The Association between Discrimination Concerns and Father Involvement: The Role of
Accessibility and Racial Socialization

By

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Abstract

In the United States, the number of children under 18 living in a mother-only household has steadily increased since the 1960s. As single-parent households have become more common, father involvement research has turned its lens to nonresident fathers. Previous research, however, has primarily focused on White married fathers, making it necessary to examine Black nonresident fathers. Using the human ecological framework, the current study examined the relationship between Black fathers' social environment, specifically discrimination, and their parenting practices. First, a mediation model examined the indirect effects of fathers' discussions of racial socialization with their children on the relationship between fathers' discrimination concerns and involvement with their children. Results showed an indirect positive effect of discrimination concerns on father involvement through discussions of race and discrimination. Second, a moderation model was fit to test whether fathers' accessibility moderates the relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement. Results showed no moderating effects, however there was a direct positive effect of accessibility on father involvement. The current study provides four key contributions to the existing father involvement literature by exploring the parenting experiences of ethnic minority fathers, illustrating unique fathering roles of ethnic minority fathers, developing and testing a theoretical model, and promoting theory development and identifying mediators of involvement that can be used in future research.

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Accessibility and Racial Socialization

In the United States, the number of children under 18 living in a mother-only household

has steadily increased since the 1960s. In 2017, approximately 20 million children (27% of all

children) were living in a one parent household (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017a). Of those children,

84% are living with their single mother. For Black children, these numbers are larger; 48% of

Black children live in a mother-only household (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b). Previous research,

however, has primarily focused on White married fathers (Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, &

Tamis-LeMonda, 2008; King, 1994; King, Harris, & Heard, 2004). As single-parent households

have become more common, father involvement research has turned its lens to nonresident

fathers. Examining nonresident father involvement in Black fathers is necessary because Black

fathers have the unique challenge of both facing discrimination themselves and raising their

children in a race conscious social environment. Furthermore, it adds to the narrative of ethnic

minority nonresident fathers by illuminating the distinctive fathering tasks such as racial

socialization.

Past studies have explored important correlations between nonresident father

involvement and child outcomes within limited samples of ethnic minority parents. Castillo,

Welch, and Sarver (2011) highlighted that nonresident fathers may provide a protective factor

against many of the risks faced by children living in mother-only households. Research indicates

that children who are raised in mother-only households are more likely to have increased risk of

several negative outcomes such as poor academic performance, school truancy, and higher levels

of involvement in criminal activity (DeBell, 2008). In comparison, children with nonresident

fathers who are highly and positively involved tend to have lower levels of alcohol and substance

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abuse (Caldwell, Sellers, Bernat, & Zimmerman, 2004), sexual risk taking (Peterson, 2007), and delinquency (Pan & Farrell, 2006). Other positive child outcomes of nonresident father involvement include higher levels of cognitive development (Shannon, Tamis-LeMonda, London, & Cabrera, 2002), academic success (Caldwell et al., 2004), and self-esteem (Cooper, 2009). Additionally, children with strong ties to their nonresident father show fewer internalizing problems and less behavioral problems at school compared to children with weak ties to their nonresident fathers (King & Sobolewski, 2006). The aforementioned studies illustrate the importance of nonresident father involvement as a protective factor for positive child outcomes. However, attention to protective factors that ethnic minority fathers such as Black fathers provide is scant. More empirical studies are warranted that explore alternative protective factors among ethnic minority fathers such as racial socialization. For ethnic minority parents, racial socialization provides protective factors to help their children navigate through a system of racism and discrimination.

For example, Black children with nonresident fathers have the added challenge of facing discrimination based on their race. Discrimination has been linked to several negative outcomes for Black children and adolescents. For instance, discrimination has been linked to higher levels of depressive symptoms, more perceived stress, and lower levels of psychological well-being (Neblett et al., 2008). Additionally, perceived discrimination is associated with higher levels of anger, and decreases in self-esteem and psychological well-being (McHale et al., 2006; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & L'Heureux Lewis, 2006; Simmons et al., 2002; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). The social inequities faced by Black children lead to the necessity of Black fathers to utilize racial socialization as a tool to prepare their children for discrimination and promote cultural awareness and pride.

Racial socialization is defined as the process through which parents transmit values, attitudes, and behaviors of their racial group to their children (Hughes et al., 2006). The term has historically been applied to African American parents who have developed strategies to prepare their children to maneuver through a racially stratified system of discrimination (Hughes et al., 2006). There are a number of studies that explore racial socialization patterns among ethnic minority parents (Hughes, 2003; Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006), however the race-related parenting practices of Black fathers in the social science literature is scant (Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Metzger, & Griffin, 2015).

Previous research has linked racial socialization to a variety of outcomes for Black children. For instance, Neblett and colleagues (2006) found that for African American middle and high-school students, racial socialization behaviors and messages of self-worth were associated with greater academic curiosity and persistence, along with a higher grade-point-average. Additionally, previous research has found that positive race messages are linked to more positive academic beliefs (Smith, 1996), higher self-esteem (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002), and greater factual knowledge (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002). Neblett and colleagues (2008) argue that the positive outcomes linked to racial socialization suggest that racial socialization is protective against the effects of discrimination. As racial socialization is a unique fathering task for minority fathers, it is important to understand racial socialization as a key component of father involvement in the Black father community.

Currently, there exists a large gap in the literature regarding the relationship between father involvement and racial socialization messages passed from the father to the child. Using the human ecology theory as a guiding framework, the current study aims to examine the relationship between the environment of discrimination faced by Black fathers and their

parenting practices. First, the study examined previous literature on father involvement racial socialization. Second, the study will examine a mediation model examining the indirect effects of racial socialization on the relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement. The researchers predict that higher levels of discrimination concerns, related to a father's racial experiences in his neighborhood, will be associated with higher levels of father involvement, and this relationship will be indirect through discussions of race and discrimination. Last, the study will examine a moderation model testing whether accessibility moderates the relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement. The researchers predict that the relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement will depend on the father's accessibility to his children, such that when both discrimination concerns and accessibility are high, father involvement is also high.

Literature Review

Accessibility and Father Involvement among Nonresident Fathers

Lamb, Pleck, and Levine (1985) identified accessibility, engagement and responsibility as conceptual domains of father involvement. For this study, the domain of father involvement that will be explored is accessibility. For nonresident fathers, there exists contextual barriers to fathers' access to their children such as employment status, income, and neighborhood. A father's a*ccessibility* to his children is a key component in his involvement and refers to the amount of time that fathers spend in close proximity to their children (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). For nonresident fathers, accessibility is lower than for resident fathers. Not living in the same household as their children limits the amount of time available to interact with them.

Fathers' employment status, income and neighborhood may also create barriers to accessibility. For nonresident fathers, the research has consistently found that when employment

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status is stable, involvement is higher (Coley & Chase-Landale, 1999; Landale & Oropesa, 2001; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Castillo, Welch & Sarver, 2012). This relationship may be explained by a greater ability to contribute financially to the child's well-being. A higher income is associated with greater levels of involvement (Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine, 1992, Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010; Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2012; Zhang & Fuller, 2012). Previous researchers have suggested that financial contributions, often in the form of child support, are related to a greater connection to the role of father (Landale & Oropesa, 2001) and lower conflict with the child's mother (Coley & Hernandez, 2006), leading to higher levels of involvement. Furthermore, nonresident fathers with greater income are better equipped to offset the costs associated with visitation and participation in activities (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004). Finally, Castillo and colleagues (2012) found that workplace flexibility such as flexible hours, sick leave, and paid time off, is positively related to involvement. However, this result may not generalize to fathers in working class jobs, as flexibility in working class jobs may mean a lack of income stability, in example, unpredictable schedules, or periods of unemployment (Castillo et al., 2012).

In addition, where a father lives is related to his level of involvement. A father's physical distance from his children is associated with rates of involvement. Previous studies have found that father involvement tends to decrease as physical distance increases (Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010). The causal direction of this relationship is unclear. It may reflect a lack of resources to maintain frequent contact at further distances such as transporting children to see their father (e.g., airfare, long distance parenting, and both parent's ability to coordinate a meeting point). Several factors influence low father involvement with their children in long-distance situations such as the quality of the father-child relationship, or the need to secure higher employment in

cities or states further away from the child's residence. These examples illustrate diminished face-to-face interactions for fathers with nonresident children.

A father's neighborhood is also related to his level of involvement. Regarding neighborhood factors, research has primarily focused on the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood. Lower socioeconomic status within the fathers' neighborhood is associated with lower levels of paternal involvement in Black fathers (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004). A contributing factor to this finding may be that fathers from low-income neighborhoods tend to follow more traditional masculine beliefs of fathering behaviors and experience difficulties in accomplishing the traditional provider responsibilities of fatherhood, leading to lower levels of involvement with their children (Coley & Hernandez, 2006). These findings suggest that fathers who are not able to financially provide for their children experience cognitive dissonance that might lead to low levels of father involvement. This means that fathers who feel that they are not fulfilling their fathering obligations may have lower levels of father involvement compared to fathers with positive perceptions of their fathering role who may have higher levels of father involvement (Coley & Hernandez, 2006).

Historical context of American racism and racial socialization by Black families

While the historic practice of legal discrimination such as the Jim Crow laws, is no longer present in America, Black families still face racial barriers due to more subtle forms of racism and discrimination (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Subtle racism and discrimination occur in the job market, housing situations, and the school. Black families must not only face their own racial barriers but must also raise their children in racially conscious environments that might be harmful to their children's overall well-being. For example, research has found that for ethnic minority children, perceived discrimination is associated with higher levels of perceived stress,

depressive symptoms, anger, and decreases in self-esteem and psychological well-being (McHale et al., 2006; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & L'Heureux Lewis, 2006; Simmons et al., 2002; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003).

In light of recent media coverage, Americans have seen evidence of one form of discrimination encountered by the Black community: racial profiling. Historically, racial profiling has been explored under the context of police profiling. Brown and Frank (2005) explain that police officers often use traffic citation issuance as an attempt to exert social control over citizens. Past studies indicate that driver demographic characteristics and the decision to cite disproportionately affect Black citizens, specifically Black men (Walker, 2001; Websdale, 2001; Lundman, & Kaufman, 2003). Furthermore, Websdale (2001) argues that police use a much more heavy-handed style of policing with ethnic-minority groups, treating them with less respect than White individuals. In addition, racial discrimination in the justice system goes further than routine traffic stops. African American adults are approximately 6 times more likely to be imprisoned than White adults (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018).

While police profiling is a pervasive problem in America, racial profiling can occur in other contexts as well (Weitzer & Tuch, 2002). Another example of racial profiling occurs in the job market. Black individuals encounter discrimination not only in the hiring process, but also in their salary. In the hiring process, on average, White individuals received 36% more callbacks than Black individuals (Quillian, Pager, Hexel, & Midtbøen, 2017). After being hired, Black individuals are often paid less than White individuals in the same job or field (Haberfield & Shenav, 1990). Research also indicates that Black males are more likely to perceive and report instances of race-based discrimination, including microaggressions (Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008; Thomas, Coard, Stevenson, Bentley, & Zamel, 2009). These race-based

experiences occur within their neighborhoods, the education system, and other social contexts. Discriminatory practices not only impact Black adults, but also their children. Previous research has examined the association between social inequality and negative outcomes for ethnic minority parents and their children (Szalacha et al., 2003; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Racial disparities that exist within the American society creates the premise for racial socialization.

Racial Socialization by Fathers

Examining Black fathers, Cooper and colleagues (2015) highlighted five profiles of racial socialization practices. The first profile was *positive racial socializers*. Fathers who racially socialize their children in this category take a multifaceted approach, focusing on messages of racial pride, racial barriers, behavioral socialization, egalitarian views, and self-development. A multifaceted approach to racial socialization has been linked to positive messages of Black cultural pride, which aids children in coping with negative messages surrounding their racial status (White-Johnson, Ford, & Sellers, 2010). *Low race salience* was the second profile. Fathers in this profile emphasize personal development and racial equality, while not overtly addressing racial barriers or promoting awareness of cultural pride. Previous research indicates that African American men are more likely to deal with racial discrimination through compensatory efforts, rather than direct address of the discrimination (Matthews, Hammond, Nuru-Jeter, Cole-Lewis, & Melvin, 2013). Thus, African American fathers might also de-emphasize race-based messages and promote self-development in their children.

Race salience was the third profile. Within this profile, messages of racial and cultural awareness, as well as negative race messages were emphasized. The fourth group to emerge were *negative racial socializers,* which is characterized by more negative racial socialization messages

than all other dimensions. It is possible that fathers utilizing this type of racial socialization have internalized negative stereotypes about their race and are communicating them to their children. *Infrequent racial socializers* emerged as the final profile. Fathers in this group were less likely to communicate racial socialization messages overall (Cooper et al., 2015). Fathers in this group may not feel it necessary to racially socialize their children, or may rely on others, such as the child's mother, for racial socialization.

It is important to note that Black fathers' race-related discussions with their children are informed by their own racial lens, possibly producing the variations in types of racial socialization. Previous research has found the parents who experience discrimination are more likely to expect acts of discrimination towards their children and to provide their children with the tools needed to handle discrimination (Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004).

The impact of neighborhood effects on messages of racial socialization

The composition and climate of a father's neighborhood also shapes his racial socialization practices. Previous research has found that the racial composition and social climate of a neighborhood have an influence on the parent's racial socialization messages. Racial identity attitudes, discrimination experiences, perceived disadvantages and racial socialization may vary according to the racial composition of the neighborhood (Hughes, 2003). Black parents in integrated or primarily white neighborhoods tend to racially socialize their children more than Black parents in predominately Black neighborhoods (Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). It is possible that parents in predominately Black neighborhoods feel that racial socialization is less of a necessity because their children are less likely to experience racial discrimination within the neighborhood. In comparison, when Black families live in integrated or

predominately White neighborhoods, there may be a greater fear of discrimination. In addition, promotion of mistrust is less common among Black parents living in predominately White neighborhoods (Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, & Fraleigh Lohrfink, 2006). It is possible that exposure to other races reduces a parent's perceived need to promote mistrust in their children. Researchers have also noted that variance in racial socialization by racial composition may be caused by other factors within the neighborhood, such as crime rates, perceived danger, and socioeconomic status.

Social climate encompasses the safety of a neighborhood and community involvement of the people within the neighborhood (Caughy, Nettles, & Lima, 2011). Parents living in neighborhoods with high levels of perceived physical/social disorder, fear of retaliation, and fear of criminal activities were more likely to communicate messages of race and discrimination to their children (Caughy, Nettles, & Lima, 2011). Specifically, preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust were positively associated with negative social climate (Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, Fraleigh Lohrlink, 2006). These parents may discuss race and discrimination more often because they find it important to transmit messages regarding ways to avoid victimization. In addition, cultural socialization, with a focus on preparation for discrimination and promotion of mistrust was more common in neighborhoods with high community involvement with children (Caughy, Nettles, & Lima, 2011). It is possible that neighborhoods with greater levels of community cohesion have a higher level of collective pride in African American culture, leading them to prepare their children for bias outside of the neighborhood.

Human ecological framework for racial socialization among Black fathers

The current study is guided by a human ecological perspective. The human ecology framework views humans as having a social interaction with their environment. The theory

postulates that interdependence exists between humans and their environment. The well-being of Black families and their children cannot be set apart from the racial disparities within the social environment of the United States. The social environment contributes to human behaviors that are influenced by norms, social and economic processes, power relations, social inequality, cultural practices, and social practices that place constraints on individual development and progress (Casper, 2001; McNeill, Kreuter, & Subramanian; 2006; Institute of Medicine, 2003). When used to inform research concerning father involvement and racial socialization, the human ecological perspective posits that the environment in which a father exists contributes to the formation of his parenting practices. In particular, Black fathers exist within a social environment of racism and discrimination. By considering the interaction between the social context in which Black fathers exist and their familial relationships, one can better understand the circumstances that make it necessary for Black fathers to racially socialize their children.

A core assumption of this theory is that *the environment itself does not determine human behaviors, but places constraints, as well as provides opportunities for the families acting within it* (Boss, Doherty, LaRossa, Schumm, & Steinmetz, 1993). The social environment of racism and discrimination creates social constraints for Black children such as educational disparities. Black children experience educational disparities which include higher rates of school suspension, disproportionate school-related arrests, and are more likely to suffer negative consequences of zero-tolerance policies (Noguera, 2003; Gregory, Bell, & Pollock, 2016). Research also suggests that Black children are disproportionally disciplined in the school system (Irvine, 1990; Losen, 2003). As their children face these obstacles, Black fathers have opportunities to empower and protect their child through conversations about race and discrimination. For instance, Black fathers can discuss what to do when faced with racist behaviors from peers, teachers, and other

adults at school, and prepare their children for future racism. Furthermore, Black adolescents often face lowered self-esteem related to their skin tone (Crocker & Quinn, 1998). Therefore, fathers' conversations might include issues such as being proud to be Black and respect for other cultures (Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012).

An additional assumption of the human ecology theory is that *decision making is the central control process in families that directs actions for attaining individual and family goals* (Boss et al., 1993). Decision making is a process of constant and interrelated changes in an individual's ability to perceive, conceptualize, and react to their environment (Boss et al., 1993). The process of decision making is influenced by the surrounding environment, including societal norms, personal and cultural beliefs and values, past experiences, and the individual's perception of the situation. Collectively, the decisions and actions of Black families to racially socialize their children is a protective factor that emerges from the systematic racism that the Black community encounters. In 1955, the murder of Emmett Till brought nationwide attention to the racism experienced by Blacks. A 14-year-old Black child, Emmett was kidnapped and murdered after allegedly whistling at a White woman ("The murder of Emmett Till," n.d.). Black parents in the Jim Crow era transmitted messages such as black male children were not to make eye contact with White women. These types of messages were meant to protect their children from white terrorism such as lynching (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006). Over the last few decades, the treatment of Black youth by police officers has gained notoriety. Police brutality against Black individuals has included 18-year-old Michael Brown, 25-year-old Freddie Gray, and 28-year-old Sandra Bland (Cobbina, Chaudhuri, Rios, & Conteh, 2019). All three instances included a young unarmed Black person who lost their life during interactions with White police officers. Based on these experiences, fear towards police officers has become a narrative of the Black

community. To protect their children, Black parents may transmit messages of respect and compliance for police officers, along with advice about proper demeanor when encountering a police officer (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011).

For Black fathers navigating a predominately white environment, there exists a unique set of decisions concerned with providing their children with the resources necessary to deal with discrimination. First, fathers must decide if they will racially socialize their children. Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, and Allen (1990) found that a majority of Black parents chose to racially socialize their children. Other studies found that Black fathers who perceive fewer instances of discrimination are less likely to discuss race and discrimination with their children (Cooper et al., 2015). Therefore, Black fathers must choose the types of racial socialization messages to transmit to their children. The previously mentioned profiles of racial socialization identified by Cooper and colleagues (2015) highlighted six dimensions of racial socialization. The first dimension is *racial pride*. Black fathers who transmit messages of racial pride emphasize being proud to be Black and teach about prominent Black figures in history and pop culture.

The second dimension is messages concerning racial barriers. For example, Black fathers may tell their children that some people may dislike them because of the color of their skin. The third dimension is egalitarian views, which focus on promoting acceptance of all races and cultures. The fourth dimension is behavioral socialization. Behavioral socialization requires the father to model behaviors related to the other dimensions. For example, fathers trying to promote racial pride may take their children to Black cultural events. A second example would be a parent modeling self-constraint in the presence of his children, when encountering racist behaviors of others. The fifth dimension of racial socialization is self-development. Fathers who utilize self-development messages focus not on race but on behaviors that their child can do to

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promote themselves. For example, when a child faces discrimination at school, their father may tell them to focus on getting good grades and following the rules. The final dimension is negative race messages. Negative race messages occur when a father tells his child that "being Black" is something to be ashamed of. Fathers' choices were found to be influenced by their encounters with racism, their perception of their race (either positive or negative), and the messages they received from their own parents. For instance, parents who perceive their race to be a negative aspect of themselves or wish that they were a different race, may pass those beliefs on to their children.

A fathers' perception of the social environment and his discriminatory experiences inform his racial socialization decisions. Perception is a human ecology concept that guides fathers in their racial socialization choices. Perception is defined as the process through which environmental information is registered by the senses, processed, and made available for use (Melson, 1980). Perception is a crucial component of how fathers filter through information to discuss issues of racism and discrimination. Fathers also receive cues from their environments about social perceptions of Black families and their children. As a protective factor, father involvement for Black fathers might emerge as encouraging their child to succeed in school, teaching their child to follow rules at home and school, setting rules and limits for their child's behaviors, and knowing where their child is and who they are with. Furthermore, Black father's experiences are informed by their perceptions of discrimination. These perceptions are associated with their concerns of racism and discrimination which stem from racist encounters with employment, neighborhood context (i.e. police profiling), and housing discrimination (Cooper et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2006).

An ecological perspective illustrates the importance of fathering within a racially discriminatory environment. The social environment of the United States encompasses social inequality and disparities. For Black fathers living in the United States, there exists a challenge of raising their children in a society that places constraints and barriers on their success, while trying to promote their overall well-being (Boykins & Toms, 1985). Black fathers must decide to make use of the opportunities offered in the environment. One such decision is whether to racially socialize and which messages to transmit to his children. As previously mentioned, a father's racial socialization decisions are influenced by his perception of the social climate. Fathers who perceive higher levels of discrimination in their neighborhoods, education, and the job force, are more likely to discuss race and discrimination with their children (Cooper et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2006).

Through the process of racial socialization, fathers bond with their children over their shared race experiences. The discussions that Black fathers have with their children concerning race and discrimination provide a foundation for a strong father-child relationship, and in turn, may lead to more involvement in other aspects of their children's lives. Concern that their children may face discrimination may lead fathers to behave in a way that promotes their child's well-being. For example, fathers may provide for their children's basic needs, encourage their children to read, plan for their children's futures, or encourage their children to develop their talents. By being involved in their children's lives, fathers are promoting positive outcomes for their children, such as better psychosocial development, higher levels of cognitive competence, greater self-esteem, and enhanced occupational achievement in adulthood (Wilson & Prior, 2011). As used here, human ecology theory suggests that a father's involvement with his child

will be predicted by his perception of discrimination through his conversations about discrimination with his own children.

The Present Study

Research studies that investigate racial socialization and father involvement from the perspective of Black fathers are scarce. The current study builds on existing father involvement literature by first examining father involvement from the father's perspective. Second, the study will expand on previous literature by providing a within-group look at differences between nonresidential Black fathers, rather than comparing across racial and ethnic groups, allowing for more in-depth knowledge about a large subgroup of nonresidential fathers. Third, the study will build on the narrative of ethnic minority nonresident fathers by illustrating the unique fathering role that they must fulfill. Finally, the conceptual linkage between father involvement and racial socialization helps to promote theory development and identify mediators of involvement that can be used in future research (Hawkins et al., 2002).
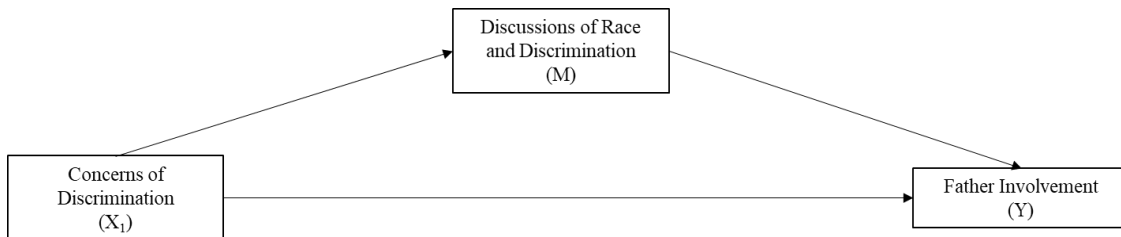
Conceptual model of Father Involvement with Discussions of Race and Discrimination as Mediator

As presented earlier, factors that are likely to influence nonresident Black fathers' father involvement includes their perception of discrimination in the social environment and his discussions of race and discrimination with his children. Based on the literature and theoretical framework, we examined the proposed conceptual model to explain the relationships between father involvement, concerns of discrimination, and discussions of race and discrimination. As illustrated in Figure 1, the proposed mediation model tested two hypotheses: (a) a father's concern of discrimination (X_1) has a direct positive effect on his involvement with his children

(Y) and (b) the effect of a father's concerns of discrimination and father involvement is mediated through discussions of race and discrimination (M), where there will be a positive relationship between concern of discrimination and discussions of race and discrimination, and a positive relationship between discussions of race and discrimination. Finally, there will also be a positive indirect relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement.

Figure 1

Conceptual model of the association between concerns of discrimination and father involvement mediated by discussions of race and discrimination

Conceptual model of the interaction between concerns of discrimination and accessibility

As presented earlier, factors that are likely to influence nonresident Black fathers' father involvement are his concerns of discrimination and his accessibility to his children. Based on the literature, the proposed conceptual model to explain the relationships between father involvement, accessibility, and concerns of discrimination, is examined. As illustrated in Figure 2, the proposed moderation model tested two hypotheses: (a) there is a positive direct effect of concerns of discrimination on father involvement, and (b) accessibility moderates the relationship between concerns of discrimination and father involvement, such that when discrimination concerns and accessibility are high, father involvement will also be high.

Figure 2

Conceptual model of the interaction between concerns of discrimination and accessibility

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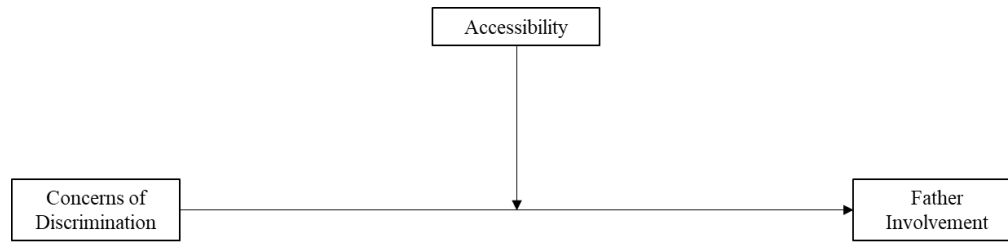
Methods

Sample and recruitment

The sample consists of 80 Black non-resident fathers, co-parenting children (ages 2-17) with one mother. The current study uses the term Black fathers, rather than African American fathers, to encompass the diversity of Black men in the United States, regardless of country of origin.

Recruitment occurred in a southern state. Participants were primarily recruited through a street outreach approach, where the primary investigator approached Black men in places that they often spend time, such as churches or barber shops. Furthermore, announcements were made on local radio stations and flyers were disseminated to local stores. Participants were required to meet five study criteria: 1) A Black father. 2) The biological father of a non-resident child ages 2-17. 3) Co-parenting a child or children with only one mother. 4) Residing within the Combined Statistical Areas (CSA) of Lexington-Fayette-Frankfort-Richmond, Kentucky or Louisville-Elizabethtown-Scottsburg, Kentucky-Indiana CSA. 5) Be willing to complete a web-based questionnaire (Akande, 2014).

All fathers within the sample were between the ages of 20 and 59. Approximately ninety-two percent of the sample had a bachelor's degree or higher. Annual income ranged from under $10,000 to $200,000. The demographic characteristics are listed in tables 1-4.

Measures

Father Involvement

Father involvement was measured using the Inventory of Father Involvement-Online Non-resident version, a 22-item modified version of the Inventory of Father Involvement, $r = .76$ (Hawkins et al., 2002). Of the original eight dimensions, four dimensions emerged with acceptable reliability; teaching responsibility (.87), childrearing cooperation (.82), praise and encouragement (.87), and mother support (.72). Participants were given statements regarding how often they had done an activity with their child and asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale, 1=Never to 5=Very often. Sample items include "encouraged your children to read," "praised your children for something they have done." "Encouraged your child to develop their talents," and "spent time with your children doing things they like to do."

Accessibility

Accessibility was measured using seven items regarding how often the father spends time in person or talking to their child ($r = .81$). Five of the items regarded visitation with their children and were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1= daily to 7 = never. Sample items for these questions include "How often do you hang out with your daughters?" and "Which describes your visitation with your children?" Two items regarded time spent doing activities and talking with their children and were measured in hours on an 8-point Likert scale from 1 = 0 hours to 8 = 30+ hours.

Concerns about Discrimination

The father's concerns about discrimination were measured using seven items from a modified version of Hall's Everyday Stressors Index (1987), the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Non-resident Father, Cronbach's alpha was .80 (Akande & Heath, 2013). Participants were asked to report how often they felt concerned with certain factors in their neighborhood on a 6-point Likert scale from 1= never to 6 = always. Sample items include "Please select how often you are concerned about each statement: problems with job related discrimination," "feeling safe in your neighborhood," and "concerns with racial profiling by police."

Discussions of race and discrimination

A ten-item measure derived from the literature was used to access frequency of discussions of race and discrimination by the father and was found to be reliable ($r = .93$). Participants were asked how often they discussed issues of race and responded a 6-point Likert scale from 1= Never to 6 = Always. Sample items include "how to handle police encounters," "being proud to be Black or African American," "How to handle racist behaviors of your child's friends," and "respect for other cultures or people who are different from you."

Additional Measures (Covariates)

Previous research found that employment status was correlated with father involvement (Coley & Chase-Landale, 1999; Landale & Oropesa, 2001; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Castillo, Welch & Sarver, 2012). Nonresident fathers are less likely to be involved with their children due to unemployment and underemployment (Coley & Chase-Landale, 1999; Castillo et al., 2012). For fathers employed part-time, fluctuating hours and periods of unemployment may lead to lower levels of involvement (Castillo et al., 2012). Furthermore, full-time employment has been

linked to an increase father-child contact (Hofferth & Casper, 2007). For nonresident fathers who are employed full-time, high levels of father involvement are associated with high levels of parental motivation compared to fathers who are not employed full-time and have lower levels of parental motivation (Tach, Mincy, & Edin, 2010). Employment resources such as work flexibility (e.g., sick leave) and fathers' income are also associated with levels of father involvement (Castillo et al., 2012; King, Harris, & Heard, 2004).

Furthermore, research has also identified *age* (Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2011; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Landale & Oropesa, 2001), *level of educational attainment* (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Goldberg, 2015), and *income* (Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010; Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2012; Zhang & Fuller, 2012) as possible predictors of father involvement. Based on these findings, the researchers controlled for age, educational attainment, income, and employment status.

The response options for *age* included 1 = under 19, 2 = 20-29, 3 = 30-39, 4 = 40-49, 5 = 50-59, 6 = 60-69, 7 = 70+). *Education level* included the following response options 1 = 8th grade or less, 2 = some high school, 3 = high school diploma, 4 = GED, 5 = some college, 6 = technical/trade school, 7 = bachelor's degree, and 8 = graduate or professional. The response options for *employment status* were 1 = employed full-time, 2 = employed part-time, 3 = retired, 4 = unemployed, 5 = disabled. *Annual income* was measured using the following response options 1 = less than $10,000, 2 = $10,000-$14,999, 3 = $15,000-$19,999, 4 = $20,000-$24,999, 5 = $25,000-$29,999, 6 = $30,000-39,999, 7 = $40,000-$49,999, 8 = $50,000-$59,999, 9 = $60,000-$69,999, 10 = $70,000-$79,999, 11 = $80,000-$89,999, 12 = $90,000-$99,999, 13 = $100,000-$149,999, 14 = $150,000-$199,999, 15 = $200,000+.

Results

Plan of Analysis

To test the current hypotheses, two linear regression models were fit. Prior to fitting the models, univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics will be examined in SPSS statistical software and model fit will be determined. Using the Mplus statistical software, a mediation model was fit to examine the indirect effect of discrimination concern on father involvement, through discussions of race and discrimination (see Figure 1). Secondly, a moderation model will examine the effect of the father's accessibility to their children on the relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement (see Figure 2).

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to conducting the mediation and moderation models, univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics were examined in SPSS statistical software. Criteria for skewness was based on a normal distribution falling between a -2 and 2 skewness statistic. Based on this criterion, employment status was positively skewed ($\alpha_3 = 1.95$), and involvement ($\alpha_3 = -1.61$) and education ($\alpha_3 = -1.06$) were slightly negatively skewed. All other variables were normally distributed.

One participant was missing data on income, employment status, discussions of race and discrimination, and discrimination concerns. As only one participant was missing data, no missing data patterns emerged. Missing data was coded as such and the models were estimated using full information maximum likelihood.

To address the possibility of multicolinearity, bivariate correlations were examined. Bivariate correlations can be found in Table 2. No variables were significantly correlated at

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higher than .5. Age is significantly correlated to education ($r = .22$, $p < .05$). Income is

significantly correlated to education ($r = .47$, $p < .001$), employment status ($r = -0.39$, $p < .001$),

accessibility ($r = .26$, $p < .05$), involvement ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), and discrimination concern ($r = -0.37$, $p < .001$). Education is significantly correlated to employment status ($r = -0.30$, $p < .01$),

and involvement ($r = .28$, $p = .01$). Employment status is significantly correlated to accessibility

($r = -0.32$, $p < .01$). Accessibility is significantly correlated to involvement ($r = .47$, $p < .001$).

Involvement is significantly correlated to discussions of race and discrimination ($r = .40$, $p < .001$). Discussions of race and discrimination is significantly correlated to discrimination

concerns ($r = .24$, $p < .05$). Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics can be found in Table 5.

Mediation Model

Mplus statistical software was used to test the indirect effect of racial socialization on the

relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement. The model is fully

saturated with zero degrees of freedom. Age ($B = -0.09$, $p > .05$), education ($B = 0.15$, $p > .05$),

income ($B = 0.01$, $p > .05$), and employment status ($B = -0.06$, $p > .05$) were controlled for in the

model. Discrimination concern is significantly and negatively related to father involvement (path

c'), $B = -0.30$, SE $= 0.08$, $p < .001$, such that fathers with higher levels of discrimination concern

were less likely to be involved with their children. There is a significant positive relationship

between discrimination concern and discussions of race and discrimination (path a), $B = 0.52$, SE

$= 0.09$, $p < .001$, such that higher levels of discrimination concern predicts more frequent

discussions of race and discrimination. There is a significant positive relationship between

discussions of race and discrimination and father involvement (path b), B $= 0.34$, SE $= 0.08$, p $< .001$, such that higher levels of discussions of race and discrimination predicts higher levels of

father involvement. There is an indirect effect of discussions of race and discrimination on the

relationship between discrimination concern and father involvement, $B = .18$, SE $= .05$, $p < .001$.

Finally, 27% of variability in father involvement was explained by the predictors and covariates

($R^2 = 0.27$). The magnitude of the indirect effect was estimated using the method outlined by

Preacher and Leonardelli (2001). The proportion of the total effect that is explained by the

indirect effect is .42.

Figure 3
Structural model of the indirect effects of discussions of race and discrimination
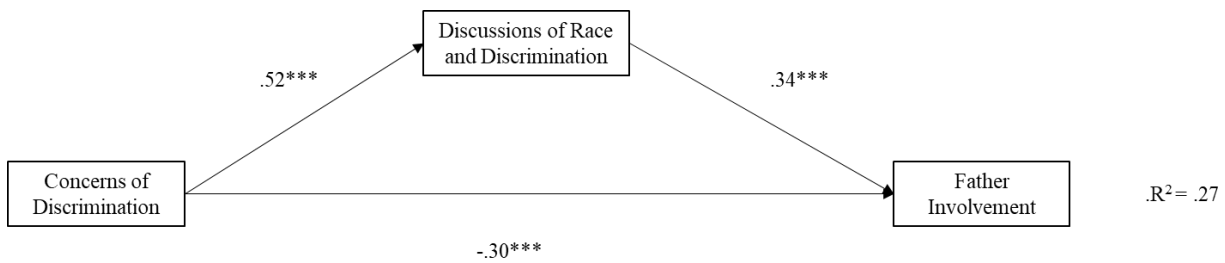
Note: * indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001)
Unstandardized coeffients are given.
Covariates included: age, education level, income, and employment status.

Moderation Model

Mplus statistical software was used to test the interaction between accessibility and

discrimination concern on father involvement. In the current study, accessibility is the moderator

and not the predictor, because the relationship between discrimination concerns and father

involvement is the main relationship being examined. Second, it cannot be a mediation model

because accessibility does not predict discrimination concerns and discrimination concerns does

not predict accessibility.

The model is fully saturated with zero degrees of freedom ($\chi^2 = 0.0$, df $= 0$, $p < .001$;

RMSEA $= 0$, $p < .001$; CFI $= 1$; TLI $- 1$). Age ($B = -0.003$, $p > .05$), education ($B = 0.21$, $p <$

.01), income ($B = 0.02$, $p > .05$), and employment status ($B = 0.19$, $p < .05$) were controlled for in the model. Discrimination concern is not significantly related to father involvement ($B = -0.09$, SE $= .10$, $p > .05$). Accessibility is significantly and positively related to father involvement ($B = 0.82$, SE $= 0.23$, $p < .001$), such that fathers who had more access to their children had higher levels of involvement with their children. Accessibility did not significantly moderate the relationship between discrimination concern and father involvement ($B = -0.07$, SE $= 0.07$, $p > .05$). Finally, 36% of variability in father involvement was explained by the predictors and covariates ($R^2 = 0.36$).

Figure 4

Structural model of the interaction between discrimination concern and accessibility

Note: * indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001)
Unstandardized coeffients are given.
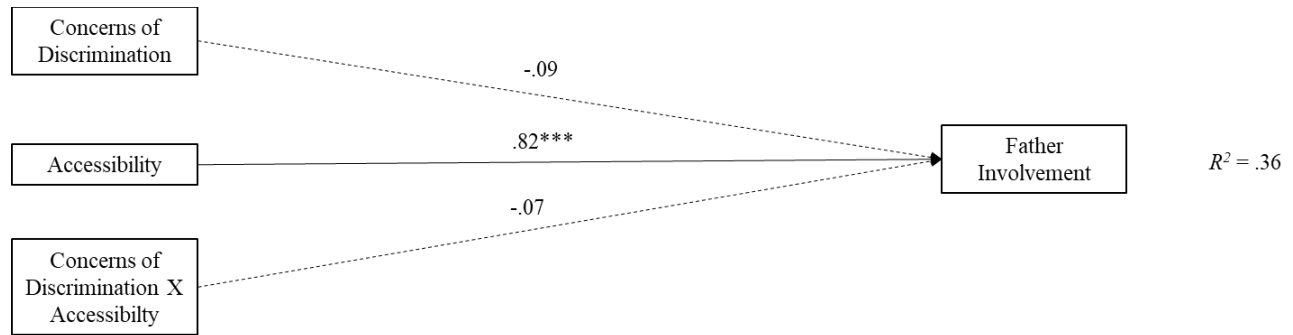Covariates included: age, education level, income, and employment status.

Discussion

The current study aimed to bridge the gap between father involvement and racial socialization literature. The current study provides four key contributions to the existing father involvement literature. First, a sample of Black fathers was used to explore the parenting

experiences of ethnic minority fathers, which is often understudied in the father involvement literature. Second, the narrative of ethnic minority nonresident fathers is expanded by illustrating the unique fathering role that they must fulfill by racially socializing their children. Third, a theoretical model was developed and tested to examine the effects of fathers' concerns of racial discrimination on father involvement through discussions of race and discrimination. Last, the conceptual linkage between father involvement and racial socialization helps to promote theory development and identify mediators of involvement that can be used in future research.

In this study, I examined the effects of fathers' concerns of discrimination on father involvement, with discussions of race and discrimination as a mediator. A model was also tested to assess the moderating effects of accessibility with respect to concerns of discrimination and father involvement. The results indicate that the first hypothesis was supported. Discrimination concerns had a direct effect on father involvement through discussions of race and discrimination. Fathers who have concerns about discrimination are more likely to have high levels of father involvement and discussions of race and discrimination with their children (Hughes, 2003). It is possible that these conversations lead to opportunities to teach children about issues related to race and discrimination, leading to higher levels of overall involvement.

The second hypothesis was not supported. The relationship between discrimination concerns and father involvement was not moderated by fathers' accessibility to his children. The results were consistent with findings from previous studies. The results indicated that accessibility has a direct effect on father involvement (Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010; Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2012; Zhang & Fuller, 2012). When fathers have higher opportunities for interactions with their children, they are more likely to be involved in the lives of their children.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present study contributes to the literature regarding both father involvement and racial socialization, there were several limitations. First, there were measurement limitations. While the racial socialization measure had strong internal consistency, it was limiting because it did not cover all types of racial socialization. The measure used was limited to questions regarding discrimination in multiple settings and how to prepare for discrimination. Hughes and colleagues (2006) define several domains or types of racial socialization practices used by Black parents. These include cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, egalitarianism, and silence about race. Future scholars should test the conceptual model using one or more types of racial socialization. In addition, future research should explore other types of discrimination experienced by ethnic minority fathers such as immigration status and how it is associated with racial socialization.

Another aspect of racial socialization that should be explored is children's perceived socialization. The study of perceived socialization provides insight about what children perceive they need versus what parents actually teach (Paasch-Anderson, & Lamborn, 2014; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Furthermore, scholars should examine gendered racial socialization, specifically how parents differ in their socialization of male versus female children. Gendered racial socialization is particularly important when examining the racial socialization practices of fathers. Fathers may have different parenting practices related to racial socialization of male children because Black males are more likely to be racially profiled and are more likely to be criminalized compared to non-Black males (Mchale et al., 2006; Walker, 2001; Websdale, 2001)

The sample was also limiting in generalizability. The sample was recruited from one area of the United States. Future studies should collect a larger sample across a broader area of the United States. Additionally, there was little variance in the fathers' employment status and education within the current sample. While it was controlled for in the current study, future studies could examine fathers from a variety of backgrounds to see if differences in employment status or education impact the findings.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations of the present study, the results provided useful insight into the parenting practices of ethnic minorities such as Black fathers. Few studies have examined how perceived discrimination in a fathers' social environment impacts his fathering practices. The results illustrated the important relationship between perceived discrimination in a father's social environment and his involvement with his children. When a Black father has concerns about discrimination within his neighborhood and career, he is more involved in his children's lives because he has the added task of racially socializing his children to help prepare his children for possible acts of discrimination. This is supported by an ecological framework, which suggests that a Black father's parenting cannot be separated from the social environment in which he lives.

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Table 1

Father's Age

Range	*frequencies*	*Percent*
20-29	7	8.8
30-39	28	35
40-49	32	40
50-59	13	16.3
60-69	0	0
70-79	0	0

Table 2

Father's Education

Categories	*frequencies*	*percent*
8th grade or less	0	0
Some high school	1	1.3
High school diploma	4	5
GED	1	1.3
Some college	32	40
Technical/Trade school	5	6.3
Bachelor's degree	18	22.5
Graduate or Professional	19	23.8

Table 3

Employment Status

Categories	*frequencies*	*percent*
Employed full-time	59	73.8
Employed part-time	8	10
Retired	2	2.5
Unemployed	6	7.5
Disabled	4	5
Missing data	1	1.3

Table 4

Income Range

Range	*frequencies*	*percent*
Less than $10,000	7	8.8
$10,000-$14,999	10	12.5
$15,000-$19,999	5	6.3
$20,000-$24,999	4	5
$25,000-$29,999	5	6.3
$30,000-$39,999	9	11.3
$40,000-$49,999	14	17.5
$50,000-$59,999	5	6.3
$60,000-$69,999	11	13.8
$70,000-$79,999	3	3.8
$80,000-$89,999	1	1.3
$90,000-$99,999	0	0
$100,000-$149,999	4	5
$150,000-$199,999	1	1.3
$200,000+	0	0
Missing Data	1	1.3

Table 5

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	Age	Education	Income	Employment Status	Accessibility	Involvement	Discussions	Concern
Age	3.65	0.86	1							
Education	6.42	1.35	.22*	1						
Income	6.09	3.33	0.1	.47***	1					
Employment Status	1.58	1.17	0.06	-.30**	-.39***	1				
Accessibility	-0.02	0.8	-0.08	0.06	.26*	-.32**	1			
Involvement	3.86	0.97	0.06	.28**	.28**	-0.02	.47***	1		
Discussions	3.33	1.19	0.2	0.1	-0.006	0.22*	0.15	.40***	1	
Concern	2.41	0.96	-0.04	-0.06	-.37***	0.1	-0.13	-0.14	.24*	1