier (1957), *Black Bourgeoisie*, was a comprehensive sociological analysis of attitudes and behaviors

of the black middle class. Frazier's work suggested an association between skin tone, status, education, power, and the middle class and showed that a significant number of middle class blacks had lighter skin. These studies laid the foundation for research on colorism during the Civil Rights Era and the Black Power Movement.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement gained in popularity. Both movements were focused on encouraging black consciousness and black pride and eschewed traditionally European paradigms for a more Afrocentric one. Each movement represented a rejection of hegemonic and ideological views of race and color deeming anything light or close to European as superior. As a result, the "Black is Beautiful" ideology shifted attitudes about light and dark skin and began to embrace darker skin. African Americans began to promote the belief that all shades of blackness should be praised and appreciated. More blacks began wearing their natural hair and considered marrying a darker skinned partner (Goering, 1972). During this time, it appeared that colorism and stratification diminished alongside Jim Crow. Jones (1997) acknowledged that future generations of blacks would no longer be confused about skin tone and racial identity. Consequently, the "Black is Beautiful" ideology appeared to be successful in alleviating the issue of colorism in the black community.

Unfortunately, colorism remained an issue of debate and significance even after the emergence of the "Black is Beautiful" movement. Decades later, scholars began to suggest that although progress was made, the ideological shifts of the 1970s were neither all-encompassing nor long-lasting (Hill, 2002; Bond & Cash, 1992; Coard, Breland, & Raskin, 2001). Many contemporary studies on colorism illustrated that skin tone continues to play a significant role in the lives of African Americans (Brown, 1998; Hall, 1998, 2005; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Hunter 1998, 2002, 2005; Jones, 2000; Keith & Herring, 1991; Kerr, 2006; Patton, 2006; Seltzer and

Smith, 1991; Wade 1996). In fact, its prevalence appears to be more common than once believed (Hill, 2000). Thus, taken together, the current paper build upon these historical and contemporary findings to investigate the impact of skin tone on racism in the larger U.S. society, colorism within the context of African American families, and the racial socialization messages transmitted within African American families. The effects of skin tone on each of these areas are discussed below.

Effects of Skin Tone on Racism in the United States

Scholars have stressed the salience of considering factors unique to the daily lives of African Americans such as racism (e.g., racial discrimination) and have argued that research on African Americans should include these realities (McLoyd, 1990; Peters & Massey, 1983; Simons, Murry, McLoyd, Lin, Cutrona, & Conger, 2002). The history of racism towards African Americans in the United States has been well documented. A study by Greene, Way, and Pahl (2006) suggest that African American adolescents are particularly at risk for being targets of racial discrimination. Evidence shows that African American adolescents experience significantly higher levels of racial discrimination than any other racial/ethnic group (Fisher et al. 2000; Romero & Roberts, 1998). Over 90% of African American adolescents reported experiencing at least one incident of discrimination during their lifetime (Gibbons et al., 2004) and similar results were found using a nationally representative sample of African American adolescents (Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008). Furthermore, a wealth of research has indicated that racial discrimination is a constant stressor that has deleterious effects on African Americans (Anderson, 1991; Bryant, Wickrama, Bolland, Bryant, Cutrona, & Stanik, 2010; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Simons, Simons, & Wallace, 2004). For example, discrimination has been linked to a myriad of outcomes including delinquency (Martin,

McCarthy, Conger, Gibbons, Simons, Cutrona, & Brody, 2010; Simons, Chen, Stewart, & Brody, 2003), violence (Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2004), depression (Brody, Chen, Murry, Ge, Simons, Gibbons, Gerrard, & Cutrona, 2006; Simons, & Conger, 2007), academic achievement (Powell & Arriola, 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003) and sexual behavior (Roberts, Gibbons, Gerrard, Weng, Murry, Simons, Simons, & Lorenz, 2012). Therefore, these findings illustrate the pervasiveness of discrimination in the lives of African Americans.

Interestingly, while many studies have found a significant relationship between race, racial discrimination, and outcomes, a dearth of studies have examined the association between skin tone and racial discrimination. Of those studies, findings yield conflicting results. For example, an early study by Edwards (1973) indicated that compared to lighter skin African Americans, darker skin African Americans tended to experience higher levels of discrimination and unfair treatment. This finding was also replicated by Allen, Telles, & Hunter (2002). Klonoff & Landrine (2000) used cluster analysis among a sample of African Americans and found that darker skin African Americans were 11 times more likely to be classified in the “high discrimination” group. Conversely, only a few studies have shown no relationship between the two variables (Borrell, Kiefe, Williams, Diez-Roux, & Gordon-Larsen, 2006). For instance, results from a recent study revealed that women’s experiences of racial discrimination did not differ by skin tone (Keith, Lincoln, Taylor, & Jackson, 2010). Therefore, while some past research has suffered from measurement error due to use of a measure of racial discrimination that focused only on whether African American had ever experienced discrimination (Krieger, Sidneyy, & Coakley, 1998; Krieger & Sidney, 1996), the current study will clear up previous

research inconsistency by testing whether skin tone is still associated with racial discrimination using a measure of the frequency of racial discrimination.

Effects of Skin Tone on Colorism within African American Families

Family has been shown to be a central force in the lives of African Americans. It is within the family that socialization occurs and parents are regarded as the primary agents of socialization (McAdoo, 1997). In fact, it is through socialization that families often introduce and reinforce messages within the family unit and children learn these various messages, albeit positive or negative. Hill (2001) discussed the socialization of African American children within African American families and highlighted the effort African American parents invest in their children. Rather than viewing African American parents as passive reactors to external forces such as racism, Hill described the labor of these parents to be neither inconsequential nor over ridden by more powerful external forces.

Past empirical evidence has documented that parenting exerts strong effects on numerous outcomes including depression (Simons, Murry, McLoyd, Lin, Curtrona, & Conger, 2002), delinquency (Simons, & Conger, 2007), relationship functioning (Bryant, 2006; Simons, Simons, Lei, & Landor, 2012), and sexual behavior (Bowleg, Burkholder, Massie, Wahome, Teti, Malebranche, & Tschann, in press; Landor, Simons, Simons, Brody, & Gibbons, 2011). Family scientists, however, have only recently begun to identify and conceptualize how family process measures, such as parenting, impact how race and ethnicity operates within family context and vice versa. These studies have focused on outcomes such as residential segregation and mobility (Charles, 2003), child behavior problems (Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster, Jones, & the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2001), anxiety (Hill & Bush, 2001), and mental health (Wickrama, Noh, & Bryant, 2005). Examples of these family processes can also be found in

ethnographic research within the past decade that has focused on the intersectionality of race, poverty, and social class among families (Newman & Massengil, 2006; Pattillo, 2003). Pattillo (2003) highlighted this intersection in her ethnographic work on African American families living on Chicago's South Side. Less empirical research has been focused on how issues of colorism operate within African American families.

A review of the literature indicates a dearth of empirical studies on this issue, particularly in family research. However, numerous literary and popular culture works such as *Don't Play in the Sun* (Golden, 2004) and CC Stinson's *Light, Bright, Damn Near White* (2007) have documented this issue, specifically within African American families and communities. Some sociological research, however, has indicated that African American families may, in fact, cultivate and perpetuate skin tone bias. Parents have been shown to teach skin tone bias directly to their children (Harvey, 1995; Russell et al., 1992). A recent qualitative study examined the role of Black families in developing and maintaining skin tone bias and found these biases to be "learned, reinforced, and in some cases contested within families, ultimately shaping perspectives and experiences with colorism" (Wilder & Cain, 2011, p.1). The study found respondents to report their families as the primary influence in shaping how they viewed themselves and others as it relates to skin tone. Similarly, when discussing her family's internalized scripts about dark skin and how they lowered their expectations about her intelligence given her dark skin tone, one focus group participant from a study by Wilder (2010) stated:

My experience, I think, I've always seen this idea if you are lighter skinned, then you are capable of education. I remember my young cousins growing up who were lighter skinned and had the good hair. . . . They were just expected to be smart, to say smart

things, to kind of carry on the family name, versus I was never expected to be smart, but maybe they didn't expect it more from me, and when they did see it, it was a surprise and kind of different than what they thought it would be, versus the lighter-skinned kids [who] came out perfect and they were, they were manifested to be perfect, where I had to prove [my intelligence] over and over again. (p. 191)

Skin tone bias has also been expressed in clinical settings. Boyd-Franklin (2003) and Greene (1990) discussed issues of skin tone within African American families that may cause unique stress between family members. For instance, Boyd-Franklin mentions that parents of dark skin children may “scapegoat” them and hold their lighter skin children in higher regard. Whereas other parents may look at their light skin children as reminders of the long history of slavery and blame them for not being Black enough.

In addition, for some African Americans, issue of skin tone occurs prior to childbirth. For instance, Russell, Wilson, and Hall (1992) highlighted the importance of skin color among African Americans even before a child's birth in that African American families often display excitement and obsession about a child's impending skin tone, hair texture, and facial features. For example, a female focus group participant explained:

[My cousin has] two sons and a girl, and his daughter in the middle is darker skinned, she takes after her mother, and his younger son... was born with gray eyes and you know, turned out to be this beautiful light skinned child, and I just remember... in my family a mass flocking to the hospital to see this child and my grandmother, she still to this day, will go to the house and pick up this little boy and leave the daughter there, just leave her there. And I mean, there's no other reason to explain it other than it's just, everyone wanted to babysit him, to take care of him. I even fell into the trap as well, and you

know, I want to have a little gray eyed baby myself. And [my grandmother would say] "how can we be so lucky to have a beautiful gray eyed child?" (Wilder & Cain, 2011, p. 592)

Some African American parents have also been shown to have skin tone preference in child adoption because they request lighter skin children over darker skin children. In Stephen Birmingham's book on the Black bourgeoisie, *Certain People*, he asserts that wealthy African American couples who were able to have children themselves instead adopted lighter skin children to avoid the possibility of producing a darker skin child.

As a result of the colorism issues within African American families illustrated above in literary works and focus groups, this study aims to build upon these findings by using quantitative analysis to address an unstudied area of research that focuses on how colorism within African American families may be expressed through preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting to children based on skin tone. Interestingly, no quantitative studies to date have tested this complex issue despite the fact that colorism has been a mainstay in the African American community for generations. I posit that just as gender (Mandara & Murray, 2000, Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005), birth order, weight, and other individual traits of children (Furman & Lanthier, 2002; McHale, Updegraff, Jackson-Newsom, Tucker, & Crouter, 2000; Simons et al, 2008) influence parenting, this may also be the case for skin tone. Thus, skin tone may be a new factor that can influence parenting. This study examines this issue.

Numerous studies have also suggested that parents serve as the most proximate source of support and guidance for children and parents accomplish this task through parenting practices (Belsky, 1999, 1984). This study employs parenting practices instead of parenting typologies for several reasons. First is the lack of predictive utility among African American youth. Although

past studies in family research have found parenting typologies/styles (e.g., authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, neglectful; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) to be predictors of white adolescent outcomes, most cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have failed to do so among African American adolescents (exception, Pittman & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). In addition, parenting typologies are a configuration of parenting practices which causes them not to lend easily to the discernment of the ways in which adolescent functioning is influenced. Scholars Darling and Steinberg (1993) state that youth characteristics and behaviors are directly influenced by parenting practices, whereas parenting typologies only exerts influence indirectly. Thus, there is strong consistent evidence that specific parenting practices are more effective predictors of adolescent functioning than parenting styles in African American families.

As a result, I focus on several parenting practices (viz., warmth and affection, eschewing hostility, monitoring, consistent discipline, and eschewing harsh discipline) to produce the quality of parenting construct. Research has indicated that being the recipient of such parenting practices is beneficial to children and adolescents (Brody, Murry, Kim, & Brown, 2002; Simons, Simons, & Wallace, 2004). Studies have shown a strong direct relationship between these parenting practices and positive outcomes (Maccoby, 1992; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000) including educational attainment (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009; Melby, Conger, Fang, Wickrama, & Conger, 2008; Park & Bauer, 2002; Roksa & Potter, 2011), psychological functioning (Brody & Ge, 2001; Duggan, Sham, Minne, Lee, & Murray, 1998; Ge, Best, Conger, & Simons, 1996; Simons & Conger, 2007; Simons et al., 2002), and relationship status and quality (Bryant, 2006; Bryant & Conger, 2002; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000; Kan, McHale, & Crouter, 2008).

Therefore, based on both the anecdotal and empirical evidence stated above, it may be that skin tone not only provides advantages or disadvantages in the context of adolescent outcomes, but skin tone may also afford privileges in the context of family processes such as quality of parenting. The research literature would suggest that colorism could work in two ways within African American families. First, families would display a preference for lighter skin due to historical preference for lighter skin within the African American community, as well as the larger U.S. society. Thus, lighter skin adolescents would receive preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting. Second, there would be higher quality of parenting for darker skin adolescents because families understand that these adolescents are likely to experience more racial discrimination. Thus, they engage in higher quality of parenting in an attempt to counter this discrimination or protect their children from it. This study examines which of these processes are in evidence.

Racial Socialization within African American Families

African American families play an important role in teaching racial socialization to their children. Within the African American community, racial socialization, which is the process by which explicit and implicit messages are transmitted regarding the significance and meaning of race and ethnicity, serves as an important protective factor (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006; Miller, 1999; Peters, 2002; Tatum, 2004). Family studies scholars also consider it to be an important aspect of parenting for African American families (Hughes, 2003; Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990) as well as other families of color (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). According to Hughes and Chen (1997), there are three components of racial socialization: (1) *cultural socialization* in which families teach cultural values and traditions, (2) *preparation for bias* in which families prepare children

for future racial discrimination or prejudice, and (3) *promotion of mistrust* in which families promote more cautions or warnings about interactions with other racial groups. These components are suggested to help foster the adjustment of African American children in the face of race-related adversity and help to prepare children of color to live in a society that may be hostile toward them (Wong et al., 2003). In fact, racial socialization is believed to be critical to adolescent development of effective responses to racial discrimination.

Over the past three decades, research on racial socialization of African American children has grown significantly. Results based on a nationally representative sample of African Americans found that nearly 64% of parents reported transmitting racial socialization messages to their children (Thorton et al., 1990) and racial socialization has been found to occur regardless of social class (Crouter, Baril, Davis, & McHale, 2008). Moreover, nearly 78% of adolescents and 85% of college students reported receiving socialization messages about race (Lesane-Brown, Brown, Caldwell, & Sellers, 2005). Thus, these findings suggest that racial socialization is a common practice in most African American families.

Burton and colleagues (2010) points out, however, that in regards to research in the area of racial socialization, there is a “lack of attention to colorism and how it shapes within-race/ethnic socialization practices of families.” Past studies have investigated several demographic and contextual factors (e.g., gender, age, parent’s socioeconomic status, racial identity, and neighborhood) that directly influence racial socialization (Caughy, O’Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Peters & Massey, 1983), but no studies have examined whether racial socialization processes vary by another factor: skin tone. Research has shown, for example, that a child’s age influences parents’ racial socialization messages in that parents were less likely to transmit racial socialization messages to younger children (Fatimilehin, 1999;

Hughes & Chen, 1997). Thus, this study responds to Burton's call for research in this unstudied area by testing the association between skin tone and racial socialization. It may be that skin tone is another factor that influences African American families' transmission of race-related messages. As a result, this study will test how skin tone shapes the racial socialization practices of African American families by examining the impact of skin tone on the three components of racial socialization (e.g., cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust). The FACHS data contains all three components of racial socialization.

Primary Caregiver Skin Tone as a Moderator

Despite the fact that racism and colorism has been part of the U.S. discourse for over a century, previous research has failed to include parents' skin tone in study measures. Past studies have also failed to test the potential moderating effect of primary caregiver skin tone. Studies have demonstrated, however, that child and parent characteristics influence the parenting practices and racial socialization messages of African American parents (McAdoo, 2002; McLoyd, 1990). For example, a child's gender has been found to influence parents' treatment of their children (Hill & Zimmerman, 1995; McLoyd, 1990) and the same is true of child's weight (Simons et al, 2008). Work by Mandara and Murray (2000) that focuses on gender support this assertion and the old adage that African American mothers "love" their sons and "raise" their daughters. This saying suggests that African American mothers are generally more demanding of their daughters and have higher educational expectations for them than to their sons. Thus, consistent with this line of thinking that child characteristics such as skin tone, gender, and weight influences parents' behaviors, it may be that parent skin tone also impacts their behaviors. Therefore, this study examines whether primary caregiver's skin tone moderates the relationships

between their child's skin tone and both quality of parenting and transmission of racial socialization messages.

Skin Tone and Gender

In general, research has demonstrated that skin tone is an important determinant in obtaining positive life chance outcomes. Numerous studies have indicated that lighter skin African Americans have been found to achieve more years of education, more prestigious careers, and more income than darker skin African Americans (Bodenhorn, 2006; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Hunter, 2007; Keith & Herring, 1991). Less research has focused on exploring gender difference when examining the effects of skin tone. Among the few scholars who have pointed to the effects of skin tone based on gender, most have shown that having lighter skin is advantageous for African American males and females. For males, Hill (2002) found that lighter skin African American men had a significant advantage in the labor market (e.g., unemployment status, occupational prestige). This was consistent with other research by Keith and Herring (1991) and Allen and colleagues (2000). Hill (2002) also found that skin tone accounted for more difference in social status than family background. Furthermore, when involving aggression and crime, darker skinned African American males are seen as more aggressive and violent than their lighter skin counterparts (Harvey, 1995; Dixon & Maddox, 2005). Conversely, only a small number of findings indicate that dark skin is an asset for African American men in that it is often associated with dominance and status. A study by Wade (1996) highlighted that many of the highest paid and prominent African American male athletes and entertainers are darker skin. For example, Denzel Washington and Michael Jordan both have dark skin.

Interestingly, the limited number of studies that have examined gender differences based on skin tone have found skin tone to play a more significant role in the lives of African American

women (Allen, Telles, & Hunter, 2000; Russell et al., 1992). Whereas darker skin was seen as an asset for some African American men, Robinson and Ward (1995) reported light skin to be a significant asset for African American women. Studies have suggested that African American women are more affected because light skin is associated with beauty and beauty is more salient for women in our society (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). A light skin African American woman is believed to be more desirable because she is physically similar to the white standard of beauty (Hernton, 1965). Lighter skin African American women have also been found to have higher person incomes, higher educational attainment, and more likely to marry a high-status spouse than darker skin African American women (Hunter, 1998). Thus based on these findings, this study is interested in potential gender differences therefore examines each relationship separately by gender.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model that illustrates the relationship between skin tone, quality of parenting, racial discrimination, and racial socialization among African Americans. Consistent with the discussion above, this study poses several research questions.

Research Questions

1. Is there a direct relationship between target's skin tone and his/her experience with racial discrimination?
2. Is there a direct relationship between target's skin tone and quality of parenting? Current literature suggests that colorism could work in two ways within African American families therefore it may be the case that:
 - (a) Lighter skin adolescents receive preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting as a result of historical preference for lighter skin.

(b) Darker skin adolescents receive higher quality of parenting as a result of their families' attempt to counter target's experience with racial discrimination by the majority culture or protect their children from the consequences of it.

3. Is there a direct relationship between skin tone and racial socialization?

4. Is primary caregiver's skin tone a moderator in the relationship between target's skin tone and quality of parenting?

5. Is primary caregiver's skin tone a moderator in the relationship between target's skin tone and racial socialization?

6. Do any of these relationships vary by gender of target?

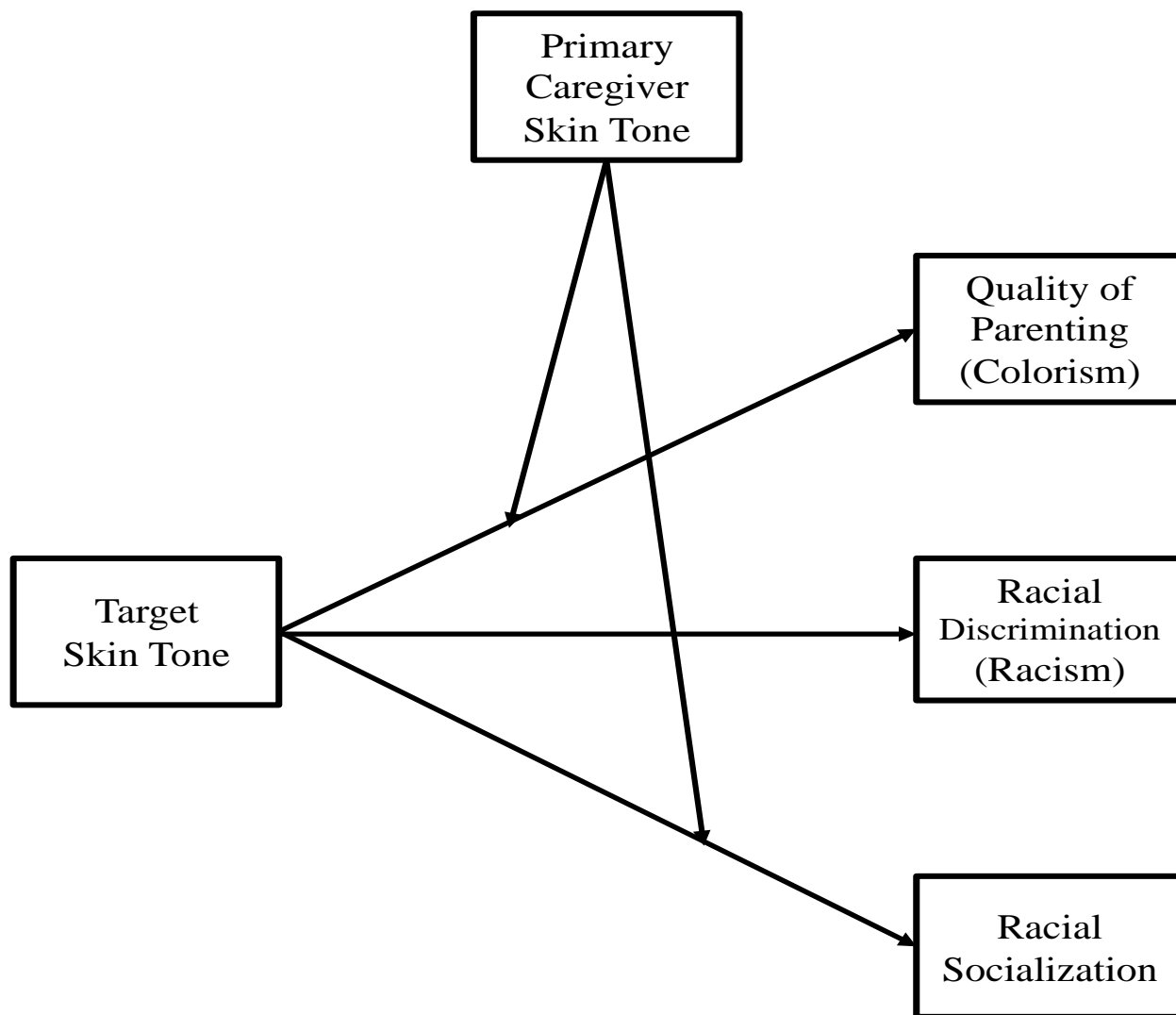


FIGURE 1. Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Sample

This study uses data from the Family and Community Health Study (FACHS), a multisite study of family and neighborhood effects on the health and development of African American families from small towns and cities in Georgia and Iowa (Simons, et al., 2002, Simons, et al., 2005). The FACHS sample includes over 800 African American families who were recruited when the target child was in the fifth grade. The first wave of data was collected in 1997 from 897 target children aged 10 to 12 years old (417 boys and 480 girls; 422 from Georgia and 475 from Iowa) and their primary caregivers. The primary caregiver is defined as the person living in the same household as the child and primarily responsible for his or her care.

Recruited families lived in neighborhoods that varied on demographic characteristics such as racial composition (percentage African American) and economic level (percentage of families with children living below the poverty line). Neighborhoods were determined using 1990 census tracts. Block groups (BGs) were identified for both Iowa and Georgia, in which the percent of African American families was high enough to make recruitment economically practical (10% or higher), and in which the percent of families with children living below the poverty line ranged from 10% to 100%. As a result of this sampling strategy, the final sample of families recruited involved participants who ranged from extremely poor to middle class. Based on these criteria, 259 BGs were identified, 115 in Georgia and 144 in Iowa. Georgia and Iowa samples were comparable on demographic characteristics therefore were combined. Families

were then selected from these rosters and contacted about their potential project participation. The response rate for the contacted families was 84%.

This study uses two waves of data. Wave 1 is used because during this wave, observational data of parent-child interaction tasks were collected on videotapes. As a result, raters later used this wave to code for skin tone of target children and their primary caregiver. Wave 3 is used to tests quality of parenting, racial discrimination, and racial socialization. The present study consisted of 767 targets (350 males, 417 females) and their primary caregivers. Target respondents were approximately 14-15 years old (Mean= 15.56) at wave 3. Ninety-three percent (713) of targets self-identified as African American. There were no significant differences in education or income of the primary caregiver between the Iowa and Georgia subsamples (Simons, Simons, Lei, & Landor, 2012).

Procedures

Similar procedures were employed across all waves. Focus groups and pilot tests in Georgia and Iowa were conducted to determine whether changes were needed in study instruments. Both did not indicate changes in any of the study instruments. In order to enhance rapport and cultural understanding, African American students and community members received one month of training in administering protocol prior to data collection and served as home visitors to collect data from the sample. Each family was visited at their homes twice for approximately 2 hours each. Each home visit contained a self-report questionnaire administered in an interview format using a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) to the primary caregiver, the child, siblings, and a secondary caregiver if applicable. The CAPI procedure provided privacy to respondents in order to eliminate any possible concerns about underreporting and respondent literacy. The interviews were conducted privately between one participant and

one researcher, with no other family members present. Responses were entered on a keypad operated solely by the respondent and those answers did not appear on the shared screen.

Participants took part in videotaped interaction tasks in their homes during the two waves of data collection. The 20-minute task involved the primary caregiver and the target child. African American interviewers provided instructions and then left the room so they could not hear the video recorded discussion. The questions asked the caregiver and child to discuss a range of issues in their daily lives from pleasurable things they do together to how they handle conflicts and disagreements. Videotaped discussions occurred in a location that provided as much privacy as possible. Videotaped interactions were coded using the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (Melby et al., 1998). Years following the initial video recordings, 6 trained female observers (3 Caucasian, 3 African American) rated targets and primary caregivers skin tone based on these videotapes. Similar to previous studies on skin tone, data are not available regarding eye color, facial features (e.g., lips, nose), or hair color/texture. These coders also rated targets and primary caregivers physical attractiveness based on these videotapes.

Measures

Skin Tone

The measure of skin tone was coded from videotapes obtained as a part of the FACHS data collection process. Coding staff at the Institute for Social and Behavioral Research at Iowa State University worked with principal investigators on the FACHS study to develop guidelines for rating target children and primary caregiver skin tone. All raters received approximately 8.0 hours of initial training (personnel procedures, rating manual, rating practice, feedback on ratings, written quiz on rating system, and university assurance training). The coding team practiced as a group of 3–5 people on 9 tapes, and independently rated 12 tapes. Raters discussed

all ratings in a group setting and determined a “criterion” score. After it was determined that the team members were achieving close agreement on ratings, coders began independently scoring the study videotapes. Approximately 18% of the tapes were selected at random for scoring by a second independent rater. Using the intraclass correlation (ICC; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979; Suen & Ayers, 1989) to evaluate interobserver agreement, the ICC for the videotape scoring for target child and primary caregiver skin tone was between ICC of .67 and .79, which is acceptable for these types of data (Kenny, 1991; Mitchell, 1979).

Values for skin tone were based on coders' observations of the target child's and primary caregiver's skin tone. Coders rated skin color on a scale from zero to five, with zero indicating a very light skin individual (not African American) and five denoting a dark skin individual. See Appendix A for the skin tone rating measure.

Quality of Parenting

The items used to create the quality of parenting measure were adapted from instruments developed for the Iowa Youth and Families Project (IYFP; Conger, Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons, & Whitbeck, 1992; Conger & Elder, 1994) and have been shown to have high validity and reliability (Simons, Chao, Conger, & Elder, 2001; Simons, Johnson, Conger, & Elder, 1998). Consistent with past research, the parenting practices of warmth, eschewing of hostile behavior, monitoring, consistent discipline, and eschewing harsh discipline were combined to create a quality of parenting measure.

The target child report of parenting was assessed at wave 3 and included 16 items involving parental warmth, eschewing of hostile behavior, monitoring, consistent discipline, and eschewing harsh discipline. The target child answered four items to determine their primary caregiver's warmth and affections towards them. Respondents were asked to indicate how often

their primary caregiver engaged in activities such as "...let you know that he/she cares about you?" and "...listen carefully to your point of view?" The response format ranged from 1 (*always*) to 4 (*never*). The target child was asked six items to determine their primary caregiver's hostility towards them. Respondents were asked to indicate how often their primary caregiver engaged in activities such as "...push, grab, hit, or shove you?" and "...criticize you or your ideas?" The response format ranged from 1 (*always*) to 4 (*never*). The target child was asked two items to determine how often their primary caregiver monitors their activities. Respondents were asked "how often does your primary caregiver know how well you are doing in school?" and "how often can you do whatever you want after school without your primary caregiver knowing what you are doing?" Responses ranged from 1 (*always*) to 4 (*never*). Targets reported on their caregiver's consistency in discipline and were asked questions such as "how often does your primary caregiver discipline you for something at one time and then at other times not discipline you for the same thing?" Targets answered two items to determine their primary caregiver's hostility towards them. Respondents were asked to indicate how often their primary caregiver engaged in activities such as "how often does your primary caregiver spank you?" All items were recoded so that higher scores indicated superior parenting and standardized to form a quality of parenting scale. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .77. The complete lists of the items included in the quality of parenting measure can be found in Appendix C.

Racial Discrimination

The measure of perceived discrimination was assessed at wave 3, using target youth experiences with racial discrimination. Items were adapted from the Schedule of Racist Events scale (Landrine and Klonoff, 1996), which has strong psychometric properties and has been used

extensively in studies of African Americans of all ages. Seven items assess the frequency with which various discriminatory events (e.g., hassled by police, yelled a racial slur or racial insult) were experienced during the preceding year. Each item was rated on a 4-point Likert scale 1 (*never*) to 4 (*frequently*). Higher scores demonstrate higher racial discrimination. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .84. See Appendix C for the complete measure of racial discrimination.

Racial Socialization

The measure of racial socialization was assessed at wave 3 to determine how often within the past year have targets received race-related messages. Consistent with the article by Hughes and Johnson (2001), the racial socialization measure in the FACHS data was divided into three components (e.g., cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust). *Cultural Socialization* (3 items, $\alpha = .78$) measured the extent to which primary caregiver's emphasized the history of target's racial or ethnic group. *Preparation for Bias* (4 items, $\alpha = .83$) assessed the extent to which primary caregiver's discuss with targets the challenges they may face as of result of target's racial or ethnic group. *Promotion of Mistrust* (2 items, $\alpha = .65$) measured the extent to which primary caregiver's talk to targets about trusting other racial or ethnic groups. The rating scale ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*10 or more times*). It should be noted, however, that all items were consistent with Hughes and Johnson (2001) except for the cultural socialization scale in which two items from the previous study were omitted and replace with one item which asked targets "how often within the past year have the adults in your family taken you to places or events that reflect your racial heritage?" The complete measure for racial socialization can be found in Appendix C.

Control Variable

The physical attractiveness scale was adapted from ratings of Physically Attractive as described in Melby et al. (1998). This scale assesses the rater's subjective rating of the target and primary caregiver's physical features and/or overall physical appearance. It measures the degree to which the respondents may be considered physically unappealing or appealing to the rater. The scale assesses the extent to which the respondent's physical features and/or appearance qualities elicit the rater's subjective response using the following categories: 1 (*Mainly unattractive: low attractiveness; unpleasant looking; unappealing*), 2 (*Somewhat unattractive: somewhat unattractive; less attractive than average*), 3 (*Mixed or neutral: middle or mid-level attractiveness; typical in attractiveness; average appearance; ordinary looking; neither attractive or unattractive*), 4 (*Somewhat attractive: somewhat more attractive than average; nice looking; good looking; attractive*), and 5 (*Mainly attractive: highly or very attractive; considerably more attractive than average; very good looking; appealing; beautiful; gorgeous; handsome*). See Appendix B for the physical attractiveness rating measure.

Analytical Strategy

The conceptual model depicted in Figure 1 was tested using Mplus 5.1 (Muthen & Muthen, 2008). The parameters in the hierarchical regression models were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation (MLR) with robust standard errors. Five hierarchical regression models for males and females were conducted to examine whether target's skin tone predicts quality of parenting, racial discrimination, racial socialization (e.g., cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust). All dependent variables, except quality of parenting, had a strong positive skew. As a result, the variables were transformed using a natural log functions ($\ln[x+1]$) to meet the assumption of linearity for OLS regression (Cohen & Cohen,

1983). Furthermore, the independent variables (e.g., adolescent skin tone and primary caregiver skin tone) were standardized prior to the calculation of interaction terms. Dawson & Richter (2006) suggests using standardized scores in interaction models to reduce multicollinearity and enable coefficients to be easily interpreted. In addition, this study tests whether primary caregiver's skin tone moderates to relationship between target's skin tone and the dependent variables quality of parenting and racial socialization.

The hierarchical regression models include two steps. Step 1 (Model I) includes the control variable— physical attractiveness— and the main effects of target and primary caregiver skin tone. The interaction of the adolescent and primary caregiver skin tone was entered at step 2 (Model II). If interactions are significant, post hoc analysis will be conducted using simple slope test with the pick-a-point approach (Aiken & West, 1991; Baron & Kenny, 1986). This procedure will identify significant points for interactions between the independent variable and the moderator. It is important to note, however, that the discrimination model is the only outcome that does not include a test for the main effect of the primary caregiver and the interaction effect because there is no theoretical base for testing the influence of primary caregiver skin tone on discrimination and the moderating effect of primary caregiver skin tone on the relationship between skin tone and discrimination.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive and Correlational Analyses

Table 1 provides the distribution of target skin tone by gender. Results show a roughly bell-shaped distribution of skin tone for males and females. A higher proportion of males, than females, were classified in darker categories. This is consistent with biomedical research that has objectively measured skin tone by using tertiles of skin color as measured by reflectometers (Keil, Sutherland, Knapp, Tyroler, & Pollitzer, 1992; Sweet, McDade, Kiefe, & Liu, 2007). A chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between gender and skin tone, $\chi^2 (5 \text{ df}) = 20.43, p < .001$. The highest proportion of targets (32%) was classified as medium dark skin. Approximately 16.7% of the targets were classified as dark skin, whereas 5.7% of targets were classified as light skin. Furthermore, the highest proportion of males was classified as medium dark skin (34.5%) and the highest proportion of females were classified as medium skin (31.4%).

Means, standard deviations, and the correlation matrix for the study variables are presented in Table 2. In general, the pattern of correlations is largely consistent with the conceptual model. However, findings show an interesting gender difference in the link between target skin tone and quality of parenting. Target skin tone was positively associated with quality of parenting for males and negatively associated with quality of parenting for females. Thus, darker skin was significantly related to higher quality of parenting for male targets whereas darker skin was significantly related to lower quality of parenting for female targets.

Furthermore, target skin tone was not significantly related to discrimination for males or females. In discussing the three components of racial socialization, for females, target skin tone was not significantly associated with any of the three components of racial socialization. Conversely, for males, the association between target skin tone and the three components of racial socialization was significant or marginally significant. Target skin tone was only associated with physical attractiveness among females not males which is consistent with past research (Hill, 2002).

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Hierarchical regressions were performed to examine the impact of skin tone on quality of parenting, racial discrimination, racial socialization, while controlling for target physical attractiveness (see Table 3). All hierarchical regression models were separated by males and females. Target and primary caregiver skin tone were entered at step 1 (Model I) as main effects for all models (except the racial discrimination model), with physical attractiveness included as a covariate. Step 2 (Model II) included the interaction of target and primary caregiver skin tone to tests for the moderating role of primary caregiver skin tone.

The hierarchical regression analysis predicting racial discrimination showed no significant relationship with target skin tone for males or females, thus skin tone does not directly predict racial discrimination. Furthermore, the racial discrimination model does not include a test for the main effect of the primary caregiver and the interaction effect because there is no theoretical base for testing the influence of primary caregiver skin tone on racial discrimination and the moderating effect of primary caregiver skin tone on the relationship between skin tone and racial discrimination.

Findings indicate that target skin tone was a significant predictor of quality of parenting for males ($\beta = .16, p < .05$) and females ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$), while accounting for target physical

attractiveness. That is, darker skin male adolescents tended to report higher quality of parenting and darker skin female adolescents tended to report lower quality of parenting than their lighter skin counterparts. There was no significant relationship between primary caregiver skin tone and quality of parenting for males or females. The interaction of target and primary caregiver skin tone entered in Model II was not significant for males or females.

Table 4 shows the hierarchical regression models predicting the three components of racial socialization. For males and females, the main effects of target and primary caregiver skin tone were not significant predictors of cultural socialization. In addition, there were no significant interactions. In predicting preparation for bias, target skin tone was marginally significant for males ($\beta = .11, p < .10$) and not significant for females. Primary caregiver skin tone was not significant for males or females. No significant interactions were found to predict preparation for bias. Lastly, for males, target skin tone was a significant predictor of promotion of mistrust ($\beta = .17, p < .01$). That is, darker skin males received more promotion of mistrust than lighter skin males. Skin tone was not a predictor of promotion of mistrust for females. This finding indicates that darker and lighter skin females may receive similar levels of promotion of mistrust. In addition, primary caregiver skin tone is a marginally significant predictor of promotion of mistrust for males ($\beta = .10, p < .10$) whereas primary caregiver skin tone is a significant predictor of promotion of mistrust for females ($\beta = .12, p < .05$) suggesting that darker skin primary caregivers display more promotion of mistrust to their children. No significant interactions were found for males or females.

Given that no interactions emerged as statistically significant predictors of quality of parenting, racial discrimination, racial socialization, and types of racial socialization, the interactions were not probed further.

TABLE 1
Distribution of Target Skin Tone by Gender

Gender	Target Skin Tone						Total
	White/Very Light	Light	Medium Light	Medium	Medium Dark	Dark	
Males							
Frequency	2	16	53	79	118	74	342
Percentage	.6%	4.7%	15.5%	23.1%	34.5%	21.6%	100%
Females							
Frequency	0	27	81	130	124	52	414
Percentage	0%	6.5%	19.6%	31.4%	30%	12.6%	100%
Total							
Frequency	2	43	134	209	242	126	756
Percentage	.3%	5.7%	17.7%	27.6%	32%	16.7%	100%

Note: Chi-square (5 df) = 20.43, $p < .001$; 11 missing cases (1.4%).

TABLE 2
Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD	Range
1. Target Skin Tone	–	.47**	.14*	.05	.09†	.11*	.10†	-.04	3.27	1.18	0.00- 5.00
2. Parent Skin Tone	.52**	–	.02	-.01	.10†	.09†	-.01	-.04	2.78	1.30	0.00- 5.00
3. Quality of Parenting	-.10*	-.02	–	-.22**	.17**	-.02	-.13*	-.01	54.84	5.71	0.00- 64.00
4. Racial Discrimination	.02	-.05	-.19**	–	.14**	.40**	.08	.06	1.76	.65	1.00- 4.00
5. Racial Socialization- Cultural Socialization	-.02	-.01	.24**	.19**	–	.43**	.11*	-.06	2.48	.97	1.00- 5.00
6. Racial Socialization- Preparation for Bias	.05	.07	-.09†	.46**	.36**	–	.30**	.07	2.28	1.05	1.00- 5.00
7. Racial Socialization- Promotion of Mistrust	.05	.12*	-.02	.18**	.15**	.33**	–	.05	1.35	.67	1.00- 5.00
8. Target Attractiveness	-.13**	.01	.17**	-.01	.03	.03	–	–	3.30	.83	1.00- 5.00
	M	3.02	2.67	54.57	1.77	2.54	2.35	1.28	3.13		
	SD	1.09	1.27	5.88	.60	1.06	1.03	.59	.95		

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$ (two-tailed tests). Females below diagonal ($n=417$), males above diagonal ($n=350$).

TABLE 3
Hierarchical Regression Models Predicting Quality of Parenting and Racial Discrimination

	Quality of Parenting				Racial Discrimination ²	
	Males		Females		Males	Females
	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model I
	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
Intercept	.02* (.23)	.03* (.24)	-.55** (.17)	-.57** (.16)	1.04** (.23)	1.61** (.19)
Main Effects						
Target Skin Tone	.16* (.07)	.16* (.07)	-.10* (.06)	-.10* (.06)	.08 (.06)	.05 (.06)
PC Skin Tone	-.06 (.08)	-.06 (.07)	.04 (.05)	.03 (.06)		
Two-way Interaction						
Target Skin Tone \times PC Skin Tone		-.03 (.07)		-.02 (.05)		
Control Variable						
Target Attractiveness	.00 (.06)	.00 (.06)	.16** (.05)	.16** (.05)	.08 (.06)	.00 (.05)
Adjusted R ²	.120	.121	.136	.137	.012	.005

Note: ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$; † $\leq .10$ (two-tailed); All independent variables are standardized by z-transformation (mean= 0 & SD= 1); dependent variables are transformed using the natural logs; n= 767; PC means primary caregiver.

² The racial discrimination model is the only outcome that does not include a test for the main effect of primary caregiver and the interaction effect because there is no theoretical base for testing these paths.

TABLE 4
Hierarchical Regression Models Predicting Racial Socialization

	Cultural Socialization				Preparation for Bias				Promotion of Bias			
	Males		Females		Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model II	Model I	Model II
	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
Intercept	2.27** (.23)	2.31** (.22)	1.85** (.19)	1.85** (.19)	1.16** (.24)	1.17** (.24)	1.67** (.17)	1.65** (.17)	.39** (.20)	.40** (.20)	.62** (.17)	.61** (.17)
Main Effects												
Target Skin Tone	.07 (.06)	.06 (.06)	-.01 (.06)	-.01 (.06)	.11† (.06)	.10† (.06)	.05 (.06)	.05 (.06)	.17** (.05)	.17** (.05)	.01 (.06)	.01 (.06)
PC Skin Tone	.07 (.06)	.07 (.06)	-.02 (.06)	-.03 (.06)	.03 (.06)	.03 (.06)	.05 (.06)	.06 (.04)	.09† (.06)	.10† (.06)	.11* (.06)	.12* (.06)
Two-way Interaction												
Target Skin Tone × PC Skin Tone		-.10† (.06)		-.01 (.05)		-.03 (.05)		.04 (.06)		.01 (.05)		.02 (.05)
Control Variable												
Target Attractiveness	-.06 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	.03 (.05)	.03 (.05)	.10† (.06)	.10† (.06)	.02 (.05)	.02 (.05)	.05 (.05)	.05 (.05)	-.02 (.05)	-.02 (.05)
Adjusted R ²	.018	.027	.002	.002	.123	.124	.007	.009	.125	.126	.112	.112

Note: **p ≤ .01; *p ≤ .05; † ≤ .10 (two-tailed); All independent variables are standardized by z-transformation (mean= 0 & SD= 1); dependent variables are transformed using the natural logs; n= 767; PC means primary caregiver.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In response to Burton and colleagues (2010) recent *Journal of Marriage and Family* decade in review article which called upon scholars to “remain vigilant” in the ways in which racialized systems and differentiations are evaluated in the lives of contemporary families of color and to incorporate more discourse on colorism in future research, the current study responded to this charge by advancing previous findings and addressing unstudied areas of research on the impact of skin tone on racism, colorism, and racial socialization in the lives of African Americans and African American families. Past research has historically demonstrated that lighter skin African Americans have more of an advantage than their darker skin counterparts (Keith & Herring, 1991; Seltzer & Smith, 1991; Anderson & Cromwell, 1977) because lighter skin affords more opportunities and access to resources in almost all categories of life chance outcomes (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Keith & Herring, 1991; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Therefore, the present study was interested in whether skin tone impacts other areas of African American life such as family process and race-related outcomes. More specifically, this study investigated the impact of skin tone on two systems of discrimination affecting African Americans: *racism* in the larger U.S. society and *colorism* within African American families. Both have historically been two of the primary sources of differentiation and inequality for African Americans (Jones, 1997; Hall, 2005; Herring, 2004). In addition, this research examined whether skin tone shaped the racial socialization practices of African American families.

Although past research is consistent in the finding that racial status is strongly associated with experiences of racial discrimination (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Romero & Roberts, 1998), the limited number of studies that have explored the link between skin tone and racial discrimination demonstrate inconsistent results. Most findings indicate that compared to lighter skin African Americans, darker skin African Americans tend to experience greater levels of discrimination and unfair treatment (Allen, Telles, & Hunter, 2002; Edwards, 1973; Klonoff & Landrine, 2000). Conversely, a small number of studies have found no significant relationship between these two variables (Borrell, Kiefe, Williams, Diez-Roux, & Gordon-Larsen, 2006; Keith, Lincoln, Taylor, & Jackson, 2010). Some of the previous research also suffered from measurement error due to use of a measure of racial discrimination that focused only on whether African American had ever experienced discrimination (Krieger & Sidney, 1996). The present study did not suffer from this limitation. Therefore, the link between skin tone and racial discrimination was examined using a more reliable and comprehensive measure of the frequency of discrimination which builds confidence in study results. Study findings support research that has found no relationship between skin tone and racial discrimination. In fact, results show no significant relationship for males or females which suggests that skin tone does not have any effect on the amount of racial discrimination experienced by African Americans adolescents.

Though surprising given the wealth of literature suggesting that colorism disadvantages darker skin individuals, this finding is consistent with a recent study that revealed that women's experiences of discrimination did not differ by skin tone (Keith, Lincoln, Taylor, & Jackson, 2010). One possible explanation for why racial discrimination does not vary by skin tone may be because the majority of African American youth experience racial discrimination. For example, numerous studies have indicated that African American adolescents experience

significantly higher levels of racial discrimination than other racial/ethnic groups (Fisher et al. 2000; Romero & Roberts, 1998) and the majority report experiencing at least one incident of discrimination during their lifetime (Gibbons et al., 2004). Therefore, taken together, it appears that African Americans racial status is enough to engender discriminatory behaviors and lightness or darkness of skin does not either protect African Americans from or exacerbate the experiences of racial discrimination. As a result, racial status (e.g., being African American) is a more salient cause of discrimination than skin tone. Thus, in the case of racial discrimination, African Americans may be incorrect in their assumption that skin tone matters.

Narratives of colorism in African American families can be found in numerous literary work and autobiographical accounts, yet, there has been a dearth of quantitative research examining how colorism operates within African American families. The majority of literature in this area of research has been anecdotal and qualitative in nature and have revealed that African Americans not only show skin tone bias, they also teach bias directly to their children (Harvey, 1995; Russell et al., 1992; Wilder & Cain, 2011). Therefore, based on these previous findings, the current study addresses an unstudied area of research by examining how colorism within African American families may be expressed through preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting to children based on skin tone. This study posited that just as gender, birth order, weight, and other individual traits of children influence parenting (Mandara, Varner, & Richman, 2010; McHale, Updegraff, Jackson-Newsom, Tucker, & Crouter, 2000; Simons et al, 2008), this may also be the case for skin tone. In fact, the research literature suggested that colorism could work in two ways within African American families. First, families would display a preference for lighter skin due to historical preference for lighter skin within the African American community, as well as the larger U.S. society. Thus, lighter skin adolescents

would receive preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting. Second, there would be higher quality of parenting for darker skin adolescents because families understand that these adolescents are likely to experience more racial discrimination. Thus, they engage in higher quality of parenting in an attempt to counter this discrimination or protect their children from it. Interestingly, study results provide evidence that colorism operates through both processes indicating that skin tone is a new factor that can influence parenting.

The findings also show uniquely different patterns for males and females. For example, in the case of males, findings show that darker skin African American males received higher quality of parenting than lighter skin males. Thus, African American parents may understand the constant challenges their sons face as a result of being a black male in America and deem it necessary to equip not only their sons in general, but their darker skin sons more specifically, for a world that may discriminate against them as a result of both race and skin tone. Several studies have illustrated the effects of skin tone on the outcomes of African American men, where darker skin African American men are at a disadvantage in education, income, and the labor market (Goldsmith, Hamilton, & Darity, 2006; Hill, 2000). Therefore, parents buffer such negative effects on their darker skin sons by providing higher quality of parenting which, in turn, has been found to increase the likelihood of children having positive outcomes such as higher educational attainment (Mandara, 2006). This finding also suggests that African American parents are keened into and recognize the plight of their sons therefore are more aware of the advantages and or disadvantages their sons have based on their skin tone and are able to make parental adjustments.

For females, findings indicate that African American parents engaged in higher quality of parenting with their lighter skin daughters. This may be because these parents view skin tone

similar to the way in which skin tone is viewed in the African American community and the larger U.S. society in that lighter skin is advantageous and preferred, especially for African American females. Findings have shown lighter skin tone preferences in general (Livingston, 2001; Livingston & Brewer, 2002) and among African American children (Clark & Clark, 1946; Powell-Hopson & Hopson, 1992), adolescents (Anderson & Cromwell, 1977; Robinson & Ward, 1995), and college students (Bond & Cash, 1992; Hall, 1992). This result is also consistent with a recent qualitative study by Wilder (2010) in which female participants discussed their family's internalized scripts about dark skin and how their families lowered expectations for them and treated them differently given their dark complexion. African American parents may also show higher quality of parenting to their lighter skin daughters as a protective factor given that their daughters are more sought after in terms of romantic partners. For example, a study by Ross (1997) found that African American men were more likely to prefer lighter skin mates in dating and marital relationships. To this end, providing higher quality of parenting— such as monitoring and consistent discipline— may be a way parents guard against this potential danger for their lighter skin daughters.

The results among females should not be surprising given that the notion of beauty has been infused not only into a racial paradigm but a skin tone paradigm as well. Society places high values on female beauty in which white beauty is the standard (Kilbourne, 1999). In fact, the relationship between skin tone and beauty is very important for women because beauty is a form of social capital. Thus, it appears that African American parents may have internalized this *gendered colorism* and as a result, either consciously or unconsciously, display higher quality of parenting to their lighter skin daughters. Thus, in the case of colorism within African American

families as expressed through preferential treatment via higher quality of parenting to children based on skin tone, skin tone matters.

Lastly, this study was concerned with the extent to which skin tone influences whether African American adolescents receive racial socialization messages from their parents. There is no empirical literature regarding skin tone and racial socialization. However, a wealth of research has shown that African American families play an important role in teaching racial socialization to their children (Hughes & Chen, 1997; McAdoo, 2002; Murray, Stokes, & Peacock, 1999; Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990). It is believed that African American families buffer the negative information their children receive about their race in order to raise a physically and emotionally healthy child. For example, a study by Bynum, Burton, and Best (2007) found that parents' racial socialization messages reduced the impact of racism on psychological stress. Moreover, research on racial socialization has shown that children's characteristics contribute to whether parents transmitted racial socialization messages. For instance, one characteristic that was found to influence parents' racial socialization messages was their child's age. Parents were more likely to racially socialize their younger children (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Thus based on this research, I tested whether targets' skin tone is another characteristic that may contribute to parents' transmission of racial socialization messages (e.g., cultural socialization, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust).

First, findings on the relationship between skin tone and cultural socialization revealed that target skin tone does not influence cultural socialization (e.g., teaching about one's own group's culture, history, and heritage while emphasizing diversity and awareness of other groups) for males or females. Therefore, target skin tone does not impact whether African American families teach cultural socialization. Caregiver's skin tone was also not related to the cultural

socialization lessons taught to their male and female children. The reason for these findings may be that African American families teach these lessons based on being African American and regardless of either target or caregiver skin tone. Furthermore, findings show that caregiver's skin tone did not moderate the relationship between target skin tone and cultural socialization indicating that this link is not dependent on the skin tone of caregivers.

Results also indicated that skin tone influenced African American families' lessons on preparation for bias for males and not females. This relationship was marginally significant for males suggesting that African American families provide more preparation for potential experiences with racial bias to their darker skin sons. Conversely, for females, findings showed no relationship between skin tone and preparation for bias suggesting that African American families may teach preparation of bias to their daughters regardless of daughters' skin tone. Building upon studies that show that parents' racial socialization messages differ by gender (Thoman & Speight, 1999), current results suggests that racial socialization messages on preparation for bias also varies by skin tone— for sons. Furthermore, similar to the link between caregiver's skin tone and cultural socialization, caregiver's skin tone was not related to preparation for bias for males or females indicating that, regardless of African American caregivers' skin tone, African American families teach preparation for bias to their children. Caregiver's skin tone was also not found to moderate the relationship between target skin tone and preparation for bias for males or females.

Additionally, target skin tone predicted promotion of mistrust for males and not females. To this end, darker skin African American males were found to receive more cautions or warnings about interactions with other groups (e.g., promotion of mistrust) than lighter skin males. This may speak to research that African American males are more likely than African

American females to date outside of their race (Batson, Qian, & Lichter, 2006; Qian & Lickter, 2011; Yancey, 2002, 2007), therefore African American families may find it important to emphasize that their sons should be cautious in interacting with other groups. Or, it may be a response to the fact that African American males are more likely to be questioned by police, arrested, convicted, and incarcerated (Lundman & Kaufman, 2003; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000). Furthermore, darker skin African American males are more likely to be arrested, receive longer prison sentences, and receive the death penalty (Blair, Judd, & Chapleau, 2004; Eberhardt et al. 2006; Gyimah-Brempong & Price, 2006). On the other hand, results show a marginally significant and significant relationship between caregivers' skin tone and promotion of bias for male and female adolescents, respectively. This suggests that darker skin caregivers provide more promotion of mistrust to their children. Although not tested, it is plausible that this difference may be a result of darker skin African American caregivers experiencing unfair treatment because of their skin tone. Thus, they may strongly emphasize more mistrust unlike lighter skin caregivers who may receive more preferential treatment.

In general, the results on racial socialization suggest that African American parents transmit more racial socialization messages to their darker skin sons. This socialization may occur in order to help prepare their sons for possible negative race-related and skin tone-related experiences given that darker skin African American males have been found to receive fewer privileges than their lighter skin peers (Blair, Judd, & Chapleau, 2004). Interestingly, skin tone was generally not related to racial socialization for females. It may be that for females, African American families focus more on transmitting other messages such as self-reliance and assertiveness. For example, a study by Hill (2002) found that African American families place more emphasis on messages of self-reliance and assertiveness for their daughters than their sons.

To this end, African American families seem to believe that darker skin African American males need more racial socialization messaging, therefore it appears that in the case of racial socialization— skin tone matters.

In summary, current findings largely correspond with past literary works, autobiographical accounts, focus group discussions, and pop culture films on colorism within African American families and communities. Results undoubtedly reaffirm that colorism remains a salient issue among African Americans, particularly within African American families, and show that skin tone is an additional status marker that exposes African Americans to differing degrees of family process and race-related outcomes. Interestingly, taken together, these findings seem to suggest a *race paradox* operating within African American families. It seems that while African American families transmit racial socialization messages to their children in order to protect them from the realities of racism, some of these families are also perpetuating colorism that simultaneously disparages darker skin. In fact, this paradox may further explain why the two systems of discrimination among African Americans— colorism and racism— are distinct, but inextricably linked.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Although the current study has several strengths, it is not without limitations. Two weaknesses in particular need to be mentioned. First, this study includes only African Americans. It is important to note that recent studies have identified the existence of colorism among other people of color (Allen, Telles, & Hunter, 2000; Arce, Murguia, & Frisbie, 1987; Hall, 2008). Therefore, future research should replicate my findings using other racial/ethnic groups. A final limitation of my study was that there were not an adequate proportion of fathers included in the FACHS data, therefore I was not able to test and capture potential differences

between mothers and fathers and their sons and daughters. Future studies should examine more closely the role of parent and child gender on skin tone and outcomes impacted by skin tone.

Notwithstanding these limitations, these results are important for several reasons. First, the current study builds upon a burgeoning area of research that examines the role of skin tone in the lives of African Americans and African American families. This research advances previous findings and identified new areas of research by investigating the effects of skin tone on family processes and race-related outcomes such as quality of parenting, racial discrimination, and racial socialization. Second, this study went beyond most previous studies which have focused on skin tone for individuals who came of age during the Civil Rights Era (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Keith & Herring, 1991) by exploring the effects of skin tone on individuals who came of age in the millennium. This analysis of a more contemporary sample is important because the effects of skin tone seen a few decades ago was not the same when tested on a younger cohort of African Americans. Third, because only a small number of previous studies on skin tone have explored gender differences, this study was able to focus on the unique gender differences. Lastly, the current research was able to control for physical attractiveness, which is a significant confounding variable when examining skin tone (Hill, 2002).

In conclusion, it is also important for researchers to recognize that the daily experience of being African American is not homogenous but rather race often interacts with skin tone, gender, and other factors to provide different everyday experiences for African Americans. The homogeneous depictions of African Americans often eliminate such skin tone and gender distinctions found in the current study. Thus, failure to include these differences in social science research will result in research inconsistency with social reality. It is also important that the researchers understand that ignoring colorism practices in African American families may

impede the efforts of scholars to advance research on African American families and families of color more broadly.

The finding also suggests that although African American families may be a core piece in teaching and perpetuating skin tone bias, these families may also be the solution to eliminating such colorism within families and communities. It appears that most African American parents are doing a good job in buffering the effect of racism on some of their children by providing higher quality of parenting and racial socialization, therefore, preventative-intervention programs aimed at families of color should build off of this positive but complex finding that is at the core of this paper. For example, family programs that emphasize quality of parenting should first recognize that family processes impact how skin tone and race-related outcomes operate within family context (and vice versa) and include not only issues of racism but issues of colorism in program dialogue in order to expose skin tone bias which has been a “dirty little secret” entrenched within African American families and communities. My hope is that the findings from this study will not only add to the body of knowledge on colorism, racism, and racial socialization but that it will help researchers, educators, and mental health professional to improve their understanding of the complex dynamics that take place within African American families.

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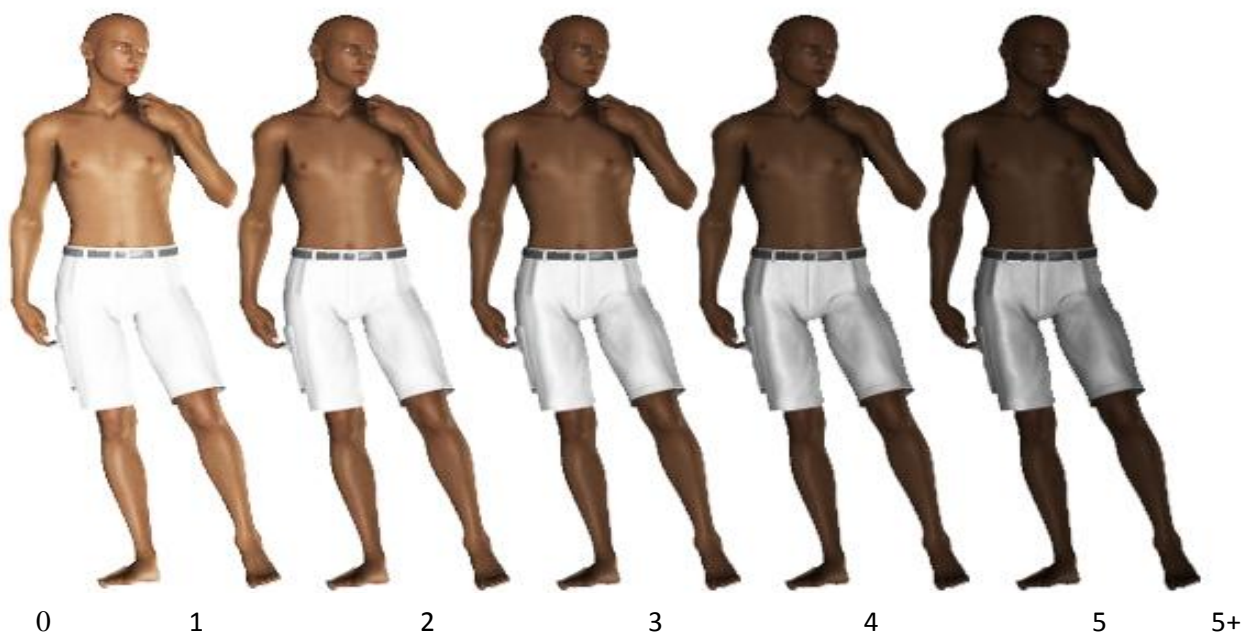
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APPENDIX A

SKIN TONE RATING MEASURE

Pictorial Measure: Use the 5-figure skin tone rating chart on the next page as the primary basis for scoring skin tone shade. To assist scoring, each image is presented twice—once in color tones and again in grayscale (black & white) tones. When scoring, pay attention to the gradation (shades) in skin tone from lighter to darker.



SCORE	SKIN TONE COLOR NAME	SKIN TONE DESCRIPTOR	SKIN TONE SHADE
0	None of the below	White	Very light
1	Light Brown	Light, light skinned, yellow (also includes very light, but not quite 0)	Light
2	Medium Brown	Caramel	Medium light
3	Brown	Brown, brown skinned	Medium
4	Dark Brown / Very Brown	Mocha	Medium Dark
5	Black	Dark, Dark skinned / ebony (also includes very dark skinned)	Dark

APPENDIX B

PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS RATING MEASURE

This scale assesses the Rater's subjective rating of the Focal's physical features and/or overall physical appearance. It measures the degree to which the Focal may be considered physically unappealing or appealing to the Rater. The scale assesses the extent to which the Focal's physical features and/or appearance qualities elicit the Rater's subjective response using the categories below:

1 = Mainly unattractive: low attractiveness; unpleasant looking; unappealing.
2 = Somewhat unattractive: somewhat unattractive; less attractive than average.
3 = Mixed or neutral: middle or mid-level attractiveness; typical in attractiveness; average appearance; ordinary looking; neither attractive or unattractive.
4 = Somewhat attractive: somewhat more attractive than average; nice looking; good looking; attractive.
5 = Mainly attractive: highly or very attractive; considerably more attractive than average; very good looking; appealing; beautiful; gorgeous; handsome.

Clarifications: Physical Attractiveness

- Code Physical Attractiveness separately for each Focal based on silent tape viewing.
- Fast forward approximately 2 minutes into the task, stop the tape, make tentative ratings, then let the tape play briefly and finalize the rating for each Focal.
- Consider a Focal's general physical appearance; use the categories 1 – 5 to rate each Focal's overall attractiveness.
- Rate only a Focal's physical features (i.e., face, hair, eyes, weight, body shape, etc.), excluding his or her clothing, the room furnishings, and the attractiveness of other family members.
- Physical Attractiveness should be rated based on the Rater's own subjective opinion of attractiveness in light of general cultural norms for physical appeal.
- Consider 3 as the mid-point, and rate toward the ends of the scale. When debating between 1-2 or 2-3, rate down; when debating between 3-4 or 4-5, rate up.
- By definition, everyone can't be average. For example, no more than 30% should be average (rated 3); the other 70% should be spread out among 1, 2, 4, or 5.

*Adapted from ratings of Physically Attractive as described in: Melby, J. N., Conger, R. D., Book, R., Rueter, M., Lucy, L., Repinski, D., Rogers, S., Rogers, B. & Scaramella, L. (1998). *The Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (edition 5)*, p. 18. Unpublished coding manual. Institute for Social & Behavioral Research, Iowa State University, Ames.

APPENDIX C

DETAILED LIST OF MEASURES

Quality of Parenting
<i>Warmth/Support</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]... Understand the way you feel about things? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Let you know [HE/SHE] really cares about you? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Listen carefully to your point of view? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Let you know that [HE/SHE] appreciates you, your ideas or the things you do? Was it...
<i>Hostility (eschewing hostility)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Criticize you or your ideas? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Push, grab, hit, or shove you? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Boss you around a lot? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Slap or hit you with [HIS/HER] hands? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Throw things at you? Was it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the past 12 months, how often did your [PC RELATIONSHIP]...Insult or swear at you? Was it...
<i>Monitoring</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often does your [PC RELATIONSHIP] know how well you are doing in school? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often can you do whatever you want after school without you [PC RELATIONSHIP] knowing what you are doing? Is it...
<i>Consistent Discipline</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often does your [PC RELATIONSHIP] discipline you for something at one time, and then at other times not discipline you for the same thing? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When your [PC RELATIONSHIP] disciplines you, how often does the type of discipline

you get depend on [HIS/HER] mood? Is it...
<i>Harsh Discipline (less harsh discipline)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you do something wrong, how often does your [PC RELATIONSHIP] spank you? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When your [PC RELATIONSHIP] disciplines you, how often does [HE/SHE] hit you with a belt, a paddle, or something else? Is it...
Racial Discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often has a store-owner, sales clerk, or person working at a place of business treated you in a disrespectful way just because of your race or ethnic background? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often have the police hassled you just because of your race or ethnic background? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often has someone suspected you of doing something wrong just because of your race or ethnic background? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often has someone yelled a racial slur or racial insult at you just because of your race or ethnic background? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often have you encountered people who are surprised that you, given your race or ethnic background, did something really well? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often have you been treated unfairly just because of your race or ethnic background? Is it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often have you encountered people who didn't expect you to do well just because of your race or ethnic background? Is it...
Racial Socialization (by component)
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family talked to you about important people or events in the history of your racial group?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family encouraged you to read books concerning the history or traditions of your racial group?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family taken you to places or events that reflect your racial heritage?
<i>Preparation for Bias</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family indicated that people might limit you because of your race?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family indicated that some people might treat you badly or unfairly because of your race?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family indicated that you will have to be better than other kids to get the same rewards because of your race?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often within the past year have the adults in your family talked to someone else about discrimination or prejudice against your racial group while you were present?

Promotion of Mistrust

- How often within the past year have the adults in your family talked to you about how you can't trust kids from other racial or ethnic groups?
- How often within the past year have the adults in your family encouraged you to keep your distance from kids of a race or ethnicity that differs from yours?