LINKING GENERAL PARENTING AND RACIAL SOCIALIZATION TO RURAL AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTHS' ADJUSTMENT

by

NELROSE CHANDLER SIMS

(Under the direction of Velma McBride Murry)

ABSTRACT

Data from 668 rural African American families, with an 11-year-old adolescent, were examined to test pathways through which individual racial socialization components influence youth adjustment through the enhancement of self-pride, self-control, and goal-directed future orientation, and through the prevention of externalizing and internalizing. Youth gender and general parenting behaviors, including nurturant-involvement, harsh-inconsistent discipline, and parent-child affective relationship quality, were examined as moderators of these pathways. Results supported adequate model fit of two hypothesized pathways, (CFI = .9996, RMSEA = .024 (.00, .055); CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00 (.00, .064)), and supported the hypotheses that nurturing and involved parents are most likely to engage in racial socialization and that individual racial components have unique effects on youth. Specifically, while preparation for bias promotes positive development, promotion of mistrust contributes to decreased self-control and increased externalizing in African American youth, even when associated with effective parenting.

INDEX WORDS: Rural African American Families, Racial Socialization, Parenting, Racial Identity, Self-control, Externalizing, Internalizing, Gender

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A.B., Princeton University, 1999

M.S., The University of Georgia, 2005

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2007

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# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Nelrose Anderson Sims, an exuberant humanitarian who has guided and cheered me throughout my education. Your values and sacrifices are my foundation.

I would also like to honor the memory of my grandmothers, Nelrose Boykin Anderson and Dixie Blissard Sims, for their wisdom, grace, and humor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am enormously grateful to have had the opportunity to work with my major professor, Velma McBride Murry, on this project. Her intelligence and generosity as a mentor have inspired me and contributed to my development as a researcher, writer, and thinker. I would also like to acknowledge the time and energy that my committee members put into this project. Drs. Joan Jackson and Steven Beach, thank you for your valuable contributions. For her input on the "seedling" stage of this dissertation, I am grateful to Dr. Gail Wyatt. And for their clinical mentorship, support, and perspective, I am grateful to Drs. Mark Davis and Scott Miller at the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders. In addition, I'd like to thank Dr. Kimberly Shipman, whose mentoring in my first three years of graduate school shaped my thinking about families, both as a focus of my research and in my clinical work. Finally, I'd like to thank Dr. Yi-fu Chen for his statistical knowledge and kindness, as well as the Family Research Center investigators, staff, and study participants who made this project possible.

To my wonderful family, I love you and am so grateful for your support over these years. My fiancé, Steven Chang, has nourished me daily with humor, compassion, and patience. My parents, Hoytt and Mary, Nelrose and Sharon; brother DeSha and sister-in-law Kara; Besty and Ed; my step-family and extended family; and the Chang family, Irene, Dominic, Dennis, and Schuyler. I would also like to acknowledge my dear friends, especially my Georgia classmates, with whom I have shared so many formative experiences. I am so grateful for your companionship.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Racial socialization is the process by which African American parents communicate cultural values and prepare children for racial discrimination. Studies of racial socialization are an integral part of African American family research, as parents' promoting ethnic pride and preparing children for racism are unique responsibilities within this community. Findings from numerous studies converge and indicate that racial socialization, when examined as an amalgamation of related behaviors, contributes to adaptive psychosocial development. That said, scholars note that much conceptual variability across studies results in difficulty interpreting and generalizing related findings (Stevenson, 1994; Hughes, 2003). While current literature generally identifies at least three subsets of racial socialization behaviors—including promotion of mistrust, preparation for bias, and cultural pride—few studies have examined the specific effects of these distinct behavior subsets. Moreover, while racial socialization naturally occurs in the midst of other parenting behaviors, the construct is usually examined either without consideration of other parenting behaviors or combined together as a single measure of effective parenting. The current study contributes to limitations in extant racial socialization literature by disentangling distinct subsets of racial socialization behaviors and examining them within the context of other parenting behaviors. In doing so, the findings aim to identify the particular racial socialization components that may be most protective for African American youth and indicate specific parenting strategies that best complement this process.

Despite current limitations, significant findings indicate that, as a whole, racial socialization is predictive of adaptive social and emotional development in African American youth. The extant literature suggests that parental racial socialization is associated with positive

psychological functioning, including decreased rates of depression and hostility (Stevenson, 1995), as well as other markers of healthy development, such as positive racial identity, academic achievement, problem-solving skills, self-esteem and behavioral regulation (Sanders, 1997; Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Murry, Brody, et al., 2005).

Despite consistent findings that racial socialization promotes healthy development in youth, there is some evidence that racial socialization behaviors can have a negative impact on psychosocial development. For example, some studies have indicated that parents' promotion of mistrust of other races is associated with poorer cognitive and socioemotional functioning in children (Hughes & Chen, 1999), distrust and anger (Ogbu, 1974), and conduct disordered behavior (Biafora, Taylor, Warheit, Zimmerman, & Vega, 1993). It is also likely that contextual factors, such as child gender and family socioeconomic status, moderate the link between particular racial socialization messages and developmental outcomes. For example, Stevenson (1997) found that, among males, parents' promotion of cultural pride was linked to less hostility while parents' racism awareness teaching was associated with anger dysregulation (including maladaptive anger expression, suppression of anger). Noting such discrepancies in the literature, Stevenson (1997) identified an important distinction between general racial socialization messages and racial socialization messages that are particularly beneficial for youth. He referred to the latter as adaptive racial socialization and described this set of behaviors as teaching children about the realities of racial discrimination while emphasizing the possibility of achieving goals despite oppression. Nevertheless, important divergences in the literature represent limitations in our current understanding of distinct racial socialization behaviors and their unique contribution to adaptive racial socialization.

As racial socialization is usually examined as a single set of behaviors, without consideration of the diverse behaviors that comprise the construct, disentangling these behaviors represents an important contribution to the literature. This investigation provides a more specific examination of distinct racial socialization behaviors and their unique contributions to youth psychosocial adjustment. Furthermore, this study recognizes that racial socialization behaviors do not occur in a vacuum. On the contrary, racial socialization behaviors naturally occur in conjunction with daily parent-child interactions and parenting behaviors. Thus far, studies have either examined racial socialization separately from other parenting behaviors or together with them as a single construct. The current study provides a clearer picture of the parenting process that includes both racial socialization and other general parenting behaviors by examining them as distinct behaviors and then as they co-occur. To our knowledge, there are no previous studies that characterize the nature of other parenting behaviors associated with racial socialization. As such, no previous studies have identified how these associated parenting behaviors moderate the effects of racial socialization. In sum, little is known about the distinct effects of specific racial socialization messages (i.e., promotion of mistrust, preparation for bias, cultural pride), and even less is known about the effects of various general parenting behaviors on racial socialization processes in African American families.

It is important to consider the impact of general parenting behaviors on racial socialization processes, as research suggests that parenting plays a primary role in a child's psychosocial development. Past research demonstrates that consistent discipline, a nurturant and involved approach, and a positive affective parent-child relationship are related to adaptive social and emotional development in youth. Findings indicate that parenting characterized by support and involvement reduces youths' negative emotionality; promotes a future orientation, self-

regulation, self-esteem, and academic success; helps youths deal effectively with racial discrimination; and reduces youths' likelihood of internalizing negative messages about their race (Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2004; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Spencer, McDermott, Burton, & Kochman, 1997; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Empirical findings with African American families demonstrate that parents who are involved and monitoring protect their children from dangerous surroundings and involvement in antisocial activity (Brody et al., 2001; Brody, Kim, et al., 2003, 2004); teach them to be vigilant and to anticipate potentially dangerous events in their neighborhoods and schools (Allen & Majidi-Ahi, 1989; Willis, 1992); promote the development of self-regulation; and prevent the development of externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors (Brody, Dorsey, Forehand, & Armistead, 2002; Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999; Brody, Murry, Kim, & Brown, 2002), and substance use (Gibbons, Gerrard, Cleveland, Wills, & Brody, 2004). In addition, positive affective parent-child relationships in African American families are related to youth self-regulation, academic competence, psychological adjustment, and avoidance of alcohol use (Brody et al., 2002; Gibbons et al., 2004; Wills, Gibbons, Gerrard, & Brody, 2000). Thus, parenting characterized by nurturant involvement, consistent discipline, and a positive affective parent-child relationship may be expected to augment the positive effects of racial socialization behaviors. It is likely that racial socialization behaviors enacted in the context of such positive parenting behaviors may be bolstered in their association with positive outcomes in youth.

The current study is an investigation of the impact of general parenting behaviors on the links between distinct racial socialization components and adaptive social and emotional development in African American youth. In order to demonstrate this relationship, the study first assesses the association of general parenting variables (including nurturant-involved parenting,

harsh-inconsistent parenting, and parent-child relationship quality) with racial socialization messages (including preparation for bias, cultural pride, and promotion of mistrust). The next step involves testing the moderating effects of general parenting practices on racial socialization behaviors to determine the extent to which high and low levels of specific parenting styles influence the effects of racial socialization. The analyses then examine the buffering effects of youth self-pride and self-regulation on the link between parenting (including racial socialization) and the manifestation of externalizing behaviors. In the proposed model, youth self-pride and self-regulation were examined as potential mediators of the link between general parenting and prevention of externalizing behaviors, including delinquency and aggression. An additional model was then analyzed to measure the impact of racial socialization components (along with general parenting variables) on internalizing, which may be a precursor to the development of externalizing behaviors. Finally, the effect of youth gender on these relationships was analyzed.

The model proposed for this study was informed by theories of child development that emphasize environmental context. Specifically, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of development is an important overarching theory that positions the developing child within a set of environmental layers. The child's experience of these layers, as individual as well as interactive contexts, has a critical impact on the child's development. This theory underlies most investigations of development within a specific cultural context, which assumes that ethnic identity not only has meaning within the family unit but also in the child's larger social experience. From this perspective, theories of parental socialization provide further understanding of how parents navigate these contexts and transmit cultural values, mores, and standards of behavior to their children (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Within this framework, a primary goal of parenting is to teach children these skills that will help them function within a

larger social context. Racial socialization is an example of parental behaviors that are thought to promote a child's understanding of his or her race and the social implications of that identity. For this study, we also relied on the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy as a phenomenon that may be especially meaningful in African Americans' developmental processes. Self-fulfilling prophecy is the process in which a person's expectations about an individual elicit those behaviors, thereby confirming expectations (Smith & Mackie, 1995). The way that others perceive a child has important implications for the child's self-identity, attitudes, and behaviors. The current study addresses the way in which racial socialization promotes the development of internal processes, including self-pride and self-regulation, which may protect youth from internalizing their encounters with racial discrimination.

# CHAPTER 2

# CURRENT STUDY AND RELATED LITERATURE

Racial socialization is the process by which some African American parents prepare their children for experiences of bias and instill in them a sense of cultural pride. This two-fold function of racial socialization appears to protect youth from a number of deleterious effects that racial discrimination and perceived discrimination can hold for African American youth. By preparing youth for such experiences, through race-based problem-solving and preparation, and by promoting youths' individual self-esteem and racial identity, parents seem to promote the internal traits, including self-pride and self regulation, that protect them from engaging in the world in more maladaptive forms, such as delinquency and aggression.

## *Racial Discrimination and Youth Developmental Outcomes*

African American parents have an additional responsibility of preparing their children to live in a society in which they will encounter racism. As research demonstrates, racial discrimination persists today and is associated with significant distress and negative outcomes in individuals who experience it (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Simons et al., 2002). In fact, African American families function in a context in which both the parents and the children encounter discrimination (McLoyd, 1998; Murry, 2000). Among youth, experiences with discrimination and perceived discrimination have been linked with stress, depression, and anxiety, as well as serious externalizing problems, including anger, delinquent activity, and substance use (Brody, Chen, et al., 2006). With the reality of racial discrimination as a contextual factor in African American families, parents may explicitly or implicitly prepare their children to experience minority status via racial socialization behaviors such as preparing them for bias and promoting cultural pride.

Research indicates that African Americans continue to experience racism regularly (Kessler et al., 1999). In fact, Brody, Chen, et al. (2006) found that 92% of African American adolescents in their sample experienced a racist event in the past year. Landrine and Klonoff (1996) found that 98% of their sample of African American individuals had experienced some form of racial discrimination within the past year. Theoretical and empirical evidence also suggests that awareness of racism as it occurs is adaptive (Stevenson, 1995). African American youth encounter racial discrimination in a number of forms, including individually (at school or socially), vicariously through their family members, or at the community level.

Theoretical and empirical research suggests that experiences with racism and perceived discrimination contribute to negative developmental outcomes for African American youth. Numerous studies have linked discriminatory experiences to increases in youth hostility, frustration, and stress (Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997); and depression and anxiety among adolescents (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996) and adults (Jackson, Williams, & Torres, 1997; Sanders-Thompson, 1996). In turn, findings indicate that racism contributes to substance use in adolescence (Gibbons et al., 2004) and failure to meet educational goals (Rumbaut, 1994).

Similarly, perceived discrimination has been linked to negative outcomes, including depression, anger, and a hostile world view (Brody, Chen, et al., 2006; Gibbons et al., 2004); and, indirectly, to decreases in school engagement (Brody, Chen, et al., 2006). A number of externalizing behaviors may be related to perceived discrimination, including conduct problems, delinquent activity, and substance use (Brody, Chen, et al., 2006; Dubois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale, & Hardesty, 2002). Research demonstrates that anticipation of future racial discrimination compromises adolescents' psychological well-being (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986),

and the experience of racism may deter youth from engaging in planful, future-oriented behaviors (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

### *General Risk Factors and Youth Externalizing and Internalizing Problems*

Across cultures, early adolescence is sometimes accompanied by increases in problematic behaviors, such as conduct disorder and depression (Caron & Rutter, 1991; Eccles, Lord & Roeser, 1996). Externalizing behavior problems include aggression and hostility (including physical aggression towards others); impulsivity/hyperactivity; and noncompliance with limits set by adults and peers (McMahon, 1994). Externalizing behaviors are linked with academic underachievement, conduct disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, poor social skills and peer competence; and criminality and adult psychopathology (Farmer, 1995; Hinshaw, 1992; Parker & Asher, 1987). General risk factors for externalizing behaviors include temperament (Rubin, Coplan, Fox, & Calkins, 1995; Deater-Deckham, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1998), being male (Deater-Deckham et al., 1998; Huselid & Cooper, 1994; Zahn-Waxler, 1993), and peer experiences, such as peer rejection (Deater-Deckham et al., 1998; Parker & Asher, 1987). Other risk factors across ethnicities include poverty or low socioeconomic status (Deater-Deckham et al., 1998; Huston, McLoyd, & Coll, 1994), stressful life events (Deater-Deckham et al., 1998; Abidin, Jenkins, & McGaughey, 1992), and parental stress or isolation (Hashima & Amato, 1994; Leadbeater & Bishop, 1994). Although ethnic differences explain small amounts of variance in rates of externalizing behaviors when risk factors are accounted for (Achenbach, Howell, Quay, & Conners, 1991; Costello, 1989), ethnic minority youth in the United States are exposed to greater psychosocial risk factors than other groups (Barbarin, 1993; Barbarin & Soler, 1993; Deater-Deckard et al., 1998). It is likely that there are multiple pathways to externalizing and conduct problems (Deater-Deckham et al., 1998; Moffitt, 1993).

Past research suggests that parenting behaviors that promote youths' self-pride and self-regulation may buffer African American youth from the psychosocial risk factors that are associated with externalizing behaviors. Among African American youth, self-pride has been described as the convergence of positive racial identity and self-esteem. The development of self-pride appears to protect youth from impairments in psychological functioning (e.g., externalizing, internalizing behaviors) that are associated with experiences of discrimination. Self-pride is a construct that may be unique to non-Caucasian youth, as the equivalent construct among Caucasian youth is often identified and studied as self-esteem. In fact, most research on self-esteem has been conducted among Caucasian youth, while most of what is known about African American youths' self appraisal is embedded in racial identity research. While researchers in this area vary in the extent to which they demarcate racial identity and self-esteem in African American youth, it is clear that racial identity, especially when one's race is central to one's sense of self, is intrinsic to self-esteem. Thus self-pride, measured as a combination of racial identity and self-esteem, captures this construct that is integral to healthy development in African American youth.

Racial identity, as distinguished from general self-esteem, has been widely researched as a developmental process among minority groups that functions similarly to ego identity development, which is considered a crucial developmental task of adolescence (Erickson, 1968). For adolescents in ethnic minority groups, racial identity formation is an essential part of this process (Munford, 1994; Pyant & Yanico, 1991; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Racial identity development among African American adolescents has been associated with positive mental health and psychological well-being (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997). Specifically, positive racial identity has been linked to decreases in

anxiety (Parham & Helms, 1985) and depression (Munford, 1994). Researchers note that African American youth appear to be protected from adjustment problems by a strong identification with their ethnic group (Hill, 1999; Hughes & Chen, 1999), and that a positive racial identity may equip youth to reject negative images conveyed by the larger society (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000; Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, & Chen, in press).

In the current study, racial identity is measured using the constructs of centrality (i.e., degree to which defines the self with race) and black pride (i.e., esteem held for African American people and culture). In combination, youths who endorse both constructs are more likely to experience psychological well-being, including lower perceived stress, less depressive symptoms, improved general well-being (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006) and greater self-esteem (Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998). On the other hand, youth who endorse centrality with little black pride may be at greater risk for perceived stress and psychological distress, possibly due to attributing more negative events to race (Caldwell, Zimmerman, Bernat, Sellers, & Notaro, 2002; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

The construct of racial identity among African Americans appears to be highly associated with the "de-cultured" construct of self-esteem. Rosenberg (1981) defined self-esteem as meaning "that the individual respects himself, considers himself worthy" whereas low self-esteem "implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt" (p. 31). In fact, significant theoretical and empirical research suggests that racial identity and self-esteem are strongly correlated among African American youth (Murry et al., in press; Hughes & Demo, 1989). College students who had more positive feelings about African Americans and about being African American had greater self-esteem (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994). In 1995, Phinney and Chavira found that elevated self-esteem in African American youth is

associated with greater use of proactive coping in response to racial discrimination. Those with low self-esteem were more likely to engage in coping that included internalizing and externalizing behavior (e.g., anger, depression, apathy). In turn, self-esteem, in combination with positive racial identity, or self-pride, may be an important tool for adolescents as they cope with experiences of discrimination.

Self-regulation has also been identified as an important goal of development that may protect youth from externalizing behaviors. In the current study, self-regulation is investigated as a protective variable in the link between parenting and externalizing symptoms and is identified as a combination of youth self-control and future-oriented planning behaviors. Self-control, or the ability to set goals, plan actions, and consider the consequences (Bandura, 1989; Barkley, 1997; Carver & Scheier, 1998; Clausen, 1976), is negatively associated with externalizing behaviors in youth (Brody et al., 2002). Self-control continues to develop through adolescence, and deficits in this construct of inhibitory control have been theorized to underlie disruptive behavior problems in childhood (Eisenberg et al., 2001). Research based on cross-sectional and longitudinal designs indicates that self-control represents a critical link between family processes and child outcomes, including academic and social competence, psychological adjustment, affiliation with prosocial peers, and avoidance of early sexual activity and substance use (Brody et al., 2002; Murry & Brody, 1999; Wills et al., 2000, 2003).

Adolescents who exhibit self-control abilities are likely to monitor their behavior and consider future consequences of current actions. As such, future-oriented planning, which involves thinking about consequences of behaviors and making decisions with goals in mind, has been associated with self-regulation in childhood and adolescence (Zimbardo, Keough, & Boyd, 1997). Keough, Zimbardo, and Boyd (1999) found future orientation to be linked with

adolescents' avoidance of alcohol use, an important indicator of self-control in youth. In addition, adolescents reared in high-risk environments who engage in future planning are less likely to experience psychological and social problems later in life. In sum, while normal development into adolescence, in addition to risk factors resulting from experiences with discrimination, may contribute to the development of adjustment difficulties in African American youth, the acquisition of self-pride (i.e., positive racial identity, self-esteem) and self-regulation (i.e., future-oriented planning, self-control) is likely to protect youth from developing such behavioral symptoms.

### *Disentangling General Parenting and Racial Socialization*

Research indicates that racial socialization promotes healthy social and emotional development in African American youth and buffers them from experiences of racism and negative outcomes in adolescence. In general, racial socialization is associated with an increase in positive future orientation, better preparation for dealing with experiences of discrimination, increased self-pride, academic success, and less internalization of negative racial messages among African American children (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Murry & Brody, 2002: Smith & Brookins, 1997). Similarly, Stevenson (1997) found that racial socialization experiences are associated with less sad affect, greater self-esteem and less hopelessness in girls and that cultural socialization is associated with less maladaptive anger in boys. He suggests that racial socialization is a mediator that facilitates resilience and coping in early adolescence, which is a developmental period in which an individual begins to understand the impact of racial discrimination on the ideas and goals that are valued. The adolescent must determine how to confront those challenges and will likely benefit from being exposed to discussion of these issues.

When studied as a single construct (and not in its individual components), racial socialization appears to buffer African American youth from maladaptive outcomes partially by promoting youth self-pride. Parental racial socialization behaviors may be an important contributor to adolescents' development of self-pride (Marshall, 1995; Spencer, 1983; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997), as racial socialization is positively related to both racial identity and self-esteem (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Murry & Brody, 1999; Murry et al., 2005; Smith & Brookins, 1997; Stevenson, 1997). In addition, parental racial socialization practices, by promoting racial pride, racial identity and self-esteem, have been shown to buffer youth from the stress of racial discrimination (Smith & Brookins, 1997; Murry et al., in press). Past research indicates that racial socialization behaviors contribute to youth self-pride (i.e., racial identity, self-esteem) and to self-regulation (i.e., self-control, future planning behaviors), both of which appear to protect youth from the development of externalizing symptoms.

Still, as mentioned previously, there are limits to our understanding of how racial socialization messages vary in the degree to which they contribute to this process, as they are usually investigated in aggregate fashion. Theoretical and empirical findings have supported three categories of racial socialization behaviors reflective of distinct socialization goals, including 1) cultural pride, 2) preparation for bias, and 3) promotion of mistrust (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Hughes & Chen, 1997). Cultural pride, often noted as the most frequently endorsed behavior, includes messages of ethnic diversity, heritage, and pride (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Preparation for bias refers to discussion of and preparation for racial discrimination, and promotion of mistrust includes warnings about interacting with members of other ethnic groups or practices that engender distrust of other racial groups.

The few studies investigating the specific impact of individual racial socialization components are compelling, particularly regarding the effects of preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust messages. Stevenson (1997) illustrated that preparation for bias may be associated with poorer outcomes in African American adolescent males, who reported high rates of hostility and maladaptive suppression of anger. In addition, Hughes and Chen (1997) note that little empirical attention has been given to the promotion of mistrust component of racial socialization and that an important future direction would be to investigate this particular strategy. Recent research suggests that parents' endorsement of behaviors contributing to promotion of mistrust may be predictive of more negative outcomes in children, such as poorer cognitive and socioemotional functioning (Hughes & Chen, 1999), distrust and anger with maladaptive outcomes (Ogbu, 1974), and conduct disordered behavior (Biafora et al., 1993).

Despite growing evidence of negative outcomes related to promotion of mistrust messages, a study of African American mothers living in rural Georgia indicated that "separatist" parental attitudes were associated with increases in children's self-regulation (Murry & Brody, 2002). This important finding may suggest that, for families living among historically greater racial threat, behaviors that promote mistrust of other races may be more protective and adaptive. In sum, behaviors associated with a "separatist" racial socialization style deserve further investigation, with particular attention to the moderating influence of other parenting behaviors and youth gender. The inconsistency of these findings may indicate that general parenting behaviors associated with promotion of mistrust or preparation for bias messages actually moderate the effects of individual racial socialization components. Further study is necessary to delineate the effects of individual subsets of racial socialization behaviors.

An understanding of racial socialization practices and their effect on youth development is incomplete without consideration of other general parenting behaviors. In fact, these variables may explain why racial socialization behaviors sometimes result in less favorable outcomes, such as anger dysregulation in males (Stevenson, 1997). Contextualizing racial socialization within the broader parenting milieu is currently a gap in extant racial socialization research. No one has yet specified which associated general parenting behaviors make racial socialization practices work more or less effectively. As parenting behaviors are naturally fluid, overlapping, and interacting with each other, a natural extension of this research is to understand the interaction between racial socialization and general parenting behaviors.

A great deal of research has been conducted to explicate the impact of various parenting behaviors on youth outcomes, both among Caucasian Americans and African Americans. Parenting characterized by a nurturing and involved approach is associated with multiple positive outcomes in youth. Research conducted across cultures indicates that nurturant-involved parenting is positively associated with resilient adaptation in children and adolescents (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Masten, 2001). Control is an additional component that describes effective parenting. In general, parenting characterized by involvement, vigilant monitoring, and control in conjunction with emotional and instrumental support appears to promote healthy socioemotional development (Brody, Stoneman, & Flor, 2006).

On the other hand, a large body of literature has documented the association of less effective parenting with both externalizing (e.g., Deater-Deckham et al., 1998; Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994) and internalizing (e.g., Cole & Rehm, 1986) disorders among boys and girls. A clear relationship has been established between parenting behaviors and externalizing problems, including conduct

disorders, delinquency, and aggression (Patterson, 1982). Theoretical and empirical research demonstrates that disturbances in parental involvement, parental support, non-punitive parenting practices, and monitoring are associated with the development of problematic behaviors in youth, such as externalizing behaviors (Beyers, Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 2003; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). In general, parenting that is inconsistent, includes harsh discipline, and is marked by hostility is related to increases in aggression and conduct problems in children (Patterson, 1982; Nix et al., 1999). In addition, theoretical and empirical findings indicate that hostile interactions between parents and children increase children's report of depression and anxiety symptoms (Gecas & Seff, 1990).

Increasingly, researchers are finding similar links between parenting and youth outcomes specifically in African American families. Brody, Chen, et al. (2006) found that parenting characterized by warmth, involvement, effective communication, and monitoring moderated the impact of discrimination on African American youth. Findings indicated that this nurturant-involved parenting style protected youth from increases in conduct and depressive symptoms that were linked with discrimination experiences over time. Similar results have been found in studies of involved-vigilant parenting, characterized by monitoring and control, which has been found to protect African American youth from the development of both externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Brody et al., 2002; Brody et al., 1999; Brody, Murry, et al., 2002). Involved-vigilant parenting also decreases children's likelihood of developing negative emotions, such as anger and depression (Brody, Murry, McNair, & Chen, 2005; McLoyd, 1998; Spencer & Dornbusch, 1990), and is associated with lower school truancy and delinquent behaviors (Baumrind, 1991; Loeber & Dishion, 1983). Parental warmth and support lessens the influence of negative life changes on adolescent mental health trajectories (Hauser, Vieyra, Jacobson, & Wertlieb, 1985;

Petersen, Sarigiani, & Kennedy, 1991). Youth who expect non-critical listening from their parents will be more likely to engage in discussions with them about sensitive topics. In addition, positive affective parent-child relationships promote psychological adjustment (Brody, Murry, et al., 2002; Gibbons et al., 2004; Wills et al., 2000) and are associated with lower levels of substance use and externalizing behaviors among rural African American adolescents (Brody & Ge, 2001).

Conversely, parenting that is characterized by hostility appears to be significantly related to externalizing symptoms in youth (Kim et al., 2003). In fact, multiple studies have indicated that hostile parenting or negative parent-child relationships are a mediating link between family stress and youth externalizing symptoms (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994; Jones, Forehand, Brody, & Armistead, 2002). In a longitudinal study of parenting effects on youth outcomes, findings indicated that harsh and inconsistent parenting with less nurturant involvement was associated with an increase in conduct problems over time (Kim et al., 2003). In addition, uninvolved parenting is associated with depressive symptoms in early adolescents who are African American (Simons et al., 2002).

Adaptive parenting behaviors, which include racial socialization in African American family research, are positively linked to youth self-pride. In cross-cultural studies, parenting characterized by warmth and support is positively associated with self-worth in children (Maccoby, 1992; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and self-esteem in adolescents (Holmbeck & Hill, 1986; Peterson, Southworth, & Peters, 1983). Among African American families, parenting behaviors may play an even more specific role in instilling racial identity and self-esteem in youth. Findings indicate that effective parenting behaviors help youth deal effectively with experiences of racial discrimination and reduce their internalizing of these racist messages

(Brody et al., 2004; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Spencer et al., 1997; Brody, Chen et al., 2006). Among African Americans, parenting that includes emotional support, instrumental assistance, racial socialization, and monitoring promotes a sense of self that enables youths to cope more effectively with daily hassles and acute stressors (Luthar et al., 2000). In addition, maternal support (i.e., emotional support, problem-solving, and moral support) has been linked to racial centrality (i.e., extent to which being African American was central to identity) and private regard (i.e., positive feelings towards African Americans) (Caldwell et al., 2002). On the other hand, past findings indicate that hostile interactions between parents and children decrease children's sense-of-self (Gecas & Seff, 1990). Similarly, parenting that includes use of guilt, anxiety, and withholding of love as a means of parental control is negatively related to self-esteem (Graybill, 1978; Kawash et al., 1985), and the use of harsh discipline has been linked to low self-esteem (Litovsky & Dusek, 1985).

Adaptive parenting also seems to promote youth's future-oriented planning behaviors. Research conducted with African American families indicates that adaptive parenting promotes a future orientation, self-regulation, and academic success (Brody et al., 2004; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Spencer et al., 1997; Brody, Chen, et al., 2006). Empirical findings demonstrate that involved-vigilant parenting and positive parent-child relationships are associated with the development of self-regulation (Brody et al., 2002; Brody et al., 1999; Brody, Murry, et al., 2002), thereby deterring them from other maladaptive outcomes, such as substance use (Gibbons et al., 2004). Warm, supportive parents promote a child's sense of self-efficacy and optimism (Maccoby, 1992; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) among families of various ethnicities. Interestingly, frequent, harmonious parent-child discussion contributes to youths' development of planful self-regulation (Brody, Murry, et al., 2002), and involved-vigilant parenting along with an affectively

positive parent-child relationship is positively associated with youth self-control (Brody et al., 2005).

*Moderating effects of youth gender*

An important component of this study is an examination of how aforementioned links related to racial socialization and adjustment may differ as a result of youth gender. Past research in the areas of racial socialization and racial identity has established significant gender differences (Stevenson, 1997; Phinney, 1989; Rowley et al., 1998). Specifically, Stevenson (1997) identified a striking difference in the way that males and females responded to parents' racial socialization messages characterized by preparation for bias as well as cultural pride. Findings revealed a consistent pattern of parents' preparation for bias messages predicting unhealthy suppression or dysregulated expression of anger in males but not in females. In addition, he found that messages of cultural pride were related to higher levels of maladaptive state anger for females but not for males. Furthermore, recent research indicates that child gender may impact the frequency of parental racial socialization behaviors (McHale et al., 2006). This particular study found that fathers endorse more frequent racial socialization behaviors, in sum, with their male children than females.

There are also important gender differences in the general parenting literature that may be relevant in this integrative study. For example, boys may be more likely to receive harsh discipline from parents and more likely to have mothers who value their sons' aggression towards others, both characteristics that are risk factors for developing externalizing behaviors (Deater-Deckard et al., 1998; Kim et al., 2003). Based on these gender findings, boys appear to be more likely to respond favorably to positive parenting practices in concurrence with racial socialization messages.

*Study hypotheses*

Based on prior research presented herein, we posited that adaptive racial socialization components would be indirectly linked to decreases in youths' externalizing behaviors through the youths' self-pride and self-regulation. We also predicted that parenting styles would have a moderating effect on racial socialization components. Specifically parenting characterized by nurturant-involvement and a positive affective parent-child relationship would be most likely to co-occur with racial socialization components of preparation for bias and cultural pride. Parenting characterized by harsh-inconsistent discipline was predicted to co-occur most frequently with promotion of mistrust racial socialization messages, as these stances may be more anger-based and lacking in problem-solving or self-efficacy. Regarding moderation effects, the positive outcomes associated with racial socialization components would be strengthened when paired with positive parenting behaviors (i.e., nurturant-involved parenting, positive affective parent-child relationship quality). Based on previous findings, self-pride and self-regulation will act as mediating links between racial socialization messages and decreased externalizing behaviors. In addition to this primary model, an additional model was proposed to investigate the link from general parenting and racial socialization behaviors to general internalizing behaviors, as well as the link from internalizing to externalizing. Finally, considering past divergences in the literature specifically for adolescent males, it was hypothesized that males would experience more of a positive moderating effect from adaptive parenting variables than girls would, as males seem to be most influenced by contextual factors.

In sum, it was hypothesized that a) nurturant-involved parenting and positive affective parent-child relationship will most frequently co-occur with preparation for bias and cultural pride, b) harsh-inconsistent parenting will co-occur most frequently with promotion of mistrust

messages, c) positive parenting will positively moderate the link between racial socialization components and adaptive youth outcomes, including externalizing and internalizing, d) self-pride and self-regulation will mediate the link between racial socialization and externalizing behaviors, and e) the moderating effects of positive parenting behaviors will be more pronounced for males than for females. These hypotheses represent the notion that parenting behaviors, including adaptive racial socialization, enhance youths' development of proximal protective processes, including youth self-pride and self-regulation, which act as a buffer from the development of adjustment problems.

*Methodological issues*

This study examines the within-group links between racial socialization variables and developmental outcomes in African American youth, with particular attention to the effects of parenting style on this process. As proposed by Deater-Deckard and Dodge (1997) and others, this approach to understanding African American families is more informative than testing for main effect differences across ethnic groups (Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997; Phinney & Landin, 1998; Garcia-Coll et al., 1996). As such, these scholars recommend an emphasis on the factors and social context that may be specific to the cultural group of interest. In order to maintain a culturally informed perspective, hypotheses for the current study were based upon the emerging literature on the relationship between parenting practices and adjustment problems in African American children (Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994; Brody et al., 2002). Regarding cultural congruence in measurement, measures used in this study were modified carefully based on previous research and validated by African American focus groups. Data for this study represents baseline data collected from a larger intervention study that is part of a program of research with rural African American families that identifies family and community contributors to

competence in children and youths (Brody et al., 1994, 2001; Brody et al., 2004; Brody et al., 2002). From this competence-promoting perspective, there is the underlying assumption that rural African American families have developed strategies for promoting competence in children and youths.

To avoid confounds due to shared method variance, we investigated parent (general parenting, racial socialization) and child constructs (self-pride, self-regulation, externalizing, internalizing) from various sources, including parent, child, and teacher. Child externalizing and internalizing symptoms are based on teacher report; parenting behaviors are based on parent report. Self-pride and self-regulation measures were completed with child and teacher reports.

Regarding characteristics of the study population, this investigation represents a unique contribution to the racial socialization literature because most existing studies have been conducted with families living in urban centers primarily in northern states (Brody et al., 1994; McLoyd, 1990; McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, & Borquez, 1994). This study's sample consists of African American families living in rural counties in Georgia. Families participating in this study reside in the rural Southeastern United States, mostly in small towns and communities in which poverty rates are among the highest in the nation and unemployment rates are above the national average (Proctor & Dalaker, 2003.) Racial discrimination is as likely to operate in small or moderately sized communities as in large urban areas (Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003).

In addition, this study was conducted among African American mothers and their children between the ages of 10 and 12. From a Piagetian perspective (Piaget, 1960), children at this age are acquiring formal operational skills which include abstract thought, which allows for more sophisticated representations of self (Higgins, 1991). This particular age range is ideal for

investigating the impact of family processes on individuals' development of self-pride and self-regulation.

In sum, hypotheses were tested regarding direct and indirect paths through which racial socialization and general parenting factors protect youth from developing adjustment problems. We gathered data from parents, youths, and teachers to minimize method variance confounds. Mothers reported their own racial socialization and parenting practices; youths reported their own self-pride; and, teachers reported their perceptions of youths' self-regulation, internalizing problems, and conduct disordered behaviors, including delinquency and aggression.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHOD

Data for this study was collected as part of the Strong African American Families Program (SAAF), which is a prevention study comparing control families to families who took part in an intervention program. Families who participated in this study had 11-year old adolescents when baseline data were collected. SAAF is based on a conceptual model positing that changes in intervention-targeted parenting behaviors would enhance various youth socioemotional variables, including self-control, self-pride, and goal-directed future orientation. Data for this study includes baseline data collected for all study families prior to onset of the intervention program.

## *Participants*

Participants in the study were African American parents and their 11-year-old children ($M$ = 11.2 years of age) who resided in nine rural counties in Georgia. The age of 11 years was targeted because it marks the beginning of the transition into early adolescence, a time during which rural African American youths become more peer-oriented and aware of deviant behaviors (Brody et al., 2005, Murry, 2000). Participating families lived in small towns and communities in which poverty rates are among the highest in the nation and unemployment rates are above the national average (Proctor & Dalaker, 2003). Although the primary caregivers in the sample worked an average of 39.4 hours per week, 46.3% of the participants lived below federal poverty standards, and another 50.4% lived within 150% of the poverty threshold. These families were representative of the areas in which they lived (Boatright & Bachtel, 1999); they are best described as working poor.

An a priori power analysis based on effect sizes reported in family skill-building interventions (Lochman & van den Steenhoven, 2002) informed the size of the participant pool for the larger intervention study. For the current study, power analysis, following the method recommended by MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara (1996), suggests a minimum of 177 participants.

Schools in the nine counties provided lists of 11-year-old students, from which families were selected randomly. Of these families, 668 participated in the study, resulting in a recruitment rate of 65%. The retention rate for families providing data in all waves of collection was 94%. In 53.6% of these families, the target child was female. The families who completed the study had an average of 2.7 children. In 53.6% of these families, the target child was a girl. Of the mothers (who made up 91% of responding parents), 33.1% were single, 23.0% were married and living with their husbands, 33.9% were married but separated from their husbands, and 7.0% were living with partners to whom they were not married. Of the two-parent families, 93.0% included both of the target child's biological parents. The mothers' mean age was 38.1 years. A majority of the mothers, 78.7%, had completed high school. The families' median household income was $1,655.00 per month.

*Procedure*

Center for Family Research staff contacted the families who had been selected randomly from the lists that schools provided. Follow-up contacts were then made by community liaisons. Chosen on the basis of their extensive social contacts and positive community standing, the community liaisons were African American community members who resided in the counties in which the participants lived and maintained connections between the University research group and the communities. The liaisons sent letters to the families and telephoned the children's

primary caregivers to describe the pretest assessment and answer any questions the caregivers asked. Families who were willing to participate in the study were told that a field researcher from the University would contact them to schedule a data collection visit in the family's home. Each family was paid $100 at the completion of each wave of data, including pretest, posttest and 24-month follow-up. The current study utilizes data from all participating families obtained during the pretest wave of this intervention study, thus group assignment will not be described here. Pretest data was collected 1 month prior to the intervention, thus none of the respondents had any exposure to the intervention.

To enhance rapport and cultural understanding, African American students and community members served as field researchers to collect data. Prior to data collection, the visitors received 27 hours of training in administering the protocol. The instruments and procedures were developed and refined with the help of a focus group of 40 African American community members who were representative of the population from which the sample was drawn. Both the focus groups and the community liaisons are part of a partnership process between the researchers and the communities in which the research is conducted; this process has been described in detail elsewhere (Brody, Murry, Kim, & Brown, 2002; Murry & Brody, 2004).

For data collection, one home visit lasting 2 hours was made to each family. At the home visit, self-report questionnaires were administered to caregivers and target children in an interview format that eliminated literacy concerns. Each interview was conducted privately, with no other family members present or able to overhear the conversation. Informed-consent forms were completed; caregivers consented to their own and youths' participation, and the youths assented to their own participation.

*Measures*

*Parental racial and ethnic socialization.* Parents reported their use of the three components of racial socialization via the preparation for bias (6 items), cultural pride (5 items), and promotion of mistrust (4 items) subscales of the Racial Socialization Scale (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Parents rated the items on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 3 (*three to five times*). The stem for each question is, "How often in the past month have you…" with the stem followed by specific socialization behaviors. Preparation for bias items include "talked with your child about discrimination or prejudice against your racial group" and "explained something you saw on TV that showed poor treatment of your racial group." Cultural pride items include "talked to your child about important people or events in the history of your racial group" and "done or said things to encourage your child to read books concerning the history or traditions of your racial group." Promotion of mistrust items include "told your child not to trust kids from other racial or ethnic groups" and "talked to your child about the negative qualities of people of different races or ethnicities than yours." Cronbach's alphas were .85 for preparation for bias, .82 for cultural pride, and .80 for promotion of mistrust.

*General parenting behaviors.* Parents reported their use of nurturant-involved parenting, harsh-inconsistent discipline, and described the quality of their affective relationship with their child. Nurturant-involved parenting was assessed using an instrument previously used in similar research with rural African American families (Brody et al., 2001). The scale is composed of 9 items rated on 4-point Likert-type scales that assess the frequency, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*), of parental behaviors concerning involvement and nurturing. Responses were summed to form the nurturant-involved indicator. Cronbach's alpha for the measure was .76. Harsh-inconsistent discipline was assessed using a scale composed of 4 items rated on 4-point Likert-

type scales that assess the frequency, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*), of parental behaviors including harsh-inconsistent discipline. Responses were summed to form the harsh-inconsistent indicator. Cronbach's alpha for the measure was .55. Parents reported their use of nurturant-involved parenting, harsh-inconsistent discipline, and described the quality of their affective relationship with their child. Affective quality of the parent-child relationship was measured with a scale composed of 6 items rated on 5-point Likert-type scales that assess the frequency, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*), of parental behaviors concerning the affective quality of the parent-child relationship. Responses were summed to form the parent-child affective quality indicator. Cronbach's alpha for the measure was .79.

*Youth self-pride.* The youth self-pride construct was composed of two indicators, racial identity and self-esteem. Youths provided self-reports of their racial identity using the Inventory of Black Identity (Smith & Brookins, 1997), including 8 items from the centrality and black pride subscales. Items are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Items include "Being Black is an important part of my self-image," "I often regret that I am Black" (reverse scored), and "I believe that, because I am Black, I have many strengths." Cronbach's alpha was .67. Youths reported their self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), a widely used measure of self-concept that is composed of 10 items rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*completely false*) to 5 (*completely true*). Items include "I take a positive attitude toward myself" and "I wish I could have more respect for myself" (reverse scored). Cronbach's alpha was .77.

*Youth self-regulation.* The youth self-regulation construct was composed of two indicators, goal-directed future orientation and self-control. Youths provided self-reports of their goal-directed future orientation using a scale comprised of 5 items rated on a scale ranging from

0 (*not true*) to 2 (*very or often true*). The measure indexes the ability to set, sustain, and achieve goals for the future. Items include "I have thought of some goals I want to reach when I grow up," and "I know some specific steps to take to reach my goals." Cronbach's alpha was .72. Mothers and teachers assessed youth self-control using the self-control and lack of self-control subscales of the Children's Self-Control Scale (Humphrey, 1982), which we have used extensively with African American children and youths (Brody et al., 1994, 2002; Brody, Stoneman, & Flor, 1996). Each subscale includes five items rated on a five-point response set ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*almost always*). Examples of items on the self-control subscale include "thinks ahead of time about the consequences of his or her actions," "plans ahead of time before acting," and "works toward goals." An example of the items on the lack of self-control subscale is "has trouble keeping promises to improve his/her behavior." Cronbach's alphas for the self-control scale were .90 for teachers and .79 for mothers; for the lack of control scale, alphas were .77 for teachers and .59 for mothers.

*Externalizing behaviors.* The externalizing construct was composed of two indicators, aggression and delinquency. Teachers provided reports of targets' externalizing behaviors by completing the aggression and delinquency scales from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). The stem for each question is, "This child has a problem with…" with the stem followed by specific behaviors. Each behavior is rated on a scale ranging from 0 (*not true*) to 2 (*very true or often true*). The aggressive behavior subscale includes 20 items, including "physically attacking people" and "arguing a lot." Cronbach's alpha was .94. The delinquent behavior subscale consists of 12 items, including "skipping school" and "using alcohol or drugs for non-medical purposes." Cronbach's alpha was .73.

*Internalizing behaviors.* Teachers provided reports of targets' internalizing behaviors by completing the withdrawn scale from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). The stem for each question is, "This child has a problem with…" with the stem followed by specific behaviors. Each behavior is rated on a scale ranging from 0 (*not true*) to 2 (*very true or often true*). The withdrawn behavior scale has 7 items, including "refusing to talk," "being shy or timid," "sulking a lot." Cronbach's alpha was .77.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS

## *Plan of analysis*

The initial goals of this study, comparing frequency of racial socialization behaviors across youth gender and identifying associated general parenting behaviors, were addressed with descriptive and correlational analyses, using SPSS 14.0 software. The conceptual models were then analyzed via Structural Equation Modeling, which allows multiple predictions to be evaluated in a single analysis while controlling for measurement error, using Amos 7.0 software (Arbuckle, 2003). AMOS uses the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation method, which does not delete cases for which data are missing, thus avoiding potential problems, such as biased parameter estimates, that are more likely to occur if pairwise or listwise deletion procedures are used to compensate for missing data (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999).

The theoretical model guiding this study was analyzed several times, first using the entire data set, then using multigroup analyses to determine the moderating effects of general parenting behaviors and youth gender. This allowed us to assess the models' generalizability by determining the extent to which results could be replicated across different types of families. Replications between gender constitute what Bronfenbrenner (1977) identified as "an experiment in nature" (p. 519) because they allow researchers to determine whether the predicted paths operate differently for boys and girls reared in comparable contexts.

## *Patterns of racial socialization messages*

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for racial socialization variables, separately by youth gender. Standardized means indicate the proportion of items that parents endorsed from each racial socialization category, as the number of items for each category

varies. As noted in the table, parents endorsed a significantly greater proportion of cultural pride messages than preparation for bias ($p < .01$), which was endorsed significantly greater than promotion of mistrust ($p < .01$). Also, youth gender had no significant effect on the frequency of parents' transmitting racial socialization messages, as parents were just as likely or unlikely to engage in conversation about cultural pride (*M* [boys] = 9.46, *M* [girls] = 9.09), preparation for bias (*M* [boys] = 10.03, *M* [girls] = 9.85), and promotion of mistrust (*M* [boys] = 4.83, *M* [girls] = 4.64) with their daughters as well as their sons. Thus, these results indicate that parents engage in similar levels of racial socialization regardless of youth gender, and they reported having conversations with their children about cultural pride to a greater degree than preparation for bias or promotion of mistrust.

Table 2 presents the zero-order correlation matrix, means, and standard deviations for the study variables. Consistent with study hypotheses, parenting characterized by nurturing involvement was associated with preparation for bias ($r = .16$, $p < .01$) and cultural pride ($r = .23$, $p < .01$). Also, as expected, positive parent-child affective relationship quality was related to cultural pride ($r = .13$, $p < .01$). The hypothesized association between positive affective relationship quality and preparation for bias was not significant ($r = .01$, $p = .75$). While these correlations are significant and theoretically expected, they are somewhat low and should be interpreted with caution.

Also inconsistent with study hypotheses, parents' use of harsh-inconsistent discipline was unrelated to promotion of mistrust and, in fact, unrelated to any of the racial socialization subscales. An unexpected finding was the positive association between promotion of mistrust and nurturant-involved parenting ($r = .12$, $p < .01$), suggesting that parents who are nurturant-involved were more likely to encourage their children to mistrust individuals from other ethnic

groups. It is important to note that causality cannot be assumed as this finding reflects bivariate association. Overall, results from the correlation analyses revealed that parents who are nurturant and involved are most likely to report engaging in each of the three components of racial socialization behaviors, whereas parents who utilize harsh and inconsistent discipline are unlikely to engage in any form of racial socialization.

*Gender, parenting behaviors, and racial socialization*

An important goal of this study was to analyze the moderating effects of youth gender on the links from racial socialization messages to youth adjustment. Minimal gender differences were found when comparing the co-occurrence of general parenting behaviors with specific racial socialization strategies.

*Boys*

For boys, parents who were characterized as nurturant-involved were more likely to engage in practices that prepared youth for incidences of racial bias ($r = .17$, $p < .01$). These parents also reported use of messages that emphasized cultural pride ($r = .21$, $p < .01$), and there was a strong trend toward significance in the association of nurturant-involved parenting and the promotion of mistrust ($r = .11$, $p = .055$). A significant relation was also found between messages about cultural pride and positive parent-child affective relationship quality ($r = .21$, $p < .01$). With boys, parents who engage in nurturant-involved parenting are likely to engage in each of three racial socialization behaviors, and parents who have a positive affective relationship with their sons are more likely to endorse the importance of having pride in the African American culture.

*Girls*

For girls, a significant and positive association emerged between nurturant-involved parenting and each of the racial socialization subscales, including preparation for bias ($r$ = .15, $p$ < .01), promotion of mistrust ($r$ =.13, $p$ = .01), and cultural pride ($r$ = .24, $p$ < .01). However, no association was found between racial socialization and either of the remaining two general parenting variables (i.e., positive affective relationship quality, harsh-inconsistent discipline). Similar to findings among boys, parents who are nurturant and involved with their daughters are also likely to engage in each of three racial socialization practices. Across both boys and girls, these results illustrate that racial socialization components of cultural pride, promotion of mistrust, and preparation for bias occur most often with nurturant-involved parenting, whereas use of harsh-inconsistent parenting was not associated with parents' engagement in racial socialization practices.

*Measurement model*

The measurement model and study hypotheses were then tested. The adequacy of the measurement model was supported for the latent variable of youth self-pride but not for the latent variables of youth self-regulation and externalizing. The positive, significant loadings of racial identity and self-esteem indicate their adequacy as indicators of the youth self-pride construct ($\lambda$s = .40, .86). These factor loadings were significant at $p$ < .01. Inconsistent with predictions, the indicators of child self-control and goal-directed future orientation were not significantly correlated ($r$ = .05, $p$ = .24) and did not load significantly on the latent construct of youth self-regulation. Thus, self-control and goal-directed future orientation were specified as manifest variables in the structural models tested. In addition, the two proposed indicators of externalizing, which were teacher report of 1) delinquency and 2) aggression, were highly

correlated ($r$ = .79, $p$ < .01) and were better combined and represented as a single manifest variable in the model. Because youth self-control, goal-directed future orientation, and externalizing were indexed by single measures, we fixed each factor loading at unity.

*Structural model*

After specifying the measurement model that best fit the data, we tested the structural model in Figure 1. This model evinced a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(8, N = 667) = 11.13$, $p$ = .195, root mean square error of approximation = .024 (.00, .055), comparative fit index = .9996, incremental fit index = .997. Figure 1 depicts the results of the tests conducted on the structural model, as well as the factor loadings of the manifest variables on the latent construct.

The results were partially consistent with study hypotheses, which were that racial socialization messages would directly contribute to increases in adaptive youth traits, including self-pride, self-control, and goal-directed future orientation. However, an alternative structural model positing direct paths from racial socialization to decreased externalizing behaviors indicated that the direct paths from racial socialization components (i.e., cultural pride, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust) to externalizing were not significant (β = .07, $p$ = .15; β = -.05, $p$ = .29; β = .04, $p$ = .35).

Overall, the contention that racial socialization has an impact on youth socioemotional constructs was supported. Messages of cultural pride positively predicted goal-directed future orientation in youth (β = .11, $p$ = .03). The expected link from promotion of mistrust to youth self-pride and self-control was confirmed and in the expected direction, as both were inversely associated with promotion of mistrust (β = -.14, $p$ = .01; β = -.13, $p$ < .01). Finally, a very strong negative association between self-control and externalizing was confirmed (β = -.62, $p$ < .001). Consistent with the theoretical model, youths who are described by their teachers as having self-

control were less likely than others to engage in delinquent and aggressive behaviors. Overall, a mediated pathway was found, in which parents' promotion of mistrust decreased youth self-control, which, in turn, was associated with increased aggression and delinquent behaviors among rural African American youth.

Departures from the conceptual model involve some of the direct links between components of racial socialization and outcome variables including youth self-pride, self-control, and goal-directed future orientation. First, we hypothesized that preparation for bias would directly influence these three variables. The direct links from preparation for bias to self-pride, self-control, and future orientation, however, were not significant ($\beta = .08$, $p = .19$; $\beta = .06$, $p = .21$; $\beta = -.08$, $p = .11$) and attenuated model fit. Second, we hypothesized that cultural pride would directly influence these three variables. The direct links from cultural pride to self-pride and self-control, however, were not significant ($\beta = .05$, $p = .35$; $\beta = -.04$, $p = .40$) and attenuated model fit. Third, we hypothesized that promotion of mistrust would directly influence these three variables. The direct link from promotion of mistrust to future orientation, however, was not significant ($\beta = .02$, $p = .60$). Finally, inconsistent with study hypotheses, direct inhibitory links to externalizing from self-pride and future orientation were not significant ($\beta = .03$, $p = .52$; $\beta = -.06$, $p = .09$) and attenuated model fit.

After determining the fit of the above-mentioned model, we tested a second conceptual model to examine general internalizing behaviors as a structural precursor to externalizing problems. This model allowed us to measure more general internalizing symptoms that may indicate problems in the development of those internal traits identified in the primary model (i.e., self-pride, self-control, future orientation). Such deficits may impair youths' healthy adjustment and may cause them to engage in more maladaptive responses to their environment, including

delinquency and aggression. Thus, we examined a model identifying internalizing as a mediating variable, predicted by racial socialization components and predictive of externalizing behaviors. This model evinced an especially good fit to the data: $\chi^2(3, N = 667) = 2.82$, $p = .42$, root mean square error of approximation = .000 (.000, .064), comparative fit index = 1.00, incremental fit index = 1.00. Figure 2 depicts the results of the tests conducted on this second structural model.

Again, the contention that racial socialization behaviors have an impact on youth socioemotional constructs was supported. This model was strongly supported by the data, which indicated strong links from racial socialization behaviors to internalizing, with a second powerful association between internalizing and externalizing. Messages of preparation for bias appear to protect youth from internalizing ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .02$), whereas messages promoting mistrust may contribute to youth internalizing ($\beta = .11$, $p = .02$). While an hypothesized association between cultural pride and internalizing was set forth, this path was not significant ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .84$). Finally, the predicted path between internalizing and externalizing was supported in the expected direction ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$). Thus, consistent with the theoretical model, youths whose teachers perceive them as having internalizing difficulties in early adolescence may also be at risk for engaging in aggressive and delinquent behaviors. In sum, based on these findings, there appear to be distal links from promotion of mistrust and preparation for bias to externalizing. Promotion of mistrust may increase youths' risk for internalizing, which is related to externalizing, while preparation for bias may protect youth from internalizing and, as a result, externalizing.

*Moderational analyses*

To determine whether differences in gender and general parenting behaviors conditioned the paths in the structural model, we conducted a series of multigroup comparisons. Using the chi-square difference test at the $p < .05$ level of significance, regression coefficients did not

differ significantly across either the gender or parenting groups. While this indicated that model parameters were not significantly different across groups, there were some notable differences in the relative significance of links for the model as it was analyzed within groups.

Analysis of the structural model within youth gender groups (i.e., male, female) revealed an unexpected pattern (Figures 3, 4, respectively). As expected for both groups, racial socialization was found to influence adaptive youth traits, including self-pride, self-control, and goal-directed future orientation. However, the specific components that were significantly linked differed. For boys, a significant link from cultural pride to goal-directed future orientation was found ($\beta = .14$, $p = .04$), in addition to an expected negative association from goal-directed future orientation to externalizing ($\beta = -.13$, $p = .03$). Neither cultural pride nor preparation for bias was associated with self-pride, self-control, or future orientation, and there was no significant link from cultural pride to self-pride or self-control. In sum, cultural pride messages may positively impact boys as they appear to increase goal-directed future orientation, which appears to protect males from externalizing behaviors.

For girls, promotion of mistrust was associated with impaired self-control ($\beta = -.15$, $p = .01$), which then placed girls at risk for externalizing ($\beta = -.62$, $p < .01$). Neither preparation for bias nor cultural pride was associated with other study variables, and there was no significant link from promotion of mistrust to self-pride or goal-directed future orientation. Overall, girls seem particularly sensitive to promotion of mistrust messages, which may reduce their levels of self-control and, in turn, increase the likelihood of externalizing behaviors.

Regarding other direct links from self-pride, self-control, and future orientation to externalizing, there was a strong negative association between self-control and externalizing for both groups, male and female ($\beta = -.58$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.62$, $p < .01$). Across both groups, the

expected inhibitory relationship between self-pride and externalizing did not emerge as a significant effect. Among the socioemotional variables tested in this study (i.e., self-pride, self-control, future orientation), self-control appears to be most consistently protective for youth in the development of externalizing behaviors.

Youth gender also influenced the significance of links in the alternate structural model analyzed, which included analysis of internalizing. For both boys and girls, internalizing was a strong predictor of externalizing behaviors ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$; $\beta = .20$, $p < .001$). For boys only, there was an additional expected positive association from promotion of mistrust to internalizing ($\beta = .15$, $p = .03$). For girls only, there was an additional expected negative association from preparation for bias to internalizing ($\beta = -.17$, $p = .01$). These findings suggest that messages that promote mistrust may increase boy's likelihood of internalizing, and, in turn externalizing. For girls, internalizing and externalizing appear to be decreased when parents prepare them for experiences of bias.

A second set of moderational analyses was conducted to determine whether general parenting behaviors (i.e., nurturant-involved parenting, harsh-inconsistent discipline, positive parent-child affective relationship quality) condition the paths in the structural models. In order to test these effects, we estimated the structural models separately for families above and below the sample median for each general parenting variable. These analyses were conducted consecutively and without attention to gender, as there was not adequate power to test moderational effects simultaneously for multiple sets of groups.

Study hypotheses predicted that parents who endorsed high nurturant-involvement, low harsh-inconsistent discipline, and high positive affective relationship quality would show augmented positive effects of racial socialization on youth outcome variables. When comparing

the effects of high and low nurturant-involved parenting (NIP) on the structural model, this hypothesis was partially supported. For high NIP parents, there was a significant negative association between promotion of mistrust and youth self-control ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$). Similarly for low NIP parents, a significant negative association emerged from promotion of mistrust to self-pride ($\beta = -.18$, $p = .02$). In the context of high NIP only, the hypothesized positive effect of preparation for bias emerged in a positive association with self-control ($\beta = .15$, $p = 0.03$). For both groups, all other links from racial socialization to youth variables were insignificant. These results suggest that nurturant-involved parenting behaviors may have a particularly augmenting effect on the link between preparation for bias and self-control. That is, parents whose racial socialization messages are directed toward preparation for bias concurrent with nurturing and involved behaviors may encourage youth to become more vigilant about regulating their behavior, and, in turn, reduce acts of aggression and delinquency ($\beta = -.63$, $p < .01$).

Regarding parenting behaviors characterized by harsh and inconsistent discipline (HID), it was hypothesized that parents who are low in HID would show augmented positive effects of racial socialization. This hypothesis was not specifically supported by the data, rather, a significant negative link emerged from promotion of mistrust to self-control when parents reported low HID ($\beta = -.19$, $p = .01$), and a significant positive link from cultural pride to future orientation emerged among those who use high HID ($\beta = .13$, $p = .03$). Results indicate that, even when parents use discipline that is consistent and not overly harsh, promotion of mistrust is associated with decreases in self-control. On the other hand, even when parents utilize harsh and inconsistent discipline, their transmission of cultural pride messages promotes goal-directed future orientation in African American youth.

Regarding parents' report of their parent-child affective relationship quality (PAQ), it was hypothesized that parents who are high in PAQ would show augmented positive effects of racial socialization. This hypothesis was neither confirmed nor disconfirmed by the data, which indicated that parents who promote mistrust undermine youth self-pride in a low PAQ context (β = -.19, $p = 0.03$) and undermine self-control in a high PAQ context (β = -.16, $p < 0.01$). This pattern indicates that messages that African American parents transmit about race related issues are not influenced by the relationship quality between parent and child. Interestingly, unique to this specific multigroup analysis, youth self-pride was positively linked with externalizing behaviors for low PAQ families (β = .16, $p = 0.02$), indicating that elevated self-pride may heighten youths' vulnerability to aggression and delinquent behaviors, when their relationship with their parent is less warm, supportive and affective.

Further analyses were conducted to determine the influence of general parenting behaviors on the secondary structural model positing links from racial socialization to internalizing to externalizing. Data from families with high levels of NIP indicated that preparation for bias protects youth from internalizing (β = -.16, $p = .03$) and that promotion of mistrust may contribute to internalizing (β = .21, $p < .001$). Within a low HID context, promotion of mistrust is associated with internalizing (β = .16, $p = .03$). Within a high HID context, preparation for bias protects youth from internalizing (β = -.16, $p = .01$). These findings for HID are similar to those exhibited in the primary structural model. While there were no specific effects for low PAQ, for high PAQ, preparation for bias protects youth from internalizing (β = -.16, $p = .02$), and promotion of mistrust contributes to internalizing (β = .14, $p = .02$). Overall, parenting context did not have a notable influence on this structural model, as preparation for

bias messages were consistently protective from internalizing while promotion of mistrust consistently predicted internalizing.

*Exploratory analyses*

In order to determine the incremental effect of racial socialization behaviors in the context of general parenting behaviors, a structural model was tested using general parenting in lieu of racial socialization in the primary study model (see Figure 1). A significant reduction in chi-square resulted when racial socialization variables were added to this model ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.99$, $p < .05$). Thus, racial socialization variables have an impact on socioemotional outcomes in youth above and beyond the effects of general parenting.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION

Racial socialization is the process by which African American parents transmit cultural pride and prepare children for the experience of racial discrimination. Numerous studies indicate that racial socialization, which is primarily investigated as an aggregate of racial- and ethnic-focused parenting practices, contributes to adaptive psychosocial development. That said, few studies have investigated the specific effects of distinct components of racial socialization, including promotion of mistrust, preparation for bias, and cultural pride, on youth development and adjustment. In addition, while it is apparent that African Americans do utilize general parenting practices, few studies have considered the interrelatedness of general parenting and racial socialization. Further, to our knowledge, no studies to date have examined the processes through which the co-occurrence of general parenting and specific components of racial socialization forecast internalizing and externalizing behaviors among rural African American youth. The current study sought to identify the influence of general parenting behaviors on the links between distinct racial socialization components and adaptive social and emotional development in African American youth**.** Consequently, the current study supports past research indicating that racial socialization behaviors generally take place in a context of positive parenting and contribute to healthy youth adjustment. Findings from this study fill gaps in extant literature by highlighting the influence of other general parenting behaviors as well as youth gender differences in racial socialization processes.

## *General parenting and racial socialization*

A primary goal of this study was to investigate how racial socialization components intermingle with the general parenting behaviors of African American parents. While research

thus far has investigated racial socialization as a single measure of race-based communication, often nested within a larger positive parenting construct, little is known about the frequency with which specific racial socialization components and specific parenting practices co-occur (see Brody et al., 2006). For this study, hypotheses were made based on the assumption that racial socialization does, in fact, occur alongside positive parenting behaviors. That is, we hypothesized that effective parenting behaviors, including nurturant involvement and positive affective relationship quality between parent and child, would co-occur most frequently with preparation for bias and cultural pride. An additional hypothesis was made specifically for the racial socialization component of promotion of mistrust, which has been linked to more negative outcomes in youth as compared to other racial socialization components (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Ogbu, 1974; Biafora et al., 1993). Based on these past findings, we hypothesized that parents who promote mistrust of others may also be more likely to utilize the less effective parenting behavior of harsh and inconsistent discipline.

Results of this study support much of what was conjectured, indicating that each type of racial socialization message is most often endorsed by parents who are nurturing and involved. In addition, parents are also likely to transmit messages of cultural pride when they enjoy a positive affective relationship with their child. Interestingly, parents who use harsh and inconsistent discipline are unlikely to transmit any type of racial socialization message. Also, contrary to expectations, parents who promote mistrust of others are most likely to engage in nurturing and positive parenting behaviors, and there was no association between parents who promote mistrust and those who utilize harsh, inconsistent discipline. Additionally, results indicated that parents transmit cultural pride messages far more frequently than either preparation for bias or promotion of mistrust, suggesting that, of all racial socialization message

types, parents mostly promote their children's sense of cultural pride; this finding supports past research (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). In sum, these results indicate that racial socialization occurs in conjunction with effective parenting behaviors, including nurturing and involvement and positive affective relationship with one's child. This information supports Stevenson's (1997) notion of adaptive racial socialization, which he describes as teaching children about the realities of racial discrimination while emphasizing the possibility of achieving goals despite oppression.

Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that parents who utilize effective parenting strategies and endorse positive racial socialization components also report that they frequently promote mistrust of others in their children. It may be helpful to consider the historical context of African American families in order to understand why effective parents continue to transmit promotion of mistrust to their youth. As McLoyd (1998, 1990) asserts, researchers cannot adequately conceptualize African American family processes without a full appreciation for the history of racism in this country, and particularly in the rural South. Considering this recommendation, we can view parents' promotion of mistrust as an adaptive response to historical threats to African Americans. In the current time, however, warning youth about historically legitimate threats may be at odds with social dynamics occurring today and may undermine youths' ability to identify and manage actual threats to his or her well-being. For example, considering research indicating that peers may negatively influence African Americans' academic self-perception, parents' warnings of mistrust of only Caucasian classmates would reflect an overly narrow scope.

Furthermore, as parents communicate preparation for bias with their youth, one can imagine that this constructive message may often lead parents to identify specific threats, thereby

engaging in concurrent promotion of mistrust. Although it may be difficult for parents to disentangle messages of preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust when communicating with their children, accumulating research indicates that such disentangling may be a useful endeavor for parents and for the researchers and clinicians who support them, as promotion of mistrust may place youth at risk for more negative developmental outcomes.

*Specific racial socialization effects*

The current investigation of racial socialization and the influence of general parenting behaviors presupposes that race-specific socialization messages have a unique impact on developing youth. Otherwise, the entire construct of racial socialization could be subsumed under positive parenting practices, and further study would not be necessary. Past research, however, indicates otherwise, and results from this study support the notion that racial and ethnic socialization have unique effects on youth that are not fully explained by general parenting practices. In fact, data from the current study demonstrate the incremental influence of racial socialization variables above and beyond the influence of parenting variables, suggesting that racial socialization can have a distinct and critical impact on developing African American youth. Further, results indicate that individual racial socialization components have unique effects on youth development that warrant closer attention.

For this study, the primary hypothesized model predicted that a significant link from racial socialization components to externalizing would be mediated by youth socioemotional variables, ultimately including self-pride, self-regulation, and goal-directed future orientation. Results partially supported this model, indicating that parents' cultural pride messages (e.g., talking about important people or events in the history of African Americans, encouraging children to read books concerning the history or traditions of African Americans) promote

youths' goal-directed future orientation. In addition, results supported past research indicating that parents' promotion of mistrust (e.g., telling children not to trust kids from other racial or ethnic groups, talking to children about the negative qualities of people of different races or ethnicities) interferes with youths' development of self-control and self-pride. This direct link is especially important, given that self-control was found to be a significant buffer against externalizing, whereas other socioemotional variables (i.e., self-pride, future orientation) were not significantly related to externalizing. Thus, parents' promotion of mistrust ultimately increases risk for delinquency and aggression in African American youth through the mechanism of impaired self-control.

Despite the confirmation of some hypothesized links, analysis of the primary study model indicated some discrepancy between theoretical expectations and actual data. Results showed that the conceptual model specifying direct links from each racial socialization component to externalizing contained no significant links. Based on these findings, we presumed that the relation from racial socialization to externalizing may be too distal and that other mechanisms may be more directly impacted by racial socialization. As goal-directed future orientation and self-control seem to embody more externally-focused developmental skills, we sought to examine a construct that better represented the evolving internal working model of these youth. As study participants were 11-year-olds just entering adolescence, it was thought that a general measure of internalizing may be more directly impacted by parents' socialization messages. In addition, past research suggests that racial socialization directly protects youth from internalizing negative experiences associated with racial bias (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Smith & Brookins, 1997). Furthermore, internalizing frequently co-occurs with externalizing behaviors in youth, suggesting that youths who have difficulty managing their internal responses and experiences

may later develop behaviors that are more externally maladaptive, such as aggression or delinquency (Kim et al., 2003). The relationship between suppression of anger, which may result in anxiety and depression, and maladaptive expression of anger, which could appear as aggression or delinquency, was identified by Stevenson as a potential effect of experiences of racism among African American youth (Stevenson et al., 1997).

As it turns out, this structural model specifying internalizing as a mediator evinced a more robust fit to the data. Links indicated that youth whose parents prepared them for bias were well-protected from internalizing, and youth whose parents promoted mistrust of others were placed at risk for internalizing. Furthermore, the direct link from internalizing to externalizing was quite strong. In sum, these results show that internalizing acts as a strong mediating link from the racial socialization components of preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust to externalizing. This indirect pathway may represent a developmental progression, which highlights the importance of a healthy and adaptive internal working model (i.e., self-esteem, emotion regulation, resilience) as a critical buffer from externalizing behaviors.

An important conclusion that can be drawn from both structural models is that parents who promote mistrust, albeit alongside effective parenting behaviors, place their youth at risk for socioemotional difficulties. This conclusion was foreshadowed in 1997, when Hughes and Chen noted that little empirical attention had been given to the promotion of mistrust component of racial socialization. Further, more recent research has suggested that promotion of mistrust messages may contribute to negative outcomes in children, including poorer cognitive and socioemotional functioning (Hughes & Chen, 1999), distrust and anger with maladaptive outcomes (Ogbu, 1974), and conduct disordered behavior (Biafora et al., 1993). In support of these findings, we found that parents' promotion of mistrust significantly impairs youth self-

pride and self-control and increases the risk for internalizing. In addition, self-control and internalizing were significantly associated with externalizing, indicating that, over time, promotion of mistrust may contribute to increases in aggression and delinquency in youth. As there has not been a significant amount of research on these links thus far, the current study's confirmation of past findings is an important contribution to the literature.

Race communication that prepares youth for bias has also been associated with negative outcomes, particularly among males, that include high rates of hostility and maladaptive suppression of anger (Stevenson, 1997). Findings from the current study dispute such assertions, as preparation for bias appeared to protect youth from internalizing, and, indirectly, from externalizing. In other words, when parents prepare their children for bias, youth are less likely to develop maladaptive internalizing and externalizing behaviors. In addition, when parents who are nurturing and involved also prepare their youth for bias, this combination may promote self-control, which acts as a buffer from externalizing. Thus, findings from the current study contradict past research by pointing to more positive effects of preparation for bias on socioemotional outcomes, especially when parents prepare youth for bias in conjunction with nurturing and involved parenting behaviors.

*General parenting behaviors as moderators*

A primary goal of this study was to better understand racial socialization processes by examining the influence of associated parenting behaviors. Investigating racial socialization in its natural context, within the broader parenting milieu, has not previously been executed and represents an important future direction, as racial socialization does not occur in a vacuum. Thus far, studies have either examined racial socialization separately from other parenting behaviors

or together with them as a single construct. The current study provides a clearer picture of the parenting process that includes both racial socialization and other general parenting behaviors.

A critical finding of this study, as described above, indicates that each racial socialization component co-occurs most frequently with nurturing and involved parenting behaviors. Parenting characterized by a nurturing and involved approach is associated with multiple positive outcomes in youth. Research conducted across cultures indicates that nurturant-involved parenting is positively associated with resilient adaptation in children and adolescents (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Masten, 2001). Further, in support of hypotheses, parents' preparation for bias contributes significantly to youth self-control when such messages are accompanied by high levels of nurturant-involved parenting.

Other links from racial socialization behaviors to socioemotional outcomes do not differ according to level of nurturant-involved parenting or other parenting behaviors. That is, with high NIP behaviors, promotion of mistrust appears to decrease youths' self-control, while promotion of mistrust with low NIP parenting decreases self-pride. Similarly, with low levels of harsh and inconsistent discipline, promotion of mistrust undermines self-control. With high levels of HID, cultural pride promotes future orientation. Finally, positive parent-child affective relationship quality may have little effect on racial socialization processes, as promotion of mistrust undermines self-control when associated with high PAQ and undermines self-pride when associated with low PAQ. Thus, findings do not confirm study hypotheses suggesting that harsh-inconsistent discipline and positive affective quality moderate racial socialization effects in negative and positive directions, respectively. On the contrary, parents who transmit cultural pride messages in conjunction with harsh, inconsistent discipline contribute incrementally to youths' future orientation. In sum, study results emphasize the strength of the relationships

between racial socialization variables and socioemotional variables, as they are quite consistent even when combined with high and low levels of diverse parenting behaviors. In addition, parents engage in racial socialization communication primarily alongside nurturant and involved parenting behaviors, resulting in a fairly consistent parenting context.

*Youth gender as moderator*

Past research in the area of racial socialization has established significant gender differences (Stevenson, 1997). Specifically, Stevenson (1997) identified a striking difference in the way that males and females responded to parents' racial socialization messages characterized by preparation for bias as well as cultural pride. The current study did not indicate significant gender differences, as the fit of hypothesized structural models did not differ significantly across gender groups. Rather, across both female and male youth, findings consistently indicated that promotion of mistrust is associated with negative effects, while preparation for bias and cultural pride predict more positive outcomes. These results are divergent from past research, which identifies unique effects of racial socialization based on youth gender.

Finally, recent research indicates that child gender may impact the frequency of parental racial socialization behaviors (McHale et al., 2006), with fathers endorsing more frequent racial socialization behaviors, in sum, with their male children than females. That assertion was not supported by our findings, which indicated that frequency of racial socialization behaviors do not differ as a function of youth gender. Overall, major findings were not affected by youth gender, as promotion of mistrust appears to be a risk factor across genders, while other racial socialization messages contribute to youths' healthy development.

*Study contributions and implications for future research and intervention*

This study marks an important step in grappling with the unique effects of specific racial socialization behaviors and placing them in a broader parenting context. Over time, these findings may contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics and process of racial socialization as well as a reconceptualization of racial socialization itself. The current study enhances our current understanding of racial socialization by highlighting the potentially opposing effects of cultural pride/preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust. In addition, by analyzing these effects within groups based on youth gender, the current study exposes some differences in racial socialization behavior subsets that have important implications for future research and clinical applications. Findings from this study suggest that promotion of mistrust is inherently different from cultural pride and preparation for bias messages, and, thus, impacts youth in divergent ways. It may be best to disentangle these rather than continuing to view racial socialization as an aggregate of the three, for promotion of mistrust appears to have more negative effects on socioemotional outcomes. When considering the associated behaviors, it seems likely that warning children about interacting with certain individuals may not promote their sense of self-efficacy and problem-solving abilities in the face of racist experiences. On the other hand, having a sense of cultural pride and being mentally prepared to experience bias (with the knowledge of how to respond adaptively) seems to instill competency and self-pride in African American youth.

Despite the strengths of this cross-sectional study, other potential research designs may allow for a fuller investigation of these effects. For example, a similar investigation of parenting and racial socialization effects on development may be better investigated using a longitudinal design, which would provide information about the long term impact of racial socialization on

youth development. As parenting is thought to provide direction over the course of child and adolescent development, a longitudinal design may provide a more valid investigation of this developmental course. In addition, the current global racial socialization construct may be undermined as an aggregate measure, as promotion of mistrust may weaken the strong positive effects of the other two components. Furthermore, other methods of measurement may provide additional insight into how racial socialization functions on a daily basis. Methods that may be well-suited for such analysis include behavioral observation or real-time self-report, which is a method by which participants are randomly contacted throughout a given time period and asked to provide immediate self-report information. This approach would allow a fuller understanding of families' day-to-day responses to or preparation for experiences of racial discrimination.

In addition, an important contribution to continued investigation would be to analyze other contextual variables in addition to general parenting behaviors. The current study did not integrate environmental variables beyond family ethnic identity. Future studies should investigate more proximal predictors of parenting and the influence of neighborhood context, exposure to racism, and parental stress on the link between racial socialization and youth functioning. Specifically, the level of racism that family members experience in their neighborhoods, poverty rates, and neighborhood racial makeup would seem to contribute greatly to our understanding of racial socialization effects on youth development.

The current study may also provide useful information for clinicians who support rural African American families. As clinicians discuss racial socialization as an adaptive parenting tool, they may use these findings to delineate unique effects of parents' racial socialization messages. That is, clinicians should be confident in promoting parents' use of cultural pride messages as a means to promote healthy youth development. On the other hand, clinicians and

parents may be advised to collaborate on identifying instances when parents promote mistrust of others and may work towards replacing such messages with other types of communication (e.g., cultural pride or preparation for bias). Additionally, these findings may be integrated into clinical interventions with at-risk parents, who may be especially willing to enact cultural pride communication (as opposed to other more difficult parenting behavior modifications) and, in doing so, would be likely to observe positive effects in their children. In turn, they may be more likely to continue with treatment and may feel that their clinician is more culturally sensitive to their particular family situation.

In sum, the present study represents a valuable contribution to the literature investigating racial socialization, particularly as it offers new insight into conceptualizing this construct. Overall, significant evidence indicates that racial socialization, as a whole, contributes to healthy socioemotional development. With further investigation that disentangles individual components and considers the general parenting context, it is likely that researchers and clinicians will better understand the adaptive aspects of racial socialization as well as the less contributory ones. With this information, parents, and the researchers and clinicians who support them, can most effectively promote African American youth by preparing them for challenges while instilling a sense of pride and possibility in them.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of racial socialization variables by youth gender. [No significant gender differences at $p < .05$.]

| | Boys | | Girls | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Racial Socialization Variable | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | *t* | *p* |
| *Standardized* | | | | | | |
| Cultural Pride | .6307 | .17 | .6057 | .19 | 1.78 | .08 |
| Promotion of Mistrust | .4022 | .12 | .3871 | .11 | 1.66 | .10 |
| Preparation for Bias | .2681 | .08 | .2580 | .07 | 1.66 | .10 |
| *Nonstandardized* | | | | | | |
| Cultural Pride | 9.46 | 2.55 | 9.09 | 2.83 | 1.78 | .08 |
| Promotion of Mistrust | 4.83 | 1.48 | 4.64 | 1.34 | 1.66 | .10 |
| Preparation for Bias | 10.03 | 3.13 | 9.85 | 3.14 | .75 | .45 |

Table 2. Zero-order correlations, means, standard deviations, and ranges for research variables.

| | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | RS: Preparation for bias | -- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (2) | RS: Cultural pride | .56** | -- | | | | | | | | | | |
| (3) | RS: Promotion of mistrust | .42** | .31** | -- | | | | | | | | | |
| (4) | Nurturant-involved parenting | .16** | .23** | .12** | -- | | | | | | | | |
| (5) | Harsh-inconsistent discipline | .02 | .02 | .04 | -.09* | -- | | | | | | | |
| (6) | Parent-child affective relationship quality | .01 | .13** | -.07 | .45** | -.30** | -- | | | | | | |
| (7) | Racial identity | .03 | .08* | -.04 | .02 | -.01 | .03 | -- | | | | | |
| (8) | Self-esteem | .04 | .04 | -.07 | .04 | -.04 | .10* | .34** | -- | | | | |
| (9) | Child self control | -.01 | -.04 | -.10** | .05 | -.10* | .15** | .01 | .21** | -- | | | |
| (10) | Goal-directed future orientation | -.01 | .07 | .02 | .01 | -.05 | .04 | .20** | .38** | .05 | -- | | |
| (11) | Externalizing behaviors | .00 | .05 | .04 | -.05 | -.12** | -.15** | -.01 | -.13** | -.62** | -.08* | -- | |
| (12) | Internalizing behaviors | -.08* | -.05 | .05 | -.05 | -.02 | -.04 | -.08* | -.13** | -.32** | -.07 | .19** | -- |
| | *M* | 9.94 | 9.26 | 4.73 | 28.67 | 6.80 | 13.94 | 32.01 | 41.99 | 12.47 | 8.95 | 9.95 | 2.04 |
| | *SD* | 3.13 | 2.70 | 1.41 | 4.41 | 1.58 | 1.58 | 5.57 | 6.72 | 4.70 | 1.53 | 11.08 | 2.56 |
| | Minimum | 2.00 | 4.00 | 2.00 | 14.00 | 4.00 | 8.00 | 9.00 | 18.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Maximum | 18.00 | 15.00 | 12.00 | 36.00 | 13.00 | 15.00 | 40.00 | 50.00 | 20.00 | 10.00 | 56.57 | 14.00 |

**p < .01
*p < .05

Figure 1. Primary conceptual model. Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct, standardized structural coefficients, and model fit indices. **p < .01, *p < .05.

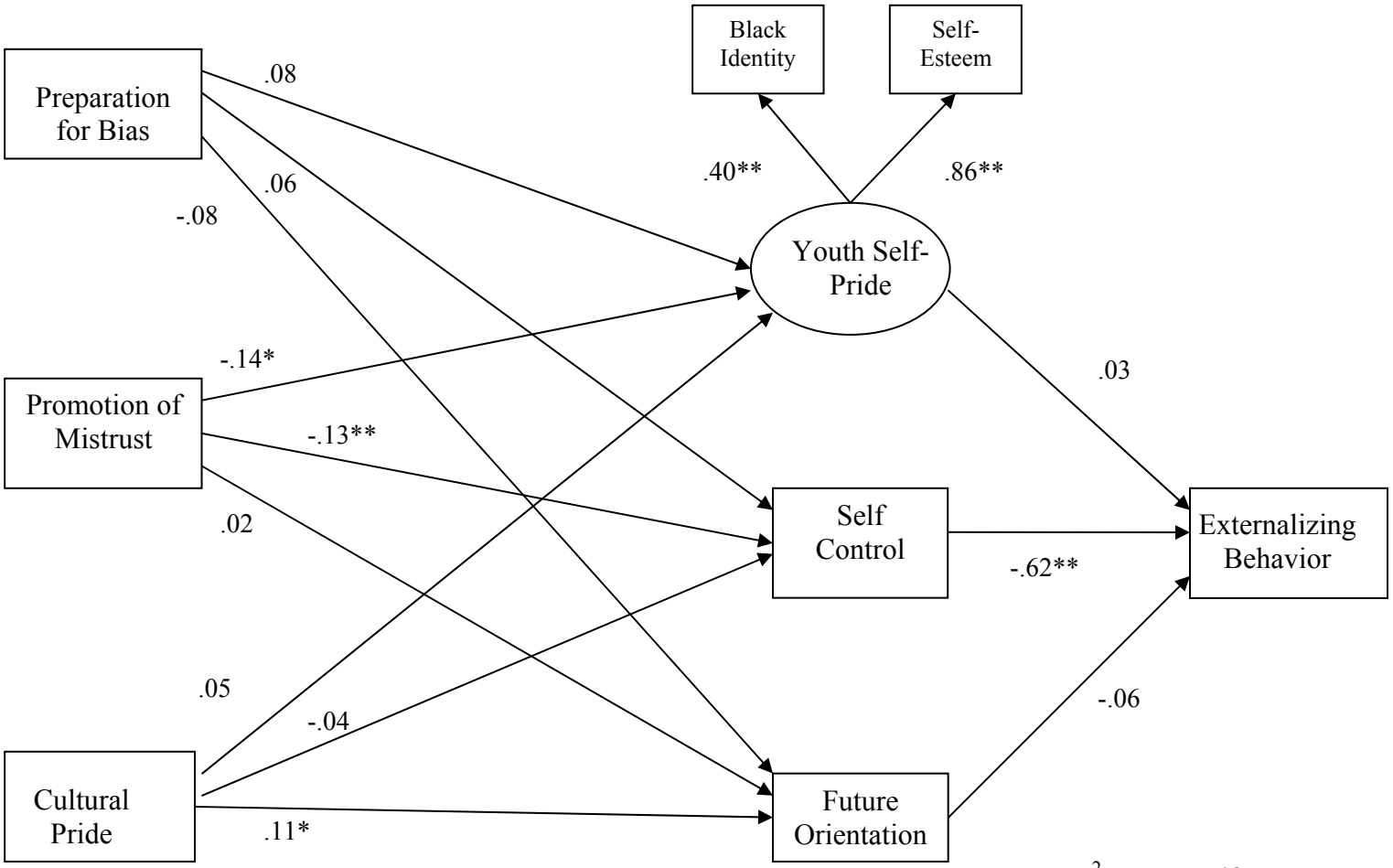


Figure 2. Conceptual model with internalizing as mediator. Standardized structural coefficients and model fit indices. **p < .01, *p < .05.

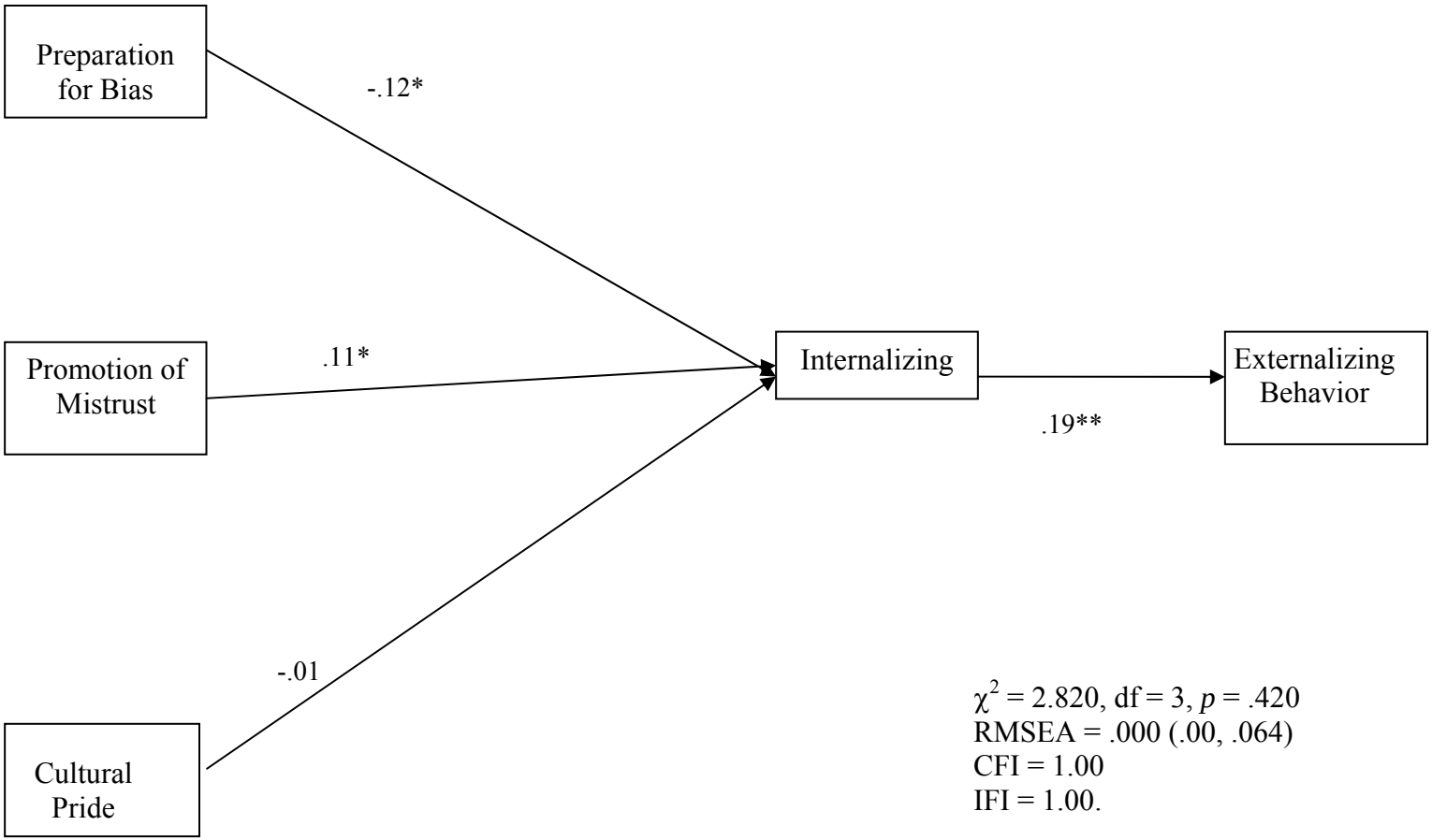


Figure 3. Moderational analysis: male youth. Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

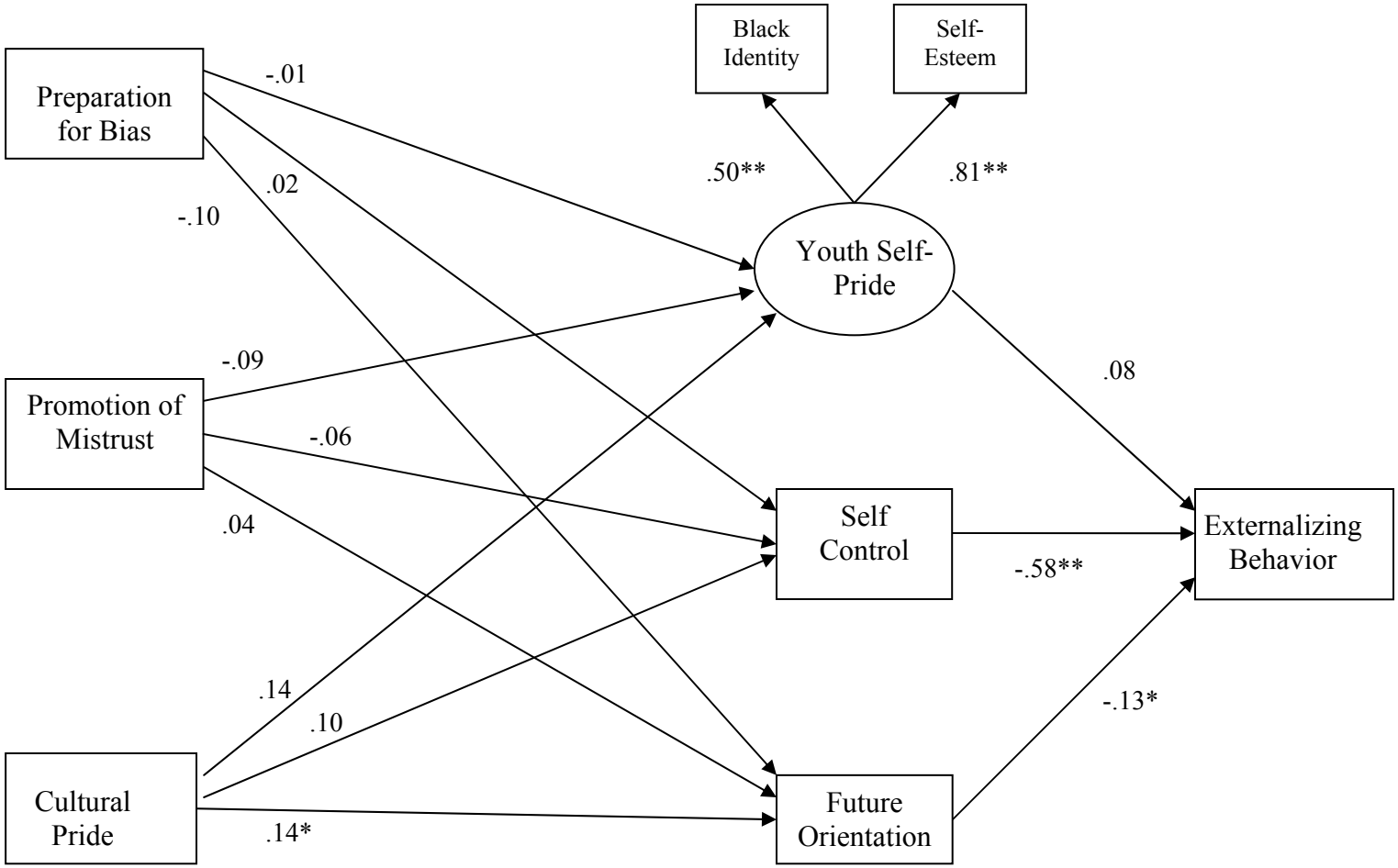


Figure 4. Moderational analysis: female youth. Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

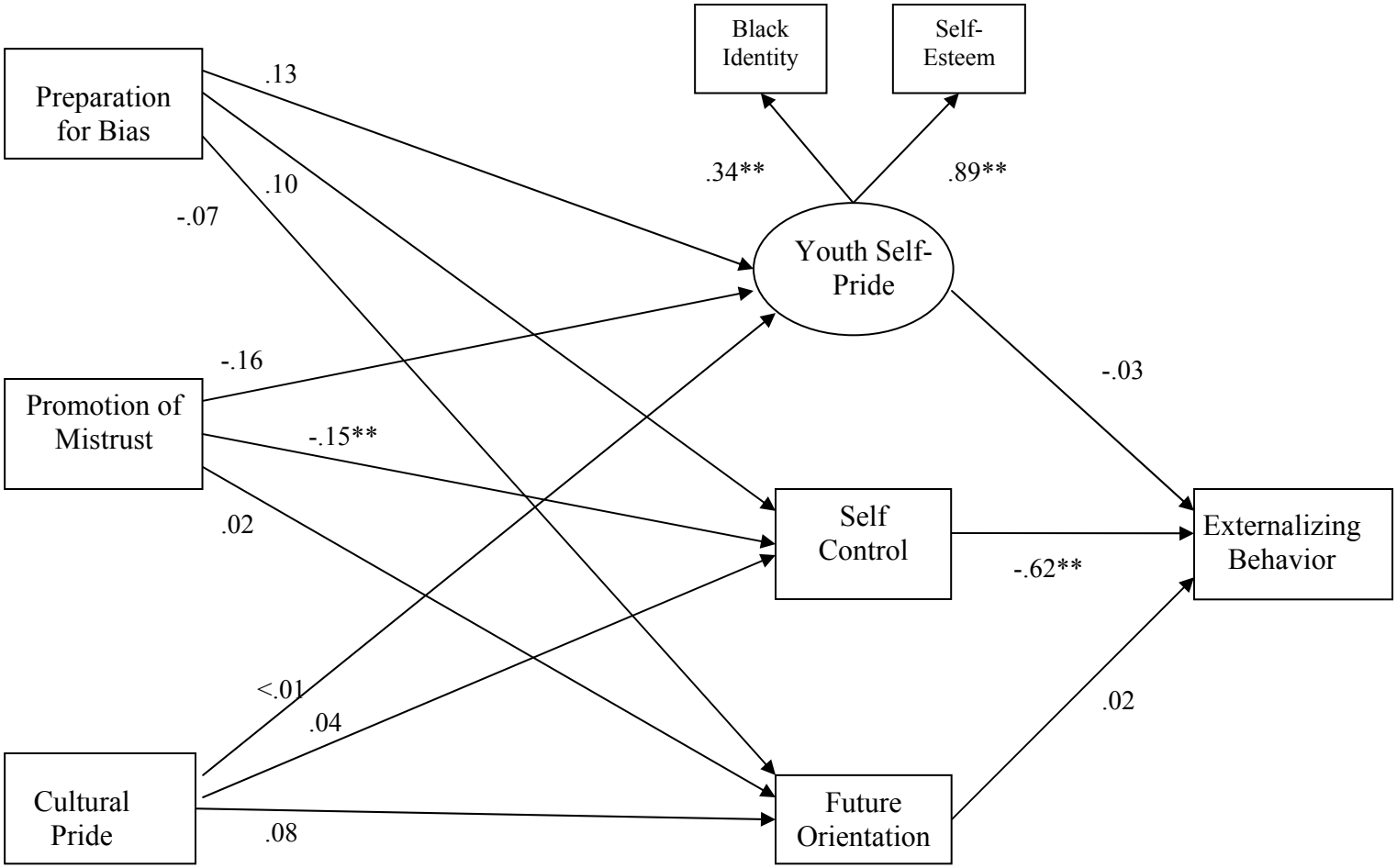


Figure 5. Moderational analysis: high NIP (nurturant-involved parenting). Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

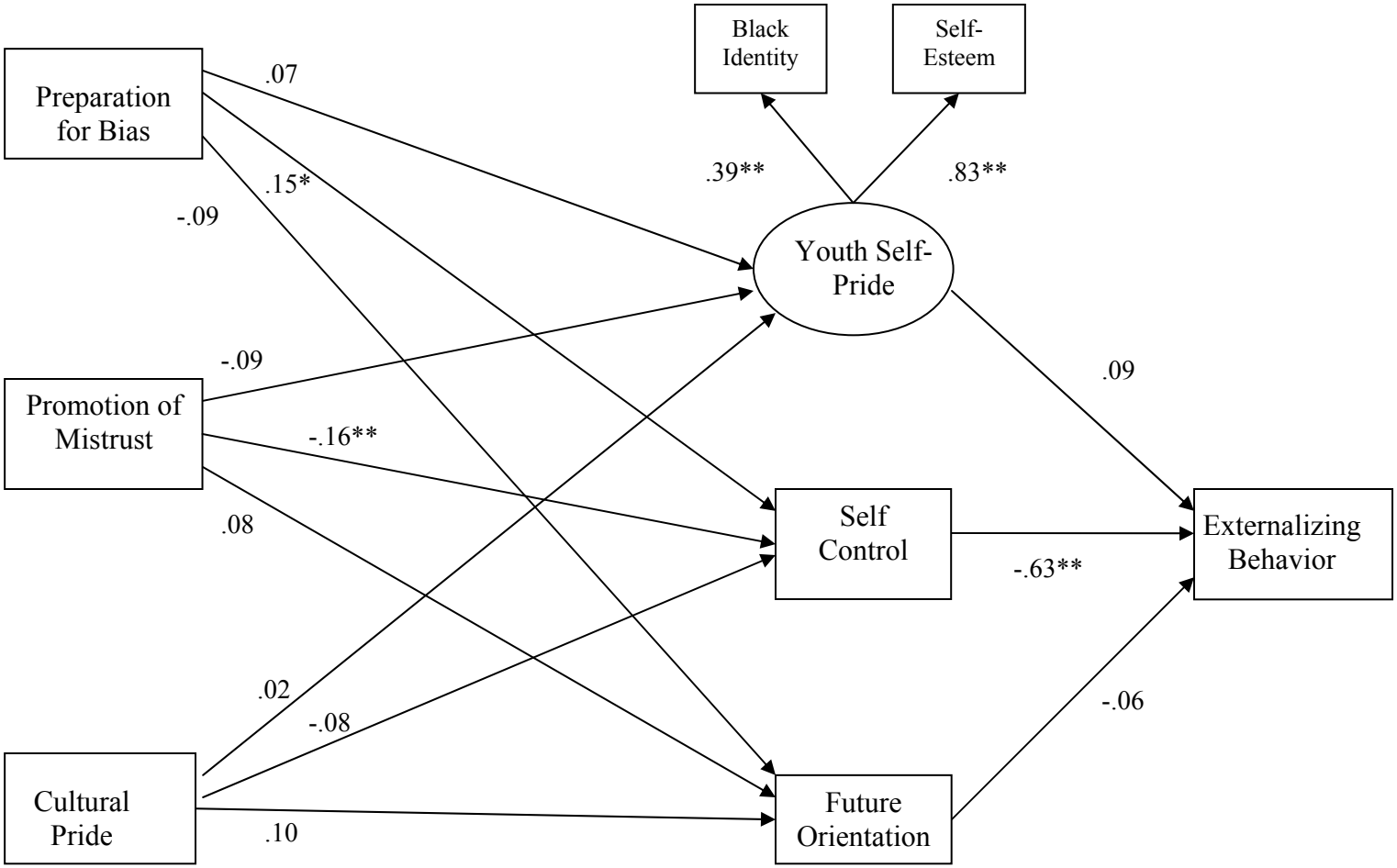


Figure 6. Moderational analysis: low NIP (nurturant-involved parenting). Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

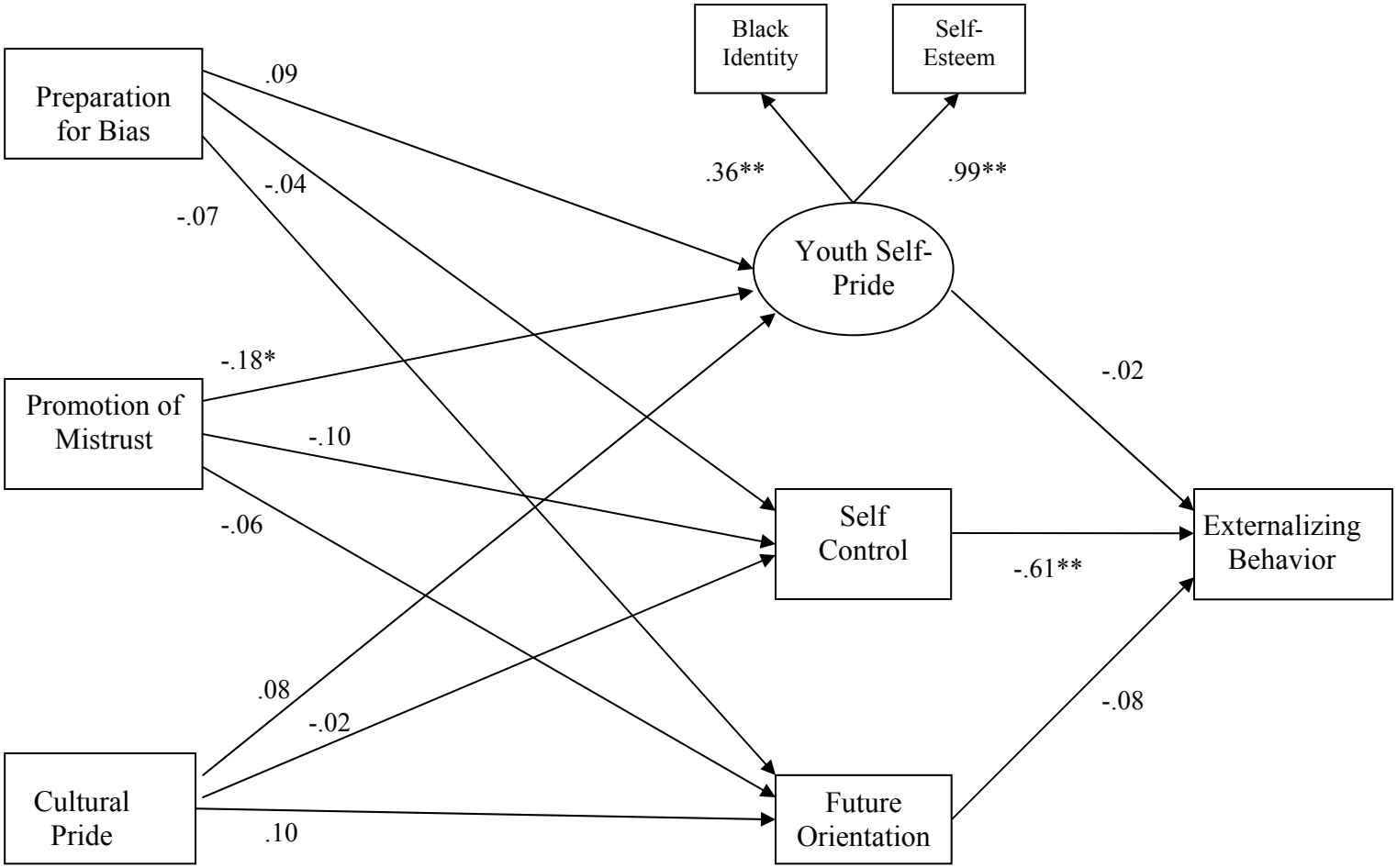


Figure 7. Moderational analysis: high HID (harsh-inconsistent discipline). Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

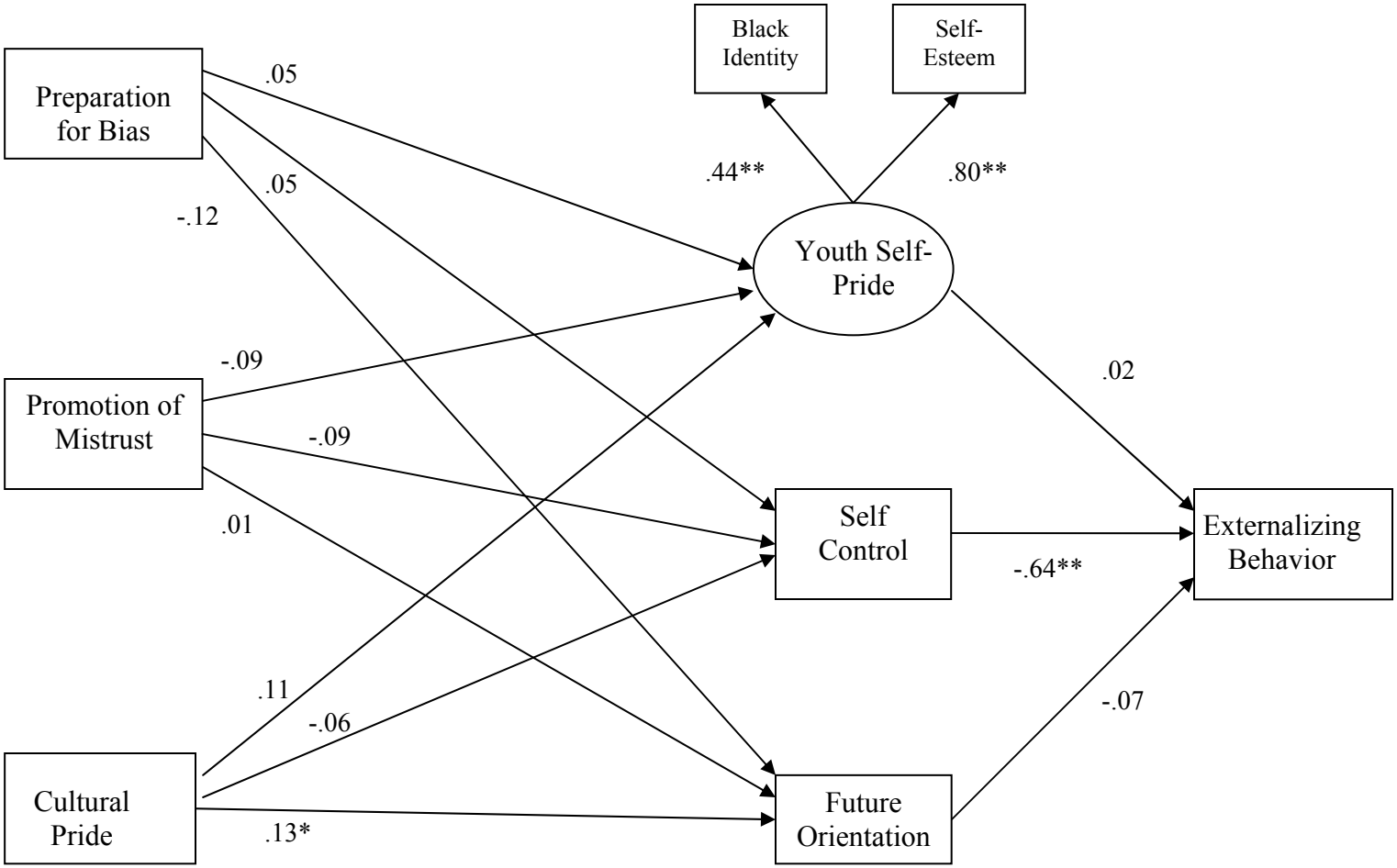


Figure 8. Moderational analysis: low HID (harsh-inconsistent discipline). Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

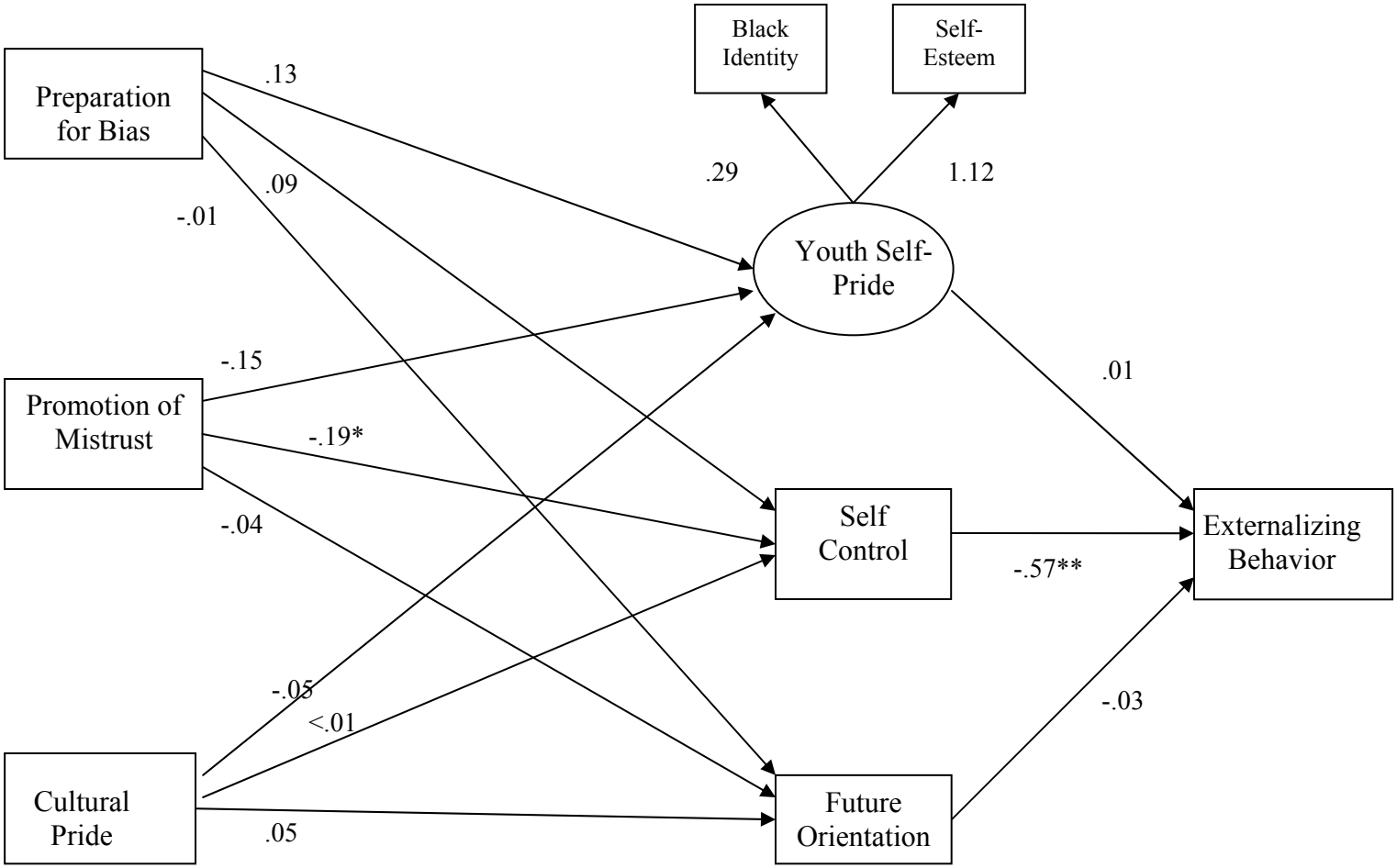


Figure 9. Moderational analysis: high PAQ (parent-child affective relationship quality). Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.

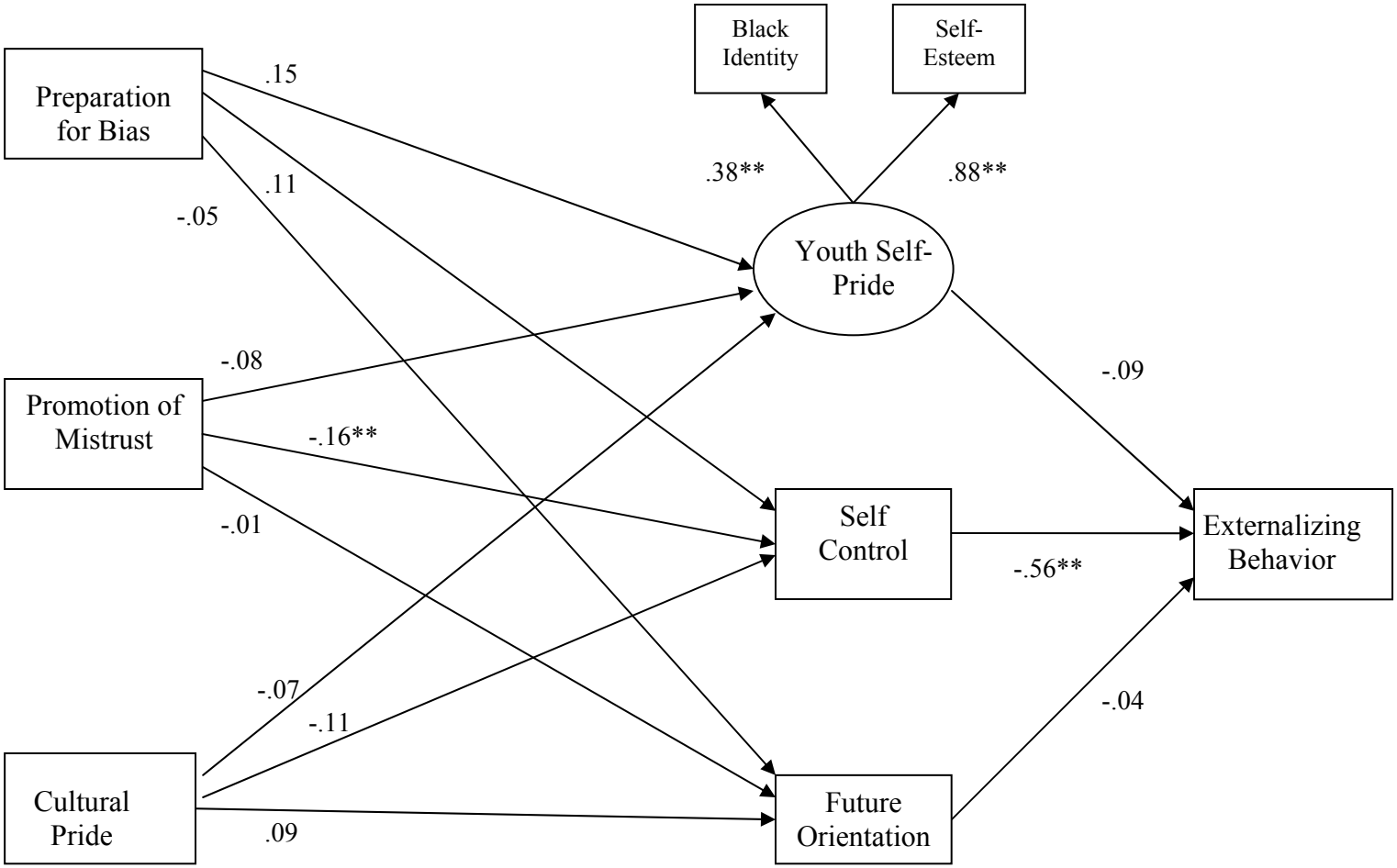
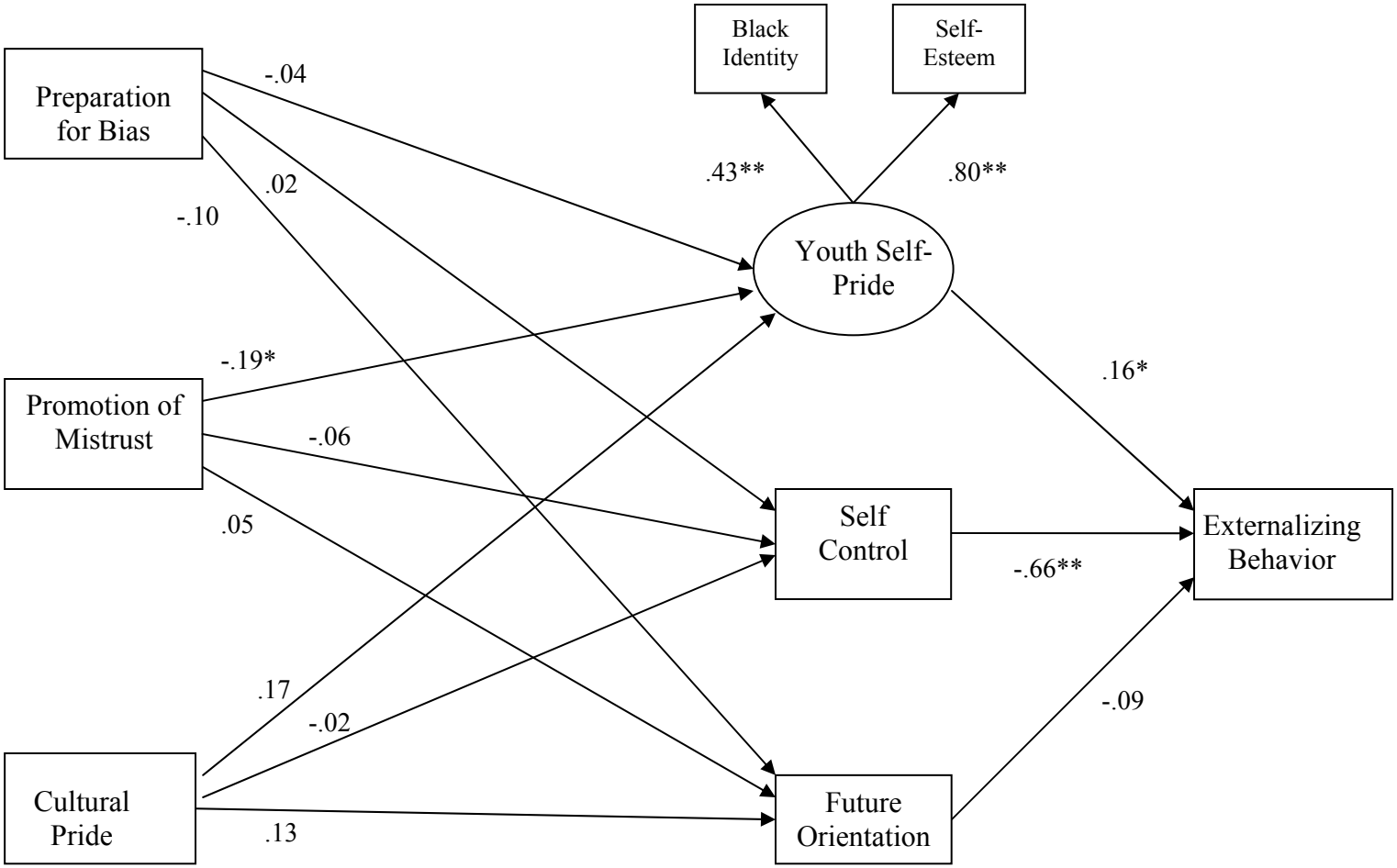


Figure 10. Moderational analysis: low PAQ (parent-child affective relationship quality). Factor loadings of the measured variables on the latent construct and standardized structural coefficients. **p < .01, *p < .05.



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