A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF BLACK MIDDLE SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH AND RESPONSES TO PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

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ABSTRACT

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Racial discrimination is commonplace among racial minority individuals, including adolescents, who report experiencing discrimination in their everyday lives. These experiences can put youth at risk for negative health and psychological outcomes. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) perspectives, this study qualitatively explored the perceived discrimination experiences and responses of Black middle school students, as well as parental racial socialization practices, as previous research has found this to be related to perceived discrimination and racial identity among children and adolescents. The study used a phenomenological approach to understand the unique perspectives of nine Black adolescents in middle school and their parents. The findings confirmed that the youth experienced both direct and vicarious discrimination during this developmental period in multiple forms, across settings, and from different sources. In addition, adolescent responses highlighted developmental and adaptive challenges involved in responding to discrimination. Findings revealed direct and indirect socialization practices used by parents to prevent these experiences, or to help their children navigate them in order to promote positive racial identity development and reduce negative outcomes. Connections were also found between discriminatory experiences, socialization, and racial identity. Implications of these findings for parents, educators, and researchers are discussed.

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Dedicated to my mother
Priscilla Ngozi Okoroji
for
life, love, and the pursuit of education

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It is impossible to name all of the people who walked this journey with me, but here I will do my best to attempt such a feat.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Experiences of racial discrimination have become commonplace in society (Herda, 2015) among racial and ethnic minority youth and adults (Seaton & Yip, 2009). In a study of the forms of discrimination experienced by racial and ethnic minority adolescents, 57% of participants reported being called a racial slur, 31% were threatened by peers, and 42% believed that they had been unfairly graded due to their racial or ethnic background (Fisher et al., 2000; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). Recent studies have also revealed that a majority of racial and ethnic minority adolescents report experiencing at least one incident of discrimination within the past year (Simons et al., 2006; Gibbons et al., 2004). Moreover, the ways in which adolescents cope with and respond to these experiences can affect their well-being and psychological outcomes (Smith-Bynum et al., 2014; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). The prevalence of discrimination in this population, and the potential to affect future outcomes, warrant a critical exploration of the experience of perceived discrimination among racial minority adolescents, the effects of these experiences, and the ways in which they respond to these situations.

One of the primary ways in which children and youth can learn to respond to and cope with perceived discrimination is through socialization by parents or other significant adults. Research has suggested that parents of racial minority youth can play an important role in preparing their children for the likelihood that they will experience race-related stressors (Saleem et al., 2016). The messages that parents communicate to their children can inform how they feel about their race, the strategies children use to respond to discriminatory experiences, and how children might navigate interracial encounters in general (Lesane-Brown, 2006; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Therefore, an exploration of adolescents' experiences

with perceived discrimination is more complete by also examining the ways in which they are socialized by their parents.

A critical way in which parents can influence children's experiences is through the socialization of their racial identity. Racial identity, in turn, can play an important role in adolescent experiences with perceived discrimination and socialization. Research suggests that the attitudes that Black youth hold about their race (i.e., racial identity) can be a risk or protective factor by influencing how they manage discriminatory experiences (Sellers et al., 2006). Parents can play a role in the development of racial identity through the messages that they send to their children which can inform how they think about their racial group and how they feel about being a member of their race (Nasir, 2012).

The relation between discriminatory experiences, racial identity, and socialization is complex. Although prior research has examined each of these factors, separately and in varying combinations, most studies have used quantitative methods, and few studies have examined adolescent populations (Paradies et al., 2015). There is limited research about discriminatory experiences among adolescents, as well as studies that provide adolescents opportunities to speak about their experiences. The proposed study is intended to address these gaps by taking a qualitative approach to explore how adolescents experience and respond to perceived discrimination, how parents socialize their children to manage these experiences, and how racial identity is involved in these processes.

Defining Discrimination

Discrimination is commonly defined as the negative actions and behaviors that a person might display towards another member on the basis of group membership (Aboud & Amato, 2001). A key idea is the unfair treatment by one group towards another (Brown & Bigler, 2005).

Discrimination can be overt and unambiguous or covert. Overt discrimination refers to clear and observable actions, such as harassment, bullying, or the use of racial slurs toward an individual. Covert forms of discrimination are subtle and nuanced, involving inferences regarding their experience. Covert discrimination is a perception that one is being unfairly targeted, such as noticing that others appear threatened or afraid of you based on attitudes and stereotypes (Hughes et al., 2016).

Use of the word “action,” especially in defining overt discrimination, suggests that discrimination is an observable behavior. In other words, defining discrimination in this way implies that an outside observer can determine whether an act of discrimination has occurred, and researchers should be able to clearly assess experiences of discrimination. However, uncertainty regarding the ability to clearly establish what constitutes an act of discrimination, and the fact that discrimination can be both overt and covert, makes it difficult to measure and quantify discrimination from a research perspective. In other words, discriminatory actions are not always apparent, and are often dependent on an individual’s perceptions, thereby making it difficult to clearly establish whether discrimination has occurred in some cases.

Consideration of the many different ways that discrimination can be experienced has led to use of the term *perceived discrimination* as the best way to assess this social process. Perceived discrimination is defined as an individual’s thoughts and feelings about situations in which he or she experienced unfair treatment based on social category membership (Brown & Bigler, 2005). This conceptualization of discrimination examines the phenomenon from a personal lens to assess how individuals make meaning of their own lived experiences (Byrd & Carter Andrews, 2016). In other words, the concept of perceived discrimination is an example of

a cognitive approach that views individuals' interpretations of their experiences and meaning-making, as valid and meaningful, regardless of whether they are directly observable.

Although the literature in this area has mainly focused on racial and ethnic discrimination, the conceptualization of discrimination has been expanded by researchers to include unfair treatment that might be based on other group characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, religious orientation) and to view discrimination as involving a power imbalance between dominant and subordinate groups (Garnett et al., 2014; Brown & Bigler, 2005; Williams & Neighbors, 2003).

Need and Rationale for the Study

Throughout history, people of color and those with marginalized identities have experienced discrimination. Historical events such as the Civil Rights movements leading to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and landmark cases such as Brown v. Board of Education (1954) are examples of society's attempts to address discrimination. However, reports of both interpersonal and institutionalized racial discrimination (e.g., in government policies) not only persist, but have dramatically increased (Levin & Reitzel, 2018). One explanation for this alarming surge in racial discrimination and racially motivated incidents including hate crimes is that the current socio-political climate has likely emboldened those with prejudiced views (Levin & Reitzel, 2018). In recent years, the increase in deaths of unarmed young Black men at the hands of law enforcement and others (e.g., Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice) have shown the importance of examining issues of racial injustice, racism, and discrimination among racial and ethnic minority populations (Threlfall, 2018). The start of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013, following the death of Trayvon Martin, was a collective call to action. Interest in the movement was reignited following the death of Michael Brown in 2014 (Banks, 2018).

These incidents, in conjunction with the Black Lives Matter movement, have heightened awareness to the prevalence of state-sanctioned violence against Black individuals (often young men), as well as the lack of prosecution towards their killers. They have also likely increased youths' awareness of racism and discrimination, and potentially changed the ways that parents and children discuss these issues. Recent research following these cases has found that Black parents specifically report increased worry and fear for their children, as well as more frequent conversations regarding how to react when faced with discrimination and how to decrease the likelihood of being perceived as a threat (Thomas & Blackmon, 2015; Threlfall, 2018). It is important to note that the current study's examination of experiences with and responses to perceived discrimination is situated in this current historical period of increased awareness, heightened parental vigilance, and potentially higher levels of parental socialization around issues of discrimination.

Perceived discrimination is frequently based on racial or ethnic identities, but it also can be based on other characteristics, such as gender, class, sexual orientation, age, or dis/ability (Gillborn, 2015; Lanier et al., 2017). Discrimination affects individuals in a variety of ways, especially in terms of mental and physical well-being (Lanier et al., 2017; Freitas et al., 2017). In order to better understand the effects of perceived discrimination, it is important to not only recognize it, but to also understand how individuals cope with and respond to this stressor. Research using adult samples has found that experiencing discrimination is associated with poorer mental health outcomes, such as decreased self-esteem, and increased psychological distress (McLaughlin, Hatzenbeuhler, & Keyes, 2010; Schmitt et al., 2014). These findings with adults support the need for examining perceived discrimination in younger populations, specifically during early adolescence, as this is a critical period of identity development

(Erikson, 1968). This period has been characterized as a time when adolescents confront the task of integrating their many identities. They are thought to be moving away from *received* identities (e.g., an acceptance of their racial identity as described by their parents or other family members) toward a personal exploration of their identity in which they are trying to understand the multiple facets associated with their particular racial group (Phinney, 1992; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). Engaging in this process of exploration makes this a critical time as identities are being considered, questioned, integrated, and forged. This is likely to inform how adolescents perceive and respond to their discriminatory experiences.

Adolescence is also a period of increased social awareness, and a time when youth begin to become more aware of discrimination (Gibbons, Gerrard, Cleveland, Wills, & Brody, 2004; Fisher et al., 2000). Although the majority of prior research in this field has been conducted with adults (Sellers et al., 2006), studies have found that children and adolescents report experiencing and being affected by discrimination (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Seaton, Upton, Sellers, Neblett, & Hammond, 2011). In fact, some research suggests that children as young as seven years old are able to identify instances of racial discrimination (Dulin-Keita, Hannon, Fernandez, & Cockerham, 2011) with adolescents becoming aware of social categories, bias, and social consequences beginning around age ten (Quintana, 1998). Thus, by early adolescence, youth become more aware of and able to articulate their experiences with discrimination (Verkuyten, Kinkett, & van der Wielen, 1997).

Given this increased awareness, these young adolescents can be especially vulnerable to the negative consequences of discrimination, at a time when their problem-solving, perspective-taking, and social skills are still developing (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997) and their coping strategies are somewhat limited. Moreover, there is the possibility that these

consequences will persist throughout the lifespan (Sanders-Phillips, 2009; Priest et al., 2013). For example, experiencing discrimination early in life has been shown to affect psychological well-being into adulthood (Lambert et al., 2009; Smith-Bynum et al., 2014). In addition, studies with adult populations have found that some racial differences in health outcomes can be attributed to early experience of stressors, such as racial discrimination (Sanders-Phillips, Settles-Reaves, Walker, & Brownlow, 2009; Shonkoff et al., 2009). These findings show that perceived discrimination is a critical adolescent experience with long-term ramifications.

There is also a need to explore perceived discrimination at the individual level. Although researchers have found that racial and ethnic minority adolescents have increased risk of experiencing discrimination, less is known about the experience of discrimination from an individual's (person-centered) perspective. Sellers et al. (2004) suggest that experiences of discrimination are not uniform within racial and cultural groups, however, researchers have paid little attention to individual variation in experiences of discrimination. Additionally, certain individual factors, such as cognitive classification skills, awareness of stereotypes, and racial identity, might play a role in how adolescents experience and understand discrimination during this time period (Smith-Bynum et al., 2014; Brown & Bigler, 2005). It cannot be assumed that all racial minority adolescents will experience discrimination in the same way. Previous studies highlight the fact that adolescents experience discrimination, but do not necessarily explore the nature of this experience, how it occurs, how adolescents feel about it, and how they make sense of their experience (Hoglund & Hosan, 2013). These are important aspects that should be considered in order to better understand the role of perceived discrimination in adolescents' lives. It is important to not only know that adolescents truly do experience discrimination, but to

also include their voices to develop more precise and accurate understanding about the effects of perceived discrimination and ways in which they manage these experiences.

Theoretical Frameworks

Many theories have been proposed to explain the developmental nature of perceived discrimination, as well as to better understand its mechanisms and effects on individual and group outcomes. Most of these theories have noted that phenomena such as racism, prejudice, and discrimination are prevalent in today's society, and that these social processes can be powerful, resulting in differential experiences of the world that have adverse physical and psychological consequences for racial minority youth (Essed, 1991; Williams et al., 2003; Carter, 2007; Clark et al., 1999; Crenshaw, 1989). García-Coll et al. (1996) argue that the development of racial minority youth is likely to differ from dominant group peers due to differences in developmental contexts, such as the increased likelihood of experiencing discrimination. These contextual differences warrant further exploration of racial minority adolescents' experiences with discrimination. In addition to normative competencies that are developed by all children, racial minority youth must develop culture-specific and bicultural competencies due to increased likelihood of negative experiences. Specifically, racial minority children must effectively manage the negative influences of discrimination and other threats in order to positively navigate a society that may diminish their racial group and also develop a strong sense of self (García-Coll et al., 1996). Two prominent theories that are relevant to further understanding discrimination among youth from minority backgrounds are Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997).

Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a scholarly and political theory that addresses the significance of race and racism in American society. CRT was first proposed in the 1970s as a way to illuminate the consequences of minimizing the role that race plays in the lives of people of color. With its origins in the field of critical legal studies, CRT emerged during a time when lawyers, activists, and legal scholars noticed a regression in advances towards equality from the Civil Rights era (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT highlights the idea that the social construction of race provides power and privilege to members of dominant groups (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Torres, 2008). CRT also suggests that racial discrimination occurs at both individual and societal levels, meaning that people of color can experience discrimination in multiple forms. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) have proposed five tenets of CRT, four of which are directly relevant to the current study's examination of perceived discrimination in early adolescence.

The first tenet of CRT is that *racism is endemic* in U.S. society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT notes that racism, prejudice, and discrimination are ordinary consequences of living in a society in which certain groups are ascribed greater power and privilege. Additionally, this tenet challenges the belief that the U.S. is a "post-racial society", and instead, argues that the experience of racism among marginalized groups is common, and must be addressed. The second tenet of CRT is *interest convergence*, or the notion that societal change only benefits members of marginalized groups when their interests are aligned with those of the dominant group. In other words, movements towards racial justice do not occur unless the dominant group also benefits from these actions. One prominent example of interest convergence is Bell's (1980) proposition that school segregation was eradicated in the United States due to a need for the government to appear favorable to other nations with citizens of color. In other words, Bell

(1980) argued that the integration of schools was not a result of a conscious commitment to decrease discrimination towards Black citizens, but rather a convergence of interests that also benefitted members of the racial majority.

The third tenet of CRT is that *race is socially constructed*. CRT takes the position that there is no genetic or biological basis for race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), as is commonly assumed and proposed by some scientists (Jensen, 1974; Hernstein & Murray, 1996; Rowe, 2002). Race as a social construct is evident in the different ways that the classification of Black people has changed throughout history. For example, certain racial groups have experienced advantages or disadvantages based on the economic climate. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) use the term "differential racialization" to describe the ways that groups of people are racialized, and judged, based on shifting societal needs. Specifically, they note that Mexican or Japanese individuals may have been favored over Black individuals during a time when society needed these groups for agricultural work (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), but viewed as national security (Nagata, Kim, & Wu, 2019) or economic (Martinez, 2000) threats at other points in history. Another example is increased discrimination, unfavorable attitudes, and an immigration ban towards Muslims, post 9/11. This constantly shifting racialization often accompanied by discriminatory practices or policies suggests that the concept of race is not an objective reality, but rather, a social construction that reflects society's needs, fears, and values at any given point in history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This construction of race can result in a hierarchy that creates negative consequences for individuals with marginalized racial identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This racial construction also makes it possible that members of marginalized groups are more likely to experience negative life events.

The fourth tenet of CRT highlights the concepts of *intersectionality and anti-essentialism*. Intersectionality is the recognition that individuals have more than a single identity and these multiple identities (e.g., race, sex, class, sexual orientation, etc.), in various combinations and situations, can create opportunities for experiencing prejudice or discrimination (Crenshaw, Williams, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). Anti-essentialism is the belief that all members of a social group should not be expected to be the same (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This CRT hallmark challenges, for example, the notion that, all Blacks think, act, and believe in the same things. In fact, CRT argues that within-group differences are likely to outweigh between-group differences, and thus advocates for understanding the perspectives and experiences of individual group members (Ladson-Billings, 2013).

The fifth and final tenet of CRT is the importance of *voice or counter-narrative*. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) note that the perspectives of marginalized groups are often missing from the dominant discourse. Counter-storytelling is a call to focus on and include these voices to challenge the perspectives of those in power (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). It is important to note that CRT proposes a qualitative approach to including these voices, as a way to understand and interpret the experiences of marginalized populations. This approach lifts the voices of these populations by giving them the opportunity to tell their own stories, and to counter dominant (and often incorrect or stereotyped) narratives told by others.

Critical Race Theory is an appropriate framework for the current study due to its fundamental view that racial discrimination is a normal occurrence in the lives of marginalized people, and its focus on exploring the effects of race as a social construct. Additionally, CRT's tenets of intersectionality and anti-essentialism, along with counter-narrative are important because they highlight the need to qualitatively explore individual perceptions of discrimination,

without the assumption that all youth of color are the same, and also allowing these young adolescents to speak about their own experiences.

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory. The Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST; see Figure 1) can be used to better understand the effects and coping mechanisms at play in discrimination experiences, from an adolescent perspective. This theory suggests that during this time period, adolescents' increased perspective taking skills can lead to developing an awareness of how they are perceived by others. For racial minority youth, this developing awareness might illuminate feelings of being devalued based on social category membership. This theory proposes that, as these youths develop cognitive competencies, it is likely that they will need to use positive or negative psychological coping mechanisms to alleviate the negative effects of a growing awareness that they are members of a subordinate group (see *APPENDIX A*; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997).

According to PVEST, adolescents' identity markers, such as race, socioeconomic status, sex, biological characteristics, and physical status can be risk factors for stereotypes and biases. García-Coll et al. (1996) also references these identity markers as important for racial minority adolescents' navigation of the world around them. These social position variables, as noted by García-Coll et al. (1996), are risk factors because they are related to an adolescent's experiences with prejudice, racism, and discrimination, which ultimately affects their developmental competencies. In PVEST, Spencer (1995) posits that these risk factors are dependent on the adolescent's development of social cognition. Specifically, adolescents' understanding of social structures, expectations, biases, and stereotypes are likely to influence their understanding of discrimination. These markers also influence whether the adolescent is likely to engage with the potential stress aroused by these biases or discriminatory experiences. Factors affecting stress

engagement include whether the stressor is a daily hassle and whether the adolescent has social supports (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). Next, the adolescent is likely to use coping methods to manage the stressor. These coping methods can be adaptive or maladaptive and continue to have a bidirectional influence on the adolescents' emerging identity, as social cognition continues to increase. Over time, these coping strategies can become stable and persist throughout the life course (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997).

PVEST posits that adolescents undergo a meaning-making process when they experience phenomena such as discrimination, and that this process has the potential to affect how they feel about themselves. The authors also propose that these meaning-making processes include how the adolescent responds to the situation, because these responses can be repetitive across time, and bi-directionally influence the adolescents' identity development. In other words, an adolescent's racial identity development affects how he or she will respond to a discriminatory experience, and recurrent experiences with discrimination can shape the attitudes and beliefs that the adolescent holds regarding his/her racial group membership. Spencer, Dupree, and Hartmann (1997) proposed that self-perceptions can determine whether the adolescent will try to downplay their abilities or physical attributes that were the target of discrimination, suppress certain behaviors, or decrease engagement in certain activities.

PVEST also makes connections to parental socialization, specifically the idea that parents of racial minority children must explicitly convey the significance of their identity markers in order to prepare them to manage and respond to the stress of possible bias and discrimination. This parental socialization can be described in terms of a phenomenological approach because parents are viewed as helping their children to make sense of the experience (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). In relation to the current study, PVEST argues that discriminatory experiences

are common among racial minority youth (much like the first tenet of CRT), and that early adolescence is a critical period for these experiences to emerge due to increased awareness and social-cognitive development. These adolescents respond to these stressors by using adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies that are influenced by their racial identity development, as well as parental socialization practices.

Summary. Together, these two theories provide a conceptualization of both the developmental aspects of perceived discrimination, and the possible effects on racial minority adolescents' well-being. The theories have overlapping concepts that are important to highlight. For example, both CRT and PVEST note that discriminatory experiences are common occurrences for racial minority individuals, thus, providing a theoretical rationale for examining the discriminatory experiences of middle school adolescents. Additionally, both theories reference the importance of identity in these experiences, albeit in different ways. Specifically, the CRT concept of intersectionality focuses on the role that multiple identities can play in the experience of discrimination, while PVEST views identity as a way that adolescents can make sense of these experiences based on their social identity development.

These theories, along with previous research in the field, clearly support the need for assessing perceived discrimination during this developmental period, as well as the ways in which adolescents respond to this stressor. A key assumption of these theories is that the larger society operates in a way that leads to differential development of racial minority youth. Specifically, the increased likelihood of these youth to experience discrimination throughout development, along with the heightened awareness of these experiences during early adolescence, suggests that further research is needed to better understand this phenomenon. Additionally, exploration of racial identity development and parental socialization in this process

of experiencing and responding to discrimination is warranted due to the age of the adolescents. PVEST notes that early adolescence is important for emerging identity, and also the likelihood that parents will play a role in how these youth make sense of their experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine the experience of perceived discrimination in the lives of Black adolescents in middle school. This research used qualitative methods to give these adolescents an opportunity to voice their experiences with discrimination, the effects of perceived discrimination, and the ways in which they respond to these negative experiences. Additionally, this study aimed to address a gap in literature by examining the roles of racial identity and parental socialization in adolescent experiences of discrimination.

The current study examined the following questions:

1. How (if at all) do Black middle school adolescents experience discrimination?
    a. What is the frequency of perceived discrimination?
    b. Who reports experiencing perceived discrimination?
    c. What forms of discrimination do adolescents experience?
    d. What types of discrimination do adolescents experience?
    e. What are the sources of discrimination?
2. How (if at all) do Black middle school adolescents respond to experiences of discrimination?
    a. What coping strategies do they report using?
    b. How effective are their responses?
3. How (if at all) do parents of Black middle school adolescents help their children understand and navigate discriminatory experiences?

   a. What do parents know about their child's experiences with and responses to discrimination?
   b. What actions do parents take to prepare their children for experiencing and responding to discrimination?
4. How (if at all) does racial identity inform Black middle school adolescents' experiences with discrimination?
5. How (if at all) do parents' racial identity inform parental socialization practices?

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review draws on research from multiple areas related to racial discrimination, racial identity, and parental socialization. First, the review examines the research related to prevalence, forms, types, and sources of discrimination, followed by its effects on mental health. Responses to discrimination are also discussed. Next, research on racial identity development is reviewed along with the linkage to experiences of discrimination. Finally, parental socialization is examined in relation to the discrimination experiences of children. Currently, few studies have taken a qualitative approach to exploring and connecting these issues.

Racial Discrimination

Prevalence. Discrimination is commonplace in the lives of Black individuals. In a national survey of adults, Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams (1999) found that 81% of the sample of Black participants reported daily experiences of discrimination. Additionally, 49% of the participants reported experiencing at least one major discriminatory event in their lifetime. Other researchers have also noted the prevalence of daily discrimination experiences among this older population (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; D'Augeli & Hershberger, 1993), with more than one-third of participants experiencing moderate discrimination, such as unfavorable work assignments, grades, or evaluations (Sanders-Thompson, 1996). While the majority of research on racial discrimination has been conducted on adults (Sellers et al., 2006), the finding that discrimination is a common occurrence for Black adults suggests that Black adolescents may also be at risk for experiencing discrimination.

Studies have shown that reports of discrimination are highest among children and adolescents who are Black, compared to other racial and ethnic minority groups (Fisher et al., 2000; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Stainback & Irvin, 2012). To better understand the prevalence of discrimination experienced by this population, Seaton et al. (2008) surveyed a large sample of Black adolescents and found that almost 90% endorsed at least one of 13 "everyday" discrimination experiences. This included, for example, being followed in stores or others assuming the adolescent was being dishonest. Two-thirds of the sample also reported being treated with less courtesy. A similar trend was observed in a longitudinal study in which 40% of the sample of 10- to 12-year old Black youth reported being targeted by a racial slur, 33% reported being disrespected or threatened, and 6% reported being harassed by the police (Martin et al., 2011). As the children aged, these percentages dramatically increased during a five-year follow-up assessment (Martin et al., 2011). Perceived discrimination is so widespread that studies have indicated that the majority of Black youth have reported experiencing at least one incident of discrimination within the past three months (Prelow et al., 2004).

The primary focus of research on adult experiences of discrimination can overshadow child experiences with discrimination. It is critical, however, to examine these experiences earlier because it is highly likely that individuals who report experiencing discrimination in adulthood also have experienced discrimination during childhood and adolescence. From a developmental perspective, discrimination is reported by children as young as seven and increases from childhood to adulthood (Dulin-Keita, Hannon, Fernandez, & Cockerham, 2011). Thus, discriminatory experiences are clearly not just an adult phenomenon. This supports the importance of examining early experiences of discrimination in order to better understand the

basis for sustained and cumulative effects of these experiences by studying how racial minority adolescents are affected by and respond to these experiences.

Middle school is a critical time to examine discrimination as adolescents' social cognition undergoes dramatic developmental change. Research suggests that children develop the cognitive maturity to consider others' perspectives and cognitive states between the ages of seven and eight (Carpendale & Chandler, 1996). These cognitive gains not only help children identify when others are being treated unfairly, but also aid in identifying when they are personally being treated unjustly due to race or ethnicity (Hughes, 2011). Also, by age 10, children have been found to fully understand the concept of racial discrimination; that it is a negative action by one majority racial group towards another (Verkuyten, Kinket, & van der Weilen, 1997). In addition to understanding that discrimination and prejudice are unjust, by late childhood, they can also understand and identify societal stereotypes regarding specific racial groups (Brown, Alabi, Huynh, & Masten, 2011).

Research has shown that sensitivity and ability to differentiate between fair and unfair treatment also develops in late childhood due to increased capacity for abstract thinking, thus making it easier to recognize both blatant and subtle discriminatory actions (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2010; Brown & Bigler, 2005). During this time, youth are also more sensitive to mistreatment by others due to increased exploration of social category memberships (Bellmore, Nishina, You, & Ma, 2012). This means, that as youth understand their own social category memberships, they also begin to understand how others may treat them based on these memberships. For example, research suggests that for racial and ethnic minority children, the realization that negative stereotypes are held about these groups makes it more likely that they will report increased discrimination experiences (Shelton & Sellers, 2000; Sellers et al., 2003;

Sellers and Shelton, 2003; Neblett et al., 2004). Therefore, not only are early adolescents more likely to *perceive* discrimination, but they are also more likely to *experience* it as well. In fact, middle school has been noted as a time of increased experiences of victimization (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Rose, Espelage, & Monda-Amaya, 2009). Specifically, Byrd and Carter Andrews (2016) found that middle school students were more likely to be in a high discrimination cluster than high school students, which suggests that middle schoolers experience and report greater rates of perceived discrimination. Middle schoolers might be an especially vulnerable population for experiencing and being affected by discrimination. The expanding cognitive ability of this group means that, although their awareness of discrimination is increasing, the ways in which they experience and respond to discrimination might be different, and possibly less adaptive, in comparison to older adolescents and adults. Experiences of discrimination appear to start in childhood and continue through adulthood, especially for members of marginalized groups.

Types, Forms, and Sources of Discrimination

As youth develop and gain a better understanding of the world, they are likely to experience different types and forms of discrimination from multiple sources. However, research has usually focused generically on discrimination and has not often made distinctions between forms or sources (Harnois, 2015). This general approach does not fully capture the extent of discrimination or how it is manifested, thereby making assumptions that individuals experiencing discrimination as a result of multiple identities attribute their mistreatment to one single system of inequality (Harnois & Ifatunji, 2011). It is necessary to distinguish between types, forms, and sources of discrimination because research suggests that these factors are linked to differential outcomes for adolescents (Seaton & Yip, 2009; Benner & Graham, 2013).

Type of discrimination usually refers to whether the experience is overt or covert. Overt discrimination refers to clear and observable actions, such as harassment, bullying, or the use of racial slurs towards an individual. Covert forms of discrimination are subtle and nuanced; often requiring the victim to make inferences regarding their experience. Covert discrimination is a perception that one is being unfairly targeted, such as noticing that others appear threatened or afraid of you based on attitudes and stereotypes (Hughes et al., 2016). The multidimensional nature of racial discrimination can also yield other forms in addition to these two broad types, as a result of individual, cultural, or institutional factors. Jones (1997) described *individual discrimination* as negative experiences that are personal and degrading towards minorities to make them feel inferior, such as derogatory name calling. This type of discrimination is directly experienced on a person-to-person basis. *Cultural discrimination* is a result of dominant groups asserting their beliefs and practices as superior to those of minority groups (Jones, 1997). For example, prior to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, there was widespread belief that Native American children were better cared for by European Americans, and thereby subjected to removal from family care. This is considered cultural discrimination because it contends that European American child rearing practices were superior to those of Native Americans. *Cultural discrimination* occurs on a greater societal level and can affect more people than individual discrimination.

Similarly*, institutionalized discrimination* refers to differential access to societal resources between dominant and subordinate groups (Jones, 1997; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). This differential access usually leads to inequity between these groups. The Plessy vs. Ferguson ruling suggesting “separate but equal” facilities for Black individuals is an example of institutional discrimination because it was later shown that separate facilities and schools for this

group were not in fact equal to those provided to White people, consequently creating many disadvantages and unequal access to resources for Black people. Types of discrimination are important to consider because they have implications for how youth may be affected and how they might respond. For example, youth are likely to respond differently to individual versus institutional discriminatory events because institutional discrimination experiences are much more likely to be perpetuated by adults or society in general, which might not appear as relevant and personal to youth as individual forms of discrimination.

Form of discrimination often refers to the method through which the discriminatory event occurs (e.g., name-calling, social group exclusion, harsh discipline, etc.). The form of discrimination most often reported by Black adolescents is being perceived as a threat or as being incompetent (Sellers et al., 2006). Participants reported that this form of discrimination was manifested through false accusations, being treated suspiciously or as if the individual was stupid, and being talked down to (Sellers et al., 2006). The least reported form of discrimination was being insulted, hassled, or called names.

The most frequent forms of discrimination experienced by adolescents are covert, which is consistent with reports from studies with adults (Essed, 1991; Harrell, 2000; Sellers & Shelton, 2003), and suggests that the most salient forms of discrimination tend to be subtle and nuanced throughout development. Research suggests that some forms of discrimination are experienced more frequently by specific racial and ethnic groups. For example, studies have found that both Black and Latino adolescents often report discrimination in the form of unfair grading, discouragement from advanced classes, and harsh discipline (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003; Ruck & Wortley, 2002). Additionally, Black adolescents are more likely to report feeling feared by fellow classmates, being perceived as "unintelligent," receiving less courteous treatment,

assumptions of dishonesty, and being followed in stores (Fisher et al., 2000; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Seaton et al., 2008).

The covert nature of these forms of discrimination can pose unique challenges. For example, because forms of discrimination are not always visible and blatant, it may be easy for some individuals to conclude that discrimination no longer exists. This is aligned with the idea that we live in a "post-racial society". If this was accurate, one would expect to see few to no reports of discrimination by youth, but the opposite is true; youth continue to report feelings and perceptions of racial discrimination, providing clear evidence for the first tenet of CRT, that the endemic nature of racism, prejudice, and discrimination in our society is valid. In fact, Delgado and Stefancic (2012) argue that acknowledging only overt forms of discrimination, and neglecting to address covert discrimination, limits progress for systematic change. In other words, the focus to end overt discrimination does not mean that this phenomenon has been eradicated, but rather, it appears to have been driven underground.

The subtle nature of these forms of discrimination also means that adolescents are tasked with interpreting whether these experiences are discriminatory, which can be additionally stressful. Sellers et al. (2006) notes that discrimination forms that are covert in nature require the expenditure of more cognitive energy to evaluate and make sense of the event. CRT supports the notion that forms of discrimination can be intersectional. According to Ladson-Billings (1998) individuals can experience discrimination based on myriad identities. This means that when forms of discrimination are subtle, it can sometimes be difficult for victims of discrimination to pinpoint which identity is being attacked. For example, a Black girl who experiences discrimination in the form of lowered teacher expectations in math, might be unsure of whether this is due to her race, gender, or a combination of both identities. Additionally, the inherent

ambiguity might be doubly stressful as the girl might question whether these lowered expectations would even be considered discrimination since the form of discrimination is covert.

The *source* of discrimination refers to the perpetrator of the discriminatory event. Discrimination can arise from various sources, including adults and peers. For adolescents, who spend much of their time in school settings, discrimination can be from sources including teachers and peers. Research has found mixed results related to whether racial minority youth perceive more discrimination from a specific source. One longitudinal study found that youth reported an increased rate of perceived discrimination by adults over time, while the rate of perceived discrimination by peers remained the same (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). However, a more recent study found a decrease in the acts of discrimination by adults over time among all racial and ethnic minority youth, but the rate of decline was much smaller for Black adolescents in the sample (Hughes et al., 2016). This study also shed light on the differences in prevalence of perceived discrimination from different sources between racial and ethnic minority adolescents. Black adolescents reported the highest levels of discrimination by adults, compared to other minority peers (Hughes et al., 2016). In contrast, Asian adolescents reported greater discrimination by peers compared to adults (teachers; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). These findings indicate that the sources of discrimination can vary for youth of different racial and ethnic groups and might have greater consequences for certain racial groups more than others. Additionally, forms and sources of discrimination are often linked. For example, it is likely that youth will perceive more instances of discrimination in the form of harsh discipline by teachers and adults, rather than peers. However, many forms of discrimination, such as name calling, exclusion, and overt harassment can be perceived from multiple sources (Byrd & Carter Andrews, 2016).

Types, forms, and sources of discrimination are critical for understanding adolescents' discrimination experiences and responses. Covert discrimination experiences require more cognitive effort in order for the youth to understand and respond to the event. Thus, it is likely that early adolescents' developing social cognition will play a role in their sense-making of discriminatory situations. Additionally, the source of discrimination plays a role in how youth are affected and how they will respond. It can be assumed that the power differential involved in teacher or adult discriminatory experiences is likely to influence these factors as well. It is important to note that the majority of studies have used quantitative methods to assess types, forms, and sources of discrimination. Specifically, adolescents have been asked to indicate the occurrence, rather than explain the nature, of discrimination events. Qualitative methods can further add to the literature by revealing more information regarding thoughts, feelings, and responses of discrimination experiences in early adolescence.

Effects of Perceived Discrimination

Adverse effects associated with experiencing discrimination have been widely noted by researchers. Research among Black adults who experienced discrimination reported lower subjective well-being, and increased psychological distress (Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997; Broman, Mavaddat, & Hsu, 2000). These negative effects on adults raise the possibility that children and adolescents might also experience similar consequences as a result of discrimination. Past research in this field has found that experiences of discrimination affect ethnic and racial minority youth in many different ways. Some studies have documented poor psychological outcomes, such as increased rates of anxiety and depression among Black youth, linked to the exposure of racial discrimination (Banks, John-Wood, & Spencer, 2006; Bynum, Best, Barnes, & Burton, 2008; Simons et al., 2002) as early as preschool (Caughy, O'Campo, &

Muntaner, 2004). Additionally, associations have been found between perceived discrimination and decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy (Nyborg & Curry, 2003; Aneshensel, 1992; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2004), heightened feelings of hopelessness (Burr et al., 1999; Krieger, 2003), and increased anger and aggression (Simons et al., 2006).

Differential outcomes have been noted depending on the form and source of discrimination experienced. Fisher et al. (2000) found that perceived discrimination, specific to social exclusion, was especially distressing to racial minority adolescents and was most associated with diminished self-esteem than other assessed forms of perceived discrimination, such as name-calling, or assumptions of poor English-speaking abilities. Furthermore, bullying literature has made distinctions in psychological outcomes based on discrimination form and frequency. By assessing the frequency of negative experiences, Wang et al. (2010) found that adolescents who reported high frequencies of experiencing five types of bullying behaviors (physical, verbal harassment, social exclusion, spreading rumors, and cyber bullying) reported greater depressive symptoms, sleeping problems, and nervousness, compared to those who only reported high frequencies of just verbal harassment and social exclusion, or who reported low frequencies of all bullying behaviors. These findings suggest that the form of discrimination is important in regard to the ways that adolescents might be affected by these experiences. Additionally, it is possible that perceiving multiple forms of discrimination produces a compounding influence on adolescents' psychological functioning.

Sources of discrimination have also been associated with differential psychological outcomes. Specifically, perceived discrimination by peers has been found to be detrimental to overall psychological adjustment and well-being (Fisher et al., 2000; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). In one study, discrimination by peers was linked to both decreased self-esteem and

increased symptoms of depression, while discrimination by adults was only linked to decreased self-esteem (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). This differential effect suggests that discrimination by peers might be more harmful to adolescents' socio-emotional health than discrimination by adults. Support for this suggestion is explained by the important role of peer acceptance during the adolescent developmental period (Benner & Graham, 2013). In other words, poorer psychological outcomes might be due to the likelihood of diminished peer relationships when racial and ethnic minority adolescents perceive discrimination by their fellow peers. However, it is important to consider that this same study (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006) also found that adolescents who perceived higher levels of both peer and adult discrimination experienced the worst outcomes related to self-esteem and depressive symptoms. Therefore, although peer discrimination was linked to poor psychological outcomes, discrimination from multiple sources might be linked to even worse consequences. These additional results lend support to the possibility of a *compounding* effect of perceived discrimination. Specifically, it is possible that perceiving discrimination from multiple sources might increase the likelihood of poorer psychological outcomes, similar to experiencing multiple forms of discrimination. More research is necessary to support this compounding theory of perceived discrimination.

Given the amount of time that children and youth spend in schools, it is possible that teachers are a common adult source of perceived discrimination among minority youth. This might be due to the fact that, besides parents, teachers are the next class of adults with whom children spend the most time. Research assessing the effects of perceived discrimination by teachers has often linked this source of discrimination to academic, rather than psychological outcomes (Benner & Graham, 2013). Specifically, Benner and Graham (2013) found that, although peers and teachers are sources of discrimination in the school setting, peer

discrimination was most associated with adolescents' mental health, while teacher discrimination was associated with academic outcomes. These findings have been explained by recognizing the power that teachers have to determine students' grades and academic success (or lack thereof), which has implications for educational outcomes, such as school importance, engagement, and overall performance (Benner & Graham, 2013; Chavous et al., 2008). However, the psychological effects of teacher/adult discrimination are important to consider, due to the overall psychological consequences linked to experiencing discrimination. Findings from a recent study showed that perceptions of discrimination by teachers were indirectly related to increased externalizing problems (Unnever, Cullen, & Barnes, 2016). The researchers suggested that the effects of perceived discrimination by teachers on externalizing behaviors might develop through diminished attachment to the teacher (Unnever, Cullen, & Barnes, 2016). In other words, minority adolescents who perceive discrimination from their teacher, might be less likely to feel a strong attachment to that teacher, which could increase their likelihood of displaying externalizing problems. This detachment from the teacher may also suggest a low sense of belonging in school, which is likely to decrease academic motivation and success.

Finally, researchers have also found that the effect of experiencing discrimination in middle school might be different from other developmental periods. Findings from Hughes et al. (2016) using both middle and high school students showed that discrimination from different sources increased during middle school. However, overt peer discrimination in sixth grade, specifically, longitudinally predicted worse academic and mental health outcomes, as well as behavior problems, in eighth grade and eleventh grade. Covert peer discrimination in sixth grade showed similar results but was not predictive of behavior problems in eighth grade (Hughes et al., 2016). Thus, it is important to further examine what is unique about middle school that

results in increased experiences of discrimination, as well as poorer outcomes (Byrd & Carter Andrews 2016; Hughes et al., 2016). Middle school is not only a critical time to examine frequency of perceived discrimination, but also a time to assess the implications from these experiences as they might have longitudinal consequences into late adolescence and early adulthood.

In summary, the effects of discrimination on adolescents are far-reaching. Experiencing discrimination can affect many aspects of adolescents' lives, including both mental health and school outcomes. The types, forms, and sources of discrimination can lead to differential effects, and can also create a negative compounding affect if an adolescent experiences discrimination from multiple forms and/or sources. These results make it clear that discrimination experiences in adolescence need to be addressed due to the implications for immediate and longitudinal outcomes. However, simply experiencing a discriminatory event does not always lead to negative consequences for various reasons, and the way the adolescent responds might also reduce the likelihood of adverse effects.

Responses to Discrimination

Many factors influence whether an adolescent will label a negative event as discriminatory. Specifically, self-awareness, age, available coping strategies, stress arousal and tolerance, and racial identity have been identified as possible factors that might affect an adolescent's discrimination experience and response (Wakefield & Hudley, 2005; Sanchez et al., 2016; Freitas et al., 2017). Additionally, the type of discrimination might affect whether it requires a response. For example, it is likely that individuals may forego responding to subtle forms of discrimination due to the ambiguity of the situation. Adolescents who do not perceive a negative event as discriminatory are less likely to form a response to the event and have been

found to report fewer incidents of discrimination (Smith-Bynum et al., 2014). However, if an event is deemed to be discriminatory, the adolescent might experience a greater psychological cost and is tasked with having to formulate a response (Smith-Bynum et al., 2014).

Many researchers have posited broad categories for response strategies to discrimination. Early on, Phinney and Chavira (1995) suggested three categories for adolescents' response to discrimination. It is important to note that these response styles were developed to describe the ways that individuals respond to discrimination immediately following the experience. Participants in their study responded passively, actively, or aggressively. Passive responses occur when the adolescent does not address the discriminatory event in any way. Examples of this response type include walking away or ignoring the event. Active responses are those that challenge the discrimination without being hostile toward the perpetrator. This can include actions such as talking to the perpetrator or reporting it to an adult. Finally, aggressive responses are hostile reactions to discriminatory events, including physical harm or threat of harm to the perpetrator (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Wakefield & Hudley, 2005). Phinney and Chavira (1995) found psychosocial differences in participants depending on the type of response used. Specifically, participants who often used aggressive response styles reported lower self-esteem compared to those who responded actively. A criticism of these categories is that they are assumed to be mutually exclusive, and do not account for the function of responses. For example, an adolescent may use a passive response to protect themselves from further discrimination. In this example, a passive strategy might actually be considered adaptive when used in an intentional and goal-directed way. These categories also refer to mostly observable behaviors, and do not account for internal processes that may appear passive (e.g., the adolescent internally forming a plan to address future events).

More recently, scholars have put forth two broad categories of response (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001). Internal strategies are ways of responding that are within the individual, and can include personality traits, such as optimism or high self-esteem (Freitas et al., 2017). External strategies refer to observable behaviors directed toward the perpetrator or used to resolve negative feelings brought on by the discriminatory event, such as seeking social support (Freitas et al., 2017). Positive and negative strategies can be present within both of these broad categories. It is possible to see a link between these Internal/External categories and Phinney and Chavira's (1995) Passive, Active, and Aggressive categories. Specifically, some passive strategies may fit within the internal category while active and aggressive strategies would fall under the external category.

In addition, Harrell (1994) developed a scale for coping with racially stressful events that distinguishes between emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies in response to discriminatory events (Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012). Emotion-focused coping strategies included responses such as avoidance, internal thinking (e.g., fantasizing about an action), and rumination (e.g., self-blame, or thinking about the event constantly). Problem-focused coping strategies included confrontation (verbal or physical), seeking support (e.g., talking to a trusted adult, receiving advice, or crying), or planful problem solving (e.g., changing something about yourself to reduce likelihood of future events, or making a formal complaint) (Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012). Again, there appears to be some alignment between these response categories and the Internal/External categories reported above. For example, Emotion-focused strategies are similar to Internal strategies, while Problem-focused strategies are similar to External and Active strategies. However, Harrell's (1994) strategies highlight the importance of considering the emotional aspect of responding to discrimination. Regardless of the theoretical lens that is

employed, it is clear that adolescents are likely to use both observable and unobservable responses. This myriad of responses suggests that a multidimensional lens is required in order to fully understand the ways through which adolescents respond to discriminatory experiences.

In qualitative interviews with Black teenagers and adults, Ward (2006) highlighted a developmental approach to responses in racial conflict. Specifically, she noted that teenage participants were able to identify instances of racial conflict and discrimination (e.g., being followed in stores, being denied access to establishments), but struggled with identifying how to respond to these situations in ways that emphasized their power and agency. Participants reported difficulty and confusion regarding whether to be outraged by these experiences or to ignore them. Ward (2006) also found that participants' ideal responses to these events reflected a desire for all races to be disadvantaged, rather than a justice-oriented approach in which there was no discrimination. For example, one student reported that a restaurant required payment from her and other Black youth before entry because the employees assumed that all of these youth were troublemakers. However, the restaurant allowed White people to enter the establishment without this caveat. In describing the situation, the participant stated that a solution would be to require the White people to also pay before entry. This response suggests that this participant has internalized the unfair treatment of those in her racial group, and would prefer for everyone to be treated unfairly, rather than advocate for non-discriminatory policies. In other words, it may be difficult for youth who are accustomed to discrimination to envision a situation in which discrimination does not occur, which has implications for how they respond.

In a qualitative study of Black adolescents' responses to discrimination, Carter Andrews (2012) found that resistance was one strategy used by high achieving students in order to recognize discrimination and respond in healthy ways. Students in the study reported engaging in

resistant behavioral strategies which allowed them to be successful in navigating a school environment that sometimes presented them with negative racialized experiences. Specifically, these adolescents engaged in behaviors such as distancing (diminishing significance of the event), silence as survival (remaining quiet in an effort to protect oneself), challenging (verbal confrontation of the perpetrator), problem solving (direct action to deal with the event), and seeking guidance and support. Carter Andrews (2012) noted that the strategies used by adolescents were sometimes related to the type of discrimination or microaggression that they experienced. For example, when students experienced discrimination in the form of "guilty by association" (i.e., students felt that they were automatically linked with deviant behaviors), they were likely to respond with behaviors that challenged the stereotype, problem solving, or seeking guidance and support. Additionally, when students felt that they had been the target of a derogatory racial slur, they were likely to respond through challenging or emotional expression followed by silence (i.e., feeling upset by the event but choosing to remain silent to safeguard emotions and maintain integrity). The qualitative nature of this study addresses a gap in literature that often neglects adolescent voices regarding their experiences with and responses to discrimination. It also highlights the many ways that adolescents choose to respond to discrimination, which often involves active strategies to promote positive developmental outcomes (e.g., high academic achievement) and strong racial identities. These findings suggest that these strategies can help youth resist discriminatory experiences and deal with these challenges with self-affirming responses.

Effects of Responses to Discrimination. The ways that individuals respond to discrimination can affect their well-being. Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers (2012) found that Black college students tended to respond to race-related stress by using passive, internal, or emotional

strategies, such as rumination and avoidance, which have been found to be harmful to mental health. Specifically, these avoidant response strategies have been linked to symptoms such as emotional numbing, behavioral inhibition, and symptoms of dissociation in adults (Sanders Thompson, 2006). Researchers have noted that although avoidant strategies tend to be common, they are generally more harmful compared to responses that emphasize problem solving or help seeking (Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000; Noh & Kasper, 2003).

In adolescents, studies have found that active response or problem-focused strategies to discrimination are associated with better psychological adjustment (Schmitt et al., 2014). These active strategies include seeking social support, taking action, or making a plan (Bianchi et al., 2004; Brondolo et al., 2009; Clark, Benkert, & Flack, 2006). One explanation for the positive outcomes found with using active strategies is that such actions increase the target's self-efficacy in a situation that often makes them feel a lack of personal control (Brascombe & Ellemers, 1998). In contrast, using passive, internal, or emotional responses can be maladaptive because they are likely to erode an individual's sense of self, which further threatens their self-esteem and compromises physical and mental health (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2007; Carter, 2007). Anderson et al. (2018) suggests that this decrease in self-esteem and other poor mental and physical health outcomes associated with using passive responses are related to the challenges faced by victims of discrimination to determine whether the stressor is present. In other words, it is likely that individuals rely on passive responses due to the often uncertain and ambiguous nature of discrimination. This might then prompt the victim to internalize the negative consequences of the situation, rather than to seek active responses that might help alleviate the self-blame an individual might make about the encounter. Additionally, because active responses require the acknowledgement of the discriminatory event, the challenge of determining the

legitimacy of the event is likely to lead to passive responses which allows the individual to avoid labeling the event as discrimination.

Besides noting that avoidance, rumination, and self-blame (Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012) are likely to lead to the worst outcomes, few researchers have examined the effects of using other specific response strategies. For example, outcomes associated with using confrontation versus social support are unclear. This lack of research might be due to the methodological challenges that result from the assumption that problem-focused strategies are likely to be adaptive under certain circumstances, but maladaptive in others. For example, verbal confrontation might be adaptive in a situation where an individual feels high self-efficacy in addressing or diffusing the situation but might not be as effective in an event where confrontation is likely to exacerbate it. Additionally, seeking social support might be advantageous if the adolescent talks to a knowledgeable adult who can provide meaningful support but disadvantageous if the adult is not helpful or responds in a way that diminishes the adolescent's experience.

The existence of different forms and types of discrimination suggests that individuals need to have multiple strategies with which to respond. It is unlikely that one method of responding will be adaptive for different types of discrimination. However, in a qualitative study with adolescents, Romero, Gonzalez, & Smith (2015) found that participants did not articulate many different strategies for managing racial discrimination. Additionally, participants expressed a reluctance for standing up to perpetrators due to fear of a physical altercation. These findings are interesting because they suggest that during early adolescence, youth might have few response strategies to choose from when determining whether and how to respond to a discriminatory event, which may result in a reliance on passive strategies. Although youth in

Romero, Gonzalez, and Smith's (2015) study expressed a need to stand up to discrimination, they did not necessarily have the words or tools to engage with their perpetrators in an active response. Some participants also conveyed a belief that verbal responses might lead to physical harm. Despite having reservations about using active strategies during the event, youth identified using active strategies in other ways, such as talking to family members when they had a problem.

There is limited research on factors that contribute to the type of response strategy that an individual will choose after a discriminatory event. Racial identity and parental socialization have been implicated as factors related to how an adolescent perceives a negative event, as well as how they will respond. Research findings reveal that different racial identity attitudes among Black young adults are linked to sensitivity in perceiving racial discrimination in environmental cues (Sellers et al., 2004; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Additionally, research suggests that a strong racial identity may promote the use of active response strategies and reduce the harmful effects of experiencing discrimination (Brondolo et al., 2009). Parental socialization is also important for adolescent responses to discrimination because it is likely that youth will receive messages from parents regarding strategies to combat these experiences (Romero, Gonzalez, & Smith, 2015), as well as messages that are likely to foster a stronger racial identity. These results point to the importance of examining racial identity development and parental socialization in discussions about the racial discrimination experiences of adolescents.

Racial Identity Development

Adolescence has been identified as a key period of identity development and formation. Scholars posit that identity development usually involves exploration and experimentation between the adolescent and larger societal structures (Nakkula, 2008; Nakkula & Toshalis,

2006). The development of racial identity in particular is important for racial and ethnic minority adolescents because it encompasses their understanding of what it means to be a member of a marginalized group (Wakefield & Hudley, 2005). Racial identity development theories have generally suggested that racial and ethnic adolescents' identity exploration occurs in stages. Phinney (1989, 1990) posited that adolescents with racialized identities are likely to experience three stages of development: unexamined, exploration, and achieved. An *unexamined* racial identity occurs when an adolescent has accepted societal views of their racial group without questioning the origins of these views. This adolescent is less likely to understand the role of race or racial issues in his/her life. Adolescents at the *exploration* stage are engaging in a learning process and trying to understand the meaning of their racial group in a broader societal context. In other words, although they might not have a solidified understanding of their racial group membership, adolescents in exploration are seeking to increase their knowledge and awareness of what it means to be their race. Finally, an *achieved* racial identity refers to adolescents with a clear understanding of the role of race in their lives, both on a personal and societal level (Phinney 1989, 1990; Wakefield & Hudley, 2005).

These stages of racial identity development are important because they illustrate the emergent aspect of racial identity. Specifically, in relation to adolescents, this theory suggests that younger adolescents are more likely to be found in the unexamined or exploration stages, as their cognitive understanding of race and social structures increases. However, this broad approach does not specifically address how racial identity and experiences of discrimination are related. Jackson (2001) developed a Black Identity Development (BID) model to better show this connection, specifically as it relates to Black individuals. The five stages present in this model are: naïve, acceptance, resistance, redefinition, and internalization.

According to Jackson (2001), in the *naïve* stage, children are not likely to include race as part of their self-concept. Similar to Phinney's (1989) unexamined stage, Jackson (2001) defines the *acceptance* stage as the unquestioned acceptance of the dominant culture's representation of Blackness. Children and adolescents may move to the *resistance* stage, after experiencing a discriminatory event, as they begin to gain awareness of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. This stage emphasizes the link between racial identity and discriminatory experiences, as Jackson (2001) proposes that the hurt, anger, or rejection accompanied by this event can lead to seeking out or rejecting same-race relationships and interactions, which is likely to influence the adolescent's racial identity (i.e., centrality, public regard, and private regard). The final two stages are less likely to be achieved by adolescence. The *redefinition* stage occurs when the Black individual attempts to redefine him/herself without any connection to the dominant group. Finally, the *internalization* stage occurs when the individual accepts their Blackness in a way that does not require defensiveness. This individual is able to incorporate race as an important self-concept, while also understanding the importance of other social identities.

Although Phinney's (1989) and Jackson's (2001) stage models are not used as theoretical frameworks in this study, in order to refrain from categorizing participants' racial identity, they are worth noting to show the developmental nature of racial identity during adolescence. These models illustrate how racial identity evolves during this developmental period. When paired with normative adolescent development, it is possible to see the multifaceted nature of identity development for this population, as well as the role that awareness and experiences of discrimination might play in moving an individual from one stage to another. The process of developing positive racial identity involves answering questions such as, "Who am I racially?" and "What does it mean to be Black?" (Tatum, 1997). These questions about race can be unique

to racial and ethnic minority youth, and also highlight the notion that identity development for Black youth involves an increase in the understanding that racism, prejudice, and discrimination are likely to affect their lives. Identity formation is a long-term process that develops across the lifespan, but peaks during adolescence (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009), thus, it is critical to examine how racial identity plays a role in the discrimination experiences of Black youth.

Racial Identity and Discrimination

The extent to which a racial minority adolescent identifies with his/her racial group may inform his/her perceptions and experiences of discrimination. Racial identity has been described as comprising the attitudes and beliefs that individuals hold about their individual and collective belongingness within their racial group, and their perceptions of other racial groups (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009). Furthermore, Sellers et al. (1997) proposed three key dimensions of racial identity: racial centrality, private regard, and public regard. *Racial centrality* is the extent to which an individual includes race as an important feature of their identity. *Private regard* refers to the positive or negative attitudes that one has about his/her race, while *public regard* are the attitudes that an individual believes that others hold about his/her race (Sellers et al., 1997; Burt, Lei, & Simons, 2017). These three dimensions highlight the multifaceted nature of racial identity. Specifically, for Black individuals, racial identity is not only defined by identifying with one's race, but also includes understanding what it means to be Black in the larger societal context (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Marks et a., 2004; Nasir, 2012). Therefore, it has been proposed that a strong and positive Black racial identity includes positive identification with being Black, in addition to the awareness of the role of race and racism in the United States (Zirkel & Johnson, 2016). These dimensions are important for adolescents' racial identity and have implications for their experiences and responses to discrimination.

Outcomes and Effects of Racial Identity Development. Overall, positive racial identity has been linked to better psychological health among Black individuals, such as less depression and anxiety, higher self-esteem, positive school achievement, and greater social relationships (Carter, 1991; Cross, 1991; Hughes et al., 2015; Sellers et al., 2006; Datnow & Cooper; Zirkel, 2004; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Youth with positive racial identities have been found to experience fewer negative outcomes associated with experiencing discrimination (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999), and greater overall well-being (Neblett et al., 2009; Sellers et al., 2006). The vast majority of research has identified racial identity as a protective factor against the harmful effects of discriminatory experiences. Specifically, having positive feelings about oneself as a racialized person, as well as positive feelings about one's racial group are associated with positive feelings that are necessary for maintaining a healthy self-concept when faced with events and experiences meant to threaten one's social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Researchers have found differences in outcomes related to the dimensions of racial identity and discrimination experiences. For example, individuals high in racial centrality and low in public regard (e.g., felt that others held negative beliefs about their racial group) were more likely to experience increased psychological distress (Sellers and Shelton, 2003). According to the authors, these psychological consequences were likely due to the tendency for individuals high in centrality and low in public regard to label ambiguous situations as discriminatory. In other words, it is possible that adolescents with race at the center of their identities, and who also feel that others view their race negatively, will report increased experiences of discrimination. However, this does not mean that high racial centrality is directly linked to negative discrimination experiences and outcomes. In fact, researchers have also found that high racial centrality and high private regard are associated with positive outcomes in

discrimination experiences (Sellers et al., 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). These findings on racial centrality, public regard, and private regard suggest that the association between racial identity and discrimination experiences is complex and might be influenced by how such events are interpreted.

Racial identity has been proposed as a buffer against the negative effects of discrimination (Anderson, 1991; Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998). Racial centrality has been linked to decreased stress (Sellers et al., 2003), and low public regard has also been linked to decreased distress from discriminatory events (Sellers & Shelton, 2003). These mixed findings suggest it is possible that, although racial centrality increases the likelihood of perceiving discrimination, the increased self-esteem and positive self-concept associated with high centrality can decrease the stress felt by these experiences. Additionally, low public regard might increase perceptions of discrimination, but believing that other groups have negative attitudes about Blacks can lead one to be less bothered by these experiences. It is likely that the belief that others have negative views of Blacks can lead an individual to form external explanations for discriminatory experiences (e.g., "they think all Black people are bad, so it's not about me"). Sellers et al. (2006) also found that high private regard decreases the likelihood of adolescents internalizing beliefs of inferiority. When adolescents held positive beliefs and attitudes toward their racial group, they were less likely to believe negative stereotypes about themselves. These results highlight the importance of understanding the mechanisms that underlie the relation between racial identity and discrimination experiences. The complexity of discrimination means that racial identity can influence whether discrimination consequences are mitigated or exacerbated (Sellers et al., 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003).

Positive racial identity can play a role in how adolescents anticipate and make sense of their discrimination experiences, as well as influence their responses (Cross & Strauss, 1998; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sellers et al., 2003; 2006; Smalls, White, Chavous, & Sellers, 2007). For example, in the school setting, Wright (2011) found that positive racial identity in Black youth increased awareness and understanding that teachers might hold lowered expectations of their racial group (low public regard), which led the adolescents to set their own higher standards of achievement. In a separate study with Latino adolescents, Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, and Gonzales-Backen (2008) found that those with positive ethnic-racial identity were more likely to report using proactive strategies to address discrimination. Other researchers have noted that positive racial identity in Black students is likely to give them tools to resist oppressive school practices in order to be successful and to navigate the educational environment (Carter, 2008; Chavous et al., 2008; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001; Sanders, 1997). In other words, having positive feelings about one's race is likely to bolster Black adolescents' confidence in the school setting in a way that allows them to disrupt negative stereotypes held by teachers, peers, or administrators. In doing this, adolescents might be more likely to speak up if they feel that they are being treated unfairly, work harder to dispel these stereotypes, or seek additional supports to increase their likelihood of success.

In a qualitative exploration of racial identity and achievement among Black or African American high school students, Carter Andrews (2009) found that high achievers not only had racial group pride, but also held a critical understanding of the ways that their racial identity might pose challenges to academic success. These students tended to use their achievement as a resistance strategy to transcend experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment in the school setting. These strategies often included framing their racial identity as a positive factor for their

success. For example, students did not accept stereotypes which suggested that Black individuals do not succeed in school. In understanding that they would face race-related challenges, students appeared to also understand that their academic success was a way to counter these negative stereotypes. Carter Andrews (2009) further noted that achievement as a resistance strategy was rooted in students' positive racial identity in that racial pride helped students push back against the notion that high academic achievement was equated with whiteness.

Despite these positive associations with positive racial identity, it is also important to consider how negative or underdeveloped racial identity might affect young adolescents. Dulin-Keita et al. (2011) suggest that because children and early adolescents are likely to have limited identity exploration, racial identity may not yet have a protective role for this population. This finding could suggest a diminished role of racial identity in discriminatory events for this population as youth are still in the early stages of identity exploration. Research has shown, however, that although adolescents may not have an intellectual understanding of race, they have been found to have an affective component to their racial identity (Umaña-Taylor, 2016). Specifically, individuals do not need fully formed identities in order to have feelings about racial group membership. This finding is aligned with Jackson's (2001) BID model, which suggests that children and early adolescents' identity development is often associated with their feelings about their racial group, rather than a cognitive understanding of racial identity. Specifically, how an individual at this age *feels* about his/her racial identity is likely to have implications for how they are affected by discriminatory events, even without a fully developed and explored sense of racial identity. Research has shown that simply having positive feelings about one's racial group can be a protective factor against the negative consequences of discrimination (Umaña-Taylor, 2016; Brown & Chu, 2012), therefore, suggesting that the influence of

discrimination is not bound to specific stages of racial identity development. Individuals at any stage are likely to be affected in some way by discriminatory events, and the outcome can simply depend on how the individual feels about his/her racial group membership.

Overall, racial identity plays an important role in adolescents' experiences with, and perceptions of, discrimination. Aspects of racial identity can be shaped by discriminatory experiences, and racial identity can inform how discrimination is experienced, as well as how adolescents respond. Frequent or repeated exposure to discrimination can increase adolescents' racial centrality due to heightened awareness of the salience of race in society (Sellers et al., 1998). In this case, high centrality may lead to positive outcomes and adaptive responses in the face of future discrimination experiences as a result of stronger racial group connection (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). On the other hand, repeated exposures can also decrease public regard because youth are receiving messages that their racial group membership is devalued by others in society (Richardson et al., 2015). In this case, future discrimination consequences can be exacerbated if the youth responds by distancing themselves or weakening ties to his/her racial group (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). These findings suggest that the link between racial identity and discrimination experiences might be reciprocal in nature. Discrimination experiences can influence adolescents' beliefs, and attitudes regarding their racial group, and these beliefs and attitudes can also be involved in making sense of and responding to discrimination. The beliefs that adolescents hold about their racial identity are not developed in isolation. Rather, they develop as a result of socialization by many factors. In the next section, I discuss socialization as a key process in understanding the development of racial identity and discrimination experiences.

Socialization

Although racial identity development is an internal process, many outside influences play varying roles in helping adolescents develop this sense of self and understanding of their racial group membership. The process by which external forces affect development is known as socialization and is important in understanding discrimination experiences and racial identity development, especially for youth with racialized identities (Cooper & Smalls, 2010; Brown et al., 2007). In order to develop positive identities, these youth must learn how to manage racialized experiences, such as discrimination. This act of learning often occurs through direct or indirect messages from home environments (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011), therefore, racial socialization is a key factor in the study of discrimination experiences and is necessary for optimal identity development and positive responses to discrimination.

Harro's (2000) *cycle of socialization* helps to explain the ways in which socialization informs identity development in Black youth, and also emphasizes the external influences, such as parents, peers, and teachers, who act as agents transmitting messages about group membership and social identities. Specifically, Harro (2000) suggests that socialization first involves accepting that the messages being transmitted are true. However, as growth in cognitive skills occurs, adolescents might question their socialization experiences depending on experiences that may contradict messages received at home and those received in other settings. Finally, the adolescent must learn how to manage these messages, which will have consequences for their overall identity and well-being.

Racial Socialization

Racial socialization is the direct and indirect act of conveying messages to children and adolescents about the significance of their racial group membership, and also providing them

with an understanding of race in the larger societal context (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011). Stevenson's (2014) definition of racial socialization also highlights the link between socialization, identity and discrimination. Specifically, this definition states that racial socialization involves transmitting intellectual, emotional, and behavioral skills to help youth protect and affirm their identity so that they can reappraise and negotiate racially stressful encounters and conflicts (Stevenson, 2014). Research suggests that multiple factors can affect the amount of racial socialization that an individual receives. For example, the ethnic and racial diversity present within the environmental context, as well as the socializing agent's ease and comfort with discussing racial topics, can influence whether explicit socializing messages are transmitted (Brown et al., 2007). Another important factor is whether the child belongs to a marginalized racial group, and thus must be prepared to live in a society that might devalue their race (Chesire, 2001; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Racial socialization has been found to protect Black youth from the harmful effects of prejudice and discrimination, while also emphasizing the development of positive racial identities (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003).

There are many different ways that racial socialization can occur. Nasir (2012) noted four main types of socialization messages: *cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust,* and *egalitarianism or colorblindness*. *Cultural socialization* refers to the, mostly positive, messages that children receive about their race or culture (e.g., learning the history of the Civil Rights Movement, and how Blacks fought for freedom). This type of socialization has been linked to positive identity development (Nasir, 2012). *Preparation for bias* occurs when youth receive messages regarding strategies for managing prejudice and discrimination. Nasir (2012) explains that this type of racial socialization can also have positive outcomes, such as greater ability to cope with negative experiences. *Promotion of mistrust* are the messages

intended to convey the prevalence of individual and institutional racism. In other words, these messages tell youth that certain individuals and/or establishments (e.g., law enforcement and the legal system) are racist and should not be trusted. Research suggests that these messages, if presented alone, tend to negatively affect youth who might be overwhelmed with the realization of living in a racist society, but may not have positive strategies to cope with this realization (Nasir, 2012). Finally, *egalitarian or colorblind socialization* are messages that disregard the role of race in an effort to portray an ideal of equality among racial groups. This type of socialization is often present in school settings and can be harmful to adolescents with marginalized identities (Nasir, 2012). However, parents may also engage in this type of socialization if they are not comfortable discussing racial topics.

Parental Racial Socialization. In a review of the prevalence and frequency of socialization messages, Hughes and colleagues (2006) reported the rate of use for *preparation for bias* by parents was 60-90% and about 33-80% for *cultural socialization* messages Additionally, findings revealed the rate of colorblindness (or silence) ranged from 20-50% depending on the study method. Specifically, studies using open-ended interviews had lower reports of colorblind messages, while those using surveys may have overinflated reports of colorblindness (or silence) if a high number of parents did not identify using any of the predetermined types of socialization, thereby assuming that the parent is not engaging in socialization. Finally, *promotion of mistrust* messages was found to be around 6-18%. These findings suggest that when sending messages to their children about race, parents tend to heavily focus on preparation for bias and cultural socialization, more than promoting mistrust of others or emphasizing colorblind ideologies.

Differential findings have also emerged from research assessing outcomes of types of socialization messages. Specifically, results citing the protective benefits of promotion of *distrust messages* from parents have been mixed, but many studies have shown that parental *preparation for bias* messages are linked to greater self-esteem and decreased delinquent behaviors among adolescents (Caughy et al., 2002; McHale et al., 2006; Burt et al., 2012; Harris-Britt, Valarie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007). *Preparation for bias* messages have also been found to buffer the negative psychological effects of racial discrimination among youth, through ways such as improving self-esteem and decreasing delinquent behavior (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Burt et al., 2012). Additionally, *cultural socialization* messages have been associated with fewer externalizing and internalizing problems, such as fighting, anger, anxiety, and distress in adolescents (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Caughy et al., 2002). These findings suggest that multiple socialization messages can be important in equipping youth to deal with and reduce the negative effects of discrimination experiences. It is likely that socializing agents must use multiple types of socialization messages to increase the likelihood of positive effects on youth.

Past researchers have suggested that parents of Black children must dually socialize their children to function in mainstream society, as well as in Black communities (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hale-Benson, 1982). This distinguishes Black parents from White parents who do not necessarily have to discuss issues of race with their children due to holding a dominant identity status (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997). The racial socialization messages that Black parents transmit to their children can occur through family discussions, direct instruction, or observations (Murray & Mandara, 2002). The forms and frequency of racial socialization messages can

influence whether a child has early and positive ideas about their racial group membership, which then also affects their identity.

Research has found age and gender differences related to frequency of racial socialization. Specifically, Bowman & Howard (1985) found that Black adolescent boys were more likely to receive racial socialization messages from parents, due to parents' beliefs that Black boys are at greater risk for experiencing obstacles in society as a result of their race and gender. Hill (2001) also found that parents perceived their sons to be at greater risk for physical harm, and thus tended to send more messages about coping with discrimination, possible police confrontation, and the general dangers of discrimination (Thomas & Blackmon, 2015; McHale et al., 2006). However, these findings have been mixed with studies reporting no gender differences in frequency of messages (Brown et al., 2007). Regarding age, parents report transmitting racial socialization messages when they believe that their children are becoming aware of social information related to their racial group (Aboud & Doyle, 1993; Fatimilehin, 1999). This can sometimes occur as early as three or four years old (Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008).

Peters (1985) argued that the two main goals of parental racial socialization are to equip Black children with coping strategies to overcome negative expectations, and to foster a positive sense of racial identity. In doing so, it is possible that parents will not only protect their children from the negative effects of racism and discrimination, but also help their children to recognize the strength of their cultural group. In socializing their children, Black parents generally send messages to help them navigate the extra demands present in day-to-day interactions and contexts (Richardson et al., 2015). According to Hughes et al. (2006), parents give their children coping mechanisms as well as skills to promote resilience against the negative effects of discrimination through the messages in their socialization practices before or after a

discriminatory experience. A report of discrimination from their child might provide an opportunity to talk about ways to respond in the future. However, it is also likely that parents may begin these conversations with their child before negative encounters, by providing and working through discrimination scenarios in a safe context (Richardson et al., 2015). Parents are also likely to socialize their children using personal experiences of discrimination.

Stevenson (2014) developed a framework for optimal parental racial socialization through the use of *affection, correction, protection,* and *connection. Affection* refers to the increasing the child's knowledge regarding the positive aspects of their racial difference. In other words, socialization with affection involves helping children understand the value of their racial group membership. *Correction* is the act of dispelling stereotypes and misperceptions that the child might encounter from the outside world. Specifically, Stevenson (2014) notes that this might be necessary following a personal discriminatory event, or after witnessing discriminatory events in the media. *Protection* refers to being attuned to the child's emotional well-being surrounding a personal or vicarious discriminatory experience, as well as reassuring the child that conversations about race and discrimination are important and ongoing. Finally, *Connection* involves the process of creating opportunities for the child to be aware of and surrounded by positive representatives of his/her racial group. In all four categories, Stevenson (2014) makes suggestions regarding the ways in which parents can socialize their children's physical, emotional, and cultural well-being. This framework highlights the important influence of both personal and vicarious discriminatory experiences in racial socialization, and also shows that racial identity develops in the context of parental racial socialization.

Research suggests that there are many factors involved in why parents may choose to engage in racial socialization. For example, it has been noted that highly educated parents,

especially mothers, are more likely to talk to their children about racial issues (Frabutt, Walker, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 2002; White-Johnson, Ford, & Sellers, 2010). Additionally, parents with higher socioeconomic status, and those high in racial centrality are also more likely to engage in behaviors and practices that result in racial socialization (Crouter, Baril, Davis, & McHale, 2008; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2010). Researchers have found that the amount and types of socialization messages are informed by parents' own discrimination encounters (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes, 2003; Saleem et al, 2016). Generally, a higher frequency of socialization messages has been found among parents who report discrimination experiences in social, community, and occupational environments (Hughes, 2003). Furthermore, parents who report discrimination experiences and race-related job stressors were more likely to send *promotion of mistrust* and *preparation for bias* messages to their children (Crouter et al., 2008; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). It is possible that parents with personal discrimination experiences are more attuned to the threat of discrimination and as a result, proactively socialize their children more in anticipation for future discriminatory encounters.

Parental Racial Socialization, Adolescent Discrimination Experiences, and Racial Identity

Because most Black individuals will experience some type of discrimination in their lifetime, parental socialization is an important component of equipping youth with the necessary skills to overcome these experiences (Hughes et al., 2006). Parental racial socialization is well-aligned with positive mental health and achievement outcomes after discriminatory experiences. Specifically, researchers have noted that racial socialization affects discrimination outcomes by strengthening adolescents' identification with their own race, which can create a protective factor for negative experiences (Lee & Ahn, 2013). In other words, parental socialization can instill a strong sense of racial pride in adolescents that can help youth understand that discriminatory

experiences are not personal deficits. According to Pascoe & Richman (2009), explaining experiences of discrimination as a societal injustice, rather than a personal shortcoming, prevents youths' self-concepts from being damaged. Therefore, it appears that parental racial socialization can promote adaptive responses in children by fostering positive self-concepts. Other researchers have also noted that parental socialization boosts adolescent self-esteem, which can decrease the negative psychological effects of discrimination (Harris-Britt et al., 2007).

Preparing adolescents to face and manage negative experiences is thought to be a normative practice for parents of racial minority youth, based on the high prevalence of preparation for bias messages communicated by parents to their children (Hughes et al., 2006). Through socialization messages, specifically preparation for bias, parents can increase resilience and transmit healthy and prosocial coping strategies to their children (Spencer, 1983; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997). In addition to providing information regarding how to manage discriminatory experiences, parents can also send messages that prepare their children for barriers they might encounter as a result of racism and discrimination. Allen (2013) noted that parents raise their children's awareness of these barriers, while also instructing them on ways to overcome and be resilient. For example, parents have been reported to teach their children, especially sons, that they must work harder in order to achieve equal success with their White counterparts. Parents also convey expectations for their children to use self-discipline and self-regulation in discriminatory encounters (Allen, 2013).

Limited research has been conducted from a parent perspective, however, to document the specific methods and practices used to socialize children (Romero, Gonzalez, & Smith, 2015). Few studies have directly interviewed parents about their socialization practices and have instead used either parent surveys or child reports (Hughes et al., 2006). Richardson et al. (2015)

found that youth reported being told to “do better than everyone else,” “stand up for themselves,” and “have faith in God,” as ways to respond to discrimination. Additionally, findings from Threlfall’s (2018) qualitative study found that parents often encouraged their children to respond to discrimination by rising above it. Although parents wanted their children to be aware of the pervasive nature and consequences of discrimination, they also stressed that their children could overcome these challenges by surpassing stereotypes. By doing this, parents prepare their children for the harsh reality of being a racial minority, while also trying to increase their self-confidence. Thus, parental racial socialization does not simply prepare youth for discrimination, but also influences children’s general adjustment and life-success by teaching them how to positively navigate life in a society that often devalues their racial group. It is important to increase our understanding of socialization messages directly from a parental perspective.

In a qualitative study by Reynolds (2010), Black parents reported sending messages regarding possible experiences of discrimination to their sons. Specifically, these parents noted that they explicitly engaged in conversations with their sons about the types of differential, and often discriminatory treatment that they might receive in the school setting, as well as stereotypes held by others about Black or African American people. Although this study did not explore the specific ways that parents instruct their children to respond to these negative experiences, it addressed a gap in the literature regarding parent perspectives on children’s experiences with discrimination and parental racial socialization by using the CRT tenet of counter-storytelling.

Overall, parents generally report that socializing their children is important. However, some parents report feeling concerned that sending these types of messages might not only increase awareness, but also anxiety and vigilance in their children, leading to negative

consequences (Spencer, 1983). One parent in Ward's (2006) qualitative study reported feeling hesitant to invite her children's White peers to a birthday party due to her own understanding of discrimination and the realization that these peers would not attend a party in a Black neighborhood. Specifically, she worried that this rejection of her children would prompt feelings of disappointment, hurt and worthlessness, along with early conversations about racism and racial exclusion. Ward (2006) notes that this fear among Black parents is an outcome of trying to protect their children, but they also understand that preparation for injustice and unfairness is an important socialization message for Black children. It could be argued that this fear might be especially relevant to young adolescents who are just beginning to gain awareness of social structures. Sellers et al. (2006) suggests that increased understanding of the ways that racial group members are marginalized could be beneficial for adolescents by equipping them with the necessary tools to respond positively to discrimination. However, it is also likely that this increased understanding could lead to greater reports of discrimination and apprehension in future interactions (Sellers et al., 2006). These findings are aligned with other research suggesting that, although preparation for bias messages are often linked to positive outcomes, parents must be sure to decrease promotion of mistrust messages which could ultimately be harmful if presented alone (Nasir, 2012).

Children and adolescents from marginalized populations are likely to encounter discrimination both directly and indirectly. Although experiencing individual discrimination first-hand has generally been found to increase anxiety about future discrimination in Black adolescents (Herda, 2015), indirect or vicarious experiences of discrimination through socialization can also have the same effect. Vicarious racial discrimination includes hearing or seeing others, such as family members, friends, or strangers experience discrimination (Mansouri

& Jenkins, 2010; Harrell, 2000). Within their social networks, Black adolescents have peers who are susceptible to discrimination. Therefore, even if an individual has not had a direct experience, it is likely that they are aware of someone else's experience(s), and this awareness can create anxiety and fear related to possible future experiences of discrimination. Black parents have been noted to provide their children with information regarding possible discrimination experiences through vicarious experiences (Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Hughes & Johnson, 2001), meaning that fear of future discrimination is not always due to first-hand experience. This vicarious fear suggests that Black adolescents are burdened by discrimination in many aspects of their lives, even if they have not personally experienced discriminatory situations (Herda, 2015). Despite the possibility of this unintended consequence, it appears that preparing youth to address racial discrimination has more advantages than disadvantages.

Socialization and Identity Development. Parental racial socialization is also closely linked to racial identity development. In the process of socializing children against the negative effects of discrimination, parents also try to increase their internalized sense of racial pride (Sellers et al., 2006). Socialization of racial identity has been found to inform youths' beliefs and attitudes about their own and others racial groups (Neblett et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2009). Similar to socialization directed toward discrimination experiences, this kind of socialization into racial identity can be direct or indirect. Children might be explicitly taught about the positive aspects of their racial group through explicit cultural socialization, or they might overhear their parents talking about their own (or others') racial group and observe parent reactions and interactions (Murray & Mandara, 2002).

Stevenson and Arrington (2009) suggest that *preparation for bias* messages can have a positive effect on racial identity. Specifically, it can increase an adolescent's pride and sense of

connection to their racial group (high private regard and high centrality), thereby increasing their motivation to challenge negative perceptions of their racial group. However, *preparation for bias* messages could also make the adolescent more aware and accepting of the low status of their group membership (low public regard), possibly resulting in feeling helpless about their ability to overcome race-based obstacles. Although it is possible that socialization could lead to increased distress about the negative and unfair treatment of people of color, Richardson et al. (2015) found that parental racial socialization is better than the alternative. Results from this study showed that males who reported experiencing high levels of discrimination and low levels or parental racial socialization were most likely to also report low centrality, low private regard, and average public regard. This suggests that experiencing discrimination, with little parental support increases the likelihood of internalizing these negative experiences and puts youth at risk for poor racial identity development. Parental racial socialization is an important component for positive racial identity development because it can provide knowledge and tools to help adolescents better understand their lives as racialized individuals and to enable them to discount negative experiences to maintain a positive self-concept.

Summary

Racial discrimination is commonplace in the lives of youth with marginalized identities. Many researchers have noted the widespread prevalence of this phenomenon, especially in the context of day-to-day experiences for this population (Martin et al., 2011; Fisher et al., 2000; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Stainback & Irvin, 2012; Prelow et al., 2004). Early adolescence is a critical time to examine the presence and role of discrimination in the lives of Black youths, due to a dramatic psychological growth particularly in the social and cognitive realms. Adolescents become increasingly aware of the social implications of their racial group membership, which

includes a better understanding of racism and discrimination (Carpendale & Chandler, 1996; Verkuyten, Kinket, & van der Weilen, 1997; Brown, Alabi, Huynh, & Masten, 2011; Brown & Bigler, 2005; Bellmore, Nishina, You, & Ma, 2012). Researchers have also found that the early years of adolescence are a critical time because discrimination at these ages is likely to have longitudinal consequences into late adolescence and early adulthood (Hughes et al., 2016). Furthermore, middle school is a time when students transition from having a single teacher and one classroom in the elementary school setting to a school context with multiple classes, multiple teachers, and a larger peer group, that require independence and self-direction to navigate the school day. The transition into middle school as well as the anticipated transition into high school, can be disruptive and unsettling times that may be critical for both the development of social identities and experiences of discrimination. These findings, in addition to the emerging and expanding cognitive ability, makes middle schoolers an important group to study regarding their experiences and responses to racial discrimination.

Discrimination research has found that the types, forms, and sources of discrimination are important factors to consider and also have differential effects on psychological outcomes (Seaton & Yip, 2009; Benner & Graham, 2013). Research has found that adolescents tend to report greater instances of covert discrimination, meaning that discriminatory experiences are more nuanced and require more cognitive effort to interpret (Essed, 1991; Harrell, 2000; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sellers et al., 2006). The continued presence of these covert types of discrimination, are not surprising given CRT's tenet that racism, prejudice, and discrimination are endemic in the U.S., despite the idealized vision of a post-racial society held by some segments of the population.

The current study is focused on racial discrimination; thus, it is important to consider that forms of discrimination can be intersectional and can be based on a myriad of combinations of marginalized identities (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This intersectionality also poses its own cognitive challenges when the form of discrimination is covert because victims must make sense of which identity is being targeted. Additionally, various forms and types of discrimination can be perpetrated by multiple sources, both peers and adults (Hughes et al., 2016; Byrd & Carter Andrews, 2016), and thus, these factors are central to understanding adolescents' discrimination experiences and responses.

Primarily relying on quantitative methods, previous researchers have consistently noted the negative effects of experiencing discrimination in adolescence (Banks, John-Wood, & Spencer, 2006; Bynum et al., 2008; Simons et al., 2002). Specifically, discrimination has been linked to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and aggression, as well as decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy among adolescents (Nyborg & Curry, 2003; Aneshensel, 1992; McLoyd et al., 2004; Simons et al., 2006). These outcomes are also affected by the types, forms, and sources of discrimination, and experiencing multiple forms and sources of discrimination might produce a negative compounding influence on adolescents' psychological functioning (Fisher et al., 2000; Wang et al., 2010; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). Additionally, although Black adolescents may perceive more discrimination from adults, peer discrimination has been found to be especially detrimental to adjustment and well-being due to the important role of peer acceptance during this developmental period (Benner & Graham, 2013).

Responses to discrimination can be multidimensional. Researchers have posited that adolescents' discrimination responses can be problem-focused or emotion-focused, internal or external, and passive, active, or aggressive (Harrell, 1994; Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012;

Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001). Specifically, adolescents can use response strategies that are aimed at solving the problem of the discriminatory event (e.g., confrontation, social support, or planning) or strategies that are linked to internal emotions (e.g., rumination). Responses can also address the discriminatory situation externally (either directly, indirectly, or aggressive), or internally, such as responding with optimism or high self-esteem. Response types have been found to relate to adolescents' well-being. Overall, active approaches tend to result in better psychological outcomes than avoidant strategies (Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000; Noh & Kasper, 2003; Schmitt et al., 2014) because they are more likely to give the victim a sense of agency in a situation that can leave one feeling a lack of personal control (Brascombe & Ellemers, 1998). The consideration of response strategies in early adolescence is important because scholars have proposed that the type of response used during early experiences of discrimination can create a longitudinal pattern of responding to future situations (Raver & Nishii, 2010). It is possible that the response pattern used by an adolescent during the first few encounters of discrimination might have implications for future responses, strategy use, and adjustment (Smit-Bynum et al., 2014). These longitudinal effects suggest the importance of examining discrimination experiences and responses in early adolescence.

Racial identity and parental socialization are factors that have been identified in the use of active or passive response strategies. Racial identity includes a combination of racial centrality, private regard, and public regard (Sellers et al., 1997). A strong racial identity is associated with positive psychological outcomes after discriminatory experiences (Hughes et al., 2015; Sellers et al., 2006; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003), and can serve as a protective factor against the harmful effects. Although high racial centrality can be linked to increased reports of

discrimination, research suggests that having a strong sense of race as a central identity marker is beneficial for racial minority adolescents, in addition to having high private regard about the racial group (Sellers et al., 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Individuals with positive racial identity are also more likely to use proactive response strategies.

Racial socialization from parents also plays a major role in adolescent discrimination experiences and responses. *Preparation for bias* messages are especially effective for preparing youth for discrimination and ways to respond. This type of socialization can be protective and has been linked to positive outcomes (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Harris-Britt et al., 2007). Two main goals of parental racial socialization are to equip children with positive coping strategies to racially stressful encounters, as well as to foster positive racial identity development (Peters, 1985; Stevenson, 2014). Through racial socialization, especially during early adolescence, parents can convey positive messages about racial group membership, as well as influence and equip their child with adaptive response strategies. There is an interactive pattern in the relationship between discrimination experiences, racial identity development, and racial socialization, in that all three factors can influence each other; therefore, highlighting the importance of examining these factors in the current study.

Research Questions

The study examined the following questions:

1. How (if at all) do Black middle school adolescents experience discrimination?
    a. What is the frequency of perceived discrimination?
    b. Who reports experiencing perceived discrimination?
    c. What forms of discrimination do adolescents experience?
    d. What types of discrimination do adolescents experience?

    e. What are the sources of discrimination?

2. How (if at all) do Black middle school adolescents respond to experiences of discrimination?
    a. What coping strategies do they report using?
    b. How effective are their responses?
3. How (if at all) do parents of Black middle school adolescents help their children understand and navigate discriminatory experiences?
    a. What do parents know about their child's experiences with and responses to discrimination?
    b. What actions do parents take to prepare their children for experiencing and responding to discrimination?
4. How (if at all) does racial identity relate to Black middle school adolescents' experiences with discrimination?
5. How (if at all) do parents' racial identity inform parental socialization practices?

The goal of the first question was to obtain an overall picture of participants' experiences with discrimination. I examined the number of participants reporting experiences with discrimination, and the types of discrimination reported by gender. I also explored the forms, types, and sources of discrimination being experienced by the participants. The second question examined youths' responses to discrimination without assigning categorical labels, such as adaptive or maladaptive, to their responses. The purpose of this question was to capture the adolescents' perceptions and feelings about their response type (e.g., do they feel that the response worked for them?). The third question was concerned with parents' awareness and understanding of their child's experiences, as well as their socialization practices. The fourth and

fifth questions aimed to understand the role of racial identity in experiences of discrimination, both from the adolescent and parent perspective. Specifically, question four was aimed at understanding how the adolescent's racial identity informed their own experiences and responses to discrimination, while question five aimed to understand how parents' racial identity informed their racial socialization practices.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODS

Research in the field of perceived discrimination has typically taken a quantitative approach to measure prevalence, forms, types, and responses to discrimination. Additionally, the literature has often focused on the experiences of older adolescents and adults, with little attention paid to children and early adolescents (Priest et al., 2014). This study adopted a Critical Race theoretical (CRT) perspective, which provided a lens that enriches the study of perceived discrimination by grounding it in the tenets of Centrality of Race, Importance of (counter) Narratives, and Intersectionality/Essentialism. In line with this theory, the use of qualitative methods to study middle school adolescents' experiences with and responses to discrimination was an ideal approach to explore the salience of race in everyday life, as well as to give these adolescents the opportunity to tell their own stories of how race plays a role in their lives. This qualitative approach illuminated experiences with other types of discrimination separate from race, thereby illustrating the presence of intersectional discriminatory experiences. In addition, this approach was used to examine the role of parental racial socialization in adolescents' experiences with and responses to discrimination, as well as racial identity development.

Using a qualitative approach for the proposed study was intended to achieve four goals. The first goal was to understand how participants experience discrimination in their everyday lives by collaborating with them to accurately capture the veracity of their experiences. A second goal was to examine participants' responses to perceived discrimination and to identify the strategies, both effectual and ineffectual, that adolescents use to cope with these experiences. The third goal was to explore how parents socialize adolescents' responses to discrimination. The final goal was to better understand how racial identity development is involved in the experience

of discrimination and parental socialization practices. Qualitative methods provide the potential to capture, in rich detail, the nature of participants' experiences with discrimination, the ways in which they respond, how they are socialized to respond, and the role of racial identity in these processes. This research method strives to make few assumptions and to safeguard against my preconceived notions about participants' experiences by engaging in member checks and researcher journals (Maxwell, 2013).

Phenomenology

This study used a phenomenological approach to qualitative research. The aim of phenomenological research is to examine an individual's lived experience, and to understand these subjective experiences from the individual's perspective (Bullington & Karlsson, 1984). In other words, phenomenology was used to describe, rather than to explain, the phenomenon being studied. In the current study, this phenomenological approach examined perceived discrimination in order to describe whether and how discriminatory experiences were present in the lives of early adolescents, and the ways in which they responded to these experiences. Additionally, the study aimed to describe and explore the processes and content of socialization messages that parents conveyed to their children regarding how to respond to discriminatory experiences, as well as describing how participants' racial identity development is involved in these experiences and their parents' racial socialization practices.

When adopting a phenomenological approach, I attempted to shed any preconceptions regarding the phenomenon being studied (Bullington & Karlsson, 1984). Therefore, hypotheses were not postulated prior to data collection and analyses. This can be considered a strength, as the aim was to explore adolescents' sense-making regarding discriminatory experiences, rather than imposing and testing pre-existing conceptual notions. Participants were given the

opportunity to describe their lived experiences in their own words, rather than adhering to methods (such as surveys) that required them to fit these experiences into preconceived, prescribed categories.

Although this study examined the phenomenon of discrimination, I did not assume that all participants have experienced discrimination in their lives. The study was designed, along with the interview protocols, to be open to the possibility that participants may not report any direct discriminatory experiences by including questions about vicarious discrimination experiences and allowing for reporting no perceived discrimination. It was understood that, depending on their developmental level, participants in this study may not be aware of discriminatory experiences or may be unwilling or unable to talk about them. Because phenomenological research is usually iterative, data collection occurs over time, rather than at one time period. Thus, this approach allowed for the possibility of change over time. It was also understood that participants' thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and experiences with discrimination might evolve through engagement in the study, and a phenomenological approach was likely to capture these changes.

Phenomenological approaches, however, require a great deal of time and resources. Data analysis and interpretation can be difficult because the phenomenological approach tends to produce vast amounts of data. Despite these possible disadvantages, a phenomenological approach was well-suited for this study, as it provided the best opportunity to achieve the goals of understanding discriminatory experiences and responses from the perspective of adolescents and their parents, as well as engaging in a collaborative process with participants to capture the veracity of their experiences. This approach was used to deepen the understanding of

discrimination by including the voices and experiences of early adolescents, which has been largely neglected (Priest et al., 2014).

Researcher Positionality

As a self-identified Black woman, it is important to consider the ways in which my race, gender, and experiences influence my interest in this work and the possible benefits and challenges that these identities may pose throughout the current study. My interest in this work stems from personal life experiences with discrimination from childhood to adulthood. My focus on middle school reflects my own lack of understanding of these experiences during this time in my life, and a desire to have these types of conversations with my own parents and other important adults. With this in mind, I began to wonder about Black middle school students' own understandings of discrimination while completing a practicum experience at an urban middle K-8 public school. Although my prior experiences and literature suggest that most African American children have or will experience discrimination, I am mindful to approach this study in a way that does not assume that this is true for all study participants. Therefore, the research questions and interview protocols provide space for participants to disagree with the notion that discriminatory experiences are common among this population.

My racial (and ethnic) socialization also plays a role in the development of this study. As a Nigerian immigrant, I have had to consider the ways that my ethnic heritage is intertwined with my racial identity. Specifically, although others might label me as being African American, socialization from my parents explicitly indicated that I should first consider myself as Black or African. Some of my early understandings regarding race were conversations in which my father instructed me and my siblings that we should always tell people that we were African. It was not until early high school that I began to consider the implications of this identification, particularly

the realization that most people would continue to otherwise identify me as “African American”. Although my parents were clear in this distinction between nationality and ethnicity, they also often socialized me to understand that this distinction would not inoculate me and my siblings from the harmful effects of racism and discrimination. In other words, they understood that having pride in our Nigerian heritage was not enough of a protective factor, and that we would experience the same or similar negative situations as any other racial or ethnic minority group. These messages came early and often following my family’s immigration to the United States, and they have stayed with me, leading to an interest in understanding the ways that parents help their children learn about their identities and how they might try to prepare and protect them from the consequences of discriminatory experiences.

My racial and gender identities were assets to the study, as they may have increased the likelihood of building rapport with same race and same gender participants (both adolescents and parents). Specifically, being the same race as the participants likely increased their comfortability with discussing a difficult topic like discrimination. My gender as female may have also made some participants feel more relatable when discussing issues of intersectional (race x gender) discriminatory experiences. However, these personal attributes may have also created some challenges. For example, participants likely made assumptions about my cultural knowledge that led them to provide little details about their experiences. It is also possible that participants might have tried to answer questions in ways that they believed were in agreement with their assumptions of my race and gender. These challenges were addressed by asking participants to elaborate further on their answers and also providing reminders that there are no right or wrong answers. Additionally, I engaged in memo writing, and self-reflection after each interview to

consider and decrease the presence of biases throughout the study, and to maintain integrity and transparency throughout data collection and analysis.

Recruitment

The primary inclusion criteria for adolescent participants were that they were currently enrolled in 6th through 8th grade, were between the ages of 11 to 14, and self-identified as Black (*see APPENDIX B*). The term "Black" was used here to be inclusive of individuals with African and African American roots, and to allow for multi-racial youth to be recruited for participation, given that they self-identified as Black. Participants with cognitive or emotional impairments were excluded from the study because the addition of these groups, although important, was likely to add confounding factors beyond the scope of this study. For adult participation, the primary inclusionary criterion was that the parent/caregiver must be the adolescent's primary caregiver. However, parents/caregivers were not excluded based on race. Mothers, fathers, stepparents, and/or grandparents were eligible for participation, if they met the primary criterion. One parent/caregiver was necessary for participation, but both parents/guardians of an adolescent were allowed to participate if available.

Adolescent participants and their parents/caregivers were initially recruited through local youth organizations dedicated to Black youth development. Parent/caregiver participants and their adolescent were invited to participate in the study in person and through emails. An effort was made to recruit participants from varying school backgrounds (e.g., those attending predominantly White schools, racially diverse schools, or predominantly Black schools).

I began by partnering with a local youth organization as a potential site for participant recruitment. This organization provided learning and recreational opportunities for young Black males from 7th through 12th grade, twice a month. These Black youths also received mentoring

from older Black males in the community and discussed issues relevant to their experiences in their local community, and society in general. The organization hosted monthly parent sessions to discuss issues related to raising their children. I met with the leadership board of this organization and attended meetings of the board. I also was an administrative volunteer at the organization and continued to attend staff meetings and youth sessions for about one year prior to participant recruitment. Through this volunteer role, I gained a better understanding of the organization, and also built rapport, trust, and familiarity with members of the organization, before beginning participant recruitment.

Participants were recruited through talking with parents and adolescents in this organization, as well as distributing emails and flyers that they could provide to other families who may be interested. Parents/caregivers were provided with information regarding the study and asked to provide their contact information if they were interested in participating. Therefore, participants were recruited through convenient and snowball sampling. Ultimately, two families were recruited through the organization, and all other participants were recruited through word-of-mouth, personal connections, and flyer distribution. Using this method, I recruited a total of nine adolescents and seven parents to participate in the study. Two families featured sibling twins who were both included in the study in order to reduce the introduction of bias by choosing only one child to participate. I believe that these sibling pairs ultimately contributed interesting data to the results, which will be discussed in the results section.

Once recruitment materials were distributed and collected, I then followed up with each potential parent/caregiver and child participant pair to engage in a rapport building process. Participant recruitment occurred until the study achieved saturation in ideas being reported by participants. Additionally, recruitment was informed by school composition in an effort to create

a balanced sample of students from predominantly White schools, predominantly Black schools, and racially diverse schools. School composition was determined by acquiring demographic information from each participant's school. Edwards (2016) suggests that predominantly Black or White schools are those with more than 76 percent of either Black or White students, respectively. Schools with racial compositions falling within the middle quartiles, but not exceeding 50% White students, are considered racially diverse. However, few middle schools in the geographical recruitment area met these guidelines and thus the criteria for school demographics was reorganized such that schools with more than 50% of one race but less than 25% of the next racial group were considered to be "majority" that race, and those with relatively even distribution of racial groups were considered to be diverse. For example, a school in which 56% of students are Black, 21% are White, and all other races make up the remaining 23% of the population, was considered to be a Majority Black school.

During the recruitment process informed consent was obtained from each parent/caregiver (*see APPENDIX C*), and informed assent (*see APPENDIX D*) was also obtained from each adolescent participant. All participants and their parents/caregivers were asked to provide background information, such as age, racial identity, and other relevant personal characteristics.

Participants

Nine participants and their parents/caregivers participated in the study. The table below shows demographic information for each adolescent participant. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 14 and were enrolled in 6th through 8th grade at the time of study. They came from single-parent and two-parent families, although only one parent was required to participate in the study. All parent participants held occupations requiring post-secondary education and responded to

recruitment materials inviting them and their children to participate in the study. In keeping with the Critical Race Theory tenet of voice and counter-narrative, I invited each adolescent participant to also report self-descriptors in order to further humanize and give them an opportunity to express themselves.

Table 1: Demographic Data for Study Sample (N=9)

Name[1]	Gender	Age	Grade	Self-Reported Racial Identification	School Descriptor	Parent/Caregiver
Noelle	Female	14	8th	Black or African American	Majority White	Robin
Stuart	Male	13	8th	Black or African American	Racially Diverse	Mary
Naomi*	Female	12	7th	Black	Majority White	Judy and Wilson
Jerry*	Male	12	7th	Black	Majority White	Judy and Wilson
Taylor*	Female	13	7th	Black or African American	Majority Black	Eleanor
Sophia*	Female	13	7th	Black or African American	Majority Black	Eleanor
Christoph	Male	12	7th	Black	Racially Diverse	Eleanor (Caregiver)+
Michael	Male	11	6th	Black	Majority White	Kimberly
Mia	Female	11	6th	Black or African American	Majority White	Tina

[1] Pseudonyms
*denotes twin siblings
+foster parent

Participant Self-Descriptions

Noelle is a 14-year-old female in the 8th grade at a majority White middle school. Her favorite subject is art and she has a diverse friend group. She stated that she likes to draw and

wants to be an artist, photographer, or graphic designer when she gets older. Noelle self-identified as Black or African American.

Stuart is a 13-year-old male in the 8th grade at a racially diverse middle school. He described himself as “cool” and “funny” and enjoys playing video games. He aspires to be a rapper/music artist. Stuart self-identified as Black or African American.

Naomi is a 12-year-old female in the 7th grade at a majority White middle school. Naomi is the fraternal twin of Jerry (below). Her family recently immigrated from Africa three years prior and she self-identified as Black or African. She described herself as “unique” and “kind of tomboyish”. She enjoys playing the cello and various sports, and she aspires to be a neurosurgeon.

Jerry is a 12-year-old male in the 7th grade at a majority White middle school. He is Naomi’s twin brother, and also recently immigrated from Africa. He also self-identified as Black or African. He described himself as “naturally funny”, “responsible”, and “creative”. He enjoys playing soccer and aspires to be a forensic scientist.

Taylor is a 13-year-old female in the 7th grade at a majority Black middle school. Taylor is the fraternal twin of Sophia (below). She described herself as “pretty smart”, “really talented”, “trustworthy”, “kind” and “responsible”. In the future, she aspires to be a nurse because she enjoys helping others. Taylor self-identified as African American.

Sophia is a 13-year-old female in the 7th grade at a majority Black middle school. She is Taylor’s twin sister. She described herself as “funny” and “smart”. She enjoys art, dancing, and singing. She aspires to be an artist and businesswoman in the future. Sophia self-identified as African American.

Christoph is a 12-year-old male in the 7th grade at a racially diverse middle school. He was born in Africa and immigrated to the United States in early childhood. He self-identified as Black. He described himself as “smart” and “chill”. He enjoys playing soccer and math is his favorite subject in school. He has many ideas about his future, and has considered being a police officer, firefighter, professional soccer player, professor, or astronaut.

Michael is an 11-year-old male in the 6th grade at a majority White middle school. He described himself as “fast”, “athletic”, and “funny”. He enjoys running cross country, as well as playing sports and video games. He aspires to be an engineer. Michael self-identified as Black.

Mia is an 11-year-old female in the 6th grade at a majority White middle school. She enjoys art and playing volleyball. She described herself as “quirky” and “socially awkward”. She aspires to be an artist or teacher in the future. Mia self-identified as African American.

Procedure

This study used both semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, as well as a short racial identity questionnaire. Each adolescent participant was individually interviewed twice, and each parent/guardian was interviewed once. Additionally, voluntary focus groups, held separately by gender, were conducted with interested adolescent participants, and all adolescent participants completed the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-teen (MIBI-t; Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008).

Interviews and Focus Groups. In addition to rapport building, the first individual adolescent interview was focused on understanding each participant’s experiences with discrimination, responses to discrimination, discussions with parents about discrimination, and their racial identity. This first interview (*see APPENDIX E*) provided participants with the opportunity to define what discrimination means to them, describe any discrimination

experiences they (and/or others) have experienced, discuss ways in which they have been taught to respond to discrimination, how they actually have responded or would respond, and perceptions/feelings about their racial group membership. Participants were allowed to discuss any and all forms/types of discrimination relevant in their lives. Subsequent individual adolescent interviews (*see APPENDIX H*) were used to gather additional information from the initial interview to capture any changes in thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or experiences about the topic, and also to conduct member checking of themes discussed in the first interview. Additionally, this follow-up interview explored participants' mental and emotional well-being related to discriminatory experiences.

The adolescent focus group interviews (*see APPENDIX G*) examined discrimination experiences specific to the school setting and among peers. All adolescent participants were invited to participate in the focus group, with the intent of generating a representative group of participants from each school demographic. Focus groups were divided by gender, one male and one female focus group, in consideration of possible intersectionality themes that may arise across both genders. Focus groups occurred after the first round of individual interviews.

Finally, individual parent/caregiver interviews (see *APPENDIX F*) explored their perceptions of their child(ren)'s discrimination experiences, their socialization practices and ways in which they teach their child(ren) to manage and respond to these experiences. Since, prior research has suggested that parents' discrimination experiences can also affect students' experiences of discrimination (Saleem et al., 2016), parents were asked about their own experiences with discrimination, in addition to how their own and their child(ren)'s racial and gender identity played a role in their socialization practices.

All individual parent and adolescent interviews were conducted in a setting that was comfortable and familiar to the participants and that also afforded privacy. All interviews were conducted either in participants' homes or in quiet reserved spaces at local libraries. The initial individual adolescent interview was conducted first, followed by the parent interview, in order to decrease the likelihood of parents engaging in further racial conversations with their child prior to the adolescent being interviewed. The second individual adolescent interview occurred after the focus group. Because it was likely that participants' ideas about perceived discrimination evolved through participation in the first individual interview and the focus group, questions were posed during the second individual interviews to try to capture these changes. Both focus groups were conducted in a quiet and reserved room at a local library. All individual and focus group interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using a transcription service. In keeping with the phenomenological approach, interviews were not rigidly time limited, to allow participants to fully express their thoughts. All adolescent individual interviews (initial and follow-up) ranged from 22 minutes to an hour in length. Focus groups were approximately 1.5 hours in length. Parent/caregiver individual ranged from 44 minutes to 1.5 hours.

Data were collected during a 10-week period in March through May 2019. One goal of collecting data over time was to examine whether adolescents' reports and understanding of discrimination experiences evolved over time. All adolescent and parent/caregiver interviews were completed on a rolling basis within the first three weeks. There was then a three-week gap prior to completing adolescent focus groups. These data were transcribed and analyzed during this three-week period and used to inform the focus groups' discussions. Finally, individual follow-up interviews with adolescents began about two weeks after the completion of focus groups (see Figure 2 for timeline of data collection procedures).

Questionnaire. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-teen (MIBI-t; Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008; *see APPENDIX I*) is a 21 item Likert-scale questionnaire developed from the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The adolescent participants completed this at the end of the first individual interviews. The authors of the MIBI-t noted a gap in literature that overlooked early and middle adolescence in the area of racial identity measurement. The MIBI-t was created to better meet the developmental needs of teens. This questionnaire measures four dimensions of racial identity, each containing subcomponents. The four major dimensions are: Salience, Centrality, Regard, and Ideology. *Salience* refers to the importance of race as part of an individual's self-concept at a particular time. *Centrality*, as mentioned earlier, refers to the extent to which an individual emphasizes race as an *overall* part of his/her self-concept. *Regard* refers to the positive or negative feelings an individual holds about his/her race. This major dimension includes the subcomponents of Public Regard and Private Regard. Finally, the *Ideology* dimension refers to an individual's philosophical ideas about the way African Americans should behave. This dimension includes the Nationalism, Humanism, Assimilation, and Oppressed Minority subcomponents. Nationalism refers to the idea that African Americans should prefer African American organizations and environments. Humanism is the idea that everyone is equal regardless of race. Assimilation refers to the idea that African Americans should try to fit into the mainstream culture. Finally, Oppressed Minority emphasizes the similarities between all minority groups (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008).

The MIBI-t can be used with adolescents from middle school through high school. Adolescent participants answered all questions on a 5-point Likert scale (1= Really Disagree to 5=Really Agree) and completed the questionnaire in paper format at the end of the first

individual interview, so that follow-up questions could be asked about their answers during the individual follow-up interview. The low sample size means that statistical analyses were not meaningful for the current study. However, results from the questionnaire were used to better understand and make qualitative connections between adolescent interview responses to the racial identity items during the first interview. Therefore, two of the four major dimensions (Centrality and Regard) were specifically analyzed as they best fit with qualitative questions asked during interviews. The MIBI-t complements the phenomenological and qualitative approach of the current study by providing a deeper examination of adolescents' reports of their racial identity across the three dimensions. Although all adolescent participants self-identified as Black or African American, the MIBI-t allowed them to provide ratings on the specific dimensions of racial identity, especially centrality and regard (public and private). Additionally, the inclusion of the MIBI-t allowed for the comparison of adolescents' narrative descriptions of their racial identity with their responses on a questionnaire. It is important to not only consider how these adolescents verbally reported their racial identity, but also how these reports may vary when they are asked to rate them on a standardized measure.

The research design, interview sequence, and questionnaires used in the current study were well-aligned with the phenomenological research approach to answer the aforementioned research questions. Adolescent and parent/caregiver participants received incentives at each phase/interview of the study. All incentives were distributed as gift cards.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach. IPA is used to understand how participants make sense of the phenomenon being studied (Wadman et al., 2017). IPA is also best used with relatively small

sample sizes (Smith, 2011), therefore, it was deemed to be a good analytical fit for the study. Each transcript was analyzed individually, and themes were generated from the data, rather than applying predetermined codes. Triangulation was achieved through the use of interviews from multiple data sources (adolescents, parents, and focus groups), as well as data gathered from the racial identity questionnaire.

One goal of this data analysis was to identify similarities and differences in experiences and responses to discrimination, parental knowledge and socialization processes, and racial identity development. Specifically, data analysis involved an iterative process of making descriptive and interpretative comments throughout the transcripts, identifying themes reflective of the essential qualities, and organizing themes across transcripts to form meaningful and structured data clusters. To do this, I first read through each transcript from the initial adolescent interviews and identified general ideas relevant to the research questions. These ideas were then compared across participants and analyzed to identify common themes. Finally, these themes were used to develop codes representing the big ideas that resonated across multiple participants. I analyzed all transcripts to achieve consistency in generating themes across participants. A theme was considered to be "salient" if at least three participants reported the experience (Smith, 2011). However, some themes were still considered as important if they appeared to influence or inform a participant's experience. The same process was followed for parent/caregiver interviews.

The data analysis process for the adolescent follow-up interviews included individual transcript analysis to identify new themes or elaborations on previously identified themes. I used member checking to ensure that these data accurately reflected the participants' intended meaning. Specifically, all first-round interviews and focus groups were transcribed and initially

coded prior to the completion of second interviews, so that I was able to ask deeper questions at follow-up.

The PVEST and CRT theoretical frameworks on which this study was based, were used to inform coding and analysis. For example, PVEST's constructs of adaptive and maladaptive strategies were used to first analyze adolescent responses to discrimination as adaptive or maladaptive in alignment with previous literature. However, the interpretation of these codes was considered alongside how the adolescents themselves reported the effectiveness of their responses, which is aligned with CRT's tenet of voice/counter-narrative. Additionally, CRT informed the coding of intersectional discrimination experiences and parent socialization practices, as well as the importance of coding experiences that may have only pertained to one individual in order to reduce essentialist notions of the participants' experiences.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION PART I:

ADOLESCENTS' DISCRIMINATORY EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES

The following results and discussion sections begin by reporting how participants in the study perceived discrimination in their lives (both directly and vicariously), and the strategies they used to respond to these experiences. These results also include the adolescents' thoughts and feelings regarding discrimination experiences. Following that is a discussion of the ways that racial identity was seen to interact with and influence these participants' experiences. Finally, I report results from parent interviews regarding the ways that parents socialize their children to navigate discriminatory experiences, and the interaction between socialization practices, discrimination experiences, and racial identity development.

Adolescents' Experiences with Discrimination

First, to ensure that all participants understood the definition of discrimination, I began each interview by asking them to define discrimination in their own terms:

> Like when you tease someone about like, what they believe in, or like what they are. Like, for example, if they're like gay or something, you tease them about that (Naomi, Interview 1)

> It's like how you... say something about somebody to like, put like a label on somebody who's a different race than you (Noelle, Interview 1)

> Well, like racism and like [ex]cluding other people that's not your color (Michael, Interview 1)

Almost all participants accurately described discrimination as differential or unfair treatment, such as name calling, teasing, or labeling, based on an identity marker. Participants' definitions of discrimination centered on race or sexual orientation, but not gender discrimination. In these definitions, participants sometimes noted that they had heard about

discrimination in school during units on the Civil Rights era, which provides valuable insight into why many definitions included references to race or skin color. Ultimately, the participants' definitions provide support for the notion that young adolescents are aware of discrimination and are able to articulate its meaning.

Direct Experiences with Discrimination. This section focuses on situations, events, and experiences that were reported as first-hand accounts of discrimination by the participants. Vicarious discrimination experiences are reported later. This section presents only experiences reported by the youth. Any experiences recalled by parents about their children are reported in a later section.

Regarding the frequency of discrimination, four (Noelle, Michael, Stuart, and Taylor) out of the nine participants reported direct experiences with discrimination when asked explicitly. However, the frequency of direct discriminatory experiences may have been underreported due to what appeared to be participants' limited awareness of covert types of discrimination. For example, when explicitly asked about personal discriminatory experiences, both Naomi and Jerry stated that they had "never experienced discrimination." Later in the interview, however, they both reported situations that could be considered as discriminatory, although they did not perceive/experience these incidents as examples of discrimination. For example, when asked about her experiences in school, Naomi reported that a previous teacher made a comment about her presence as the only Black girl in the classroom:

> I don't know if this is a funny story. I don't know, but like in fifth grade, we were reading a book and then my teacher was like 'I'm so happy' because I was the only Black person in the class. Like, 'I'm so happy that we have someone here that like, I don't know, has black skin.' I don't know what to say... she was like 'I'm so happy we have a Black person in class.' Well, that's not what she said, but that's what she meant. (Naomi, Interview 1)

Naomi's report is evidence of how discrimination is an individual perception and socially constructed. In this case, she did not perceive her interaction as discriminatory, but another individual or adult in the same situation may label it as discrimination. From a research perspective, this incident could be classified as "racial spotlighting," a microaggression which Carter Andrews (2012) describes as occurring when racial minority individuals are involuntarily made hyper-visible by Whites. In this particular case, Naomi's teacher's comment regarding her race in the classroom led to other students staring at her, and also highlighted her as a native informant of Black history, despite the fact that Naomi does not identify as African American, and reported that she does not know much about African American history in the United States:

> In fifth and sixth grade, we were talking about like the Ku Klux Klan, and like all the stuff that happened, and everybody looks at me weirdly, like as if I went through it. But I didn't! I didn't go through American stuff. I was in Africa, and I didn't know.

In addition to this incident, Naomi also reported a situation in which a peer had called her hair a 'mop.' She appeared to be unsettled by these events, but she did not explicitly report them as discrimination. When talking with both Jerry and Naomi, it appeared that their labeling of these experiences as discriminatory may be associated with their perceptions of what constitutes *true* discrimination:

> I thought it'd be like the stereotypical... like in movies, it showed White people being rude or mean to Black people mostly. Like those types of shows, so that's what I thought would happen. (Jerry, Interview 1)

> In [Africa], we heard about like segregation and stuff. I kind of thought that was what's going to happen. But it didn't. (Naomi, Interview 1)

These responses suggest that Jerry and Naomi's social awareness of discrimination is linked to overt types of discrimination typically shown in the media, which possibly explains why they did not consider their own covert experiences as discriminatory. Other participants who reported no discriminatory experiences also seemed to qualify their responses by saying that they

had never "*noticed*" any discrimination, suggesting that they are aware that discrimination exists, but that they may not have been aware of it in their own lives.

When asked about how often they experience these situations, participants' responses ranged from "very rarely" to "every day," suggesting that there is not a regular pattern of discriminatory experiences. Nevertheless, these results indicate that the prevalence of experiences of discrimination is about 66%, which is slightly lower than those reported in previous research, which found that almost 90% of Black adolescents experienced everyday discrimination events (Seaton et al., 2008). Other researchers have also found that a majority of Black adolescents reported at least one discriminatory incident within the previous three months (Prelow et al., 2004). Although conducting interviews across time was used as way to examine possible changes in adolescents' reports of discrimination, the data did not show a change in these reports. Only one participant recalled a new discriminatory event during the follow-up interview. Despite the variability in the frequency of discriminatory experiences, the main finding is that youth in the study were able to report recent firsthand examples of discrimination.

Discrimination Experiences and School Composition. Students who attended the same schools reported vastly different experiences with discrimination. Participants from majority White schools, or those who were in classes with few students of color, however, reported similar experiences, in that, they experienced discrimination most when they were in these classrooms and spaces. For example, Jerry noted that he especially felt "an uneasiness" during classroom discussions or lessons on race when he was the only Black student. Similarly, Michael and Stuart reported feelings of discrimination in classrooms with few students of color, or when socializing with a majority White group of peers: "If we all in a group with all my White friends,

I'm going to get taken out that group because they're gonna think I was like the cause of it [class disruption] or something" (Michael, Interview 1).

This pattern suggests that discrimination experiences might be more common in certain settings, irrespective of school composition. For example, participants particularly noted how being the only or one of a handful of students of color seemed to be related to more discriminatory experiences.

Types and Forms of Discrimination. Participants provided many different examples of discriminatory experiences. The majority of experiences reported were covert, which were often more subtle, nuanced, and based on perceptions of unfair treatment linked to attitudes and stereotypes, such as harsh discipline or negative statements about appearance. Despite the subtle nature of this type of discrimination, participants in the study were able to identify incidents that they perceived to be unfair based on their identity markers mostly their race and ethnicity.

In addition to the "racial spotlighting" reported by some participants, other discriminatory examples included negative comments on their appearance, harsh and differential treatment/discipline, and assumptions of criminality. Only girls reported negative comments on their appearance. For example, Noelle noted that she often had experiences in which peers and adults would make comments that she was "Mexican", racially "mixed," or question whether she was biologically related to her parents and family members. Although adults in the community sometimes made these comments as well, Noelle and other girls reported that negative comments about their appearance were often directed at them from peers. Although these comments were observable, they were coded as covert because an additional layer of interpretation is needed to understand that they could be intended to question an individual's racial group membership.

Many adolescents, both boys and girls, reported experiences of harsh or differential treatment and discipline from teachers. Specifically, they spoke about being treated differently from their White peers at school, and school rules being more strictly enforced with them than with other students. For example, Taylor recalled an incident in which she and a White peer were arguing. Both she and the peer had made negative comments to each other, but she felt that the teacher had taken the peer's side and made her apologize:

> It's like she [teacher] takes the other kids' side. I think it's because of my race because the kid is White and I'm Black, so she takes his word for it every time... she said, you need to apologize to him, even though he's the one who said something to me first. And so, she has me apologize to him, and then I don't get an apology. So, I start thinking, is it because of my race? (Taylor, Interview 1)

Additionally, Stuart reported recurring incidents in which he feels that he is the target of unfair treatment regarding phone use at school:

> We're not allowed to have phones in class, but she [teacher] will pretty much give everyone a pass except for me. Or like, if she sees my phone, she'll say, go take your phone to Mr. (principal) and it someone else has their phone out, she'll be like 'I'll just take your phone 'til the end of class. Just let me know and you'll get it back at the end of class.' (Stuart, Interview 1)

These reports are consistent with research that has found Black and Latino adolescents often reported the highest frequencies of discrimination in the form of harsh discipline (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003; Ruck & Wortley, 2002; Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2014).

Participants also reported discriminatory experiences in the form of assumed criminality, especially from adults in the community. One third of the participants recalled incidents in which they were followed in stores or subjected to extra security measures. Michael reported an incident in which a store clerk had assumed he was stealing Pokémon cards within the past year:

> I was looking at Pokemon cards... but a woman was following me around. She thought I was stealing, and my mom said the woman came up to her like 'you should probably go get your son because I think he's stealing something.' Yeah, they make it look like they're not looking at you, but like, they really are. (Michael, Interview 1)

Stuart and his friend experienced this assumption of criminality when they were suddenly made to remove and turn in their backpacks at a store that he regularly visited, despite never having been asked to do so before:

> There's like a rule like you can't have backpacks on because like I understand why. Like people steal. But... I go there all the time with my backpack, and I don't steal. They see me walk in and walk out. But one day, I went with my friend and like instantly, they were like 'you gotta take your backpack [off]. We'll take it.' I mean, I gave them the backpack. We went and got some stuff and left. But like the whole time we was in there, she [store clerk] was watching us... like 'I know you're gonna try something.' (Stuart, Interview 1)

Finally, during the follow-up interview Noelle recalled a similar incident that occurred when she went shopping with her cousins:

> We were in the store shopping. We just went in there and like, the people didn't greet us, but they greeted this other lady that came in and she was White. And like, she [store clerk] kept following us around the store... she probably followed us because she felt like we were you know, the stereotype, I guess. (Naomi, Interview 2)

In all of these incidents, participants believed they were targeted because of stereotypical assumptions made by the store clerks. Interestingly, both Michael and Noelle reported that they had not immediately been aware of being followed in the stores until family members made comments or discussed it with them. Both participants now report having a heightened awareness of the possibility of discrimination in stores. Again, this suggests that adolescents are more likely to perceive experiences of discrimination as their understanding of social structures and stereotypes develops.

It is important to note that only one participant reported experiencing discrimination in a physical form. Specifically, Michael recalled a story in which he felt he had been physically victimized by White peers in the previous year:

> Michael: In fifth grade, I actually got spit on. We was all going outside... we was all running out. And then like, there was this kid, and he just like spit in my eyes. I couldn't see who it was so I couldn't report him immediately.
>
> Researcher: Why do you think that happened?

> Michael: Cause of my skin tone... he had a group of friends behind him as well. And just like, boom, and then they all ran off and laughed. (Michael, Interview 1)

Upon further reflection, Michael became sure that this experience was racially motivated, and he appeared very distraught when discussing this incident. Although overt types of discrimination are less likely to occur, Michael's experience is a reminder that these forms of discrimination still exist. Furthermore, although an observable and undeniable example of discrimination involving aggression and physical assault, Michael did not seem to have acknowledged and addressed the fact that this was racial discrimination. These experiences were not forgotten but may have gone "underground" in the absence of effective coping strategies at the time. In the context of a safe relationship, this memory resurfaced with new insight and the painful awareness that he was a target of racial discrimination. It suggests that even if unacknowledged at the time, memory of these racial incidents can persist and raises the question of long-term effects on the socio-emotional health and well-being.

Sources of Discrimination. Adolescents' discriminatory experiences were also coded by the source or perpetrator. Participants varied in their views of who they thought enacted the most discrimination (e.g., teachers/adults or peers). Some adolescents felt that their school climates encouraged peer discrimination due to teachers' lack of consequences for bullying and victimization. For example, although Christoph reported that he did not experience any direct discrimination, he stated that he sees other students experiencing discrimination in the form of name-calling (i.e., students in the classroom making racialized remarks to each other), which suggested that peers were the main sources of discrimination at school:

> I think other kids, because that's just their nature. If they know no one's around to really do anything about it, they'll take advantage of that. Honestly, sometimes it [discrimination] happens mid-class, and I'm surprised how the teachers don't even notice anything. (Christoph, Boys' Focus Group)

On the other hand, some participants felt that the power difference between teachers and students made it more likely that adults were the main perpetrators:

> I'd say the staff, because they have so much power. They know that they can send you out. They can get you suspended or expelled. They can call your parents. They can do pretty much anything to you, take away recess, whatever, all that. But you can't do anything to them, so they know that they have maximum power. (Stuart, Boys' Focus Group)

It is worth noting that adolescents' description of peers as the main perpetrators also appears to implicate adults as agents who do not respond to other children engaging in discrimination. Therefore, it is likely that sources of discrimination are not mutually exclusive and in fact, work together to create a climate that affords and maintains discrimination.

Discrimination as an Intersectional Experience. Intersectional themes on discriminatory experiences emerged implicitly during individual interviews. Girls often reported discriminatory experiences related to their appearance (e.g., skin tone, hair texture), while boys were more likely to report being targets of assumed criminality. Data analysis also showed that boys in this study reported more incidents of discriminatory experiences than girls. During individual interviews, participants focused heavily on racial discrimination and rarely discussed other types, such as discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. Other studies have also found racial discrimination to be the most frequently reported form of discrimination by middle and high school adolescents (Byrd & Carter Andrews, 2016; Kessler et al., 1999). When asked directly about gender discrimination only Noelle reported that girls are often seen as less athletic when playing sports than boys. She expressed uncertainty regarding whether this was a form of discrimination and stated that it does "not affect her much." Additionally, during individual interviews, only Stuart mentioned how he sees Black boys being treated differently from girls in general:

> For gender, I feel like girls get treated a little bit nicer [at school] ... it's not that boys get treated worse, it's just like... the way that teachers talk to girls. Like, they talk to the girls in a lighter voice. Like, it's more welcoming when they talk to females more than males. (Stuart, Boys' Focus Group)

In focus groups, boys were more vocal about the ways in which they saw intersectionality play a role in discriminatory experiences and favorable treatment towards girls. Specifically, Michael agreed with another boy's comment on this idea by saying:

> I feel like 100% if you're White or if you're a girl, that's automatically a bonus, at least by the teachers. I feel like they just see them as better or I don't know. They just think they're better somehow. (Michael, Boys' Focus Group)

Although boys in the focus group did not directly report that the differences they noticed between boys and girls was extremely unfair, the way that they talked about these differences suggests an underlying feeling of being "less than." In other words, it could be argued that if being White and female elicits favorable outcomes, then being Black and male would result in the opposite, a penalty instead of a bonus. In the girls' focus group, Naomi also reported that she has *"only seen Black boys getting treated badly for some reason."* These comments illustrate that adolescents are aware of how race and gender can intertwine and create different experiences, even if they do not necessarily experience discrimination based on other identity markers.

Thoughts and Feelings About Discrimination. Participants expressed a wide range of thoughts and feelings regarding their direct discriminatory experiences. Feelings ranged from indifference, sadness, and surprise to confusion and anger. Analysis of these results did not reveal any patterns to suggest that those who experienced more discrimination reported greater psychological distress. Instead, thoughts and feelings appeared to be more associated with the specifics of each incident and whether or not the adolescent had previously experienced (that form of) discrimination.

Disbelief. Adolescents who reported that their experience was a first-time incident also reported being surprised. For example, Stuart stated that his initial reaction to being asked to remove his backpack at the store was a feeling of surprise: "It was like surprising. Like, you never do this, so why me? I just feel like why do you see me as someone that would want to steal?" (Stuart, Interview 1).

Some adolescents experienced multiple thoughts and feelings as they processed through a first-time incident. For example, Michael recalled first feeling surprised that a peer had spit on him, but then later feeling scared after processing the situation:

> I was like really?! Because, at the time, I was like, my mom was telling a lie... until it actually happened. I was like, wow!... [Then] I was scared, and I didn't know what to do because my parents never taught me like, if you get spit in the face, do this, do that. (Michael, Interview 1)

In these two examples, both Stuart and Michael were surprised to encounter the unfair and discriminatory treatment. In Michael's case, despite having had previous discussions about discrimination with his parents, he was still shocked when he encountered it first-hand. Stuart had experienced discrimination before, but this particular incident of being treated unfairly in a store that he often visits, and presumably considered safe and welcoming, was the surprising part. Both examples illustrate that the very first discriminatory experience can be shocking to young adolescents, however, experiencing discrimination in new and different forms can also produce similar feelings as an initial experience.

Many adolescents also reported feeling a sense of confusion and uncertainty about their early discriminatory experiences. For example, Stuart's above reaction contained a certain level of confusion since he had previously been treated well in the store prior to the incident. When describing her discriminatory experience, Taylor felt confused when she realized that the teacher was not going to hear her side of the story during the argument with a peer:

> It was confusing and it was stressful because I couldn't understand why. Like, why is she doing this and like she's gonna take my side for it, but instead, no she had to go and take his side. I was like, you know what, I'm not even gonna argue. I'm just not going to say nothing about it... I just apologized to the kid and that was it. (Taylor, Interview 1)

Ambiguity. Additionally, feelings of uncertainty arose when adolescents did not know whether what they experienced was considered discrimination. For example, Stuart recalled that, as one of very few Black students in his language class, he is often targeted by the teacher. However, he can never be sure whether this kind of treatment from the teacher is "discriminatory":

> ...in some classes I have a lot of darker friends, and some classes I have a lot of lighter friends. In my Chinese class, there's mostly White kids in that class. And the teacher... most times, she'll call me out [for something negative], out of all of them. I think to myself, is it because I'm darker? Like, I can't be sure. Maybe. Yeah. I don't really know if she actually is. (Stuart, Interview 1)

These feelings illustrate the difficulty that arises when individuals experience covert discrimination, which is harder to differentiate, and thus can be more stressful for adolescents to determine whether their experiences are truly discriminatory.

Affective Responses. It is likely that, as adolescents develop and experience more discrimination, their understanding of it can create feelings of helplessness towards future incidents. For example, as Stuart spoke about his feelings regarding other subsequent discriminatory experiences, his feelings shifted more towards reluctance and indifference:

> I don't even know, you know. It's not a good feeling. Like, the truth hurts sometimes. Yeah, I know what happened happens to a lot of people in a lot of ways, but I mean, it doesn't feel good. Doesn't feel terrible. It's like, what can I do? (Stuart, Interview 1)

In a similar way, Noelle reported that she used to feel angry when she first experienced negative comments about her skin color and appearance. However, she now has a realistic attitude due to the repeated exposure to these incidents:

> Noelle: Well, it made me feel like... people are never going to change. Like, they're never going to see past what somebody looks like. That they can't change what they are cause that's who they are... I'm like more aware of it, and it's fine, but it's not fine.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by that?
>
> Noelle: It's like I have to be aware of it. But then like, it's not fun to know that people are still going to discriminate [against] you. (Noelle, Interview 1)

It appears that both Stuart and Noelle have come to acknowledge discriminatory experiences as a fact of life after repeated exposure. This acknowledgment of discrimination as a typical experience of Blackness has also been noted in adults (Krieger, Kosheleva, Waterman, Chen, & Koenen, 2011), which suggests that the experience of discrimination is similar for both adolescents and adults.

Participants also expressed anger, questioning, and feelings of unfairness regarding their discriminatory experiences, sometimes simultaneously. For example, when speaking about the incident in which he was followed in the store, Michael reported feeling angry upon realizing the unfairness of not being able to move about in stores in the same way as his White peers, as well as questioning the unfairness of how he may be perceived:

> [I was] mad because I want to do what other people can do. Like, I don't want to be like.... I can't be caged in. I can't do all the things. And then [I get] discouraged by that... It's just unfair because, like, if White people can do it, why can't I do it? Or it's just like, what's the point of it? Because they're gonna think I'm doing something wrong. (Michael, Interview 1)

Stuart also recalled similar feelings of unfairness regarding the store backpack incident, "I just feel like that's not fair! Like, there shouldn't be a way for you to be able to do that to me. And like, why should I even have to worry about this?"

Vicarious Discriminatory Experiences

Although only a few adolescents reported personal discriminatory experiences, all study participants were able to articulate vicarious incidents in the media, with family members, and

with peers. Most of these vicarious experiences were overt in nature, and thus the adolescents were able to observe, identify and label them as discriminatory. Additionally, unlike the firsthand experiences, these vicarious experiences included a wider variety of forms. Reports included blatant racism, disparaging remarks, name-calling, social exclusion, denied access, and harsh/differential treatment.

Adolescents readily identified experiences of discrimination seen in movies, TV shows, and on social media.

> I watch a lot of movies where like the Black person was like, jumped. Like one about how a Black boy got killed because he had a hairbrush. And I was like 'dang, they literally just killed him because he just had a hairbrush.' That's how Black people get killed nowadays. Because like they can have a phone, or a hairbrush. (Michael, Interview 1)

> I've watched a movie about Jackie Robinson called "42." It was about how Black people couldn't join the baseball leagues, and then he was great at it. And then this guy... found out that he was really good, and they let him join, and that changed baseball. (Mia, Interview 1)

> Definitely on TV. Like, Donald Trump talking about he don't like the Mexicans and he's building the wall. And like he don't want Mexicans inside his town. And so, I was like 'man this is unfair.' How can he do this? (Sophia, Interview 1)

Adolescents' ability to discuss issues of discrimination in the media suggests that they are attuned to these experiences even if they are not encountering them firsthand. They know and understand what discrimination looks like, especially when it is overt. An emerging pattern regarding adolescents' exposure to discrimination in the media is that it was not often self-directed. Rather, parents appeared to be the catalyst for adolescents' viewing of movies featuring discrimination (a form of socialization to be discussed later), or they happened to stumble upon videos or clips on TV and social media. Regardless of how adolescents were exposed to media-based discrimination, their feelings about seeing these events were similar to those who reported

firsthand experiences. For example, Sophia recalled feeling upset about the comments made by Donald Trump, especially because she has friends who are Mexican.

> It made me very upset because I have a Mexican friend. And my friends are getting mad because he's trying to build the wall. I can't take it because it really be on my nerves. Every time I look, like on the news, all he talks about is Mexicans... it just made me angry, and I gotta turn the TV off because it's making me mad. (Sophia, Interview 1)

Michael also reported mixed feelings of anger and sadness about witnessing discrimination while watching a movie, but also noted feelings of acknowledgment regarding the presence of discrimination in society:

> Well, I mean, it's kind of sad that I got used to it. Like all the movies I watched and all that has a lot of racism. So, I was like sad and mad at the same time, but mostly mad. (Michael, Interview 1)

The similarities in feelings between firsthand and vicarious discrimination experiences highlight the importance of considering both when examining the effect of discrimination on adolescents.

Adolescents provided many examples of peer vicarious discrimination. Discrimination by peers included additional forms such as name-calling and social exclusion. They also expanded upon the reason for discrimination. Whereas most reported incidents of direct discrimination were focused on race, reports of vicarious discrimination included targeted additional identities such as nationality and gender identity:

> My friend, actually. She's Asian. Somebody was calling her bamboo, last year and this year. People do that a lot. To my friends, not me. It makes me very mad. (Noelle, Interview 1)

> We went to the seventh grade camp, and this one person in my class who I thought was a girl, said they go by he or him (pronouns) and everybody starting acting weird and stuff, and kind of not really hanging out with them much... it was not nice (Naomi, Interview 1)

> This typically happens to Asians who speak Chinese. So, kids at my school they'll [call them] kimchi and sushi... trying to say some Chinese words. (Mia, Girls' Focus Group)

> Like in school if you walk down the hallway, some people say like these Africans stink, that type of stuff. Like if you're like fully African, and people can tell in my school, they will make fun of you. Without a doubt, they will make fun of you. (Stuart, Interview 1)

Similar to the direct experiences, teachers were reported to engage in harsh/differential treatment and discipline.

> There's this teacher. I don't really like her, but she likes to get the [Black] kids in trouble a lot. She'll send kids out and she'll call their parents and then say a lie about what that person did. And she knows it's not true... she treats other kids unfairly. She puts bad kids in the same group at a table just to get them out, just to get them in trouble. (Taylor, Interview 1)

> There was a Black girl and a White girl, and the White girl was actually on her phone during class and the teacher was talking. And the Black girl was too. The teacher didn't tell the White girl to put her phone down, but she told the Black girl to. (Noelle, Interview 2)

> My math teacher, she always picks on the Black people. She never picks on the White people when they be talking, and that's not good. I'm like you're the one that made them sit by each other. So, you want them to talk so you can call their parents. (Sophia, Interview 1)

These reports of vicarious discrimination from peers and teachers, yet again highlight that adolescents are aware of and affected by discriminatory experiences in their environments. They do not need to directly experience discrimination in order to understand when others are being treated unfairly. In fact, no participants reported direct discrimination in the form of name-calling, yet that appeared to be the most reported form of peer vicarious discrimination.

Few adolescents spoke about family experiences of vicarious discrimination. Stuart and Michael both spoke about experiences in which their fathers experienced discrimination from other adults. Specifically, Stuart recalled being denied access to a local gym that he and his father often visited:

> Me and my dad went to play basketball and this lady at the counter... she told us no. We usually can get in there every day just fine. We couldn't get in that day. I'm not exactly sure how it works, but she told us something and we couldn't get in. But I can tell, like the look on her face from when we came in the door. It's the look like 'oh no, these

> people. I don't like these people.' But yeah, I really felt like it was because of our skin color. (Stuart, Interview 1)

Following this incident, Stuart and his father left the gym and Stuart reported feeling unsure of what to do in that moment. He also cited feelings of helplessness during the event. Although few participants in the study reported family or caregiver experiences of discrimination, it was apparent that observing these events affected those who did.

Future Discrimination

All participants were asked about their feelings regarding the possibility of future discrimination experiences. Results did not indicate any major differences between adolescents who had experienced direct discrimination and those who had not. Responses ranged from feelings of hopefulness, fear, and acceptance. Despite his multiple reports of discriminatory experiences, Stuart reported feeling slightly hopeful that he would not experience discrimination in the future: "*I hope it doesn't happen, but I'll always know that it can happen."* Additionally, Naomi recalled a hopefulness that society would not regress to pre-Civil Rights era discrimination:

> In like fifth or sixth grade, we went to this place where they have like monuments of the bus that Rosa Parks was in and like MLK and stuff. There was this room where it showed where the Black people were separated from the White people... and I felt bad. And I was kind of hoping that that wouldn't happen to me in the future. It hopefully wouldn't come back. (Naomi, Interview 1)

Some participants recalled feeling afraid of experiencing discrimination as a consequence of getting older:

> Well, I'm kind of scared. Since I'm getting older, there's gonna be some problems. So, like as a seventh grader, it's kind of hard because it's kind of scary too because you never know what's gonna happen in the future (Sophia, Interview 1)

Finally, many of the participants reported knowledge and awareness of how they would be treated in the future, similar to feelings of resignation or indifference after experiencing

discrimination. Unlike feelings of resignation, however, these responses were imbued with a sense of agency, determination, and resistance, regarding the possibility of discrimination:

> I actually thought about that, but then I try not to think about it. Because I know that later on when I'm older, people are going to say stuff like that. But yet again, I'm not going to pay attention to that because that's not who I am, and I know who I am in myself. (Taylor, Interview 1)

> When I grow up and be a Black African male, people are going to think that I will be stealing something or I'm going to do something wrong. And that's just... well it's not life and it's not right, but I'm not gonna be surprised if someone treats me unfairly because of my skin tone or anything like that. (Michael, Interview 1)

> The most difficult thing about being Black would be knowing that like no matter what, you're always going to be the main target of anybody... but I would say I can work harder and better than you could at anything and achieve more. (Noelle, Interview 1)

> [Despite being followed in a store] We kept shopping, but then I left with my cousins. We just walked around the mall and went to other stores instead of going [back] to that store. (Noelle, Interview 2)

These responses suggest that, regardless of whether or not they had previously experienced direct discrimination, all participants were aware of the increased likelihood of discriminatory experiences in the present or future and described actions that they would or did take to resist being defined by those perceptions.

Responses to Discrimination Experiences

Adolescents reported a variety of ways in which they responded to discriminatory experiences. These responses included both internal and external coping strategies, and some responses reflected the use of different strategies in different environments.

Table 2: Adolescents' Responses to Discrimination

Response	**Examples**	**Reported Effectiveness**
Silence	It's actually easy for me to say nothing to her. Because when she says something, I'll just obviously say something back and that's what gets me in trouble, so I just be quiet. (Taylor, Interview 1)	Effective because of reduction in future consequences or reprimands from teachers.

Table 2 (cont'd)

Cooperation	We never went to like a spot where she couldn't see us... So, we made sure that we were in her sight the whole time. (Stuart, Interview 1)	Effective because of perceived reduction in further discrimination (e.g., by store clerks).
Support Seeking: Parents	I talked to my mom... it actually went well. She was like 'Well you know that if you're having a problem with a teacher, the best thing to do is to listen and then just go about your day (Taylor, Interview 1) I didn't tell my mom because she do too much. She'd be like, 'who's this person, who's that?' So, no, I just keep it to myself. (Sophia, Interview 1)	Mixed effectiveness. Parents perceived as supportive at times, but parent involvement could result in further questioning, embarrassment or humiliation.
Support Seeking: Peers	Yeah, I'm definitely more open with Black kids than I am with White kids. Definitely more open. They have the same problems. They have the same things going on (Naomi, Focus Group)	Low frequency, but most effective among same-race peers.
Support Seeking: Teachers/School Staff	I just don't trust teachers in general. I would just not tell the teacher because their job is to help you learn and they just don't. (Christoph, Boys' Focus Group)	Very low effectiveness due to lack of trust and teacher role as perpetrator or gatekeeper. Some effectiveness with same-race and/or same-gender staff.
Verbal Confrontation	She sends me into the corner where I can't see anyone... One time I actually responded to it. I was like 'why do I have to move? It makes no sense for me to move and I'm already sitting down.' (Michael, Interview 1)	Effectiveness unclear due to low frequency. Noted barriers to using this strategy included power differential and situation ambiguity.

Silence. The most commonly reported internal strategies were silence and cooperation. Some adolescents described responding with silence as a way to reduce the likelihood that they would experience more discrimination. Specifically, both Stuart and Taylor reported using silence strategically, during incidents in which they felt unfairly targeted by their teacher:

> I was like, 'I'm not gonna say anything else.' Just sit there pretty much to avoid more trouble. (Stuart, Interview 1)
>
> It's actually easy for me to say nothing to her. Because when she says something, I'll just obviously say something back and that's what gets me in trouble, so I just be quiet. (Taylor, Interview 1)

Noelle reported using silence in a different way. Specifically, when people question her

Blackness or make comments about her appearance, she often responds with silence or “laughing it off” even if that response does not match her internal feelings about the experience: “I would just like laugh it off or something. Or just let it go. Because I’m just the person who can let things go but deep down inside, I’m still like mad about it at the same time.”

In the responses described by Stuart and Taylor, the youth used silence as a strategy to prevent inciting further harsh discipline from their teacher. Using Phinney and Chavira’s (1995) categories for discrimination responses suggests that silence is a passive approach used by these adolescents. However, that conceptualization would miss the potential adaptive and resistant nature of silence as a response. In these particular situations, Stuart and Taylor appear to be using silence as an adaptive strategy and a form of self-protection. Therefore, silence in this case might be considered an internal and emotion-focused response strategy (Freitas et al., 2017; Harrell, 1994). Additionally, it is possible that different forms and sources of discrimination warrant different responses. In this particular case, silence is an adaptive strategy due to the power differential between teachers and students. However, this does not suggest that responding with silence is always adaptive, as Noelle’s use of silence is more fitting with passivity in the general sense, and also suggests some rumination, which has been linked to negative mental health outcomes (Sanders Thompson, 2006). Similar to responding with silence, some participants reported that they did not do anything at all in response to discrimination. For example, when Stuart and his father were denied access to the gym, Stuart recalled that he was not able to do much in response to that situation:

> I was just like watching and observing the whole scene. But I didn’t try to do anything about it cus I’m only a kid. I don’t even know how the whole thing works. So, I guess there wasn’t really nothing I could do. (Stuart, Interview 1)

This inability to respond is an important facet to consider when examining adolescents' discriminatory experiences. One aspect of being a young person is that youth are not always afforded the opportunity to respond to direct or vicarious discriminatory experiences. In this particular situation, it appears that Stuart remained silent due to his father being present and trying to solve the problem. Once again, this response appears passive, but might actually be adaptive given the circumstances. However, Stuart reported feeling a sense of helplessness, given that he was not able to assist his father and the situation ultimately resulted in being denied entry to the gym. This response and the underlying messages suggest that, when faced with discrimination, adolescents must make appraisals about the situation before choosing (or not) to engage and respond (Wakefield & Hudley, 2005; Sanchez et al., 2016; Freitas et al., 2017).

Cooperation. Participants also noted compliance or rule-following as an intentional and strategic response to discriminatory experiences, especially in the community and at school. Both Michael and Stuart stated that their responses to being followed in stores or being asked to relinquish the backpack was to comply with the request.

> She was looking at us the whole time. We never went to like a spot where she couldn't see us. We were like alright, so she thinks we're gonna steal, so we weren't going to anyways. I would never do that. There's no reason. So, we made sure that we were in her sight the whole time, cus we don't want here to be like 'let me check your pockets' on the way out or something like that... we just hurried, got our stuff, and left. (Stuart, Interview 1)

> When I see something exciting, I just wanna be like [imitates touching items], and like I can't because they think I'm stealing something. I'll play on them, but I'll make sure that they see me playing on them, and like make sure they know that I'm not going to steal it or anything. (Michael, Interview 1)

In these examples, the adolescents are being intentional in their cooperation and using what appears to be a passive problem-solving strategy to respond to assumed criminality by store clerks. By keeping their hands in view, they hope to reduce any chances of being seen as thieves

in the store, however, they do not directly confront the clerks. Additionally, the cooperation strategy is external with internal features. Specifically, the boys are engaging in observable behaviors by keeping their hands in plain sight in an effort to dispel any suspicion, but this external response is a result of internal processing of the situation. These adolescents' responses suggest that although they cannot control how they are perceived by the store clerk, they do have control over their actions in the store in an attempt to ensure that they are not further discriminated against or subjected to further scrutiny. Other external strategies reported by participants included seeking support (from parents, teachers, and peers) and verbal confrontation.

Support Seeking. Many adolescents cited seeking support as a main response to discrimination. Help-seeking is characterized as an active, external, problem-focused response style (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Freitas et al., 2017; Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012). Research has found that adolescence is a time of increased use of social support seeking (Seiffge-Krenke, 1995), due to increasing cognitive and social development that occurs during this developmental period (Compas et al., 2001). Specifically, as adolescents develop, they are more able to recognize that parents, teachers, and friends, can provide positive informational and emotional support (Compas et al., 2001; Seiffge-Krenke, 1995; Malecki & Demarauy, 2003). In the current study, there were varying reasons for who participants sought out for this support after experiencing discrimination.

Parents. Overall, many adolescents expressed comfort with having conversations with their parents about discrimination and also felt that talking to their parents about race or discrimination issues would be helpful. However, only three participants specifically mentioned

that they responded to experiencing or observing discrimination by talking to their parents. Adolescents who talked to their parents about these events also reported that it was beneficial:

> I talked to my mom... it actually went well. She was like 'Well you know that if you're having a problem with a teacher, the best thing to do is to listen and then just go about your day, because you don't want to let that response get in the way of the rest of your day.' Just like get that bad thing out of the way and then go about your day. (Taylor, Interview 1)

> She (mother) understands. I be like 'mom, why he (president) gotta be on TV? He should not be our president.' And she's like 'well bullies try to do all these bad things, but he's our president, so you gotta give respect.' It makes me feel very good. Like when it's in your head, you want to say it out. You just blurt it out. That's what I did. (Sophia, Interview 1; discussing discrimination experienced by her Latinx friends)

Although, seeking parental support was cited by participants as a positive response style, some adolescents also reported reasons for why did chose not to talk with their parents after certain discriminatory experiences. Michael reported that he rarely talked to his parents about current discriminatory experiences, unless the experience was severe, due to a previous reaction from his parents:

> I talked to my mom and my dad and they were like 'Why did he spit on you? What did the guy look like?' and all that. And I'm just like, 'I don't know, he spit in my eye.' They screamed at me, like 'Really? You should have done this, that.' I wish I had done something different now. (Michael, Interview 1)

Sophia and Taylor also indicated that they did not always tell their mother about these experiences due to their perceptions of how she would react:

> I didn't tell my mom because she do too much. She'd be like, 'who's this person, who's that?' So, no, I just keep it to myself. (Sophia, Interview 1)

> I didn't (talk to mother) because I didn't want her to make a big fuss about it. It would just be crazy. (Taylor, Interview 1)

In these scenarios, the parents' strong reaction (whether real or perceived) to learning about their children's discriminatory experiences led the adolescents to be more cautious about the incidents they chose to discuss with them. Michael's report is notable because it illustrates

the way in which parental response, even if justified, can reduce the likelihood of their children seeking support in the future. Given the importance of peers at this age, parental reactions that might involve coming to the school or making the youth report the incident, might be perceived by adolescents as embarrassing or humiliating, thus making them reluctant to inform and involve their parents in future incidents. It is important to note all of these adolescents further reported that they can and do talk to their parents about discriminatory experiences when they feel that it is important. They also reported that their parents often engage them in conversations around race and discrimination (which will be later discussed in the parental racial socialization results). On the other hand, Stuart reported that although he knows he can always talk to his parents about his own experiences with discrimination, he does not often do so because he usually ruminates on the experience for a long time. Noelle also noted that rumination influenced her use of support seeking from parents:

> I would probably spend so much time thinking about it, and then by the time if I did want to tell my parents, they'd be like 'Oh that was a whole week ago.' Yeah, I probably should tell my parents, but it's like nah it's over. (Stuart, Interview 1)

> I talked to my mom and dad about it (others questioning her race), but I kept it to myself a lot. They were like, 'well you know you're Black anyways, don't worry about it.' (Noelle, Interview 1)

Stuart's initial response of rumination after certain experiences, and Noelle's rumination in addition to her parents' response, both appeared to decrease their likelihood of responding with help-seeking behaviors.

Peers. Few participants mentioned seeking peer support during the individual interviews. However, research suggests that adolescence is a developmental period marked by increased gravitation towards peer relationships (Erikson, 1968; Benner & Graham, 2013). Additionally, peer support has been found to be a common positive response among racial and ethnic minority

youth in the face of discriminatory experiences (Ayres et al., 2009; Ayres & Leaper, 2012). During the focus groups, adolescents spoke more about their peer support-seeking strategies and reported that they were more likely to seek support from their Black friends than White peers: "Like, I'll tell my friends about it and they'll probably do something about it. Well, my Black friends, not the White ones because they don't get it" (Michael, Interview 1).

Girls in the focus group particularly spoke about their preference for same-race peer interactions and discussions about race:

> Taylor: I like being in that (same-race friends) grouping because some of us in the group, we can talk about our emotions.
>
> Naomi: Yeah, I'm definitely more open with Black kids than I am with White kids. Definitely more open. They have the same problems. They have the same things going on.
>
> Mia: We're much more open about it.

Adolescents in the study felt that their White peers would be less likely to provide support regarding discriminatory experiences, and thus they were less likely to respond by talking with these peers. Research suggests that peer support is most likely when adolescents have peers who may also have similar experiences or who can share in discussions regarding social group issues (Ayres & Leaper, 2012), so these findings are not all that surprising. However, this preference for same-race peer support is important due to the limitations that it might pose for adolescents attending majority White schools in which it might be more difficult to identify same-race peers for support. These environments can decrease the likelihood that Black adolescents are afforded the opportunity to respond with peer support-seeking which has been found to have positive outcomes (Bianchi et al, 2004; Brondolo et al., 2009; Clark, Benkert, & Flack, 2006; Tatum, 1997). Therefore, it is possible that few adolescents reported peer support as a response because they appeared to be selective about the peers that they talked to regarding

their discriminatory experiences. School environment may have played a role in the small number of participants who cited peer social support as a response style.

Teachers. In addition to parents and peers, a select few participants reported seeking support from teachers or other school administrators. These few participants stated that they felt that talking to a teacher would be beneficial, while others felt that they could only talk to a specific adult in the school about their discriminatory experiences. Taylor was one participant who reported talking to a teacher about her experience:

> Yes, I actually did feel like it was helpful because I'm a student there. I understand why teachers are there. They're there to talk about other kids' feelings, and also to teach them in school and see what's going on in their lives. (Taylor, Interview 1)

Taylor's positive experience with teacher support seeking made her more likely to continue to respond to discrimination in this way. However, other participants were reluctant to seek support from teachers for reasons such as lack of trust or inaction by the teacher:

> I just don't trust teachers in general. I would just not tell the teacher because their job is to help you learn and they just don't. (Christoph, Boys' Focus Group)

> Every time in class, people are making jokes and the teacher hears it and she or he does nothing. Nothing. I even go tell the teacher and they do nothing, which is really really upsetting. (Naomi, Interview 1)

Also, similar to participants' beliefs that their White peers would not understand their experiences, Michael stated that he preferred to seek support from same-race peers because White adults were less likely to understand his experience:

> Some adults probably wouldn't even understand. Like a White adult will try to help, but he doesn't even get me. I was having a bad day because everyone was messing with me, and then I was like 'Look, they're being racist.' But he took the White people's side, of course. He was like 'Well whoops, he didn't mean it'... cus he's never gotten treated that way. (Michael, Interview 2)

Finally, both Stuart and Michael reported that there was only one administrator at their respective schools that they felt comfortable talking to about their discriminatory experiences. Both of these administrators had similar race or gender characteristics as the two boys:

> There's one staff. He's Black too. He knows like how it is. When I tell him stuff, he understands everything. (Stuart, Boys' Focus Group)

> My principal. He's the type of guy where he understands because he's gone through it too. If you get in a fight because someone was talking trash about you and you laid the first hand, he'll understand why. So, you get a light punishment. But the vice principal, she's a girl, so she's like 'Well I'm gonna have to suspend you.' (Michael, Interview 1)

Once again, these responses highlight the nuanced ways in which adolescents make decisions regarding their responses to discrimination. Almost all participants reported that talking to an adult is a positive response (e.g., Noelle stated: *it's always helpful to talk to people about anything that happens*). However, they did not always use this response style due to perceptions of their teachers and other school administrators. It is clear that participants do not view all teachers and administrators as equally able to support them during these experiences, which is strategic given that some teachers were the perpetrators of discrimination. Although support seeking is an active, external, and problem-focused response method, certain factors create limitations for students to use this approach in school. These responses, in addition to responses about peer support, illustrate the importance of having representation in both the student and teacher body, so that students are more likely to have people they can go to for support since participant reports suggest that they are more likely to seek support from those who share same-race and/or same-gender identity characteristics.

During focus groups, male participants spoke extensively about why they did not think that seeking support from teachers was effective:

> They just won't help at all. And it's annoying. It's like they wouldn't help me at all. They just gonna backstab you. Or they talk behind your back. Once I was in the office and they

> thought I couldn't hear them, and they were talking about me. I got so mad! (Michael, Boys' Focus Group)

> Another reason why I wouldn't tell another teacher about what the teachers do is because all the teachers back each other up... I feel like, at the end of the day, they don't really care. (Stuart, Boys' Focus Group)

It appears that these adolescent Black boys do not trust that their teachers will be responsive to their needs and concerns. It also appears that they believe the power imbalance between teachers and students creates a barrier to seeking teacher support.

Verbal Confrontation. Finally, no participants reported using physical confrontation as a response, and only one participant reported the use of verbal confrontation. Michael described an incident in which he felt that the school secretary would unfairly make him sit in the corner of the office, while allowing other White students to sit in chairs closest to the window. He recalled verbally responding to her during one particular incident:

> She sends me into the corner where I can't see anyone. It's like trapped, cooped up, and everything. If I go automatically sit by the window, she's like 'can you please go sit over there?' and then like for the White person, she'll be like 'okay you can sit right there." One time I actually responded to it. I was like 'why do I have to move? It makes no sense for me to move and I'm already sitting down.' (Michael, Interview 1)

Michael reported having to work up the courage to respond to the secretary after multiple instances of experiencing this form of discrimination, which suggests that for adolescents at this age, verbal responses can be intimidating. Some researchers have examined the use of verbal or physical confrontation among adolescents, but these results support the notion that this type of response requires an appraisal of the situation and the adaptiveness of confrontation (Clark et al., 1999; Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Utsey et al., 2000). Specifically, verbal confrontation is likely to be more adaptive in situations where the victim feels a high sense of self-efficacy. In a recent qualitative study, Romero, Gonzalez, and Smith (2015) found that adolescents reported feeling reluctant to respond with verbal confrontation due to threat of physical harm or exacerbating the

situation. Similarly, when asked whether they would feel comfortable addressing their perpetrators, participants in this study appeared hesitant: “On certain occasions... Like sometimes you can’t tell if they actually are (being discriminatory). But then if it’s like 100% clear, then I would” (Stuart, Interview 2).

This response suggests that the ambiguity of covert discrimination further complicates adolescents’ use of verbal confrontation, despite the benefits of this active problem-focused strategy. At this age, it makes sense that youth are less likely to confront their perpetrators, especially if there is a power imbalance or if their understanding of what constitutes a discriminatory action is still developing. In Michael’s case, the repeated experience likely made him more confident that the secretary was discriminating against him. However, without the repetition or some other overt indication, participants might feel that verbal confrontation would worsen the situation. It is important to note that when asked about how they would want to respond to future discriminatory experiences, many adolescents noted that they would like to be more assertive or stand up for themselves, rather than just cooperate with the perpetrator. For example, both Noelle and Taylor stated that they would be more vocal in their responses, and Stuart noted that he would not continue to shop in a store that engaged in profiling:

> I will respond, not as mean, but like demanding. Like ‘This is what he said. This is what I’m going to stand up to. This is what I want. I need you to believe me.’ (Taylor, Interview 1)

> I would say more than just walk away. I think it will be like a way of getting more justice or something like that. Like saying, well I can speak up for myself. (Noelle, Interview 1)

> If that happened again, I don’t even know if I would want to shop there. I’d be like “I’m leaving. I’m out.’ (Stuart, Interview 1)

Although adolescents are not yet comfortable responding with verbal confrontation, it is

possible that as their social cognition and understanding of discrimination increases, their ability to challenge the perpetrators will also increase.

Strategies to Reduce Discrimination. While speaking about the ways they responded to discrimination, participants also often spoke about the actions that they engaged in to reduce the likelihood of experiencing discrimination. These strategies were noteworthy because, even when not responding to discrimination, adolescents were acting in ways that suggest that discriminatory experiences are part of their everyday lives in some way. These strategies were similar in that they often involved participants changing certain aspects of themselves in an effort to go unnoticed and not be a target. Some responses from participants included:

> Try to be the tough one around and be like 'you mess with me and see what happens' so I don't get treated unfairly. Or you have to be really silent. You have to either be all big and tough or super silent and don't get in the drama. (Michael, Interview 2)

> I don't think I did it on purpose, I just did it... but I just like changed my accent so I would fit in. (Naomi, Interview 2)

> I just sort of like try to be the good kid. I don't know. I just want the teacher to feel like... just because I'm Black, that don't mean anything. I'm still a good kid. Like, there's nothing different about me. So, I just be the good kid. I try to be the good kid in every class. I don't want no trouble or anything. (Stuart, Interview 1)

> When you're around teachers, you gotta act a different way. Like a different personality. I feel like (my personality) would make me more of a target... like they'll notice you more. They'll be like "oh he thinks he can stand out, let me look for something little that he do, so I can send him out.' (Stuart, Interview 2)

Although these are not direct responses to discriminatory experiences, adolescents' knowledge of how discrimination operates in their lives and the larger environment suggests that they have had to employ these strategies as protective measures. Although their awareness of the role of discrimination in their lives is important and admirable, it should be noted that these strategies also suggest a certain level of anticipation and vigilance in adolescents' everyday lives, which can be both cognitively and emotionally taxing.

DISCUSSION OF ADOLESCENT DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES

Adolescents in this study spoke candidly about their experiences with and responses to perceived discrimination. Many themes arose during these discussions related to forms, types, and sources of discriminatory experiences, as well as direct and vicarious discrimination. Adolescent participants also elaborated on their thoughts and feelings during their experiences, and their response strategies.

One major theme in the study was that the prevalence of discrimination among the sample varied depending on their definition and perceptions of discrimination. In the current study, 44% of the adolescents reported direct discriminatory experiences. When asked about how often they experienced discrimination, participants' responses ranged from "very rarely" to "every day,' suggesting that most adolescents did not perceive discrimination to be an everyday occurrence. These results indicate that the prevalence of experiences of discrimination among this sample was lower than those reported in previous research, which found that almost 90% of Black adolescents experienced everyday discrimination (Seaton et al., 2008). However, results from the study also suggest that adolescents in the study may have underreported their discriminatory experiences, because two adolescents reported events that could be perceived as discrimination although they did not label them as such. There are many possible explanations for why these adolescents may not have labeled these events as discriminatory. For example, according to the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST; Spencer, 1995), adolescents' development of social cognition can influence their understanding of discrimination. Thus, the labeling of an event as discriminatory can depend on an adolescents' understanding of discrimination, which can inform their expectations, as well as knowledge of

social structures, and stereotypes. These factors also influence whether the adolescent will engage with the discriminatory experience.

Participants' reports of discriminatory experiences (or lack thereof) appeared to be closely tied to their social cognition and awareness. For example, the adolescents who initially denied directly experiencing discrimination, but later described experiences that could be considered discrimination, appeared to have a limited understanding of discrimination as overt actions and behaviors. This narrow view of discrimination may have resulted in overlooking covert forms of discrimination. This limited awareness may in turn be associated with the ways that youth are taught about racism, prejudice, and discrimination in schools, which tends to highlight historical examples of discrimination that were overt, such as lynching, segregated schools, separate bathrooms/fountains, etc. It is possible that youth are reluctant to view covert experiences as discriminatory because they do not match the features highlighted in examples discussed in school. Furthermore, the curriculum and instruction may portray discrimination as a phenomenon of a past era; something experienced by previous generations. Thus, as Naomi noted, youth are unlikely to view covert situations as discriminatory because they do not align with the overt examples, such as segregation, that they have been shown in school. Furthermore, the idea that we live in a "postracial" era, is one that has been voiced by segments of the population, notably since the election of a Black president. Kiuchi and colleagues (Kiuchi, 2016) refer to this as "the myth of postracial society," but such views of a colorblind world may also permeate schools through curricula, instructional practices, educator values, and interpersonal interactions (Carter Andrews & Truitt, 2013).

Although adolescents may have limited awareness of discrimination during this developmental period, PVEST suggests that changes in social cognition are likely to lead to

increased awareness of the nuances of discriminatory experiences (Spencer, 1995). The ways that adolescents described their experiences, whether they directly labeled them or not, highlights the need for and importance of a qualitative exploration to fully capture these experiences. It is possible that some adolescents in the study would not endorse any discriminatory experiences if asked through quantitative means. Overall, findings show that adolescents are able to report recent examples of direct discrimination, but they may underreport discriminatory experiences if their emerging ideas of discrimination are largely focused on overt types.

The majority of reported discriminatory experiences were covert, which is aligned with previous research that has found this type of discrimination experience to be increasingly common, especially among African American adolescents (Hughes et al., 2016). Covert forms of discrimination are often more subtle and nuanced. Adolescents reported experiencing harsh or differential discipline and assumed criminality, which is consistent with research that has found that Black and Latino adolescents often report high frequencies of harsh discipline (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003; Ruck & Wortley, 2002), and being followed in stores (Fisher et al., 2000; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Seaton et al., 2008). Researchers have also found that Black children, especially boys, are perceived as older and less innocent than their White counterparts starting around age ten (Goff et al., 2014). Sellers et al. (2006) found that being perceived as a threat or being the victim of false accusations were frequently reported forms of discrimination by Black adolescents. Store personnel being more vigilant in following, monitoring, and being less welcoming of the Black youth in the study, compared to White customers, exemplifies a form of racial profiling, and highlights inequalities in the social environment. Findings also suggest that as Black children develop, they are more likely to be assumed guilty by adults,

treated unfairly, and subjected to greater scrutiny and monitoring than their White peers (Goff et al., 2014; Sellers et al., 2006).

Although only one adolescent in the study reported experiencing physical discrimination, this was an important finding to highlight because it suggests that overt forms of discrimination are still a possible experience for adolescents in this era. In a recent study of peer victimization Wang, Iannotti, Luk, and Nansel (2010) found that adolescents who experienced physical forms of victimization in addition to other forms were more likely to report negative consequences than those who only reported one form of victimization. This finding suggests that experiencing physical harm can be more detrimental than any other form of discrimination, and also that there is a compounding effect of experiencing more than one form of discrimination. Although their study did not focus directly on discrimination, it highlights the continued need to be aware of and to assess the prevalence of overt and physical forms of discrimination among adolescents.

Peers, teachers, and community adults were the sources of discrimination identified by adolescents in the study. Because forms of discrimination and sources tend to be associated, certain forms of discrimination were found to be perpetrated by specific sources. For example, discrimination in the form of negative comments on appearance and physical victimization were more likely to come from peers, while experiences of harsh/differential treatment, racial spotlighting, and assumptions of criminality came from teachers in school or community adults. These findings are in line with previous research showing that some forms of discrimination can only be enacted by adults (Byrd & Carter Andrews, 2016).

Adolescents differed in their perceptions of the main source of discrimination, but even youth who did not report direct discriminatory experiences were able to discuss their perceptions of perpetrators based on observations of the experiences of others. Some felt that peers were

more likely to enact discrimination because of minimal consequences for doing so, while others felt that teachers were more likely to perpetrate discrimination due to the power dynamics inherent in teacher-student relationships. These responses speak to the importance of considering the source of discrimination because it is clear that adolescents are careful observers of their environments and are able to identify ways that certain environmental factors can promote or reduce the presence of discrimination. Although research suggests that Black adolescents are more likely to experience discrimination from adults (Fisher et al., 2000; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004), peer discrimination can also be quite prevalent. Additionally, it is important to consider both teachers and peers as sources of discrimination because studies have shown differential outcomes related to the source, such as decreased feelings of belongingness and school engagement with teacher discrimination, and lowered self-esteem and other negative psychological consequences with peer discrimination (Benner & Graham, 2013; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006).

The differing views noted by adolescents in the study regarding the main source of discrimination is important because it suggests that settings and environments can influence who is able to perpetrate discrimination. For example, one participant's description of teacher discrimination shows a deeper understanding of how power influences who can enact discrimination without consequences. Meanwhile, another participant's description of students being allowed to engage in discriminatory actions towards classmates with impunity creates an environment that is ripe for peer discrimination. This suggests that even when teachers and other school personnel are not the perpetrators of discrimination, they can be contributors by allowing peers to discriminate against one another. Ultimately, these responses emphasize that the

perpetrators of discrimination are those who hold (or are afforded) the most power in any given environment.

The frequency and patterns of reported discrimination experiences appeared to be variable among youth, which suggests that there may be factors that influence the likelihood that an individual might experience discrimination. For example, gender appeared to play a role in these experiences, especially in terms of the form of discrimination that was experienced. Specifically, girls reported experiencing discrimination based on appearance more than boys, but boys reported greater experiences of assumed criminality. These findings are aligned with a mixed-methods study by Seaton & Tyson (2019) which found that reports of negative comments related to hair and appearance were more likely to be reported by girls. Additionally, adolescents in that study felt that Black boys were more likely to be perceived as threatening or to have a harder time with discrimination than Black girls (Seaton & Tyson, 2019), thus highlighting the intersectional nature of race and gender in discriminatory experiences.

Without directly naming it, adolescent participants alluded to experiencing discrimination in different forms and at different rates that implicated their gender as influential in these experiences. Scholars have posited that an intersectional approach to understanding discrimination suggests that Black boys and Black girls are likely to experience discrimination in different ways. However, this is not to say that one experience should be considered better or worse than the other (Anderson & Collins, 2013). For example, although boys are likely to experience more discrimination overall, it is also important to understand and validate the experience of discrimination associated with appearance for girls. An intersectional approach recognizes that neither of these findings supersedes the other and that the discriminatory experiences of both groups are worth examining. Once again, as adolescents' awareness of the

subtleties of racial discrimination continues to develop, they are also likely to begin incorporating other identities into their understanding of these experiences.

Another factor that was explored as a possible influence on frequency of discriminatory experiences was school composition. This did not appear to be a strong factor in the current study, as adolescent' reports of discriminatory experiences varied within schools. For example, two adolescents who attended the same school reported different rates of discrimination; one reported that it often occurred, while the other reported no discrimination. These results suggest that classroom dynamics and functioning may provide more insight into whether and how youth experience discrimination in schools. Some participants' descriptions of their school-based discriminatory experiences appeared to be due to classroom dynamics, such as being the only or one of a few Black students in the class. However, researchers have found that diverse or integrated schools or classrooms are still susceptible to discriminatory behavior due to the human tendency for social categorization (Rowley et al., 2008; Dovidio et al., 2010). In other words, even in diverse classrooms, students may use race and ethnicity to differentiate between peer groups, which can further perpetuate discrimination. This data, in conjunction with adolescents' reports of observing peers engaging in discriminatory behavior within the classroom (with limited or no consequences from teachers), also suggests that classroom functioning, rather than just school or classroom composition, is an important factor for determining whether and how youth experience discrimination. For example, in focus groups, adolescent participants noted observing peers engaging in discriminatory behaviors in their classrooms with impunity or minimal consequences. This suggests that the way the classroom environment functions, specifically related to whether and how teachers address discrimination when it occurs, may increase opportunities that youth will experience discrimination, regardless of their overall

school demographics or any school-wide anti-discrimination policies. More research is needed to qualitatively understand the role of classrooms in perpetuating discrimination.

Despite few adolescents reporting direct discriminatory experiences, all study participants were able to articulate vicarious incidents of discrimination in the media, with family members, and with peers. There could be many explanations for this finding. First, it is possible that adolescents are more aware of vicarious discriminatory experiences due to their overt and observable nature. Second, it is also possible that the ability to recognize discrimination in others develops before the ability to recognize discrimination in oneself. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that individuals acquire knowledge through observation of others in social contexts. Therefore, it is likely that adolescents develop their understanding and recognition of discrimination by observing others' discriminatory experiences. However, this developmental approach might also create a template in which the "default" for discrimination is overt, thus making it more difficult to recognize covert types of discrimination that are more likely to occur.

The finding that all youth in the study were able to identify instances of vicarious discrimination suggests that one does not necessarily need to experience direct discrimination in order to be affected by it. These adolescents' descriptions of their observations, thoughts, and feelings about vicarious discrimination were aligned with previous research that has found that the burden of discrimination affects youth both directly and indirectly (Herda, 2015). Additionally, these findings show that even when adolescents do not experience direct discrimination, their social networks are likely to include peers who are susceptible to discrimination, which increases their odds of witnessing it. Similar to direct experiences, adolescents reported that the main sources of vicarious discrimination were peers and teachers.

However, adolescents' reports of the forms of discrimination included more examples, such as name-calling and social exclusion. An interesting finding was youths' reports of Black students discriminating against African (presumably immigrant) students. These findings suggest that discrimination can be enacted by peers who share similar characteristics. Research on whether certain ethnic groups experience greater discrimination has been mixed. For example, Pachter, Caldwell, Jackson, & Bernstein (2018) found similar rates of discrimination between African American and Afro-Caribbean youth, while Plenty & Jonsson (2017) found that students with recent immigration status experienced greater rejection from peers. These findings point to the need to recognize intersectional identities that include not only gender and race, but also ethnicity, nationality, and immigration/acculturation status when examining discrimination.

Adolescents in the study reported a rich set of thoughts and feelings about their discrimination experiences. Some of these feelings were expected, such as sadness and anger. In fact, researchers have found anger to be the most frequently reported emotion after a discriminatory experience (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003). In the current study, adolescents' descriptions of their feelings of anger were also connected to thoughts such as "if White people can do it, why can't I?" and "why should I even have to worry about this?" These questions appear concerned with social justice and suggest a close link between thoughts and emotions when experiencing discrimination. These reactions also indicate that adolescents are further taxed with trying to make sense of their discriminatory experiences. In the face of unfair treatment, anger is likely to be a common emotional response, but fewer experiences with discrimination and adolescents' emerging cognition regarding social structures might lead them to ask these types of questions to try to make sense of their experiences and emotions.

Another noteworthy feeling noted by adolescents was confusion or uncertainty about the discriminatory event. Specifically, adolescents reported feeling unsure that what they experienced was truly discrimination due to the covert nature of the event. This feeling is aligned with Sellers et al.'s (2006) findings that more cognitive effort is required to make sense of covert discriminatory events, which are harder to differentiate and can be more stressful for adolescents. In addition to covert forms of discrimination leading to feelings of uncertainty, it is possible that young adolescents are more likely to have these feelings due to having fewer instances of discrimination for comparison, as well as the effect of their developing cognition for processing these events and using protective responses. Overall, findings from the current study suggest that adolescents' thoughts and feelings about discriminatory events reflect how they are trying to make sense of these (often) new experiences.

Adolescents in the study reported that their main response strategies were silence and seeking support from parents. Silence was sometimes used to prevent further harsh discipline from teachers. Although Phinney and Chavira's (1995) categories for discrimination responses suggests that silence is a passive approach, this conceptualization would not appropriately capture the adaptive nature of silence as a response in this particular situation. For participants in the study, silence was an effective strategy because it served as a form of self-protection from further discipline from teachers due to the power differential. Additionally, cooperation was another seemingly passive response which youth reported as effective and adaptive for them because it reduced the likelihood of further discrimination or scrutiny. These findings suggest that passive strategies may be developmentally appropriate and adaptive for adolescents who may be experiencing their first exposures to discrimination. However, although these responses

may be adaptive now, research suggests that silence as a response may become maladaptive if combined with rumination or feelings of lowered self-efficacy (Sanders Thompson, 2006).

These findings regarding use of “passive” strategies also suggest a tension between the theoretical frameworks used in this study. On the one hand, PVEST would interpret silence and cooperation as passive and ineffective strategies. On the other hand, CRT’s tenet of voice/counter-narrative provides an alternative conceptualization that highlights the importance of understanding these responses *in the context* of the adolescents’ lives and sense-making. Giving these adolescents the opportunity to speak about their own experiences revealed a different meaning than was expected; rather than being “passive” responses, these strategies were deliberate and adaptive responses that diluted the effects of perceived discrimination. These adolescents provide counternarratives of the value and effectiveness of silence and cooperation, that both challenge and enrich the ways that researchers have traditionally conceptualized strategies that do not directly respond to the perpetrator. Here, these youths’ stories highlight the critical idea, that there are many factors to consider when responding to a discriminatory situation, such as age, power differential, and future consequences. The adaptive and strategic nature of this response type would be lost if these adolescents simply reported their responses on a questionnaire. Interpreting silence and cooperation strategies as “passive” would neglect vital information about the meaning and motivation of the individual’s actions. It risks oversimplifying their experiences by failing to recognize the many reasons for why these strategies are effective for youth during this developmental period.

Adolescents’ support seeking from parents suggests that they are able to recognize the importance and benefits of this active and external strategy (Freitas et al., 2017). However, there may be barriers that preclude them from doing so, such as presumed parent response or other

internal characteristics. It is also likely that adolescents may first respond using internal strategies, such as silence or rumination, which then reduces their likelihood of seeking parent support, especially if time has passed since the incident. This suggests that youth may try to make sense of discriminatory experiences on their own before seeking parental support, if they determine that the event was discriminatory and requires parent intervention. Adolescents in the study, especially boys, were much more reluctant to seek support from teachers. Previous research has found that Black boys are more likely to be treated unfairly in school compared to Black girls (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2014; Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008). Additionally, Griffin et al. (2017) examined gender differences related to Black high schoolers' attitudes about racial fairness and school engagement and found that specifically among boys, greater perception of fairness was related to increased behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in school. Considering that these youth reported teachers to be a major source of discrimination, it is not as surprising that they found it difficult to talk to teachers about their experiences. This finding suggests that trust is a necessary component when using support seeking strategies, and it appears that Black youth, especially boys, do not have much trust in their teachers to support them in managing and understanding their discriminatory experiences.

In addition to using strategies to respond to discriminatory experiences, adolescents in the study also reported using preventive strategies to try to decrease the chances of experiencing future discrimination. The use of these strategies suggests that part of developing an understanding and awareness of discrimination is also developing an understanding of what could make one a target. Even if they do not directly experience discrimination, vicarious observations and perhaps discussions with parents, might increase adolescents' awareness of

“what not to do” to experience discrimination themselves. However, it is possible that these strategies may not be as effective as adolescents appeared to think they were. Adolescents’ actions to decrease discrimination is an area needing further exploration because it could have many implications for their well-being and academic achievement. For example, strategies such as being quiet or “trying to fly under the radar” could reduce a student’s likelihood of asking questions in class to increase their understanding of coursework. Similarly, one adolescent’s remarks that there are only two options to decrease the likelihood of experiencing discrimination (“be the tough one or be silent”), as well as another’s reluctance to be their true self in the classroom could potentially lead to negative outcomes related to overall well-being.

Regardless of whether they had experienced discrimination directly, and despite their efforts to decrease future discriminatory experiences, all adolescent participants reported an awareness of the increased likelihood of experiencing discrimination in the future. It appeared that they all viewed discrimination and unfair treatment as a normative part of their development, which suggests that part of being a Black adolescent in today’s society is being able to acknowledge and accept this reality, while also maintaining a positive sense of self and hopefulness about the future (García Coll et al., 1996). All participants were hopeful about their ability to respond to future discrimination, although one participant reported a hope that discriminatory experiences would not revert back to overt forms from the Civil Rights era. However, it is important to note that this study is situated in a socio-political climate that has seen a rise in overt forms of racism, prejudice, discrimination, and hate crimes (Levin & Reitzel, 2018). This is a climate in which young children and adolescents are continuously exposed to and witness state-sanctioned violence against Black bodies, often leading to the deaths of those who look just like them, especially Black boys and men. In a way, an argument could be made

that the current climate bears a resemblance to pre-Civil Rights era forms of discrimination. This is a realization that adolescents may not have yet arrived at, and that their parents will play a major role in helping them understand.

CHAPTER 5:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION PART II: PARENTAL RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

Parents described many ways that they prepare their children to understand and navigate discriminatory experiences. The seven parent participants varied in their racial socialization practices, as well as their own personal experiences that contributed to these practices. This section discusses parents' awareness of their children's discriminatory experiences, and how they came to be aware of these experiences. It also discusses the types of messages that they send to their children, and parents' goals during racial socialization. Furthermore, it addresses actions that parents take in an effort to reduce their children's discrimination experiences.

Parent Perspectives on Children's Discriminatory Experiences

When parents discussed their children's discriminatory experiences, they sometimes recalled incidents that their children had previously reported during individual interviews. For example, Kimberly (Michael's mother) reported the incident when he had been spat on, and Mary and Robin (Stuart's and Noelle's mothers, respectively) recalled their children being followed in stores. However, differences emerged in adolescents' descriptions of their discriminatory experiences, and those recalled by their parents. Most notably, some parents reported incidents of discrimination experienced by their children, that the adolescents did not report during individual or group interviews. For example, although Naomi and Jerry reported that they had not been directly discriminated against, both of their parents recalled incidents of name-calling and derogatory remarks directed at their children:

> There was a kid, [who] said something racial about Jerry. He called him something, and I can't remember what it is now. But it was not a positive thing. And Jerry was unhappy about it. And I think the parent found out because, Christmas time, he brought us a gift or something like that, as if to apologize. (Judy)

> Some of the things that came across were situations where you'll get incidents of some obnoxious kids who make lewd jokes. There's this kid who apparently will pass by and say "Oh, I have Ebola" right next to them when they are passing, because they are from Africa. (Wilson)

Additionally, Mia was another adolescent who reported that she had never experienced discrimination, but her mother recalled incidents in which she felt that Mia had been excluded by peers because of her race:

> Different parents at her [previous] school where they have cliques, and they don't really involve us or my daughter. It's never really bothered me, and it's never really shown to bother her. I don't think she's ever seen it as being excluded from things, whereas for me, I can clearly see it for what it is. I don't think Mia has actually noticed it. (Tina)

There are many explanations for why parents recalled incidents that their children did not report. First, it is possible that the adolescents just simply did not want to discuss these experiences, or that they had forgotten about them. Second, it is also likely that they were not aware that their experiences could be described as discrimination. As noted earlier, both Naomi and Jerry appeared to conceptualize discrimination as the types of overt events that occurred during the Civil Rights movement, and thus may have not considered their experiences as discriminatory. Additionally, although both experiences reported by their parents were overt (name-calling and derogatory remarks about nationality), it is possible that both adolescents considered their experiences as just their peers being "mean" or simply making fun of them. Finally, in Mia's case, her mother explained that she may not have recognized her experience as discrimination or been aware that she was being excluded by others. These explanations are aligned with previously stated findings regarding how young adolescents' understanding and awareness of discrimination influences their likelihood of labeling an event as discriminatory.

Some parents of adolescents who did report their own discriminatory experiences also recalled incidents that their children had not discussed. For example, Robin (Noelle's mother)

recalled an additional incident in which Noelle and her brother had both been followed in a store, and Eleanor (Taylor, Sophia, and Christoph's mother) reported a time when all of her children were denied entry to an entertainment center due to assumed criminality:

> She (Noelle) hasn't mentioned a lot of it... but I know one time we went to the gas station and I gave them money. They were old enough to be able to go into the story and they had their money... they run in for a little bit, and they came out. They didn't have anything, and they just got in the car. I said, 'you all didn't get anything?' She's like 'No, they thought we were going to steal something, so we just left.' She said, 'they were watching us and everything.' (Robin)

> We went to (entertainment center) and they assumed that the kids didn't have the money to play on the machines. I gave them the money to go in and get the tokens. I took them on a Tuesday, and everything is half price on Tuesday. I gave them [$50] to play two games. They came out and said 'he (attendant) said we don't have enough money.' So, I go in there and then he (attendant) changed it and said, 'oh there has to be an adult present.' I said, 'that's what you should have said instead of saying they didn't have enough money.' (Eleanor)

These examples illustrate how adolescents experience discrimination in their daily lives but may not internalize these experiences. Noelle may not have recalled the experience that her mother presented because it was an older memory, or because she has since experienced more incidents of being followed in stores and an earlier experience may not be as salient. Additionally, it is likely that Sophia, Taylor, and Christoph did not recognize their experience as discrimination because the attendant provided a different explanation for denying them entry once their mother arrived. In both situations, it was clear that parents' observation of their children experiencing discrimination was sometimes more salient for them than it was for their children.

An additional theme that arose from parents discussing their children's discriminatory experiences is parents recalling experiences of their children who were not participants in the study. This is important to note because it highlights how experiences of discrimination can permeate across the entire family and affect both individuals as well as families. In talking about

one child's experiences, parents appeared to also recall and include the experiences of their other children. For example, Mary stated that she believes that all of her children experience discrimination frequently through differential treatment and name-calling. Additionally, Tina mentioned that although her daughter has not experienced much individual discrimination, her son has had incidents of derogatory remarks from peers, and their family collectively co-experienced discrimination at a recent school orientation.

> You'll see sometimes in stores people following the kids around or following you around. Being overcharged for things, like at the nail shop. I have been going to that nail shop for years, and I would take my daughter. But she went by herself and they didn't realize it was my daughter, so they overcharged her $25. And so, when I went in there, they were like 'oh we're sorry, we didn't know that was your daughter.' It shouldn't matter. (Mary)

> In particular, around the elections in 2016, he (son) came to me and said there was a kid that came to him and said something like when Trump becomes president, they're going to send you back to where you came from. (Tina)

> We go to orientation and we're waiting to meet some of her (Mia's) teachers. We wait our turn and introduce ourselves... and first thing out of his mouth is "so are you school of choice?" First of all, why does it matter if we are school of choice anyway? And no, we bought this house here. Do you think that we can't afford a home in this area? (Tina; school of choice is a program in which students can be granted permission to attend a school outside of their district).

Parents' descriptions of their children's experiences with discrimination appear to be slightly different from the adolescents' reported experiences, however, the main ideas are similar. Specifically, differences were noted in the forms of discrimination. Parents, more than their children, recalled experiences of name-calling and social exclusion. These parent reports further acknowledge that young adolescents do experience discrimination, although at this developmental period, it is likely that they experience more discrimination than they self-report. As these adolescents develop into adults, they may look back on some of these experiences and recognize that they were discriminatory, but for now, it appears that parents observe and report more experiences of adolescent discrimination than their children.

Parents' observations were one way in which they came to be aware of their children's discriminatory experiences. It is likely that these particular parents are simply more vigilant and attuned to their children's experiences. It is also likely that these parents' involvement in their children's lives increased their opportunities to be aware of their experiences. In addition to observations and co-experiences of discrimination, parents noted that they often heard about discriminatory experiences directly from their children. However, parents felt that they often had to ask their children questions to elicit their experiences:

> A lot of the stories, they'll (Naomi and Jerry) keep to themselves until we ask. We used to have a little conversation from time to time. How are things? How was your experience? What are the good things you saw? We still do have conversations about that. (Wilson)

> They may say this weird thing happened, like, 'me and Susie got in an argument and the teacher told me to sit down and shut up and didn't say nothing to Susie.' So, yeah [I am] becoming more aware of it because it is a daily conversation in our house. (Eleanor)

Parents also often felt that they were not fully knowledgeable about all of their children's experiences with discrimination. Specifically, sometimes when parents asked their children about their experiences, they found that their children described events without much realization that they were discriminatory, thus suggesting that the adolescents lack the awareness and understanding of discrimination resulting in experiencing more discrimination than they are reporting:

> Sometimes we're just having a general conversation and I'm like 'what did you say?' It didn't even click to them that's not okay. Like one of them had a teacher tell them to shut their cotton-picking mouths. I'm like, 'wait, what teacher?!' And they're like 'what?' A lot of things, they're not necessarily aware of. (Mary)

> I just don't know how much of it they actually come to me with. Even that spitting incident, I don't think he (Michael) knew enough about our past to say 'hey, wait a minute, you weren't supposed to spit on me!' (Kimberly)

Again, these results suggest that adolescents' understanding and awareness of discrimination influences their conceptualization of daily events and situations in their lives. Based on parent report, it appears that these adolescents are at an age where they may recognize some actions as discriminatory, but they may also need some support from parents to fully understand their experiences. Additionally, parents' engagement in their children's lives helps them become more aware of their children's experiences so that they can provide that support.

Types of Racial Socialization

One way in which parents engaged in racial socialization practices with their children was through the conversations they initiated about discriminatory experiences. Parents noted multiple types of messages they communicated to their children in an effort to help them understand and navigate experiences of discrimination. Parents described using three of the four main types of racial socialization strategies identified by Nasir (2012). However, the degree to which they used each strategy and the emphasis on certain strategies differed. No parents identified use of egalitarianism or colorblindness as a strategy. Parental racial socialization messages described in this section include those used among all children in the families, as parents often gave examples of their socialization strategies with children not included in the study. Specific gender differences in socialization practices are reported later.

Cultural Socialization/Racial Pride. Cultural Socialization (or Racial Pride) messages were those used to convey positive messages about race or culture. Four parents noted using this strategy as a way of communicating to their children that they should be proud of being Black, and to recognize the gains that Black people have made in society. For example, Robin stated that she uses cultural socialization to convey the importance of education to her children, and Kimberly helps her children understand the contributions of Black people:

> You know you are a Black person, and you do have culture... And yes, your family may come from poor or not educated [backgrounds], but they survived this. They survived that. You don't have an excuse now. It's like slavery. I said, these people (slaves), it was against the law for them to learn to read, so what's your excuse? (Robin)

> I've told them the whole thing about how we've created a lot of things in culture that's just not really acknowledged. (Kimberly)

In addition, Judy and Wilson noted that, as Africans, they aim to instill a sense of both racial and cultural pride in their children, so that Naomi and Jerry are able to share their culture with others:

> I try to instill in them self-confidence, and their Blackness is to be proud of, and that they are great kids. (Judy)

> In particular because people don't know better, and people are not aware. And where they can in the classroom... to give presentations on Africa or share stories about Africa. About the Africa that they know. (Wilson)

Preparation for Bias. All parents noted that they explicitly convey preparation for bias messages to their children. Sometimes, these messages were intertwined with messages about cultural pride. For example, Robin reported that she talks with her children about cultural pride so that they can be prepared for bias from others who are not receptive to their Blackness:

> I don't want them saying they are colorless and stuff. No, they have a heritage. They can be proud of their heritage just like anybody else. But you also need to be aware that everybody doesn't respect your heritage or your skin color. (Robin)

Similarly, Tina described that she engages in conversations with her children about their skin color and how they might be perceived by others, while also trying to help them dispel any negative comments that they might encounter:

> There might be people who might not like you just because of your skin color. Or they might be people who make assumptions about you, about that maybe you're not as smart or whatnot. So, I've always tried to, I don't want to say drill that into them, but I've tried to talk to them about that and be like 'is that true?' And they're like 'well no, that's not true.' So, they kind of go out in their own little invisible shield or suit of armor at the same time. (Tina)

Some parents reported being very specific about the preparation for bias messages they send to their children that went beyond being treated unfairly based on skin color. These preparation for bias messages focused around safety and conveyed specific behaviors or actions that their children can and cannot engage in due to increased likelihood of being misperceived by others. For example, Robin recalled having a conversation with her son about the importance of being aware of his surroundings, and Mary communicated to her children that they need to be mindful of their clothing choices and travel in groups:

> When he was at the park, he was the last one there and he was by himself. Just the image of what if somebody calls the police to say, 'oh what is he doing at the park?'... They could come up and say he's doing something bad or what have you. You need to be aware of your surroundings, because people are not going to look at you the way they look at your friends. We do tell them that everybody's not gonna look at you the same. (Robin)

> I have to tell him, don't wear hoodies. Don't walk around after six o'clock. If you're out in the neighborhood, be with your friends. Don't be by yourself. Because [I'll] see a post on there (neighborhood Facebook group), 'oh my garage was just broken into by a little Black kid.' And people will be like, 'well I have a bat if they come over this way.' It's like they're waiting for an opportunity to have justification for acting out. (Mary)

The messages conveyed by both of these mothers are important because they reference prominent situations in which Black children have been killed in recent years. Specifically, Robin's story references the killing of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old Black boy who was killed by police officers in a park, following a 911 call from a neighbor who reported that Tamir had a gun. Additionally, Mary's instruction to her children about not wearing hoodies or walking at night is reflective of the killing of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old Black boy who was killed while walking in his neighborhood (Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Researchers have studied parental racial socialization responses to high-profile killings of Black boys and men. Findings were very similar to Robin and Mary's responses, and showed that parents often use these situations to emphasize messages of safety to their children, as well as behavioral guidelines,

such as what to wear and the importance of walking in groups (Thomas & Blackmon, 2015; Threlfall, 2018). Parents' preparation for bias messages were also reported by Kimberly, who noted talking to her children about the realization that they are likely to face racial bias and discrimination, and that they must be more careful than their peers:

> [I tell them]... it's hard because it seems so unfair, because it's like we got to be perfect. But others don't have to be perfect and still be successful or be able to live their lives and not have the same issues. And that's tough... you want to just be yourself, be free, but you can't. You got to make sure you watch and obey the rules. We gotta follow the rules. (Kimberly)

Promotion of Mistrust. Most parents also spoke about conveying promotion of mistrust messages to their children, in order to help them understand the reality of both individual and institutional racism and discrimination. Parents were clear that these messages were not intended to promote a divide between Black and White people, but rather to illustrate to their children that they must be careful in their interactions with peers and others, because they cannot always trust that they will be treated fairly. For example, Tina recalled having conversations with her son about police interactions:

> My son is getting older [and] one thing that has caused me a lot of anxiety is Trayvon Martin and all the other unarmed Back men who have been killed at the hands of police officers. Having to talk to my son and kind of losing his innocence in a way... most little boys are saying, yeah, I want to be a police officer when I grow up and they're here to protect you. And I'm saying to him, look not all these officers are good guys. (Tina)

Kimberly reported that she similarly communicates messages to her son to be careful around his friends because he may receive harsher consequences for the same actions simply by being in close proximity:

> I told him, watch your friends. Because if they steal, even though it was their idea, even though they stole and you may have just been standing there, you are gonna get more of a punishment. A greater punishment than they would get [even if] it was their idea. (Kimberly)

Tina's illustration of her son losing some of his "innocence" is poignant, because promotion of mistrust messages like hers may convey to Black children that perhaps the world is not as safe as their white peers may experience it, and that certain people in society will not always protect them. In addition, these messages could create increased awareness of White privilege and the stratification of racial groups in society.

Socialization for Responding to Discrimination. In addition to discussing how they prepare their children for discriminatory experiences, parents were also asked to be specific about the ways in which they socialize their children to respond to discrimination. Three parents (Robin, Judy, and Wilson) noted that they often talk to their children about how to respond to discrimination:

> We have talked to them, it's like you don't have to get in arguments with people. If you need to, file a report or a complaint... as they go to college, they're going to have to be able to know how to deal with situations. Not necessarily argumentative or combative, because the first thing people going to do is call the police on them... you don't make them want you or try to force yourself on someone. Especially in stores and spending your money; you take your money elsewhere. You demand your respect. (Robin)

> We often tell them. One case where (Naomi) had a girl calling her something... she didn't say anything. I said no, next time that happens, you tell this girl that you are not this and be firm about what it is. Don't fight anybody, but you tell them this is not acceptable and I'm not going to put up with it... It something is clear and overt, you let somebody know that this is not how I expect to be treated. (Judy)

> [I tell them] you have to stand up for yourself and tell the person 'I'm not who you think I am. Your perception of you who think I am is wrong. This is who I am, so if you want to interact with me again, just understand.' It's simple, and then you get out of the way and don't even spend any time with the person. You don't have to interact with them. (Wilson)

Parents who included ways to respond in their socialization practices appeared to do so because they wanted their children to use active response strategies (e.g., confronting the perpetrator or filing a complaint). Despite parents' descriptions of socializing their children engage in active responses, most adolescents used silence and cooperation strategies used in the

study. This finding suggests that there are differences between parents' socialization and adolescents' responses in the face of discrimination. Four parents recognized that, although they have conversations with their children about the discrimination they might experience, they do not necessarily tell them how to respond if and when they do experience it:

> I don't think I've ever given them something to say. I think if it's in school, I would say I tell them to tell the teacher or adult or something. I realized that maybe that's something I haven't done; tell them what to do, what to say in response. I think I've always just made sure that I told them this is what can happen, and it's not your fault... I think it's more about instilling confidence versus this is what you're going to do if it happens. (Tina)

> That's something I need to think about more. As far as how much do I tell him what he needs to do? I don't know. Maybe I need to tell him more. I just feel like maybe I'm not telling him enough. (Kimberly)

> Not necessarily because I do want them to make their own decision. I try to have them avoid doing certain things to prevent the situations if possible, but knowing that you can't avoid everything... But I would want them to speak up and say something right then. (Mary)

Tina and Mary's comments about wanting their children to seek support from a teacher or trusted adult or to respond to the perpetrator are in contrast with the adolescents' reported low levels of seeking teacher support and verbal confrontation. This distinction between types of parental racial socialization (e.g., cultural socialization, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust) and socialization for *responding* is important to note because it has implications for how youth might respond once they experience the discrimination that their parents have warned them about. For example, Kimberly's comment that perhaps she needs to talk to Michael more about how to respond to discrimination is reflected in his feelings and response to being spit on at school. Michael reported that he felt scared and did not know what to do because his parents had never "taught him how" to react if someone spit on him. It is noteworthy that physical incidents of discrimination were rare among this sample, and thus parents cannot necessarily prepare their children for all the types of discrimination they might encounter. However, this

connection between parent practices and child experiences illustrates the dynamic relationship of racial socialization and responses to discrimination. Parents who realized that they may not have provided concrete strategies for responding to discrimination discussed their reasons for not yet having these conversations:

> It's hard because on one hand, I do not want them to be a floor mat and just kind of take it. But I'm also very concerned with the state of the world too and people are crazy. I don't want them to put themselves in a position where they're going to get slammed on the ground by a security person, or they speak back because of their smart mouth and [the other person] feels threatened. (Tina)

> Them being 12 and 13, I'm the one that needs to be standing their ground. Now, when they get to be 16 to 17, and they go to the store, then I think they would have enough skills to be able to stand their own ground. (Eleanor)

These parents' reasons for not necessarily having conversations with their children about how to respond to discrimination show the nuances of socialization. Specifically, they highlight the need to distinguish the appropriateness of certain responses based on the child's age and personality characteristics. Tina's reason considers how her children's responses might be perceived by others, and she notes the difficulty in preparing young adolescents to understand the appropriateness of response strategies in different situations. Eleanor's reason appears to be based on her children's ages and the hope that they will learn through observing her responses to discrimination. Overall, both parent responses show that racial socialization for responding to discrimination is a complex process requiring attention to many different factors.

Indirect Socialization Practices. Cultural pride, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust can be conceptualized as direct socialization messages that parents convey to their children about race and discrimination, and they typically involve direct conversations from parent to child. However, as parents spoke about the ways in which they prepare their children for (or try to protect them from) discriminatory experiences, they also reported actions that they

take to decrease opportunities for discrimination in their children's lives. These actions were coded as indirect socialization practices because parents did not have explicit conversations with their children about these prevention behaviors. Rather, they could be viewed as ways that parents modeled to their children how to manage discriminatory experiences. For example, all parents noted that one way that they try to prevent their children from experiencing discrimination is by advocating and "making themselves known" at their schools:

> A lot of times what I have to do is set the stage by letting them know I'm not one of those mothers who has a house for their children like the old woman in the shoe, and sends them to school, and not follow-up with them or listen. I make it clear when I go to the PTA meeting. [I] go to the orientations and make it clear from the beginning, I will be involved in my child's school. (Eleanor)

> As a mom of a Black boy, I need the teachers to know my face. To know who I am. And so, I've always been very very there. I'm that mom because I want them to know... also, the other thing I'm always thinking about is I don't ever want the teachers to put my son on the remedial track. (Tina)

> I have to really advocate for my kids. You (teachers) aren't going to just put these diagnoses on these kids. Let's put in the work and effort to try to see what's going on. (Mary)

Many parents felt that they needed to be very involved in their children's school in order to dispel stereotypes that Black parents are not education oriented. Parents were aware of disproportionate rates of special education placement and discipline referrals for Black children and felt that their presence was helpful in preventing their children from being targeted or treated unfairly by teachers and administrators. Wilson reported an incident in which he and Judy had to advocate for their children to be removed from a remedial language program due to biased assumptions about their children's English-speaking abilities:

> Judy and I had to intervene with the school on the assumption that because they (Naomi and Jerry) are from Africa, they are language deficient. The school insisted on putting them in some course, ELL (English Language Learner Program). They have this program taking kids from countries that don't speak English as their first language... we're like English is their first language. Specifically, because their mother speaks English, and this

> is the language we use at home. Also, English is the official language of (country of origin) and the instruction from grade one or kindergarten was in English, so that's not a reason. We put our foot down that our kid is not going to do ELL. (Wilson)

Wilson and Judy later described that they felt their children would be disadvantaged by continued participation in the ELL program as it prevented them from taking other classes, such as French or orchestra. They recalled experiencing difficulty with school administrators who insisted on using these biased assumptions to make decisions for their children and noted that their children may have been "locked into" this program for many years if they had not advocated for them.

In addition to advocating for their children, parents also reported being vigilant and aware of upcoming experiences that may be discriminatory. For example, Tina recalled an incident in which Mia's teacher mentioned a class reenactment of the colonization of North America. Based on her own lived and vicarious experiences, Tina felt that she had to be one step ahead in making sure that her daughter did not experience racial bias and that she was not given a stereotyped role in the reenactment:

> So, I email him (teacher) and I'm trying to be nice and jovial about him like 'I'm just really wondering how you're going to address some of those more sensitive topics.' For example, what are some of those activities?... like number one, are you going to address slavery? Are you going to make my child play a slave for the reenactment? (Tina)

Many parents did not involve their children in their decision to email teachers or set up advocacy meetings. They also did not necessarily have conversations with their children about why they were taking these actions, unless they needed to consider their child's perspective of events. However, it is likely that adolescents were aware of their parents' involvement in their education and visits to their schools. Therefore, it is possible that these indirect socialization practices are a form of preventative (and protective) parenting that Black parents readily engage

in to decrease their children's likelihood of experiencing discrimination. Tina discussed why she uses advocacy and vigilance to reduce unnecessary racial obstacles in her children's path:

> They talk about there's like helicopter parents and now there's lawnmower parents. I don't want to erase the obstacles for my kids, but I don't want unnecessary obstacles to be there in front of them. Other things that are unnecessary, that might be due to their race or their ethnicity or anything else, I'm mama bear and I want to make sure that they have the best chance to succeed. (Tina)

Parents' anticipation of situations they felt were likely to lead to unfair treatment could be considered a form of socialization and modeling to their children that vigilance and advocacy are often skills that are necessary for Black people in society. In order words, they convey to these adolescents that to be Black in America sometimes means having to be one step ahead of possible discriminatory experiences. In a way, parents are putting their preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust messages into action by conveying the message that as Black parents (and people), you cannot assume that others will always treat you fairly, and that you must always be one step ahead.

Racial Socialization Goals

All parents reported that racial socialization was important to them and felt that it was a necessary process for raising their children. Parents' goals for engaging in racial socialization included themes such as preparation, coping/resilience, confidence, and positivity. In terms of preparation, many parents reported that their main goal is to ensure that their children are prepared to manage future discriminatory experiences while also being safe:

> To prepare them for the outside world when they're by themselves. When I'm not with them. When I can't be there to protect them. And to let them know this is what happens, so you need to know it and know what to do when you're in a situation. (Kimberly)

> Number one is safety. I worry about my kids all the time going out into the world. Not everybody has good intentions and I don't want them to be naïve in some random place where there aren't as many people who look like us. And you're expecting to be treated

> fairly and then you have this big rude awakening... I just want them to be prepared so they're not caught off guard. (Mary)

In addition to preparing their children for future discriminatory experiences, parents also felt that socialization was important for ensuring that their children had positive coping mechanisms and were confident about themselves:

> You don't want to have them be surprised and be all off kilter and not be able to function when they realize everybody does not look at you the same. So just be prepared, and know you've got the strength. You know what you're supposed to do. You just have to prove them wrong. I don't want them to be in a situation where they don't know people may look at them different, and that they have some type of coping mechanism. (Robin)
>
> My goal is kind of the same as my goal as a parent. I want to be able to raise confident, productive members of society who are able to contribute and who also are confident in themselves. And are resilient. That's really important to me. And also, that they're not blindsided at the same time for things that are happening. (Tina)

Parents' goals of socialization as preparation and coping went hand in hand. On one hand, parents wanted to ensure that their children were not blindsided by their discriminatory experiences, and on the other hand, they wanted to ensure that their children felt that they could cope with these experiences. The goal of instilling confidence is also similar in that parents wanted their children to be confident in their identity and not be dismayed by their discriminatory encounters. An interesting perspective on the goals of socialization came from Wilson who described the explicit nature of trying to raise his children with a positive mindset, despite the racial challenges they might face:

> When you're raising your child not to be... you should be raising your child to be something great. Raising someone not to be is actually a bad starting point, and that happens a lot when you're Black, when you're African American. You spend huge amounts of energy trying not to be, and that is a problem. Even in the education system, I see a lot of kids trying not to be... you cannot try not to be. You have to be who you are, and learn, and become, and grow. (Wilson)

Wilson's remark highlights an important aspect of racial socialization that was often noted by other parents in the study. Raising Black children "not to be" is a common goal of socialization as parents sometimes reported raising their children so that they were not perceived as criminals, uneducated, or other racial stereotypes. However, Wilson and other parents aimed to move away from this process of socialization and instead aimed for socialization goals related to positivity and confidence. Once again, these responses show that the socialization of Black children is a nuanced process that involves a balancing acting of preparation for negative racial experiences, as well as positive coping and identity development.

Age of Onset and Frequency. The earliest reported onset for racial socialization messages was around age seven. Generally, parents reported that they felt a need to engage in these conversations as their children began attending school, and were away from them for longer periods of time:

> Once he entered school, because when they're little, they're with me. But probably when he entered school and started having friends. I've been discussing that stuff with him for so long that it's like I don't even know when it started. That's why I tell them that type of stuff early because I may not get a chance to tell it to them when they actually get to that. (Kimberly)

> I would say my oldest one was probably about seven or eight, because that's when I really started struggling with his behavior in school. So, I had to really let him know what you're doing doesn't just affect you. It affects how other kids that look like you are being treated too. You want to be treated with respect, and when they think about the little Black boy in the class, you don't want them to think oh here comes trouble. (Mary)

Although some parents reported starting these conversations with their children at an early age, two parents also reported explicitly engaging in racial socialization when their children were old enough to ask questions about African American history. Overall, parent responses regarding the age of onset for racial socialization suggest that onset is variable, but often begins

early and may be precipitated by factors such as the child's increasing independence and knowledge.

The reported frequency of socialization messages also varied, from weekly to monthly:

> I'd say frequently. I mean, nowadays, every week, every two weeks. It's not even necessarily discrimination. It's just about race, differences you see in the world, and topics that may come up on the news. (Robin)

> I'd probably say once a week we have some sort of discussion about maybe some sort of racial issue, just because I don't want them to be ignorant. Honestly, I have them quite a bit whenever something happens. (Kimberly)

> I'd say on the average, if I'm made aware of something when we have our conversations, probably once or twice a month. (Eleanor)

> I don't know how often it is. It's just kind of as needed. It's not like you're sitting the kids down for the birds and the bees talk. You're just kind of doing it so that it's always kind of been interwoven into our lives. (Tina).

Similar to the age of onset, it appears that frequency of racial socialization messages is fluid and sometimes based on direct or vicarious events. Tina's remark highlights the ongoing nature of socialization in that it is rarely a sit-down, one-time conversation that parents have with their children. Rather, racial socialization messages appear to occur naturally in the midst of many other conversations that parents might have with their children.

Entry into Conversations. Themes emerged in the ways that parents began these conversations with their children. Few parents mentioned using their own discriminatory experiences as the entry point into these conversations, although this does not mean that parents are not talking to their children about their own experiences. Parents reported that their entry into these conversations often began with discussing television, news, or social media stories, co-viewing movies about racial issues, or discussing an event that happened to their child or someone that the child knows:

> It's usually from something we saw on the news or Facebook, or something like that. It's not usually just random conversation, it's something that's planned. (Mary)

> A lot of times they'll bring up something my dad has told them, or news usually starts it. Or something they've seen on social media. Usually, they may actually bring some things up, but it's mostly what they see on TV or social media. (Robin)

> Every time something happens, I use it as a teachable moment. So, I'm aware of it and we talk about it. When things come on the news or when something happened at school, we talk about it... If it's not my experience, it's the experience of others that I know have gone through it. Especially back three years ago when they (the police) was doing all this shooting and gunning down... and when the football players took a knee. (Eleanor)

> What I like to do is take him to movies regarding discrimination. Like, we saw the movie Detroit... So, I normally will take them to a movie or something so he can see this is what happens. I want to show him Eyes on the Prize, but I can't find it anywhere. So yeah, that's normally what I do, but I don't know if I've ever told him about my discrimination. (Kimberly)

These entries into conversation suggest that parents are finding ways to engage in racial socialization mostly through media examples. It is possible that by using television, movies, and other media as entries into the conversation, parents are showing their children real examples of discrimination, rather than speaking in the abstract. It could be argued that these entries into conversation present parents with an opportunity to engage with their children through media that are familiar to them (e.g., social media) and also provides a clear depiction to adolescents about current incidents of discrimination. However, it could also be argued that these entries might limit adolescents' understanding of discrimination because media depictions tend to focus on overt forms of discrimination. Overall, these findings suggest that parents commonly use media as a way to begin racial socialization messages with their children.

Gender Differences. As parents spoke about their racial socialization practices, they sometimes noted differences in the messages they convey to their sons and daughters. Some parents recognized these gender differences and reported that raising a Black boy is inherently different than raising a Black girl, especially in terms of messages about racial discrimination:

> We emphasize to her more; you have to make sure you could take care of yourself. We don't want you with the wrong type of guy. But I guess maybe in a way we expect her life to be easier. With him, it's more risky. He could go to jail... You still are raising Black kids, especially Black boys. I mean, if there's a target on anybody, it's them.... you want the best and you have to be careful, but you have to be realistic because like I tell him (son), people don't see you like I see you. (Robin)

> [It's] very different for me because I've seen on TV, have had personal experiences with friends and family members, the males have been discriminated against. And so, I come down on my boys a little. Not harder, but I really bring it home to them, the reality. I really bring it home to them because I feel like they get discriminated against the most in the bigger scheme of society. I do. And so, I make sure that's why I am on top of it. (Eleanor)

Robin and Eleanor's descriptions of gender differences in socialization suggest that parents also view that Black boys are more likely to experience discrimination than Black girls. Thus, parents appear to be responding to these increased rates of discrimination among Black boys by emphasizing messages of safety. Even when parents did not explicitly discuss gender differences in socialization, they often spoke about this emphasis on safety for their sons:

> You can look at my daughter, and she is clearly not a threat. And I look at my son, I don't see him as a threat either, but that's not how society sees him. And every year that he gets taller it becomes clear... he's a Black boy who just turned 10, but he's like 115 lbs. and he's almost five feet. I gotta nip this in the bud now, because if I don't, it's going to be harder to control when he's a teenager, and then it's a matter of life and death at that point... I mean Mia will get that same talk, and I have talked to her about that, but it seems more pressing for him. (Tina)

> We had to talk to him about [how] he has to manage his anger. It's a constant talking to him because we can't afford for him to become this Black male stereotype that people have out there. (Judy)

Gendered messages were not only given to sons about safety but were also given to daughters about their appearance. Specifically, parents noted that they tend to convey to their daughters (more than their sons) the importance of being proud of their hair type and skin color:

> I'm sure she will encounter things. For example, making sure she's always been proud of her natural hair. Making sure that she's proud of her skin tone and thinks that she's beautiful, so that she's not feeling that she has to succumb to that whole European standard of beauty. I didn't really have to do that with my son. (Tina)

> [I tell her], you have to be careful because they'll have you thinking you're nothing if you don't look like this. With Noelle, we probably did pay more attention because of the hair. She's never grown up knowing anyone with a relaxer in her immediate surroundings. (Robin)

Parents' messages to their daughters also suggest that they are responding to the forms of discrimination their daughters might experience, and this is aligned with earlier findings in which girls were more likely to report discrimination related to their appearance. Overall, gendered socialization messages appear to be a way for parents to emphasize and strengthen aspects of their children's lives that they perceive might be especially difficult. Parents also appear to be engaging in gendered messages to prepare their children for how others might view them. For boys, this means discussing how they might be perceived as a threat, which requires greater emphasis on their safety. While, for girls, this means discussing how society might devalue their natural hair and skin tone, which requires emphasis on building confidence about their appearance.

Parents' Concerns about Future Discrimination

Most parents reported that they did not necessarily worry about their children's future discrimination experiences due to feeling that they are preparing their children well:

> I don't worry. I've accepted it. But I mean, you can't worry about what you can't control. When they leave out the house, I'm worried, but I have enough confidence in my parenting that I have prepared them enough [that] they're going to be okay. And I just have to hope that they are okay. (Mary)

> I do, and then I kind of don't worry about it, because I try to make sure he is prepared. I'm thinking of everything that I need to teach him. Part of me knows that he really pays attention. He really listens. So, I'm not so concerned, but then I am because all it takes is one wrong move. One wrong mistake and that could be it. (Kimberly)

> I mean, they're going to experience discrimination, that's a given. So, I'm not sitting here worried about it. I'm about as worried as I am for any other thing, like my kid's going to get their heart broken. So, it's on the same kind of level. It's going to happen... I've been taking steps to make sure it doesn't happen. (Tina)

Parents' low levels of worry regarding future discrimination are similar to reports from adolescents. It appears that both parents and their children have accepted the reality of future discriminatory experiences and thus do not necessary worry about it. Rather, the focus is on preparing their children to be able to manage these experiences. Judy and Wilson were the only parents to report active worry regarding their children's future discriminatory experiences:

> In today's America, and in the Trump world moving forward. If this continues to be the Trump world, we have to be very concerned about it if our kids were to stay here, because the world is getting more polarized. The thing is that when you have that kind of environment being perpetuated from the highest level, you cannot have anything but to fear for your children growing up in a polarized nation. (Wilson)

Both Judy and Wilson commented that their fears for their children are somewhat based on their status as immigrants in the United States. For them, the worry regarding discrimination is tied to the current socio-political climate which has seen a rise in discriminatory remarks and experiences towards immigrants. Wilson further elaborated on the fear associated with the targeting of immigrants:

> When you talk about immigrants, it doesn't matter whether they are legal or illegal. I'm an immigrant, so if you don't treat those who came in illegally [nice], I'd be stupid to think that you will treat me nice. It's as simple as that... anyone who's an immigrant has to be concerned because it's a cascading thing. So, that's where the concern is. (Wilson)

Judy and Wilson's concern for their children further highlight the nuances of racial identity and discriminatory experiences. Specifically, it appears that the combination of being Black and an immigrant in today's society raises their level of concern in comparison to other parents who are not immigrants.

DISCUSSION OF PARENTAL RACIAL SOCIALIZATION FINDINGS

Many themes arose from parents' discussions of their children's discrimination experiences and their own racial socialization practices. Regarding discrimination experiences,

parents in this study reported more adolescent experiences of discrimination than their children. Some explanations for this finding are that parents are more likely to identify and label an experience as discriminatory due to increased knowledge of the subtle nature of discrimination. As noted earlier, adolescents at this age are unlikely to have a fully developed understanding of discrimination or may be less likely to understand that discrimination can be covert. The type of discrimination appears to be related to whether an adolescent will label an event as discriminatory (Wakefield & Hudley, 2005; Sanchez et al., 2016; Freitas et al., 2017), thus it is likely that adolescents simply did not interpret some of their experiences as discriminatory. Additionally, parents in the study alluded to their children not being aware of the historical context surrounding their experiences (e.g., Mary recalling one of her children telling her that a teacher told the class to "shut their cotton picking mouths," and Kimberly noting that Michael may not have understood the history behind being spit on). This suggests that, in addition to needing to understand the nuances between covert and overt discrimination, adolescents must also have a historical understanding of the ways that discrimination has influenced previous generations. However, as noted in the previous section, adolescents' historical understanding of discrimination is likely most informed by how history is taught in schools, thus parents are tasked with not only socializing their children for discriminatory experiences, but also helping them learn, (un)learn, and understand what they are being taught in school with a more nuanced perspective. Although schools may present a static view of history that portrays discrimination as a particular point in time, parents can help their children recognize that "history" continues to unfold and is not static.

Another theme is that parents recalled learning about their children's discrimination experiences directly from their children or through observation. However, sometimes this was

captured through everyday discussions between parent and child in which the child disclosed a discriminatory experience without necessarily being aware that it was discriminatory. Parents also described observing their children experiencing discrimination without the child necessarily labeling it as such. Again, these ways of "discovering" discriminatory experiences points to the developmental aspect of understanding discrimination. These findings also suggest that what we know about Black youths' experiences with discrimination in early adolescence may be limited without a parent perspective. In fact, parents often felt that they did not have a full understanding of their own children's experiences because they are not always told and are not always present to observe it. These findings also suggest that parents of Black children are tasked with helping them develop an understanding of discrimination, which parents try to accomplish through racial socialization.

Parental racial socialization was found to be a common practice among all parents in the study. Although Hughes et al. (2016) reported that use of colorblind messages ranges from 20-50% across studies, no parents in the current study indicated use of colorblind or egalitarian messages. Parents often engaged in cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages, which is aligned with previous research findings (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1999). Parents also identified promotion of mistrust messages conveyed to their children, however rates of this type of socialization were lower than cultural socialization and preparation for bias. Parents' use of these socialization messages was often intertwined and fluid across situations. This approach of combining and using different types of messages is supported by prior research suggesting that that there is adaptive value in messages that both convey positivity about race, in addition to those that prepare youth for discriminatory

experiences (Neblett et al., 2008; Riina & McHale, 2010; Butler-Barnes, Richardson, Chavous, & Zhu, 2019).

An important finding from this study that appears to be unique to the current socio-political climate is that parents' use of preparation for bias messages was sometimes informed by high profile deaths of Black boys and men. This approach to preparation for bias has been used by parents of Black children for centuries due to the historical prevalence of violence against Black bodies (Hughes, 2003). Thus, although this is not a new finding, it stands to highlight that today's societal climate unfortunately continues to provide parents with opportunities to use these examples to prepare their children for bias. Additionally, DePouw & Matias (2016) note that the killings of Black boys, such as Tamir Rice and Michael Brown, remind parents of the reality that they may not always be able to protect their children from violence and dehumanization. Despite this realization, parents' racial socialization practices should then be viewed as a form of resistance (DePouw & Matias, 2016). Additionally, the current and historical prevalence of violence against Black bodies emphasizes the life-saving nature of parental racial socialization.

Scholars have developed critical race parenting (or ParentCrit) as a theoretical framework to understand parenting practices in societal contexts, like the current socio-political climate in the United States, that feature multiple incidents of violence against Black and Brown people while also promoting the myth of a post-racial society (Matias &Montoya, 2015; DePouw & Matias, 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Carter Andrews & Truitt, 2013). ParentCrit is a framework that captures many of the themes in this study because it highlights the ways that parents and their children engage in a teaching and learning process about race and systems of oppression (Matias & Montoya, 2015). ParentCrit also provides a set of considerations, such as, too early is

better than too late, intersectionality first, and recognize the reality of violence (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018), to provide an understanding of how parents can be critically minded in socializing their children to address racism and oppression.

The ParentCrit consideration to "recognize the reality of violence" is especially important for the findings in this study because some parents reported feeling that conversations about discrimination created a loss of innocence as their children recognized that society may not be as safe for them. Preparing Black children for bias often requires having difficult conversations about situations they might experience and parents' recognition and use of societal examples of violence against Black bodies is likely to generate a sense of taking their children's innocence through discussions of these experiences. Researchers have noted this idea of losing innocence as a worry that parents might have, but the majority of research points to the necessity of such discussions for preparing children to understand and cope with discrimination (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018). Research also suggests that preparation for bias is an important socialization message, even if it challenges youths' innocence, because parents of Black children simply cannot afford to raise their children to be naïve about the racial reality of the society in which they live (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018).

The early onset of socialization messages reported by parents in the study is also aligned with the ParentCrit consideration suggesting that "too early is better than too late" to have conversations with children about racism and discrimination. Specifically, parents in the study reported that they mostly began having conversations about race when their children started formal education, which meant spending a significant amount of time away from parents. Researchers have found that some parents engage in cultural socialization practices during toddlerhood, and about 67% to 90% of parents begin preparation for bias in early childhood

(Hughes et al., 2006; Caughy et al., 2002; Butler-Barnes, Richardson, Chavous, & Zhu, 2019; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Hughes, 2003). Explanations for the slight gap in onset of message types suggest that parents believe that children require a greater level of cognitive development in order to be more engaged in discussions about the negative aspects of their racial group membership (Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997).

It is also possible that parents would prefer to convey positive racial and cultural messages early in their child's development in an effort to build a strong foundation of racial pride before introducing preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust messages. Regardless of when parents plan to begin racial socialization practices, Montoya and Sarcedo (2018) note that the timing of these conversations may ultimately be determined by children's early experiences with racism and discrimination. In other words, parents may be forced to engage in preparation for bias messages earlier than planned if their children experience racism or discrimination in toddlerhood or early childhood. Overall, ParentCrit scholars posit that beginning these conversations early is better than having them too late when children have already had detrimental discriminatory experiences (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018).

Frequency of racial socialization messages also varied among parents in the current study. However, an essential finding is that parents consistently have conversations with their children about race and discrimination, which is aligned with previous research findings. These frequent discussions can be perceived as microprotections, which James (2016) described as daily behaviors that parents use to support and care for their children in the face of microaggressive and discriminatory experiences. Additionally, DePouw and Matias (2016) suggest that frequent racial socialization messages and conversations are parents' way of recognizing the need to consistently provide their children with the vocabulary and strategies

necessary for managing the violence they may witness or experience in society. Discussions between parents and children are likely to increase children's verbal knowledge, as well as their knowledge of covert and over types of discrimination. These conversations can also help children differentiate between racism, discrimination, and prejudice and understand the role of White Privilege and supremacy in their lives.

A major finding of the current study is that parents reported using indirect socialization practices, in addition to the typical socialization messages that they conveyed to their children about race and discrimination. These practices often involved advocating for their children in school and being vigilant about possible discriminatory experiences. These indirect socialization practices are supported by ParentCrit scholars who have noted that advocacy is a common practice among communities of color (Perry, Steele, & Hillard, 2003; Madrid, 2008), and that a struggle for parents is to be vigilant in protecting their children from internalizing racism and discrimination (Osajima, 1993; DePouw & Matias, 2016). Additionally, a focus of ParentCrit is how parents teach their children to manage discriminatory experiences, which suggests that both direct and indirect socialization factors are important to consider. By advocating for their children and being vigilant, parents are likely modeling how to manage discriminatory experiences and resist oppressive racial narratives (DePouw & Matias, 2016), which may just be as important as direct types of socialization. However, these indirect socialization practices might also signal to youth that their parents are likely to come to their school and talk to their teachers, which may be embarrassing for them during this developmental period. In the previous section, adolescents reported a reluctance to share their experiences with their parents at times because they did not want their parents to "make it a big deal." Therefore, although these indirection socialization practices are ultimately beneficial for youth, they may also see these

practices as hindering their social relationships, and thus discourage them from using parent support seeking strategies when they experience discrimination.

Similar to adolescents' reports of the effectiveness of their responses, these findings regarding indirect socialization practices highlight the importance of CRT in understanding the role of parent socialization practices in youths' discrimination experiences. From a CRT perspective, these parents' experiences represent a counternarrative of effective parenting practices that challenges dominant narratives suggesting that racial minority parents are not involved in their children's education. It is clear, however, that these parents often go above and beyond in being involved by ensuring that they can advocate for their children and mitigate future experiences of discrimination or its consequences.

In addition, CRT's tenet concerning intersectionality helps to explain why parents may engage in differential socialization practices based on gender. Specifically, these differences showed that messages conveyed to boys heavily emphasized safety, while those conveyed to girls emphasized confidence in physical appearance. Such findings suggest that parents' socialization practices are influenced by their perceptions of the racial climate, which thus requires that they tailor these messages based on environmental demands (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmaan, 1997). For example, parents' focus on messages of safety are aligned with increased rates of discrimination experiences and likelihood of being perceived as a threat among Black boys. Researchers have noted similar findings across studies, and an emerging theory for gendered socialization is parents' belief and concern that discriminatory experiences will have more detrimental effects on their sons than their daughters (Varner & Mandara, 2013; Hill, 2002; Wood, Kaplan, & McLoyd, 2007). Reports from parents in the current study appear to support this theory, as some parents alluded to feeling that their daughters' lives might be "easier" than

their sons in regard to experiencing discrimination. Additionally, although parents conveyed concern for their daughters experiencing discrimination based on their natural hair or skin color, research suggests that parents, especially mothers, are more likely to feel that this form of racial (and gender) discrimination may be easier to overcome than what their sons will encounter (Hill, 2002). Specifically, some parents engage in gendered socialization practices because they perceive that their sons' discriminatory experiences may be life or death circumstances (e.g., police brutality and violence). Overall, findings suggest that parents' reasons for gendered socialization practices are not exclusionary or one-sided. Rather, they are responding to a need for targeted messages to best prepare their children for the specific types and forms of discrimination that they are likely to encounter.

Despite having goals toward preparing their children for managing bias and discrimination, parents in the study were divided on whether or not they explicitly conveyed messages to their children about how to respond to discrimination. Parents who had these conversations identified active response strategies which often involved their children telling a teacher or another adult, and parents who did not convey explicit response strategies reported concerns regarding their children's effective strategy use in different situations. Although adolescents reported unlikely use of support-seeking strategies from teachers, research suggests that parents' encouragement of active coping strategies to manage race-based stressors is associated with actual use of such strategies (Kliewer et al., 2006; Anderson, Jones, Anyiwo, McKenny, & Gaylord-Harden, 2019).

ParentCrit scholars note that an essential role of parenting is helping children of color learn how to challenge and navigate experiences that dehumanize their racial identities (DePouw & Matias, 2016). Overall, research shows that parents play an important role in teaching their

children how to cope with discrimination, whether explicitly or implicitly (Anderson et al., 2019; Kliewer, Fearnow, & Miller, 1996; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Therefore, although parents might not be using explicit strategies to convey response strategies to their children, it is possible that children can learn ways to respond to discrimination through implicit or indirect socialization practices. For example, if children see their parents using active response strategies, such as coming to their school and speaking with their teachers about discriminatory incidents, then they may be more likely to also use active response strategies over time.

In addition to preparing their children for bias and discrimination, parents in the study also wanted to ensure that their children were proud of their race and culture, which Hughes and Chen (1997, 1999) found to be the primary intention of parents' racialized messages. In the current study, parents' socialization goals were two-fold in that they wanted to ensure that their children were prepared for any discriminatory experiences (not blindsided), as well as feeling confident in themselves and their ability to manage these experiences, while remaining positive about their identity. Cabrera, Kuhns, Malin, and Aldoney (2016) found similar results regarding why parents choose to engage in socialization practices. Notably, parents in that study identified the prevalence of racism and discrimination as a motivating factor, in addition to ensuring that their children could function effectively in society (Cabrera et al., 2016). Overall, study findings suggest that parents of Black children aim to provide their children with the tools necessary for effectively managing discrimination while developing and maintaining positive racial identities.

CHAPTER 6:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION PART III:

PARENTAL RACIAL SOCIALIZATION, ADOLESCENT RACIAL IDENTITY, AND DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES

A main aim of this study was to understand the role of parental racial socialization practices on adolescents' racial identity development. Parent participants were asked to describe their own discriminatory experiences and how these experiences may be relevant in their racial socialization practices and their children's racial identification.

Parent Discrimination Experiences

All parent participants racially identified as Black or African American, and all parents discussed personal discriminatory experiences both as children and as adults. Similar to their children, parents' discrimination experiences included instances of harsh/differential treatment, name calling, and social exclusion. Parents' discriminatory experiences also included both overt and covert types of discrimination in many different forms (e.g., social exclusion, unfair treatment, derogatory remarks):

> I was telling my kids about when I was in the 12th grade, I had a teacher in (nearby urban city), and it's predominantly Black, who was Caucasian [and] he was talking to an assistant teacher, telling them how basically nobody in the class was probably going to graduate. And the ones that were going to graduate, were just going to be on welfare. And we're walking into class and he's talking like he didn't even care that we were in there. He was talking to her like they were having a private conversation. (Mary)

> Many years ago, we were on our way to Florida. I think it was in Georgia, we stopped at a Denny's. [When we walked in], we just stood there for what seemed like forever and no one ever came. They didn't even come seat us. Not even to come and greet us and say "oh we're busy, we'll be right with you"... I realized oh it's because we're Black. I have no doubt. It was a small, out in the outskirts, highway town... But we left. We weren't going to spend our money. (Robin)

> I actually didn't really encounter any really overt racism until I went to university. I tried to go to parties with friends, and I just remember it so vividly... Me and my friends going

> out about to go to a party... we go up and they literally don't let us in. And so, I was like well we don't understand. I don't get it. Why would somebody do that? It's like literally from a TV show... or being in class and nobody wanting to be my lab partner. Those are the types of things I encountered. (Tina)

> I've had one or two interactions where I would go into an office and somebody would speak to me and I don't know whether their assumption is 'who are you, you don't deserve to be here?' The kind of thing where you know the person would not typically address another person like that. So those subtleties make you uncomfortable. (Wilson)

> Their dad is in the service industry, and so in order for us to get good service, he pays the waiter or the waitress money up front and our service is a lot different. And then if he's not here, I'll be like "why is the service crappy?" (Kimberly)

Parent Experiences and Socialization. As parents described their own discriminatory experiences, they also expanded upon how these racialized experiences not only informed the ways in which they racially socialize their children, but also how it informs where they choose to raise and educate them. For example, when asked about their neighborhood or school choice, most parents identified that racial demographics and prior socialization experiences played a role in these decisions:

> I grew up in the (urban) school district back when there were a lot of Black students there. And my husband, he grew up for his entire schooling in (rural) city, where it was basically him, his twin sister, and his brother. So, we were very intentional about where we bought our home. But that was unfortunate, in some ways, because there were a lot of places that were really nice that we turned down, because we knew that there might be some issues. We actively wanted to try to shield our kids from that (being the "only") by choosing where we live. (Tina)

> The diversity, that's something that I like about the community. It's in a location where you have different financial backgrounds. So, you have people who aren't too well off, some people that are very well off; it's a nice little mixture. There's a neighborhood watch. I feel safe. I know anything can happen anywhere... like letting them go outside and play. I'm from (urban city). I would never let them go outside and play where I'm from. (Mary)

> The disappointment coming here has been that this public school has not been as diverse as we would have liked. I mean, it's a good public school... the tradeoff is you're looking for smaller classes, rigorous education, well-equipped school system, and good teachers. Those are the important things... but then we knew we're giving up on diversity in terms or race and culture. (Wilson)... For me, the number of Black kids is still very low.

> Certainly, diversity for the teachers as well. I think that there's one Black man (teacher) in the school. (Judy)

Parents' descriptions of their neighborhood or school choice suggests that their own experiences whether in childhood or adulthood inform how they approach their children's socialization. Specifically, parents' considerations included diversity, safety, and opportunity factors, and their decisions regarding these factors were often based on their own experiences. For example, it appears that Tina's husband's experiences as one of a few racial minority children in his town led them to choose neighborhoods and schools with greater diversity. Parent participants also made similar connections linking their own racial identity and discrimination experiences to their racial socialization practices, especially regarding their children's racial identity development:

> I don't want them to feel if you don't do XYZ, you're not Black, because that's what I was taught growing up. It's because I didn't fit into the typical mold, and [wasn't] "Black enough." I don't want them to feel that. (Mary)

> [I tell them] they can be the first. Nobody thought there would be a Black president. I never thought that. I always felt like there would be, coming from an African American school. I don't think I ever knew that would be an obstacle. They used to tell us you could be the president. And then when I got out with everybody else, I was like "you all never thought that?" I want them to know that you can do whatever you want to do. You don't have to be stuck doing whatever somebody thinks you should do. (Kimberly)

> I think my parents did the same things that I do for my kids, where they tried to instill confidence in myself and so that I had that kind of invisible armor too. And pride as well and making sure that I knew about different historical figures, and always letting me know that I'm just as good or better in some cases... I've been very intentional about those things that my parents did, but probably amplified. I could say that the way the world is right now, it calls for me to do that more, but I could be wrong. Maybe my parents felt the same way. (Tina)

These responses illustrate how parents' own racial identity and socialization experiences influence their approach to racial identity development in their children. Parents' reports of their own experiences illustrate the link between parents' identity and children's identity.

Additionally, parents' reports of carrying forward how they had been socialized by their own parents or socialization from childhood suggests that racial socialization is an iterative and multi-generational process.

Adolescent Racial Identity and Parental Influence

To understand how racial identity, discriminatory experiences, and racial socialization related, adolescent participants are were asked about their racial identification specifically related to centrality, private regard, and public regard. These qualitative findings were then compared with adolescents' responses on the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-teen (MIBI-t; Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008), and their reports of discriminatory experiences. Parents and adolescents were also asked about parental influence on racial identity development.

Adolescent Racial Identity. Adolescent participants were provided with an opportunity to report their racial identification during interviews. Unsurprisingly, since this was an inclusionary criterion for the study, all adolescents reported that they identified as African American/Black, with the exception of three (Naomi, Jerry, and Christoph) who preferred to only identify as Black. To them, Black was preferable because they had been born in or immigrated from Africa and did not quite feel fully American:

> I'm not American. I'm African, and there's no African African, so I'm Black. Even though most people assume that we're African American, just because we're Black. It's because we're Black and we're in America, they assume that we're African American, but we're African. (Naomi, Interview 1)

These three adolescents appeared to think of their identity as separate from other peers in the study. It is possible that acculturation played a role in this, such that, although they lived in America, they did not yet see themselves as being American. When asked what it means to be Black or African American, most adolescents described physical characteristics of Blackness, or being Black as a connection to one's heritage and ancestors:

> I think to be Black, a good portion of you has to be African. (Stuart, Interview 1)
>
> I guess your skin color? Maybe eye color? Because, most cases, a Black person's eye color is either brown or black. (Naomi, Interview 1)
>
> Their hair. Like our hair wouldn't be relaxed like theirs. (Jerry, Interview 1)
>
> I think it means to take a lot from your ancestors and know what they came from. No matter what, being Black is something to really be proud of. (Noelle, Interview 1)

These responses suggest that perhaps, adolescents' understanding of racial identity in this middle school age is largely based on race as a category and physical characteristic, rather than an awareness or a state of consciousness. Specifically, adolescents' reports of what it means to be their race are mostly centered around observational, rather than internal, characteristics. These answers suggest that for them, being Black is something that you can see, more than an incorporation of one's cultural practices and heritage into their self-concept.

Parents' Influence on Racial Identification. The role that parents play in the development of their children's racial identity was examined by asking parents how they may have helped or influenced their children's racial identification. Responses ranged from no explicitly conversations with their children to active engagement in specific conversations about racial identification:

> I wouldn't say that I've helped him (Stuart). I think he just understands what he is and naturally identifies with. [I let] them know that you do what makes you happy. What makes you feel good. Don't do what the media or whoever tells you this is how Black people should be. Be how or whatever is comfortable; whatever music you want to listen to, whatever clothing you want to wear, whatever hairstyles you like. Go with what you like. (Mary)
>
> I believe he (Michael) said Black. I kind of pushed that word on them. When we were in the car, I think I said Black. He said, 'Oh you can't say Black." I was like 'Yes I can.' He said, "You gotta say African American." I said, 'No.' Then I was trying to explain and try to teach the history a little bit. You know every generation has its terms. I talked about how we were Colored and then Black, Afro American, now African American. I was like, they may change it again for the next generation. And when a lot of us grew up, Black

> was what we were called. And so, you're going to have some people that are not going to want to be called African American. They want to be called Black. (Kimberly)

> For my kids, it would be Black or African American. (Christoph) was born in Africa, but he's been over here since he was nine months old. So, I guess he might identify himself as African American? But I don't know. When I fill out forms for him, I usually put that he was not born in the United States. (Eleanor)

Overall, there was strong alignment between parents' responses regarding their children's racial identification and their children's stated identification, regardless of whether or not this was explicitly discussed. It is important to note that parents and adolescent participants all identified as Black or African American, which may have played a major role in this alignment. It is possible that this similarity in racial identity made it easier for adolescents to establish their racial identification.

Racial Identity Profiles. Adolescents' MIBI-t ratings were used to create profiles for each participant. These profiles show each adolescents' orientation in the areas of racial centrality, private regard, and public regard. As a reminder, racial centrality refers to the extent to which race is an important part of an individual's identity, and private regard refers to the extent to which an individual feels positively towards other African Americans and being African American. On these two domains, higher scores indicate that the individual feels that race is central to their identity and feels positively about African Americans. Public regard refers to the extent to which the individual feels that other groups feel positively or negatively African Americans. High scores in this domain indicate that the individual feels other groups have more positive feelings towards African Americans. Ratings were completed using a Likert scale from 1-5 (1= Really Disagree; 5= Really Agree), and scores were derived by averaging ratings in each domain. To create profiles, ratings were grouped into low (average <2.0), medium (2.1-3.5), and high (average >3.5) categories.

Table 3: Participants' MIBI-t Profiles

Domain	**Noelle**	**Stuart**	**Naomi**	**Jerry**	**Taylor**	**Sophia**	**Christoph**	**Michael**	**Mia**
Centrality	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Private Regard	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Public Regard	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium

Racial Centrality. The majority of adolescents reported high levels of racial centrality on the MIBI-t, except Stuart whose ratings were in the medium range. Stuart's ratings reflected his verbal responses when asked whether his racial identity was important to him during individual interviews:

> (Interview 1): I don't feel like anything is important about it. Like, there's nothing that being Black would change.
>
> (Interview 2): It's like something I'm definitely going to bring up. It's like if you're describing a phone. It's a blue phone... I feel like maybe someone else might feel it's important. But I personally don't feel it's important. (Stuart)

Stuart's answers suggest that, for him, being Black is more of a descriptor rather than a central component of how he views himself. On the MIBI-t item, *if I were to describe myself to someone, one of the first things that I would say is that I'm Black*, Stuart's response was "strongly disagree," to indicate that he views himself as an individual first. Stuart's verbal and MIBI-t responses were aligned with his mother's (Mary) response above regarding her influence on her children's racial identification. When discussing her own socialization experiences, Mary also mentioned personally feeling as though she had been perceived as "not Black enough" while growing up, which influenced how she socialized her own children to think of themselves as individuals first and to not consider how others might try to label their racial identity.

Other adolescents in the study reported high levels of racial centrality, and when asked about whether and why race was an important identifier for them, most answers focused on race being so central in their lives that not being Black would be a sort of loss of self:

> It's important to me because if I wasn't Black, I wouldn't be me. (Christoph, Interview 1)

> I wouldn't want to change my skin color because I'm fine with that way I am... because then you'd lose everything. You'd lose your culture. You'd lose everything. (Jerry, Interview 1)

Private Regard. All adolescents reported high private regard on the MIBI-t. These ratings were also aligned with interview data in which adolescents reported that they had positive feelings about their racial group membership:

> The best thing about being Black is knowing how far Black people have come to be who they are. It's just something we can be proud of. (Noelle, Interview 1)

> The best thing about being Black in America is that you have the courage to talk to other people that's your race... mainly that you get to know other Black people, where they came from. How did they come from this place to other places? It's actually a great way to communicate with other people. I want to know like, have they been through this? Have they been through the same situation I've been through? What was it like for them? (Taylor, Interview 1)

> We have our own culture, our food, everything. It's like, just think of all the things that we've done. It's just important. The reason why I'm so glad to be a Black person is all of what my ancestors have done to help me have this freedom and everything. (Michael, Interview 1)

> Typically, people who are Black have curly hair and you can do anything with it. And I love that! That's my favorite part. White people take the credit [but] Black people actually do the work. Black people are a big part of history. So, I'm proud. I just love who I am. I wouldn't want to change it. (Mia, Interview 1)

Public Regard. The majority of adolescents reported medium levels of public regard on the MIBI-t. However, when asked about how their racial group was viewed by non-Black people, some adolescents noted that members of other racial groups may feel indifferently

towards Black individuals, but reports largely focused on stereotypes and other negative attitudes often applied to Black people:

> Other races probably don't like Black people at all for whatever reason, but then other races don't really care either. (Christoph, Interview 1)
>
> There's always that stereotype that Africa is such a horrible place [with] poor people. But it's not. (Naomi, Interview 1)
>
> There's lots of stereotypes like Black people eat chicken and watermelon and play basketball... or how Africa is always in poverty; it's like diseases and stuff. But that's not true. (Jerry, Interview 1)
>
> They think Black people don't like themselves, don't like who they are. They think that Black people are crazy. They do bad things. They get in trouble. They be on the news. They be shooting people. They be doing all this stuff... but we're trying to defend ourselves! (Sophia, Interview 1)
>
> People assume we're stronger than them. Like in gym class, if it's football or something and one team has more Black kids, the other team's like 'Dang, we don't got no Black kids on our team. We [gonna] lose this!" (Stuart, Interview 1)
>
> Some White people probably think we're thieves and all that. Like we're all bad, and some races might say 'Oh Black people are super-fast, and they can jump super high." Just stereotypical things. (Michael, Interview 1)

Although the adolescents' responses on the MIBI-t indicated medium levels of public regard, their comments during the interviews suggested lower public regard. Michael endorsed the lowest level of public regard on the MIBI-t. Across the two interviews, he also reported the most comments related to how other racial groups have negative feelings towards and are suspicious of Black people:

> Like, my dad taught me, you can't walk too slow or they're gonna think you stole something. Or you can't walk too fast, they'll think you killed someone or something. Walk at your normal pace cause White people always been suspicious or think something is suspicious. (Michael, Interview 1).
>
> [Other races] think the worst of Black people. The rich White people told the poor White people, 'You're still over the Black people because you're White.' That's how they came to hate Black people. And if you have a lot of money and you're Black, there's jealousy from White people. (Michael, Interview 2)

Racial Identity and Discrimination. A central question of this study was to examine the role of racial identity on discrimination experiences. Within this particular sample, there did not appear to be a clear relationship between these two factors. As noted, the majority of participants reported high racial centrality and medium public regard. These similar profiles suggest that participants are alike in their perceptions of their racial identity. However, only four participants reported direct experiences of discrimination.

Of the four participants reporting direct discriminatory experiences Stuart endorsed the lowest level of racial centrality within the group, and Michael endorsed the lowest level of public regard. These two adolescents also reported the most frequent discrimination experiences, despite differences in their racial identity profiles. It is possible that Michael's low public regard was associated with his greater perceptions of discrimination. Although this was not the same for Stuart. In fact, Stuart's low racial centrality may be linked to his increased perceptions of discrimination.

Overall, when comparing reported discrimination experiences and racial identity reports and ratings, no clear pattern emerged to suggest that participants' racial centrality, private regard, or public regard solely played a role in whether or not they experienced discrimination. These findings suggest that there is not just one racial identity domain associated with discriminatory experiences. Rather, the interaction between domains is more likely to influence how individuals perceive, understand, and make sense of discrimination in their lives. Given the study's small sample, definitive conclusions cannot be drawn regarding associations between racial identity and discrimination experiences. Further research is needed to better understand how these factors are linked.

Parents' Support of Racial Identity Development

Similar to discussing socialization related to discrimination experiences, parents were given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they support their children's racial identity development. Most parents' socialization strategies were based on exposure to Black culture through media and other experiences, as well as improving representation in their child's school curriculum:

> I checked their syllabus and automatically looked to see if they have Black authors. I guess in a way, it's subconscious... I take them to different museums and different cultural events... books that they read, pictures, and then we'll talk about the current events or people in the news. We really emphasize the family history. (Robin)

> We are heavily into doing the Sojourner Truth and the [Ain't I A Woman] speech. I do that, and I usually call their school and go do that. I do it at churches too. And we come here to the library or I may get a documentary on TV. I got a whole African American collection, so we read about it and look at films and talk about it. So, we are involved and celebrate and honor our Black heritage. (Eleanor)

> From a cultural perspective we try very hard to keep the Caribbean and the African sense about them. This is your cultural background, and you have to be proud of it. I mean, the food we eat, the music we listen to, the vacations we take. It's from that whole cultural context and getting that to be part of them to being family oriented, extended family oriented. Not getting them to forget even though we're here by ourselves in (state), that they don't forget their families. (Judy)

Parents also reported participation in social activities as a method of fostering racial identity. However, parents differed in their approach to social activities as a socialization strategy:

> Right now, we go to an all-White church. We the only Black people in the church. But I'm empowering my kids because I want them to have that experience. I never had that experience. Growing up, I was always in a predominant Black church. We still go to the Black church, but since we moved over here, our church is like 30 minutes away... [when] we need to get some Black soul music, we just go over to the Black church. (Eleanor)

> I want them to be here (in neighborhood) because I want them to be able to deal in this culture. But I also find it very important to make sure that we are surrounded by other African Americans or Black people. Which is why we go to the church all the way across

> town. It's like almost 30 minutes away... so whenever I have an opportunity to put them in a situation where it's mostly Black people, that's what I do because that's the only other option I have. I don't really want to put them in nearby (majority Black) school, but sometimes I wonder would they thrive there? But then when they go to college, would they be ready? (Kimberly)

Eleanor and Kimberly appear to be expressing similar sentiments in wanting their children to have exposure to both their racial group and the majority group. However, both parents' approaches are slightly different and appear to be based on prior experience as well as current neighborhood/school context. For example, Eleanor's children attend majority Black or racially mixed schools, and thus her socialization efforts are aimed at increasing their exposure to the majority group. This is also based on her own experiences attending majority Black churches. On the other hand, Kimberly and her family live in a predominantly White neighborhood, and her children also attend majority white schools. Therefore, her approach is centered around increasing their exposure to others within their racial group.

DISCUSSION OF PARENTAL RACIAL SOCIALIZATION, ADOLESCENT RACIAL IDENTITY, AND DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES

There are many factors involved in the development of racial identity among adolescents. For participants in this study, parents played a large role in racial identity development. Prior research suggests that factors, such as neighborhoods, schools, and peers also play an important role in racial identity development (Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016), thereby highlighting the importance of exploring parents' own discriminatory experiences and possibly racialized reasons for neighborhood and educational choices. First, findings regarding parents' own discrimination experiences suggest that discrimination is a developmental and likely lifelong experience for Black individuals. In the current study, parents' descriptions of discriminatory

experiences ranged from childhood through adulthood. These parent experiences showed that discrimination is a common and ongoing challenge among Black youth and their families.

Second, findings from this study are aligned with previous research that has shown that parents' discriminatory experiences influence their racial socialization practices (Saleem et al., 2016; Hughes, 2003). Specifically, parents' previous and ongoing experiences with discrimination informed their decisions regarding neighborhood and school choice. In terms of neighborhoods, parents expressed a desire to live in diverse environments that would reduce the likelihood that their children would be "the only" or one of a few Black children in the neighborhood. Findings from Saleem et al. (2016) suggest that neighborhood cohesion, or a positive social climate, is associated with parents' socialization messages. Low neighborhood cohesion may lead parents to convey more distrust messages, as well as more cultural socialization messages. The researchers suggest that the increase in these types of messages may be due to parents' understanding that perceptions of their children may be more negative in neighborhoods with low neighborhood cohesion and increase racial stress (Saleem et al., 2016). It can be assumed that parent participants' desires to live in more diverse neighborhoods was aimed at reducing their children's exposure to neighborhood environments with low cohesion and increased racial stress. This goal is well-intended because Winkler (2010) posited that place and environment are influential for communicating messages to youth regarding their race and ethnicity. This is consistent with PVEST, which notes that neighborhood context is also an important factor in whether adolescents will experience discriminatory stressors and strategies used to respond to these stressors. These findings suggest that the neighborhood in which a child resides, along with interactions with others in and around that neighborhood, convey ideas to youth about racial boundaries, hostility, equity, and justice (Winkler, 2010).

Parents also noted a desire to have their children in diverse school settings with high academic standards and opportunities. However, parents also felt that these desires were sometimes in contrast with one another, or that they had to choose between diversity or academic rigor. Limited research has examined the similarities and differences in these desires between White and non-White parents. Findings from this study suggest that although Black parents' desires for academic rigor are likely similar to White parents' desires, the additional component of diverse school settings may not be as much of a concern for White parents. As Wilson noted, he and Judy felt that there was a trade-off in wanting to place their children in good quality schools while knowing that this meant losing the level of diversity they sought, among both teachers and students. It is worth noting here that research suggests that diversity among teaching staff, more than diversity among the student body, has been found to be more associated with lower levels of discrimination (Seaton & Yip, 2009; Benner & Graham, 2013). In addition to Wilson and Judy's remarks, Tina reported that she and her husband refused to live in certain neighborhoods as they sought to balance their desire for diversity and academically rigorous schools. Finally, Kimberly mentioned that although she and her husband ultimately chose to live within a school district known for rigorous education, she wonders whether her children are missing out on being able to attend the nearby school district with greater diversity. These parent reports suggest that Black parents' search for both diversity and academic rigor might be an additional element of Black parenthood that is not as salient for White parents.

Scholars have repeatedly noted that this added element is simply a component of socialization for Black parents who are tasked with not only socializing their children to be members of the larger society, but also socializing them to understand the history and culture of Blackness in America (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997;

Bennett, 2006). Black parents' experiences with discrimination, in addition to their own socialization experiences, likely provides a roadmap for helping their children navigate a race-based society while cultivating a positive racial identity. As parents noted, some of their socialization practices were learned from their own parents. However, because no two experiences are alike, parents cannot simply use the same strategies from their youth, especially given changes in the sociopolitical climate.

Finally, parent participants' discussion regarding exposing their children to both majority race groups and their own racial group reinforces the notion that Black parents are tasked with preparing their children to successfully operate between two worlds. Parents discussed driving to churches across town to ensure that their children were exposed to their own racial group or to the majority group, depending on who they were surrounded by in their day-to-day environments. Again, this suggests that Black parents must consider factors related to racial identity development that White parents may not. These findings are aligned with García-Coll et al.'s (1996) argument that the development of racial minority children is inherently different from the dominant group because they must effectively navigate a society that diminishes their racial group while also developing a strong sense of self. In doing so, they must also develop both culture-specific and bicultural competences. In addition, other scholars have noted the importance of cross-cultural interactions on racial identity development (Demo & Hughes, 1990). More specifically, Bennett (2006) suggests that parental socialization of racial minority children in managing cross-cultural interactions is necessary for navigating life in a race-based society.

Findings from this study showed that parents play an important role in racial identity development, as is evident through their influence on their children's racial identification.

Adolescents' racial identification was aligned with their parents' reports of how their children would identify. This alignment may have been easier due to similarities among parent and child race as there were no non-Black parents or bi-/multi-racial adolescents in the sample. However, the important finding is that parents' attitudes, values, and behaviors are also ways of transmitting messages to youth regarding who they are and what it means to be Black individuals. Therefore, in addition to helping racial minority children and adolescents navigate discriminatory experiences, parental racial socialization is also critical in helping them to understand and ascribe meaning to their racial group membership (Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016).

Most adolescents in the study had high racial centrality which researchers have found to be common among African American youth (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006). In terms of private regard, research suggests that shifts occur in this domain during transitions in environments. For example, in a longitudinal study, French et al. (2006) found that participants' private regard increased after school transition from elementary to middle school and middle to high school. The authors posited that learning to navigate new environments required participants to incorporate additional information regarding race, ethnicity, and discrimination into their self-concepts. This may, in part, explain why participants in the current study reported higher private regard. However, it is also important to note that these participants and their parents also reported high rates of cultural socialization which likely informs not only a positive view of themselves as Black individuals, but also positive views of their own racial group in general.

In the current study, adolescents reported medium levels of public regard, similar to previous research that has found lower public regard among African American youth compared

to those from other racial/ethnic backgrounds (Altschul et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009). This may be a developmental progression, as prior researchers have found middle and high school to be periods of increased awareness of stereotypes and negative views held by other racial groups toward African Americans (Altschul et al., 2006; Hughes, McGill, Ford, & Tubbs, 2011; Hughes et al., 2011). The lower level of public regard among study participants in relation to their high levels of racial centrality and private regard suggests that they are cognizant of these negative views held by others. Research suggests that participants' public regard may decrease over time as they develop in their understanding of racial dynamics, and as they possibly encounter more discriminatory experiences (Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2009). It is also worth noting that adolescents' interviews revealed views of public regard that appeared to be lower than their responses on the rating scale indicated. It is possible that this was due to response bias on this measure. However, it could also be a coping mechanism for adolescents who may be aware of the many negative stereotypes held about their racial group but may be reluctant to endorse low levels of public regard when explicitly asked on a survey. Overall, this finding suggested that adolescents have a view of public regard that is lower than other racial identity domains. The differences in verbal and quantitative responses points to the need for qualitative explorations of racial identity.

High racial centrality and private regard are often reported by individuals with an *achieved racial identity* status. However, due to the age of the youth participants, and the noted shifts that are likely to occur as they transition into and out of high school, it cannot be assumed that these youth have developed an *achieved identity*. It is more likely that they are in an exploration phase, due to their racial identity support from parents and lack of discriminatory experiences. One recent study found developmental trends in identity exploration which showed

an increase in exploration among adolescents younger than 15 years old and increased identity resolution after age 15 (Umaña-Taylor, Updegraff, Jahromi, & Zeiders, 2015). Overall, the literature suggests that strong and positive racial identity is beneficial for youth and is linked to greater self-esteem and development (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004; Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016), suggesting that although these youth have not “achieved” their racial identity, these positive racial identity profiles are likely to serve as protection against current and future discrimination.

In the current study, adolescents’ racial identity profiles were not clearly linked to their discriminatory experiences. Similarly, studies have yielded mixed findings regarding the association between racial identity and discrimination experiences. For example, some researchers have found greater reports of discrimination among adolescents who report identity exploration and higher racial centrality (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2012). On the other hand, adolescents with high racial centrality also report greater expectation of discrimination (Neblett, Shelton, & Sellers, 2004; Rowley et al., 2008). Additionally, it is unclear whether racial identity defends against or exacerbates the vulnerability associated with discrimination. Some studies suggest that individuals with high racial centrality report more experiences with discrimination (Burrow & Ong, 2010; Greene, Way, & Pahl 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Other studies, however, suggest that individuals who are exploring their racial identity may be more vulnerable when they experience discrimination compared to those with more commitment to their identity whose racial group membership could serve as a buffer (Torres & Ong, 2010; Romero, Edwards, Fryberg, & Orduña, 2014). In a study of African American college students, Swim and colleagues (2003) found that participants with strong racial identification were more likely to report ambiguous discriminatory experiences. However,

findings were less clear when examining the association between racial identity and overall reports of discrimination. The authors speculated that the ambiguous nature of some discriminatory events may have contributed to the lack of relationship between racial identity and overall reports of racist incidents (Swim et al., 2003).

These mixed findings suggest a bidirectional relationship between racial identity and discrimination. Models of racial identity development typically include discriminatory experiences as a catalyst for identity exploration (Jackson, 2001). Therefore, in alignment with PVEST (Spencer, Dupree, and Hartmann, 1997) it is possible that the way in which an adolescent responds to these initial experiences may further influence their racial identity development and experiences with discrimination. For example, as adolescents experience discrimination, they may choose to identify more strongly with their own ethnic group since discrimination is a rejection from the dominant group (Yip, 2018), or they may downplay their identity in an effort to gain acceptance from the dominant group (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). The response that the adolescent chooses and the way that others respond to the adolescents' racial identity identification (or lack thereof) is also very much linked to socialization from their parents and other environmental factors (e.g., school, neighborhood, etc). Thus, determining a clear association between racial identity and discrimination may not be as important as determining positive socialization and environmental factors that can help adolescents understand their racial group membership and ways to navigate discriminatory experiences. In other words, findings from adolescents and their parents in this study, along with prior literature, suggests that there is not a singular right way to raise Black children in a race-based society, and this should not be the ultimate goal of parents or researchers. Instead, there should be continued acknowledgment of the nuances inherent in raising Black children with a focus on identifying the

factors that can support parents in their significant role of guiding their children throughout development to affirm their racial identity, understand the reality of discrimination, and successfully navigate these experiences.

CHAPTER 7:

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Implications and Future Directions

Findings from this study have important implications for Black adolescents' experiences with and responses to discrimination, as well as parental socialization for discriminatory experiences and racial identity development. These findings also have implications for educators, parents, and researchers, who all play critical roles in the development of racial minority youth. This work can and should inform both the practical aspects of educating and parenting racial minority youth and the methodology for examining their lived experiences.

The reported prevalence and frequency of personally experiencing discrimination within this sample suggests that these 11- to 14-year-old adolescents have limited awareness of covert types of discrimination that they experience, which may lead them to underreport their experiences. Although this lack of awareness may appear to be protective because it may reduce the negative effects of discrimination, it is important to note that these adolescents appeared to have a sense that certain experiences made them feel uncomfortable even when not labeled as discriminatory. These uncomfortable feelings indicate that adolescents still experience the affective and cognitive costs of discrimination despite having low awareness or a limited understanding of this discomfort. These costs are critical when considering how damaging early discriminatory experiences can be for racial minority youth (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Seaton et al., 2011), especially if they are not supported in understanding or managing these experiences. In the absence of effective coping strategies, adolescents are likely to dismiss discriminatory experiences, but the memory of the event remains and may result in painful awareness or recollection in the long term, which likely poses socio-emotional consequences.

A major overarching implication of this study is the need for increased conversations about the racialized and discriminatory experiences of children and adolescents. Findings from this research suggest that early adolescence is an important developmental period for increasing awareness of and experiences with discrimination. The data regarding direct and vicarious experiences of discrimination revealed that adolescents are indirectly exposed to discrimination even if they have not yet had direct experiences. These results also point to the importance of both educators and parents discussing these issues with adolescents to promote a nuanced understanding of this phenomenon and to encourage positive psychological and racial identity outcomes.

Implications for Educators

Although the current study was focused on adolescents and their parents, many of the findings have educational implications for improving school climate, feelings of belongingness, and teacher-student relationships. Notably, many of the reported discriminatory experiences described by adolescents occurred in schools, where discrimination was often in the form of harsh/differential treatment or discipline. This finding was not surprising, given the vast literature on racial disproportionality in school disciplinary actions (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2014). However, what this study adds to the scholarship is the confirmation that racial minority adolescents are acutely aware of how they and same-race peers are unfairly treated by teachers and other school personnel. This suggests that "colorblind" ideologies often employed by schools are actually detrimental to creating a safe and supportive environment for these youth (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2014). Use of colorblind ideologies are likely to exacerbate the consequences of experiencing discrimination by making it more difficult for youth to name their experience and find supportive adults. These ideologies can produce greater

cognitive and affective demands on these youth when their experiences are in direct contrast with their school's positions on race and racial issues and are likely to be dismissed. In effect, colorblind principles in education solely put the onus of "resolving" discriminatory experiences on adolescents during a period in which they may already be struggling to understand these experiences.

Although adolescent participants' discriminatory experiences occurred most often in the school setting, they reported a reluctance to seek support from teachers and other school staff. Findings from this study wholly support the need for schools and educators to also be more proactive in diversity and multicultural efforts that increase awareness and comfort with race-based discussions (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2014). These efforts should assist teachers in recognizing their role in perpetuating discrimination both directly and indirectly (e.g., by allowing other students to enact discrimination without consequences). Youth in the study also noted feelings that school staff were not helpful when they did seek support due to possibly dismissing or making excuses for their experiences. Thus, these multicultural efforts should aim to reduce the inclination to rationalize and dismiss students' experiences, as this may be more detrimental and lead to mistrust from racial minority students. Because discrimination is perceived, teachers should be trained to listen to, acknowledge, and validate students' experiences.

Study findings also point to a need for diversity initiatives among students. Not only did adolescents report discrimination based on teacher-student power differentials, but they also reported the possibility of power differentials among students. Studies have shown that by elementary and middle school youth have an awareness of social and racial group dynamics (Dulin-Keita et al., 2011). This suggests that they are aware of which social identity groups are

granted more power in their school context. In the classroom environment, this awareness implies that teachers must address, rather than ignore, peer-to-peer discrimination when it occurs. At the schoolwide level, administrators must consider how their climate, policies, and practices may actually reinforce discrimination. Student initiatives should acknowledge the occurrence of discrimination and aim towards improving students' understanding, acceptance, and celebration of social group differences. The interactions that racial minority adolescents have with their peers and teachers at school may have implications for racial identity development. Although the majority of participants in the study reported high racial centrality and overall positive identity development, it can be inferred that an unsupportive and discriminatory school environment could be damaging for youth in this developmental period. For example, the participants' awareness of the intersectional discriminatory experiences demonstrated an awareness of identity markers that are most often treated unfairly (e.g., being both Black and male). This awareness could lead adolescents to view themselves or their racial group as "less than," especially if parental socialization is minimal.

A question that was not directly answered through this study was the role of school composition in discriminatory experiences. Study findings did not provide support for this association, and other scholars have found that diversity in school composition is not enough to eliminate discrimination in the school setting (Rowley et al, 2008; Dovidio et al., 2010). However, this does not mean that increasing diversity is not valuable. As noted earlier, youth tend to use peer support-seeking strategies when placed in environments with greater representation. Nevertheless, simply increasing diversity in schools is unlikely to be beneficial in resolving racial issues without a more proactive approach to guide staff and students towards addressing and understanding these issues.

Overall, the results of this study point to a need for changes in educational policy and practice. These youths' experiences provided clear evidence that discrimination can result from institutionalized practices that are experienced as oppressive and make it difficult for students of color to learn and feel supported at school. This calls for educational administrators to critically examine current policies and practices and how they may be fostering inequity. New policies that address inequities in discipline, instruction, and curriculum need to be developed to reduce discriminatory practices and affirm students' identities and experiences. Disciplinary and instructional inequities can be addressed by countering the myth of colorblind ideologies, providing multicultural training, and increasing bias awareness to reduce differential treatment. In terms of curriculum, there is a need to ensure fair and accurate representation of marginalized groups in literature and content. Parents in the study noted that they often examined their children's syllabi and coursework to check for accurate representation of Black individuals in their learning. They also sometimes felt that they had to supplement their children's learning or engage their children in unlearning what they were taught in schools. This added load on parents of Black children can be mitigated by educational policy that reduces misinformation and negative spotlighting regarding issues of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Schools and educators should partner with parents to develop and implement these policy changes in order to support the learning and development of racial minority students.

Implications for Youth and Parents

Although adolescence is a developmental period marked by increasing autonomy from parents (Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1992; French, Seidman, Allen & Aber, 2006), findings indicated that parents continue to play an important role in supporting their children through discriminatory experiences and racial identity development. Many researchers have commented

on the need for parents to prepare their racial minority children for life in a racially stratified society, which requires them to impart messages that honestly convey the challenges children might face without impeding the pride and hope necessary for positive (racial identity) development (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Peters, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006). These racial socialization practices have been widely associated with positive outcomes for racial minority adolescents (Stevenson, 2014; Saleem et al., 2016; Caughy et al., 2002; McHale et al., 2006; Burt et al., 2012; Harris-Britt et al., 2007). From the current study, it was clear that adolescents benefited from having conversations regarding racism and discrimination with their parents. Results from both adolescents and parents provided ideas on how to engage in these conversations with youth given what could be considered developmentally appropriate limitations.

As parents noted in the study, discussing issues of race and discrimination with youth can be challenging due to the "loss of innocence" that is likely to occur. But as noted previously, ParentCrit researchers suggest, "too early is better than too late" when having these conversations (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018). This means that parents of racial minority children are encouraged to have these conversations with their children (regardless of whether they self-identify as a racial minority individual themselves), as they have been found to help youth better understand their experiences and decrease the possibility of harmful consequences (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Stevenson, 2014; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Lee & Ahn, 2013). In having these conversations, parents are also encouraged to incorporate examples of covert discrimination, as this was the most often cited form of reported discrimination. In this developmental period, adolescents appear to have adequate knowledge of overt forms of discrimination and receive exposure to these forms through the media. However, the prevalence

of overt discrimination experiences is likely lower than covert experiences (Hughes et al., 2016). Thus, increasing conversations regarding covert discrimination might be more beneficial in preparing them for future experiences, and could lighten the cognitive load required for making sense of ambiguous events. These conversations also have implications for increasing adolescents' awareness of the different types and forms of discrimination and their responses. On a few occasions, adolescents in the study mentioned that talking with their parents about covert discriminatory experiences helped them understand an ambiguous situation (e.g., Noelle and Michael were able to recognize why they were followed in stores after discussions with their parents).

Parents reported that they often used media or other vicarious experiences of discrimination as entry into these conversations with their children. Parents also reported that they gained awareness about their children's discriminatory experiences through observations and co-experiences but did not report using these real-life experiences as conversation starters. In fact, parents sometimes noted that their children were not aware that they had experienced discrimination when it was directly observed by parents. Because media examples of discrimination tend to focus on overt types, it is possible that using or pointing out these covert personal examples would be more relevant and applicable for youth in their understanding of discrimination. However, there are limits to this approach as research suggests that the ambiguous nature of covert discrimination makes it harder to determine whether an experience was truly discriminatory even among adults (Sellers et al., 2006; Anderson et al., 2019). Therefore, although parents are encouraged to increase conversations regarding covert discrimination with their children, there should be an understanding that these conversations may be more difficult for their children to grasp. Despite these challenges, research suggests that

having these difficult conversations are better than not having them at all (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018; Ward, 2006).

Study findings also highlighted the need and importance of explicit discussions about how to respond to discrimination. Many parents in the study reported that, although they often had conversations about race and discrimination with their children, they did not often have conversations regarding how to respond to everyday racial experiences. It is worth noting here that extensive research has shown that parents of racial minority, especially Black, children have conversations regarding how to respond to police threat and violence (Montoya & Sarcedo, 2018; DePouw & Matias, 2016; Hughes, 2003). However, the lack of discussions regarding how to respond to seemingly lower level discrimination, as well as the mismatch between parents' desired responses and children's actual responses warrants further exploration and guidance. Lack of socialization for responding to discrimination has implications for what children may do when they experience the discrimination that their parents have prepared them for.

Adolescents reported using "silence" and "cooperation" as strategies for responding to discrimination, which in many ways was found to be developmentally appropriate and strategic at times given the constraints that they faced, such as difficulties in determining the discriminatory nature of their experience, lack of power, and possibility of further discrimination. Parents noted that they would prefer their children to seek support when they experience discrimination, and although adolescents reported seeking support from parents and peers, they were reluctant to seek support from teachers and recognized that not all forms of support seeking are beneficial to them. Given that school is an environment in which children spend a considerable amount of time, parents should consider whether their response messages to their children are feasible in their educational environment. Implications for improving school

and classroom climates are discussed later but given that many adolescents did not feel supported by teachers and school administrators, parents need to both increase and tailor their socialization practices regarding response strategies. It is worth noting that many parents in the study were proactive with their children's schools to reduce the likelihood of discrimination experiences through actions such as ensuring high visibility in schools through their presence, making themselves known to teachers and administrators, or reviewing the representation in curricula. Along with these approaches, parents may benefit from encouraging their children to openly communicate discrimination experiences with them, to enable parents to be advocates for their children at school if their children do not feel supported by their school/teachers.

A noted challenge of socializing youth for responding to discrimination is their understanding of what strategies to use and when. This finding is not surprising given that researchers have proposed that the same strategy may be adaptive or maladaptive given the situation (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Wakefield & Hudley, 2005; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012). Therefore, these discussions between parents and children regarding how to respond to discrimination should also include caveats and examples of when a response may or may not be beneficial. In accordance with PVEST Theory and the García Coll Model of Developmental Competencies (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997; García-Coll et al, 1996), considerations should be made about the child's individual and personality characteristics (e.g., temperament) that may influence their response style and how others may perceive the child. In other words, parents may consider decreasing messages of verbal confrontation for a child who may be perceived as threatening for responding in this manner. Adolescents' response patterns suggest that parents should have conversations with their children to better understand and support them

in learning adaptive ways of responding to discrimination that also maintain their child's sense of agency and safety. Because it is an impossible feat for parents to consider all possible scenarios and responses with their children, perhaps teaching the use of strategic silence and cooperation is an adaptive strategy for parents as long as they maintain open communication with their children to discuss rather than ruminate on their discriminatory experiences. In order to create this open communication, parents should also understand that that their reaction to their children's responses can inform future responses. Although adolescents reported seeking support from their parents, some reported decreased effectiveness of this response strategy based on their parents' real or imagined reactions.

Adolescents' preference for seeking support among teachers and peers with similar identity markers affirmed their parents' desires for diversity within the school and neighborhood setting. This finding has implications for parents as they search for schools and neighborhoods for their children. It appears that diversity not only expands racial minority children's social circles but may also provide greater opportunities to find supportive adults and peers when faced with discrimination. Although parents' desires for increased diversity in schools and neighborhoods appeared to be burdensome, it should be noted that their efforts are supported by research. Specifically, studies have linked peer support-seeking strategies to positive outcomes (Biachi et al, 2004; Brondolo et al., 2009; Clark, Benkert, & Flack, 2006), and adolescents have been reported to use this strategy more when they are around peers who can share similar experiences (Ayres & Leaper, 2012). Thus, it can be inferred that opportunities to use this strategy may be reduced if these adolescents are in environments with little to no representation of peers with similar racial characteristics. These study findings lend support for parents'

continued efforts to seek diversity and representation in their children's social and academic environments.

Many researchers have examined direct socialization methods used by parents of racial minority children to instill messages related to cultural/racial pride, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust (Nasir, 2012; Hughes et al., 2006; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Burt et al., 2012). These forms of socialization were also noted in the current study. However, an interesting finding in the current study was parents' use of indirect and informal socialization practices (e.g., advocating for children in school, being vigilant). Although researchers have noted that socialization practices such as advocacy are used among Black parents (Perry, Steele, & Hillard, 2003; Madrid, 2008; DePouw & Matias, 2016), research is scarce on whether and how these informal strategies serve as a protective factor against discriminatory experiences among racial minority youth. Of course, it is impossible for parents to completely eliminate discrimination in their children's lives, but perhaps these indirect socialization practices are linked to youths' lack of reported discrimination experiences during this developmental period (in addition to their low level of awareness). Regardless of whether these practices reduce discrimination experiences, parents and their children shared an orientation towards vigilance as a way to try to prevent future discrimination. This vigilance suggests two things: first, the experience and management of discriminatory experiences is a lifelong process for Black individuals, and second, children may be modeling their use of vigilance from their parents. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that children are likely to learn about discrimination and how to respond from observing their parents. Therefore, parents should be mindful of messages they may indirectly convey to their children about how to respond to discrimination. This also has implications for how parents respond to their own discriminatory experiences when it is witnessed by their child.

These vicarious experiences could serve as entry into conversations regarding the nuances of responding to discrimination.

Findings revealed that direct and indirect socialization methods are also involved in racial identity development. Adolescents reported their racial identification even when parents did not have formal conversations with them about how to racially identify. This suggests that whether or not parents have explicit conversations with their children about how to identify, youth in this developmental period are likely to incorporate their parents' thoughts into their own identity. However, it was clear that explicit conversations about issues such as cultural/racial pride and the contributions of Black people in history informed youths' ideas about racial centrality, as well as public and private regard. This implies that, despite increasing interest in peer relationships during this period, parents continue to play a major role in their children's racial identity development. Much like socialization for discriminatory experiences, having open conversations about racial identity, directly or indirectly, has implications for how youth understand themselves and their racial group membership.

Implications for Research and Future Directions

As noted in the literature review, research on racial and ethnic discrimination has been largely focused on high school students and beyond (Sellers et al., 2006; Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999). Findings from the current study highlight the importance and need for qualitative studies with youth in middle school and younger. It is clear that discrimination is also a childhood phenomenon with developmental implications. Although there are similarities in child and adult experiences of discrimination (e.g., higher rates of covert more than overt discrimination), children's developmental level and growing awareness make their experiences unique indicating a need for more research among children and youth. In addition, the

underreported prevalence of discrimination among youth in the sample suggests that use of qualitative methodology may improve and enrich our understanding of these experiences. Finally, in alignment with previous research (Herda, 2015; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Hughes & Johnson, 2001), this study highlighted the prevalence of vicarious discriminatory experiences. These findings suggest that youth are very much exposed to discrimination through school and media, especially given the current political climate. Qualitative explorations of the influence of vicarious discrimination may further illuminate how these experiences are involved in the development of awareness for youth prior to first-hand experiences with discrimination.

In addition to qualitative studies, literature should increase utilization of parent-child dyads when examining racial socialization practices. This study demonstrated that there may be a mismatch between parents and their children in terms of awareness of discrimination, as well as socialized versus actual responses. This finding suggests that research focused solely on parent or adolescent participants may miss key components of racial socialization that extend beyond the conversations that parents have with their children. Using parent-child dyads is likely to aid in understanding the enactment of these socialization practices. More research, both qualitative and quantitative, is needed to further examine similarities and differences in socialization practices among parents and their children.

Literature regarding responses to discrimination has often focused on the maladaptive nature of passive responses, such as silence or cooperation (Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012). However, these responses appeared to be somewhat effective for adolescents in the study, at least in terms of reducing further discrimination or consequences. Although these passive strategies did not appear to improve adolescents' emotional functioning, the effectiveness of these responses in the short term suggests that perhaps a developmental

approach might be needed for understanding discriminatory responses among adolescents. This approach would be aligned with adolescents' developmental understanding of discrimination at that time and would also consider the limitations that adolescents might face in using more active strategies, such as verbal confrontation. In other words, although ideal responses to discrimination often involve responding to the perpetrator or seeking support from trusted adults, there are developmentally appropriate reasons for why children and adolescents might not use these responses. For example, these responses often require recognition of the experience as discriminatory, which has been noted to be varied among this population. Additionally, children and adolescents may not have the power or the environmental support (e.g., teachers they can trust) necessary to engage in these responses. Overall, there is ample literature generally focused on the most adaptive response styles, but research is needed to understand how these may or may not apply to youth.

Prior research has found support for positive outcomes related to direct socialization practices and conversations that parents have with their children about managing discrimination experiences and supporting racial identity development (Nasir, 2012; Hughes et al., 2006). However, current study findings suggest that parents engage in many forms of indirect socialization practices (e.g., advocating at school, being vigilant) that may be implicated in their children's discrimination experiences (or lack thereof). This study was not able to establish evidence for a link between indirect socialization practices and adolescents' experiences. However, parents' descriptions of these practices imply that they may be engaging in behaviors that, at the very least, reduce the amount of discrimination that their children may encounter. Future research should further explore the nature of indirect socialization practices on prevalence and frequency of adolescents' discrimination experiences.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations in this study are largely related to the nature of the sample and participant recruitment. I discuss these from the perspective of both qualitative and quantitative methodology.

Sample. The sample of 16 total participants (9 adolescents, 7 parents) could be considered a limitation from a quantitative perspective, but the number of participants was well-aligned with the phenomenological approach of the study. This qualitative methodology aims to deeply understand the lived experiences of participants rather than to draw broad conclusions. Thus, concerns about generalizability are less germane from this perspective.

The study did, however, include two sets of twins, which reduced the number of parents in the study. This could potentially limit the parent data, but it also provided the opportunity to explore the possibility that parenting practices varied, depending on the child. The decision to include each twin was also made to reduce the sampling bias that would result from the researcher arbitrarily choosing one twin to participate. Although not by design, the inclusion of both twins also provided an opportunity to capture the unique experiences of adolescents who attended the same school and were members of the same family.

Recruitment. Another potential limitation was the use of convenience and snowball sampling for recruitment. Limitations of this recruitment strategy include participant bias and non-representative sampling of the larger target demographic (e.g., sample is limited to parents within similar social groups). This sampling technique, however, was also well aligned with qualitative methodology because, as mentioned above, the goal of phenomenological research is to understand rather than to generalize findings across the population. Additionally, purposive

sampling was used to vary participant recruitment and mitigate bias by including adolescents from different school demographics.

Another way that the sample may have been selective is from inviting parents to participate in the study through in-person recruitment and flyers through local youth organizations in which their children participated. It is likely that parents who opted to participate in the study have similar characteristics and dispositions that led them to enroll their children in the study. For example, study findings support the view that parents in the study were those who were mindful and deliberate in their socialization practices, and who were actively involved in their children's lives and thus were aware of their children's discriminatory experiences.

In addition, there may be questions regarding whether participants who were recruited through a Black youth mentorship program, a socializing agent, were primed to think more consciously about issues of racial discrimination. This was considered unlikely, however, as over half of the participants did not report experiences of discrimination, and most did not indicate an awareness of covert types of discrimination.

Another limitation is that all parents in the sample identified as Black or African American, similar to their children. Findings from this study were meant to illuminate socialization practices among parents of Black children, but the study sample only included Black parents of Black children. It is important to recognize that Black children can be raised by adults with different racial identities. The homogeneity of this sample's parents poses limitations regarding the range of responses concerning parents' socialization practices and how their own racial identity informed these practices. Furthermore, although an inclusionary criterion for adolescents in the sample was that they self-identified as Black or African American, there were

no children of multi-racial identity in the sample who could also have identified as Black or African American. Youth identifying as multiracial or having parent(s) of a different race have distinctive experiences, who also need to be studied. It is vital to recognize the homogeneity in this sample, in keeping with the CRT tenet of anti-essentialism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001); the goal was to capture the unique lived experiences of these adolescents, rather than to draw specific conclusions about Black or African American children and their parents.

Methods. The use of interviews and the MIBI-t survey could be viewed as a methodological limitation, because they relied on participants' memories of past events and their perceptions of those events. From a phenomenological approach, however, the goal is to elicit the meaning that participants make and thus, interviews and surveys are the appropriate way to understand the lived experiences of parents and children in the study.

The interpretation of findings from the MIBI-t (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008) questionnaire was limited by the small sample size which prevented performing statistical tests. Although this restricted the inferences that could have been drawn about the aggregate data, the value of its inclusion was in comparing the questionnaire and qualitative reports of racial identity for each participant.

This study examined the unique perspectives of middle school adolescents regarding their experiences with and responses to discrimination. It also explored parents' racial socialization practices, along with adolescents' racial identity development. Findings demonstrated that discrimination is a phenomenon that Black youth experience both directly and indirectly and that parents are tasked with preparing them to manage these experiences from an early age. Although this can appear to be a difficult reality for Black children, parents can play a valuable role in helping them to navigate these experiences. During this developmental period, youth varied in

their awareness and understanding of discrimination, but this did not shield them from experiencing discrimination that is likely to affect their social and emotional well-being. It is also important to consider that adolescents' responses to these experiences may be age appropriate, rather than "ideal." Multiple factors, such as ambiguity of the situation and power dynamics, were found to influence adolescents' use of passive response strategies, despite parents' encouragement of and socialization towards active responses. Parents engaged in a variety of direct and indirect methods of socializing their children about discriminatory experiences. Their racial socialization practices are vital for helping youth understand and respond to discrimination to reduce negative outcomes, increase resilience, and develop positive identities. Future research is needed to increase opportunities for youth with marginalized identities to tell their own stories and provide valuable insight regarding their discriminatory experiences and sense-making of this phenomenon.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Figures

Figure 1: A Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Spencer, 1995)

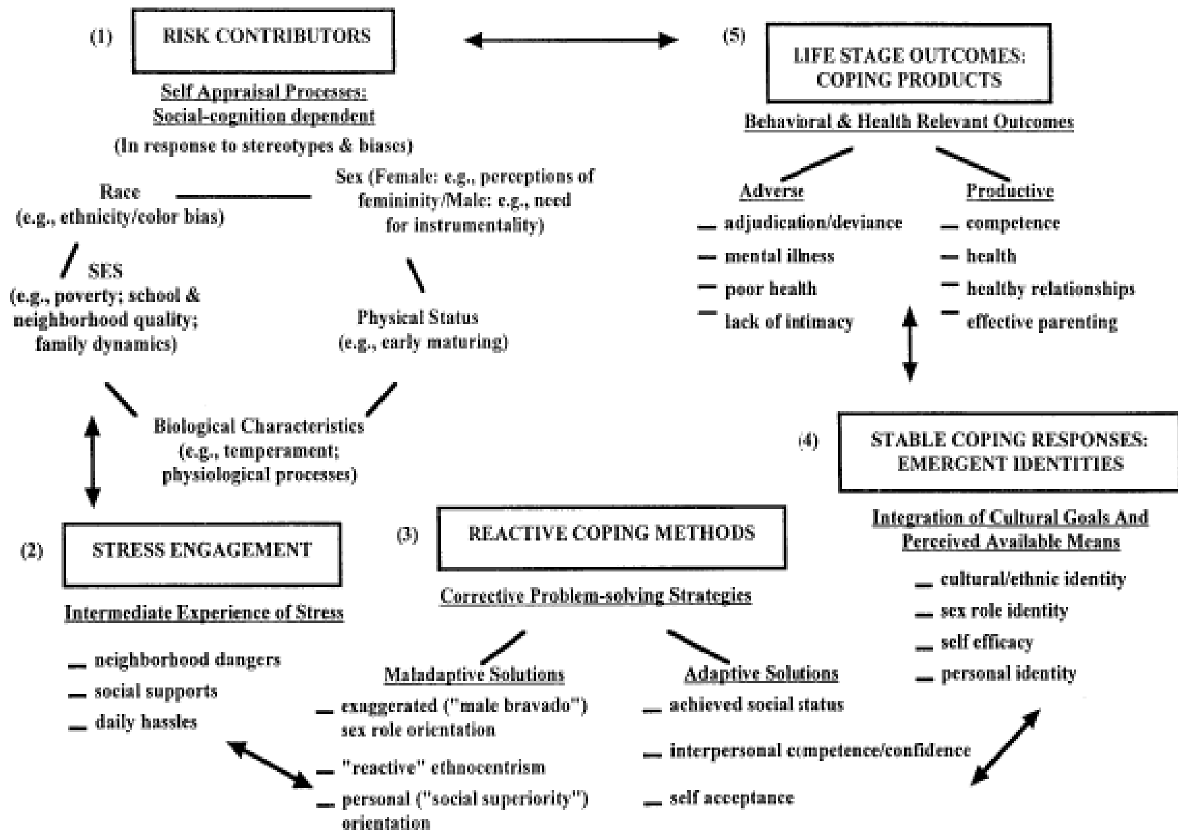
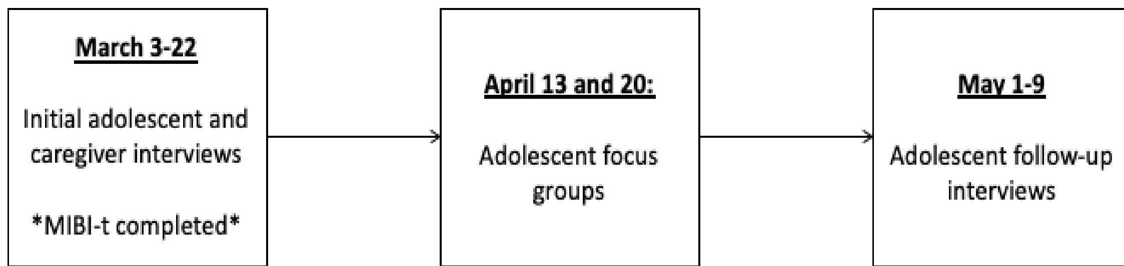


Figure 2: Study Data Collection Timeline



APPENDIX B

Background Questionnaire

Please only fill out this questionnaire if you have consented/assented to participate in the study. This information will be kept confidential and is for research purposes only.

1. Name of Person Completing Form: ____________________________ (check one)

   Mother ________ Father ________ Grandparent _______ Guardian ________

2. City of Residence ______________________

3. Adolescent Child's Name________________________________

4. Child's Age _____________ Date of Birth (month/year) ________________

5. Child's School ____

6. Child's Grade (Fall 2018) ___________

7. Child's Gender (select one): Male ____ Female ____ Other (specify) ___________

8. Has your child been diagnosed with any cognitive or emotional impairments? (check one)

   Yes______ No______

9. Your Race (Check all that apply):

   African American/Black __________

   White/Caucasian __________

   Asian American __________

   American Indian/Native American __________

   Multi-racial (please specify by marking above) __________

   Other (please specify) __________

10. Child's Race (check all that apply):

    African American/Black __________

White/Caucasian __________

Asian American __________

American Indian/Native American __________

Multi-racial (please specify) __________

Other (please specify) __________

11. How does your child self-identify his/her race when asked?

African American/Black __________

White/Caucasian __________

Asian American __________

American Indian/Native American __________

Multi-racial (please specify) __________

Other (please specify) __________

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Chim Okoroji, and I am a doctoral student at Michigan State University in the School Psychology program. I am studying African American/Black middle school adolescents' experiences with discrimination, and I am inviting you and your middle school-age child to participate in this research.

Purpose of Research: The goal of this study is to better understand Black middle school adolescents' experiences with discrimination, as well as parenting practices. As discrimination has become more common, it is important to understand young adolescents' experiences and ways of responding. A total of 9 to 12 adolescents and one or both of their parents will be selected from those returning consent forms to take part in this study.

What You Will Do: Your participation would involve completing a short background questionnaire and an individual interview. Your adolescent child would participate in two individual interviews, complete a questionnaire on racial identity, and have the opportunity to participate in an adolescent focus group. To determine your eligibility for the study and to provide participant information, parents first complete a short (5 minute) background questionnaire. The separate individual interviews will ask you and your adolescent to describe your experiences with discrimination, such as how, when, and where it occurred and how you responded. In addition, questions will be asked about you and your adolescent's racial identity. The initial interviews with you and your adolescent will each take about one hour and will be at a location of your choice (for example, at your home, or at another location, such as a local library, church, or community center). Your adolescent would also participate in a follow-up interview to obtain additional information and seek clarification, and to complete a racial identity survey. This will take approximately 45 minutes. The focus group interview will be conducted with all interested adolescents at a neutral location, such as a community center or local library, and will also take approximately one hour. All individual and focus group interviews will be audiotaped and later transcribed using code names in place of any identifying information. You will receive a total of $20 in gift cards for your participation in the interview. Your adolescent will receive a total of $20 in gift cards for completing the initial and follow-up interview, and an additional $10 gift card if he/she chooses to participate in the focus group interview. When interviewing your adolescent, individually and during the focus group, I ask that you be on site, nearby in the same building. If you would feel more comfortable being in the room during the interview with your adolescent, you are welcome to do so. You and your adolescent may opt out of any question, interview, or part of the study at any time.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Your identities will be kept confidential. Your name will be removed and replaced with a code when reporting information from your interviews. The keys that link that code to your name will be securely kept separate from the data. You and your adolescent will be assigned an ID code which will be used in the interviews and survey. We make every effort to keep your data confidential to the maximum extent possible according to

law, but there are certain situations where we have to disclose your data, such as threats of harm to self or others. To protect your confidentiality, all data will be kept in locked files and on computers that are password protected in the researcher's home office for a minimum of three years after the close of the project. Only the appointed researchers and the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) will have access to the research data. The contact information will be kept separate from the interview responses and destroyed when data collection is completed. These steps will be taken so that no one except the researcher and university staff, whose job is to ensure appropriate research practices, can have access to information that links your name with the data. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but all identities of all research participants will remain confidential.

Potential Benefits and Risks: This study has several potential benefits. This research can increase adolescents' self-awareness about challenging experiences related to being African American/Black, and sources of coping. The study gives them an opportunity share their stories about discrimination and can draw attention to the positive ways that they respond. In addition, participation in the focus group can create an opportunity for your adolescent to connect with other peers with similar experiences. There is minimal risk to you and your adolescent from participating in the study, however, questions about discrimination and racial identity may produce discomfort or negative emotions as you or your adolescent think about and discuss these experiences. If you or your adolescent needs to talk with someone about these reactions, a list of counseling and support resources will be provided at the end of the interviews. I would be happy to talk with you further should you have questions about your adolescent's participation in the study.

Your Right to Participate or Withdraw: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. This means that you are free to choose whether or not you want to participate in the study, and that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. You may also refuse to answer certain questions without consequence.

Costs and Compensation for Participating: There is no cost to participate in the study. If you and your child decide to participate, the participating parent will receive a total of $20 and your adolescent child will receive $20 over the course of the study. The participating parent will receive $20 after the first interview. Your adolescent will receive $10 after the first interview, and another $10 after the follow-up interview. Your adolescent will also have the opportunity to receive an additional $10 for participating in the voluntary focus group. This means that your adolescent could receive $30 total for participating in all aspects of the study.

Contact Information for Questions or Concerns:

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

If you have any concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury (i.e., physical, psychological, social, financial, or otherwise), please contact the researchers: Chimereodo Okoroji, M.A., email: okorojic@msu.edu or Evelyn Oka, Ph.D., evoka@msu.edu.; phone 517-432-0843; mail: 620 Farm Lane, Room 439, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. Your signature is also your voluntary agreement to allow your child to participate in the research study.

______________________________	______________________
Parent's Name (printed)	Relation to Child (e.g., Mother)
______________________________	______________________
Parent's Consenting Signature	Date

____

Adolescent Child's Name (printed)

Contact Information (For communication about research only; will not be shared)

____

____

Mailing Address

______________________	______________________
Phone	Email Address

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. Oka.

Sincerely,

Chimereodo Okoroji, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, School Psychology
Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education
College of Education
Michigan State University

APPENDIX D

ASSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Hi! My name is Chim Okoroji, and I am a student at Michigan State University. Right now, I am trying to learn about African American/Black adolescents' experiences with discrimination. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before, I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

First, I am going to interview you and ask you some questions to learn about your experiences and what you think. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions; this is not a test. This first interview will take about one hour. I will be audio-recording your responses and taking notes. When we finish, I will give you a $10 gift card. Second, I will ask you to be in a focus group with other kids around your age, that will also take about one hour. I will give you a $10 gift card after this focus group interview. Third, we'll meet one more time so that I can ask you some follow-up questions. This follow-up interview will take about 45 minutes. After this second interview, I will give you a $10 gift card. By being in this study, you will help me understand how African American/Black adolescents experience and respond to discrimination.

When I interview you, I will ask one of your parents to be at home if we meet there, or in the same building if we meet in the community. I will not be telling your parents how you answered the questions, but you can tell them if you'd like. When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell who I'm talking about. I will make every effort to keep your responses confidential, but if you tell me about threats of harm to yourself or others, I have to report that.

Your mom/dad/guardian has given me permission for you to be in my study, but if you do not want to participate, you do not have to. What you decide won't make any difference in how people think about you. I will not get upset, and no one else will be upset if you do not want to be in the study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you want to be in the study now, but change your mind later, that's okay. You can stop at any time. You can also let me know if you do not want to answer any questions that I ask you during the interview. If there is anything you don't understand, please let me know and I can explain it to you.

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of right now, you can ask your parents to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like to be in my study?

Name of Child: ______________________________

Child's Voluntary Response to Participation:

Signature of Child: __________________________________ Date: __________________

Printed Name of Child: ______________________________

Signature of Researcher: ____________________________ Date: __________________

APPENDIX E

Adolescent Individual Interview Protocol

Table 4: Adolescent Individual Interview Protocol

<table>
<tr><td>Introduction/Rapport</td><td>Introduce myself (Remind participants that they can choose to answer or not answer any questions, and there are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know what you think). Discuss limits to confidentiality.

Get to Know You Questions
Tell me a little bit about yourself?
What do you like to do for fun? (Other interests?)
What activities/clubs are you part of? What do you do in your free time?
How would you describe yourself to other people?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Neighborhood, Community, and School Experiences</td><td>What's it like being a middle school student? How do you spend your time at school?
What's your school like? What is school like for you?
Favorite subject, etc? Why?
What extracurricular activities are you involved in?
What kinds of things do you do with your friends?
(How is) What do you think about being in middle school? What's great, and not so great?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defining Discrimination</td><td>I'm interested in studying discrimination, which is something a lot of people experience. I think it's important to hear what people your age think about this.
How would you define discrimination?
Define if they are not sure: A lot of people would define discrimination as being treated unfairly based on some part of who you are (that you can't change), like your identity, how you look, or groups that you belong to. It can be actions, like how people act toward you, or words that they say (how they say it). Does that make sense? Add fictional example</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vicarious Discrimination Follow-up Questions</td><td>Now that we're talked about what discrimination is:
Have you ever seen anyone else being treated unfairly (parent, sibling, friend, other family, etc.)? Tell me more about that situation. Why do you think that person was treated unfairly?
What did you think about this situation? How did it make you feel? Did you (want to) respond in some way?
Did you talk with anyone about this situation? Why or why not? What did they say? Was it helpful?</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4 (cont'd)

	• Did you talk to your parents about this situation? Why or Why not? What are some things that you talk about (i.e., how do they tell you to respond? Do they talk to you about their own experiences? Or how other people might treat you because of _________)? • Have you thought about how you would respond if something similar happened to you? Do you worry that something like this might happen to you? **If not,** move to questions about media representations of discrimination.
Discrimination in the Media	• Have you ever seen anyone being treated unfairly in the media? This can be on tv, online, or on social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.). • Tell me more about that situation. What happened? Who was involved? How did you feel when you saw it? What did you think when you saw it? What did you do after you saw it? • Did you talk to/with anyone about what you saw? What did you talk about? Was it helpful to talk to someone about it?
Experiences with Discrimination	We're been talking about other people experiencing discrimination, but now I'm going to ask you some questions about times when you might have experienced discrimination. This can be hard for some people to talk about, but a lot of people have experienced this. I just want to know what it's like for kids your age. • Can you think of a time when you experienced discrimination? When you were treated unfairly? • **If so,** tell me more about that situation. What happened? Why do you think you were treated unfairly? Where were you? Who were you with? **If not,** Hmmmm… I wonder why. Why do you think you haven't experienced any discrimination?
Discrimination Follow-up Questions	• How did that make you feel? • What did you think about that? OR What were you thinking? • What did you do? What did you say? • How did that (your response) make you feel? Do you think it was helpful for you, OR a good way to respond? Would you do that again? • Why do you think you responded the way you did? • Did you do anything else afterwards? • Knowing what you know now, would you do anything differently?

Table 4 (cont'd)

	• Did you talk to anyone about this experience? Why or Why not? Who did you talk to about it? What did the person say? Was it helpful? • Did you tell your parent(s) about this? • *Do you talk to your parent(s) about experiences like this? Why or Why not? What are some things that you talk about (i.e., how do they tell you to respond? Do they talk to you about their own experiences? Or how other people might treat you because of _________)? • Do you wish you would have responded differently? What would you do now if a similar situation happened? • How often do you experience unfair treatment? Where does it happen the most? And with whom? • Do you think about a similar situation happening again? How often do you think about this? Does it worry you?
Intersectionality	Sometimes people feel they are treated unfairly because of their gender (boy or girl), race, or religion (exclude the identifier that the child already talked about). • Have you ever been treated unfairly for any other reason? (because of any of your other identities) Anything else about you)? **If so,** Go through Experiences with Discrimination and Discrimination Follow-up Questions • **If not,** move on to Discrimination in the Media
Racial Identity	• How would you describe yourself? **If race is not mentioned in question above:** People use many terms to describe their race. How would you describe your race? **If adolescent describes ethnicity instead of race:** Some people think about race as where they or their family comes from, like their culture. Others think of it as physical characteristics like skin color, hair texture, facial features, etc. Let's talk about race as what it's like for you being black/African American in general (in society) and not specifically being (insert ethnicity) ... Circle back through questions if necessary. **If African American/Black is not mentioned:** Do you think of yourself as being Black? • What do you think it means to be Black? • What is the best thing about being Black? • What is the most difficult part about being Black?

Table 4 (cont'd)

	• How do you feel about being African American/Black? (Private Regard) • Is being your race important to you? Why or why not? (Racial Centrality) o Would you choose to be a different race if you could? Why or why not? • How do you think that other people feel about African American/Black people? (Public Regard) • Have you ever talked to your parents about race? What did you talk about? • Is there anything that you've wanted to talk to your parents about regarding race, but didn't ask? What? **If adolescent race is different from parent race?** Would you tell me a little bit about your parents? In what ways are they like you? In what ways are you different? • How do you feel about being a different race from your mom/dad?
Positivity	I know we've spent most of the time talking about some difficult experiences, and I want to make sure to end on a more positive note by asking about the good things about being your race. • What do you like most about being your race? • What do you want to be when you grow up? What would you like other people to know about you?
Summary	Summarize main ideas from interview. Is there anything that you want to tell me that I didn't ask about. Can I follow-up with you at a later time? *Ask if adolescent would like to participate in focus group, then give more details (e.g., picture component).

APPENDIX F

Parent/Caregiver Individual Interview Protocol

Table 5: Parent/Caregiver Individual Interview Protocol

Introduction/Rapport	Introduce myself (Remind participants that they can choose to answer or not answer any questions and that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions) Tell me a little bit about yourself. What do you do for work? How is it that you came to live in ______? How long have you lived here? Likes/dislikes about this community? Tell me a little bit about your child(ren). What do they do for fun? Where do they go to school? How did you come to choose this school? Likes/dislikes about the school? Contextual Questions • Where do you live? How long have you lived here? What do you like about this community? Are there things you don't like? • Where does/do your child/children go to school? Why did you choose this school? What is the school like? What classes does your child take? What do you like/dislike about the school setting? • Tell me about your child. What kinds of activities does your son/daughter participate in outside of school? How/Where do they spend their free time?
Define Discrimination	The main purpose of my study is to learn more about parents and children's experiences with discrimination (e.g., if and how they talk about it). The form or type of discrimination that we talk about is up to you. • How would you define discrimination? **Add: Some people define discrimination as the act of being treated unfairly based on part(s) of your identity.**
Vicarious Discrimination	• Have you seen other people being treated unfairly? Please describe what happened. (Why do you think that person was treated unfairly?) • What did you think about this experience? How did it make you feel? Did you respond in some way? Have you thought about how you would respond if you encountered a similar situation?
Parent Experiences with Discrimination	• Have you personally experienced discrimination? • **If so,** why do you think you were treated unfairly? Where have you had these experiences?

Table 5 (cont'd)

	• **If not,** Why do you think you haven't experienced any discrimination?
Discrimination Follow-up Questions	• How did it make you feel? • What did you think about it? OR What were you thinking? • How did you respond? What did you say? Why do you think you responded the way you did? How did your response make you feel? • Do you wish you would have responded differently? What would you do now if you experienced it again?

Parent Perceptions of Child's Discrimination Experiences	**Now, I'm going to ask you about your son/daughter's experiences with discrimination and how you talk to them about these experiences.**
	
	• Has your child had experiences with discrimination? **If so,** can you describe the situation?
	• Did your child bring this to your attention, or did you find out some other way?
	• Why do you think they were treated unfairly? Why did they think they were treated unfairly?
	• Who were the people that treated your child unfairly? (Peers, other parents, store workers, police, other community members?)
	• How often do you think your child experiences discrimination? (Once a week, every day, once in a while?)
	• Where do they most often experience discrimination? (School, community, online, etc?)
	
	If not, why do you think they have not experienced discrimination?
	
	• Do you talk to your child about discriminatory experiences that they might encounter? Why or why not?
	• **If so,** how often do you have these conversations? What do they entail? (Personal stories, news articles, etc.)
	• What is your goal/purpose when talking to your child? What do you talk about?
	• Do you try to teach them how to respond?
	    o **If so,** what are some ways that you have taught your child to respond to experiences of discrimination?
	    o **If not**, are you planning to have these conversations with your child? Why or why not?
	        ▪ What do you think you would tell him/her?

Table 5 (cont'd)

Child Discrimination Follow-up Questions	• How did your child react to being treated unfairly? How did it make them feel? What did he/she think about the experience? How did he/she respond?
	• How did you help your child through this experience? Please give an example of all the ways you help your child (does not have to be specific to this situation) • Does your child discuss these experiences with you often? • Do you worry that your child will continue to experience discrimination in the future? Do you feel as though you have prepared them enough to manage these situations?
Non-Discrimination Follow-up Questions	• Why do you think your child has never experienced discrimination? • Has your child seen other people being treated unfairly? How did your child react to witnessing this? (What did your child say, how did he/she respond? How did he/she feel?) • Do you talk to your child about others' discrimination experiences? (Your own, or portrayals of discrimination in the media?) • If so, how do they generally respond to these conversations? • Are you worried that your child will experience discrimination in the future? Why or why not?
Intersectionality	• Prompt: Sometimes people feel they are treated unfairly because of their gender, or religion, etc. Has your child ever talked about being treated unfairly because of their other identities?
Racial Identity	• How do you self-identify based on race? • How would you define your racial identity development? (e.g., what kind of messages did you receive about race when you were growing up?) • How do you think your racial identity development influences the way you socialize your child(ren)? • What do you think it means to be ______ in the U.S.? • What do you think it means to be African American/Black in the U.S.? • How does your child define their race? (How) have you helped your child come to this definition? How do you think your child feels about being African American/Black? • How do you support the development of Black identity in your child? (Follow-up with how does TPOL fit into this if applicable and not addressed) **If Parent race is different from child race?**

Table 5 (cont'd)

	• How does being a different race from your child influence your conversations about discrimination? How do you think your child feels about being a different race from you?
Positivity	I know we've talked quite extensively about some of the challenges that you and your child have faced. I would like to end the interview on a more positive note by having you consider the benefits of raising a Black/African American child. • What are your hopes and aspirations for your child? • What would you like them to know/remember as they grow and go out into the world? • What is one piece of advice that you have given them/would like to give them?
Summary	Summarize main ideas from interview. Is there anything that you want to tell me that I didn't ask about? Can I follow up with you at a later time?

APPENDIX G

Adolescent Focus Group Protocol

Table 6: Adolescent Focus Group Protocol

Introduction/Rapport	By now, I have already interviewed all of you at least once. The reason why we are here today is for me to learn more from you about what it is like for kids your age when they are treated unfairly, especially at school.
Confidentiality Statement/Ground Rules	I want you all to know that anything you say in this room will stay in this room. I will not share what we talk about with your teachers, principals, or other people at your school. However, I will be using what you say as part of the study, but I will not use any of your real names. Also, I want everyone to feel comfortable talking about their feelings and experiences here, so by participating, you are also agreeing that you will not share what is talked about in this room. I also want everyone to be as honest as they would like during our discussion. To ensure that we hear what you each have to say, only one person can talk at a time. Please raise your hand when you want to share. Any questions? Just like with all of your individual interviews, I will be recording our conversation just to make sure that I catch everything. Any questions?
Participant Introductions	Before we begin, I want everyone to go around the room and say their first names, their grade, and something unique or exciting about themselves. Do not use your real name. Instead, use a new name that you can choose right now, and write it on your name tag.
Warm Up Activity	I want to start with an activity. I have some sheets of paper, and I want each of you to write words or draw a picture of a time that you felt like you were treated unfairly because of something about you that you cannot change. It can be about anytime that you felt this way. Now, I want each of you to take turns explaining what you wrote or drew. Without saying any names, please describe what is happening or what you were thinking about when you did this activity. Be sure to use your made up name each time you talk, so that I can keep track of what each person is saying. Who would like to go first?
Activity Probing Questions	• Why do you think you were treated unfairly? • What did the person say/do to make you think you were being treated unfairly?

Table 6 (cont'd)

	• How did you feel when you were treated unfairly? What did you do? • **Do any of you share the same experiences?** • *Summarize themes present in activity (e.g., similarities in place, or people enacting the unfair treatment)
Vicarious Discrimination Questions	• What are some ways that you see other kids in your school being treated unfairly? Why do you think they were treated unfairly? • Who is treating them unfairly? • Is there a group of students that this happens to more often? Why do you think this happens more to this group of students?
School-Based Discrimination	Now I want to talk about times when you might have been treated unfairly at school because of something about you that you cannot change. **Ask general question that elicits group interaction.** Tell me about a time when this happened.
Probing Questions	• Who treated you unfairly? • Why do you think you were treated unfairly? • How did you feel? What did you do? • Did you talk to anyone? If so, whom? Why that person? • Is there anyone in the school that you would feel comfortable talking to about this? Why or why not? • Who is this person? What would make you feel comfortable talking to him/her? • Did a teacher see when this happened? If so, what did they do/say? How did their response make you feel? • If not, • Was there some other adult who saw this happen? What did they do/say? How did their response make you feel? • How often do these experiences happen at your school?
Positivity	I want to be sure to end our time together by talking about the good parts of being a middle schooler. • Tell me what you like most about going to your school. • What is one piece of advice you would give to a kid who is just starting middle school?
Closing	Is there anything else I should know about the ways that kids your age might be treated unfairly at school? Anything that you have not been able to talk about? Thanks for sharing your time and thoughts with me today. (Confidentiality reminder)

APPENDIX H

Second (Follow-Up) Adolescent Interview Protocol

When we met before, we talked about… (provide a brief summary)

1. I want to make sure that I understood everything we talked about correctly.
    - **a.** Could you tell me more about the experience that we discussed last time?
    - **b.** **Ask for any clarifications from previous interview** (member checking)
2. Last time, you told me about (specific incident). Do you recall any other examples of this kind of experience?
    - **a.** What happened? How did you respond?
    - **b.** What did you think/feel?
    - **c.** What helped you feel better?
    - **d.** Did you ever tell your parents about this situation? Who did you talk to?
    - **e.** What did you mean by ________?
3. Since our last conversation, have there been new situations where you felt like you were treated unfairly because of something about you that you can't change?
    - **a.** **Refer to 'Experiences with Discrimination' and 'Discrimination Follow-up Questions' sections of first interview protocol**
4. (How) have your thoughts, feelings, or attitudes about discrimination changed since we last talked?
5. (How) have conversations about race and discrimination changed between you and your parent(s)?

APPENDIX I

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-teen (MIBI-t)
(Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008)

Directions: Please rate how much you agree with each statement using the rating scale below.

Items	Rating Scale 1= Really Disagree; 2=Kind of Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4= Kind of Agree; 5=Really Agree
I feel close to other Black people	**1 2 3 4 5**
I have a strong sense of belonging to other Black people	**1 2 3 4 5**
If I were to describe myself to someone, one of the first things that I would say is that I'm Black	**1 2 3 4 5**
I am happy that I am Black	**1 2 3 4 5**
I am proud to be Black	**1 2 3 4 5**
I feel good about Black people	**1 2 3 4 5**
Most people think that Blacks are as smart as people of other races	**1 2 3 4 5**
People think that Blacks are as good as people from other races	**1 2 3 4 5**
People from other races think that Blacks have made important contributions	**1 2 3 4 5**
Black parents should surround their children with Black art and Black books	**1 2 3 4 5**
Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from Black businesses	**1 2 3 4 5**
Blacks should support Black entertainment by going to Black movies and watching Black TV shows	**1 2 3 4 5**

Being an individual is more important than identifying yourself as Black	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Blacks should think of themselves as individuals, not as Blacks	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Black people should not consider race when deciding what movies to go see	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
It is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can learn how to act around Whites	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I think it is important for Blacks to not act Black around White people	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Blacks should act more like Whites to be successful in this society	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
People of all minority groups should stick together and fight discrimination	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
There are other people who experience discrimination similar to Blacks	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Blacks should spend less time focusing on how we differ from other minority groups and more time focusing on how we are similar to people from other minority groups	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

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