
African American Families: Research Progress and Potential in the Age of Obama

28

Mia A. Smith-Bynum

This decade review of the research on African American families occurs at a fortuitous time in American history. A country founded on free, primarily African slave labor has elected its first president of color. This historic milestone provides an opportunity for scholars to reflect upon the progress African American families have made while simultaneously underscoring the need for research yet to be done. African American families made progress on several demographic indicators on quality of life, reveal substantial progress in the last decade. The last decade proved to be an active period of scholarship on African American family life (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010). A cursory search of the literature reveals that, since 1999, well over 900 studies in several disciplines have been conducted on African American families.

Collectively, these studies represent a mix of methodological approaches that examine African American family life from multiple disciplinary angles. Studies examining family formation (e.g., childbirth, cohabitation, marriage) tended to be demographic studies that often, though not exclusively compared African Americans to other racial/ethnic groups. In contrast, many studies focused on parenting and parent-child relationship containing within-group study designs focused on

variation within African American families (e.g., Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2004). Furthermore, in the last decade, the field has yielded more methodologically rigorous studies involving more multi-informant research (e.g., Campione-Barr, & Smetana, 2004; McHale et al., 2006), more longitudinal research intended to understand developmental change in African American families (e.g., Brody, Murry, Kim, & Brown, 2002) and more efforts to address the conflation of race and socioeconomic status (e.g., Roopnarine, Fouts, Lamb, & Lewis-Elligan, 2005).

Space limitations preclude a full review of all of the literature published in the last 10 years. This chapter is a selective review of the research on African American families. It is limited to family formation patterns in African American families, societal and internal dynamics that characterize African American marriages, and parenting processes as an outcome and predictor of child development. The parenting section addresses general parenting processes and includes a brief review of the literature on racial socialization as there are recent extensive reviews on this topic published elsewhere (Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006).

An extensive search of the published research literature between 1999 and 2011 was conducted using PsychINFO, Family Studies Abstracts, and Families & Society Studies Worldwide. The search terms “Blacks” and “African American” were used to identify studies involving populations of African descent. These publications were cross-referenced with search terms designed to

M.A. Smith-Bynum, PhD (✉)
Department of Family Science, School of Public Health,
University of Maryland at College Park,
College Park, MD, USA
e-mail: msbynum@umd.edu

identify studies on family life addressed in this chapter (e.g., cohabitation, divorce, family, families, marriage, marital, marital quality, marital satisfaction, parenting, racial socialization). From there, additional studies were located by viewing the reference sections of the publications. Once themes in the methodology and patterns of finds began to reoccur, the search was concluded. This review heavily emphasizes peer-reviewed, primarily empirical, published articles in research journals. However, authored books and edited volumes are also used to round out review when they added an important perspective to the topical areas addressed.

Lastly, most studies on families of African descent in the United States have focused primarily on those African Americans (e.g., born in the United States) and devoted limited attention to Black immigrant families. As a result, we limit our review to African American families but do highlight results for Black immigrant groups when they are included in studies on African American families. For this reason, the term “African American” is the ethnic label used to refer to the population throughout this review.

The chapter begins with an overview of the demographic features of African American families and the forces that shape them. It will be followed by a brief overview of the major theoretical perspectives that characterize the study of African American families, latest developments in trends in family formation in African American families, and marital relations. The next section reviews major findings in studies that focus on family formation patterns in African American families, including marriage, cohabitation, divorce, and childbearing. The second half of the review addresses parenting research, including general parenting practices and racial socialization.

Family Formation, Cohabitation, Marriage, and Divorce in African American Families: A Demographic Overview

There are 40.7 million African Americans in the United States, representing 13.5% of the US population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Approximately 94% of this population is native born with the remainder being naturalized citizens (2.7%) or foreign residents (3.4%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). African American families tend to be younger and multigenerational, and large in part because they have more children on average. African American grandparents coreside with their grandchildren 3.5 times more often than White American grandparents (7% vs. 2%), and they are more often involved in the care of their coresident grandchildren (52% vs. 45%). Married-couple families comprise 44% of all African American families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Though this represents a slight decrease from 48% in 1991 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1993), the US census data also indicate that about 31% of African Americans, age 15 and older, are married and about 11% are divorced (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). By and large, African American families reside largely in the South.

African American families can be found in a variety of stations of life based on the adult family members’ accumulated accomplishments in education, occupation and income, neighborhood quality, and relatedly, decisions about partner selection, marriage, childbearing, family formation, and relationship dissolution. Embedded in these patterns is a continued cultural emphasis on extended kinship networks that distinguish African American families (and other ethnic minority families) from their White American counterparts. From a purely demographic perspective, African American family life can be best described as a bimodal group: (1) families that by all indications have achieved at least middle-class status as indicated by education, earned income, and occupational status (e.g., Lacy, 2007); and (2) families with fewer economic and educational resources that, as a result, are more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the American and global economy (Lewin, 2001). To stop at this characterization, however, would miss the historical contexts and forces that shaped the most readily observable features or markers of this population that we observe in the present day (Dubois, 1908).

As noted, a substantial amount of attention has been devoted to explaining the lives of the most vulnerable African American families

(Gadsden, 1999; Smetana, 2000). These efforts have had varying degrees of success because of reliance on deficit model-based and/or race-comparative frameworks that overlooked key socio-structural factors affecting the families and that failed to acknowledge and assess cultural strengths (Billingsley, 1992; McLoyd, 2006). Indeed, overreliance on these frameworks often seemed to reify stereotypes about poor African American families, resulting in further stigmatization and marginalization of families most in need research that informs careful, thoughtful policy interventions (Johnson & Staples, 2005). In fact, a cursory review of the literature would suggest to the uninformed that all African American families are poor, single-parent families whose families formed from unplanned, primarily adolescent, pregnancies. It is only in considering African American family life in its entirety can scholars truly grasp the structural influences of race, class, and culture on the lives of the individuals within those families. Moreover, in so doing, we can generate effective policies and interventions that address the needs of this population.

African American families make choices with respect to family formation, whether it occurs through nonmarital childbirth, cohabitation, marriage, and even divorce and family dissolution that reflect the socio-structural constraints of racism and discrimination and also their cultural belief systems regarding the meaning of families. As members of American society, certainly many African Americans subscribe to some aspects of broader American cultural norms and expectations about family and marriage (Hatchett, Veroff, & Douvan, 1995; Haynes, 2000). At the same time, these beliefs and expectations seem to be tempered by a sense of pragmatism and/or realism about the degree to which African American families can fulfill those norms. Also, African American families have a distinct, vibrant culture in the United States that is appealing, rejuvenating, and integral to the healthy existence of many of the members that identify with the African American racial group (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The affirmation and validation emanating from an understanding of

and facility with African American cultural spaces often supercedes the negative mainstream messages that African American families encounter regarding the ways in which they go about their family lives (Lacy, 2004). That African American families diverge from other racial/ethnic groups in key areas of family life should come as no surprise given the historical socio-structural and cultural forces at play (Johnson & Staples, 2005). Rather, researchers should always return to the context in which these trends unfold for meaningful, culturally sound interpretations that ultimately inform policy and interventions that maximize positive outcomes (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990).

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of African American Family Life

Development of theory and application of theory to the study of African American families has been historically fraught with controversy and political tensions (Allen, 1978; Gadsden, 1999; Hill, 2006). This controversy stems from the longevity of the racial/ethnic differences in demographic patterns, economic realities, and a tendency by researchers to rely heavily on comparing African American families to White American families on various metrics. Particularly since the publication of the Moynihan Report (1965), scholarship and public policy decisions involving African American families reflected the ethos of the times and the national debate during which the scholarship was conducted (Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990). Early scholarship used conceptual frameworks that characterized differences between African American and White American families as being structurally and/or culturally deficient (Johnson & Staples, 2005; Slaughter-Defoe, Garrett, & Harrison-Hale, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Briggs, McClowry, & Snow, 2008). These terms were used to describe and explain the various racial disparities on numerous indicators of well-being (e.g., cognitive, social).

Historically, scholars devoted little attention to more objective descriptions and analysis of cultural patterns; the impact of racism and oppression

on family life heavily emphasized the most vulnerable African American families who have the fewest economic resources and who are forming families and raising children under the most challenging of circumstances (see Stack, 1978 for exception). Consequently, a skewed portrait of African American family life evolved in the literature. Analysis of the ways in which this scholarship unfolded pointed to limitations in the existing theoretical frameworks and the ideological thrust behind theory used and the questions asked that often cast African American families in a negative light (Allen, 1978; Johnson & Staples, 2005).

Perhaps the most controversial piece of scholarship influencing the national debate, public policy, and ultimately new scholarship about African American family life in the 1970s and onward is the Moynihan Report (1965). Recently, some scholars and policy makers have argued that Moynihan at least was partially correct in his assertions given recent demographic trends among African American families (Haskins, 2009). At the time, the report produced a firestorm of negative reactions from policy makers, politicians, liberal-oriented scholars, and African American civil rights activists alike. Debate continues over what Moynihan intended to convey through his report with some arguing that his take-home message has been oversimplified (Berger & Simon, 1974). Nevertheless, most have come to agree that his “tangle of pathology” thesis asserts that American slavery destroyed the structure of African American families, resulting in matrifocal families, unstable and deviant by definition. Consequently, an African American underclass emerged plagued by numerous social ills including unemployment and high rates of nonmarital birth.

The Moynihan Report has been criticized for devoting insufficient attention to the role of institutionalized and interpersonally mediated racism on the economic plight of African American families, and notably, the compromised breadwinner role among African American men and for its problematic methodology (Berger & Simon, 1974). The report ushered in a new period of scholarship, often referred to as revisionist scholarship, intended to unpack and highlight the

strengths in African American family life (e.g., Billingsley, 1968; Gutman, 1976; Stack, 1978). Research during this period made note of the strengths of African American families, including the benefits of the extended kin network.

To date, few single theories attempt to describe African American family life in its entirety. The complexity of African American family life makes this a daunting challenge in that these theories must account for those aspects of African American family life that are distinctly *African*, that is, those West African cultural traditions that were retained when African slaves were transported to the United States during the Middle Passage and throughout American history (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Johnson & Staples, 2005; Nobles, 1974). Theories must account for the impact of slavery, and American racism’s impact via law and custom as manifested through economic practices, segregation, and reduced educational opportunities on family formation and kinship relations over multiple generations. Census data reveal a unique tapestry of African American family types that share commonalities with other groups and while maintaining some key distinctions.

A close review of the literature reveals a series of micro- and macrotheories, each focusing on specific aspects of African American life. Theories focused specifically on African American families cover family formation patterns (Burton, 1990), economic deprivation and parenting in low-income single-parent families (McLoyd, 1990), marriage formation (Wilson, 1987), or specific aspects of African American family life such as racial socialization (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006; Stevenson, 1994; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002), and culture (Boykin & Toms, 1985). Some theories also focus more on African American child development, in which family socialization patterns play a role (Spencer, 2006; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). Though intended for a clinical audience, Boyd-Franklin’s (2003) Multisystemic Family Therapy theory is notable for its useful descriptions of general patterns of interaction and organization (e.g., role flexibility, three-generational family

structure) as well as the features of the interior life of African American families (e.g., religion and spirituality, the impact of racism and intra-racial skin color prejudice). It describes the adaptive nature of these family forms and illustrates the clinical presentation of problems when external stressors and life transitions strain this adaptability.

Several theorists have modified ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986) for application to African American children and families (Ogbu, 1981; Spencer et al., 1997) and to ethnic minority families in general. Several more recent theories that have proven useful in the study of African American family life attempt to explain family socialization patterns common to all ethnic minority families and focus more on the ways that families shape child development as opposed to family development (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996; Harrison et al., 1990). These theories take into account the emphasis on kinship networks in African American families and the impact of the historical events and contexts that shape the experiences of families of color in the United States and the impact of factors shaping the experience of race.

Review of Research Findings on African American Families

Family Formation, Cohabitation, Marriage, and Marital Dissolution in African American Families

As noted, family formation patterns in some African American families resemble the broader trends observed in the larger American population (e.g., childbirth in a married “nuclear” family). They also reflect the socio-structural and historical challenges of race in the United States. Aspirations for a nuclear family were not in keeping with the demands of slavery because marriage was illegal and family members could be sold off (Cherlin, 2005; Ruggles, 1997). Even once slavery was abolished, various laws, policies, and social forces continued to impede African Americans’ capacity to make free choices about

how they chose to live and work from the Reconstruction era into the present (Johnson & Staples, 2005).

Marriage as a prerequisite life event for having children is less prevalent among African Americans, and is also becoming less common among Americans in general (Cherlin, 2005). Marriage holds many benefits for spouses, including improved economic status, better health and psychological adjustment (Booth & Amato, 1991). However, these benefits have always been historically more difficult for African Americans to obtain despite data indicating that African Americans often hold marriage in high regard (Bryant, Taylor, Lincoln, Chatters, & Jackson, 2008; Dixon, 2009). Studies suggest that they often subscribe to traditional notions of marriage that, in many cases, includes a strong religious foundation (Marks et al., 2008), traditional spousal roles and duties (Kane, 2000), economic stability and external indicators of success (e.g., white picket fence) (Edin, Kefalas, & Reed, 2004; Haynes, 2000). Consequently, some have argued that marriage as an institution is less appealing to African Americans and they may find fewer incentives to marry at all (Burton & Tucker, 2009; Hill, 2006; Holland, 2009). Furthermore, some research has suggested that African American spouses may struggle with more marital tension and less marital satisfaction (Corra, Carter, Carter, & Knox, 2009; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). To that end, this section reviews research on the three pathways to family formation as they occur in African American families: (1) cohabitation, (2) childbirth, and (3) marriage and marital dissolution.

Cohabitation and Nonmarital Childbirth

Cohabitation is becoming an increasingly common form of family formation for all Americans (Goodwin, Mosher, & Chandra, 2010). Data indicate that African Americans select into cohabitating unions more often than White Americans (Manning, 2001). Data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth indicated that for African American men and women between the ages of 15 and 44, respectively, approximately 1 in 2 reported a history of cohabitation (Goodwin et al., 2010). A total of 10% of both African

American male and female respondents in the same age group were cohabitating at the time of the study. Interestingly, data also show that African American couples decide to cohabit after giving birth less frequently than White American couples. (Manning, 2001). Collectively, these studies suggest cohabitation serves different purposes for individuals depending on relationship goals, education and socioeconomic status, and desirability of marriage. For some, cohabitation serves as an alternative form of marriage. African American cohabitators are less likely to marry than their White American counterparts, even when marital intentions are expressed. Due to the demographic nature of much of the literature on cohabitation, it is difficult to assess all of the various meanings both halves of cohabitating couples ascribe to their unions. Additional research is needed to understand the meanings and dynamics of cohabitation among African American couples.

Manning (2001) used data on cohabitating women between the ages of 15 and 44 from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth to examine what factors influence the decision to have children within a cohabitating union. Results indicated that African American women were 69% more likely to give birth inside a cohabitating union than White American women. African American women were also three times more likely to stay with the partner when they gave birth in the union than White American women. For these African American women, childbirth within a cohabiting union more than likely reflects a marriage-like relationship in many cases.

Although demographic data indicate that low-income African American couples often begin new families through childbirth, or childbirth and cohabitation, they still endorse the symbolic importance of marriage as a life goal (Edin et al., 2004). In many cases, low-income couples retain a desire to marry though they may view it as less attainable for them than couples with more income. One study of the relationship factors predicting transitions in cohabitating unions found that African American couples were as likely as White American couples to report marriage expectations (70%; Brown, 2000). Only 20% of

them eventually married, compared with 60% of White American couples expressing similar expectations. African American couples either remained in cohabitating unions or these unions dissolved. This pattern suggests that economic factors may have precluded the transition to marriage for those in intact relationships at follow-up. The story is a little less clear when considering the cohabitation patterns of African American women with more education and income as few large demographic studies test for moderator effects of race and income and/or race and education on cohabitation as an outcome or a predictor. Researchers need to devote more efforts to examining within-group variation within African American couples that cohabit in order to tease out the effects of race and class on nonmarital family formation (Lincoln, Taylor, & Jackson, 2008). These efforts will also permit an understanding of the character of cohabitation among different segments of the African American population.

Nonmarital births are more common among African American women than in other groups (Wildsmith & Raley, 2006), and this appears to be the case even as women move up the economic strata (Gibson-Davis, 2011). The decision-making parameters regarding family formation are unclear as this subgroup has more economic means, thus their decisions could be driven by the mainstream middle-class American norms (e.g., marriage followed by childbirth), a high value based on children (e.g., religiosity), and/or lower stigma for nonmarital childbirth among African Americans (Goldscheider & Kaufman, 2006; Holland, 2009). It must also be acknowledged that despite endorsement of mainstream cultural norms, African American women are outpacing their male counterparts in education (Burton & Tucker, 2009). The smaller numbers of similarly educated African American potential male partners reduces the likelihood for partnering off (Wilson, 1987). Thus, even if the relationship is not one headed for marriage, one might decide to have a child in the event of an unexpected nonmarital pregnancy because they view their future prospects for marriage as uncertain (Holland, 2009).

Marriage and Divorce Among African American Couples

African American married-couple families constitute a significant proportion of African American family households, but they are especially vulnerable to disruption. Theorists have posited that trends in education (Mincy, Lewis, & Han, 2006), employment (Tomaskovic-Devey & Stainback, 2007), and incarceration (Dixon, 2009; Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2006) among African American men have undermined the capacity for African American couples to fit into traditional mainstream norms for marriage (Hill, 2009). Essentially, marital aspirations conflict with traditional notions that couples may hold about gender roles in the marriage, especially as they relate to the male breadwinner role and the associated distribution of power men typically hold in this role. For one, the gap between African American women's and men's education can prevent these marital unions from occurring since women are less likely to marry partners who are substantially less accomplished than they are. When these unions do occur, the presence of a substantial educational gap can strain marital relations due to conflicts about household division of labor (Furdyna, Tucker, & James, 2008). Marital strain can also result from the likelihood that, over time, couples with large educational discrepancies favoring women find that they have less in common with each other. This can make maintaining marital intimacy and trust more difficult (Burton & Tucker, 2009). Unless couples can adapt to these realities, the resulting friction created by poor gender-spousal role fit can be difficult to sustain over time.

For economic and practical reasons, African American couples have adapted to these challenges by exhibiting more role flexibility and egalitarianism in their division of labor in economic and domestic arenas out of necessity (Vespa, 2009). Still, debate persists about whether this apparent behavioral egalitarianism in family roles reflect couples' actual underlying attitudes about gender, marital power, and what African American women and African American men "should" do in their marital roles given American cultural expectations for marriage (Haynes, 2000;

Kane, 2000). Indeed, one recent study found that the smaller gap observed between African American husbands and wives in time spent on regular housework is actually the result of African American wives doing less housework in comparison to wives of other racial/ethnic backgrounds, not African American husbands doing more (Sayer & Fine, 2011).

To consider that the aforementioned challenges have characterized African American marital unions from the beginning, it may not be surprising to some to learn that marital instability has been a key feature of African American family life dating back to the 1800s (Ruggles, 1997). By law, African American couples were unable to marry under slavery, setting the stage for more flexible norms regarding family formation (Johnson & Staples, 2005). In highlighting concerns about declines in African American marriage rates, there is a tendency to emphasize the high rates and stability of marriage in the first half of the twentieth century (Cherlin, 2005). Since that time, steep declines in rates of marriage have been observed (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995).

Data also show that contemporary African American marriages are more likely to dissolve, in part because of the uneasy power balance that must constantly be negotiated among many African American married couples. In writing about the relationship tasks that African American married and cohabitating couples must accomplish in order to last, Pinderhughes (2002) describes the dilemmas this way:

[African American couples] must manage the anger and frustration stemming from their societal role, such that the vulnerability and mutuality so necessary for the intimacy are not destroyed by the invincible stance and readiness to struggle that are needed to cope with that role. They must maintain intimate relationships in the face of ongoing, disruptive circumstances that demand very different behaviors. They must not channel their anger and frustration into their bodies or discharge their feelings onto mates or children. Males have to especially guard against using domination in their relationships as compensation for social justice (p. 277).

Previous research has estimated that African American women face a 50% greater chance of

marital dissolution when compared to White American and Mexican American women (Phillips & Sweeney, 2005). As a group, data have shown that the rates of divorce within the first 15 years of marriage are approximately 55% (Amato, 2010). Clarkwest (2007) conducted a study investigating whether background dissimilarities in African American spouses at the outset of their relationship, resulting in part from a smaller pool of "marriageable prospects," contributed to greater risk of marital separation or divorce. Using three waves of longitudinal data from the National Survey of Families and Households spanning 16 years (1987–2003), his results indicated that African Americans were more dissimilar from their spouses when compared to non-African Americans in many areas. These areas were church attendance, desired number of children, support for maternal employment, sexual attitudes and beliefs about the appropriate degree of independence in marriage. These dissimilarities resulted in a 50% increase in marital dissolution rates for African American couples in the sample.

Recent research bolsters the notion that divorce results in part from discontinuity in gender roles expectations in marriage and the actual daily realities among many African American couples. A 10-year study examined the impact of military service on longitudinal divorce rates among White and African American service men that participated in the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (Teachman & Tedrow, 2008). Teachman and Tedrow argue that military employment offers African American men an attractive employment option for which a college education is not required. Building on a study conducted by Lundquist (2006), they argue that hierarchical organizational structure and the clearer path for career advancement in the military mitigates some of the potential impact of racial discrimination more commonly found in the civilian employment market. They posit that Army service in particular could benefit marriages because of the high enlistment rates of African Americans within the Army, and relatedly, the presence of African Americans in senior positions. They found that at every time point

African American men on active duty in the Army were 46% less likely to end their marriages when compared with their civilian counterparts. In contrast, neither military service status nor branch of service had an effect on the risk of divorce among White American men. These results seem to suggest that improved opportunity for stable employment for African American men can positively benefit African American marriages through its impact on the male breadwinner role.

Spousal dissimilarity also seems to play a significant role in the divorce rate among African American couples. Clarkwest (2006, 2007) conducted a longitudinal race-comparative study using three waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (1987–1988, 1992–1994, 2001–2003). In both studies, he found African American couples faced a 50% greater chance of divorce when compared to other couples. The 2007 study revealed that both variables entered as controls and variables measuring areas of spousal dissimilarity impacted racial differences in divorce risk. Specifically, discrepancies in marital age, history of previous divorce or parental divorce, education, church attendance, attitudes toward premarital sexual activity, and tolerance of infidelity accounted for 21% of the racial difference in rates of divorce. African American couples were more dissimilar at the time they married than other couples in five areas: church attendance, desired number of children, support for maternal employment, sexual attitudes, and beliefs regarding appropriate levels of independence in marriage.

Education and income levels of African American spouses show evidence of a mixed pattern of relationships in predicting divorce. Orbuch and colleagues found that 50% of African American couples had divorced by year 14 of their longitudinal study of urban African American and White American couples (Orbuch, Veroff, Hassan, & Horrocks, 2002). Results indicated that while greater education reduced divorce risk for African American wives and both halves of White American couples, it had no such impact for African American husbands. Involvement in housework by African American husbands did

reduce risk, however. Another longitudinal, nationally representative study demonstrated that African American wives with the least amount of income have grown increasingly more likely to experience separation or divorce over time when compared to their wealthier White and African American counterparts (Kim, 2010). These data suggest that more economic resources are generally beneficial, but only hint at potential internal dynamics with the marital couples that exacerbate or reduce risk of divorce.

Very little research addresses marital processes within African American couples (Cutrona et al., 2003; Goodwin, 2003; Wickrama, Bryant, & Wickrama, 2010). Of these, there are very few studies of within-group variation of marital processes among African American couples (Brown, Orbach, & Bauermeister, 2008). Marital satisfaction is often lower in African American couples than White American couples (Clark-Nicholas & Gray-Little, 1991; Faulkner, Davey, & Davey, 2005; Furdyna et al., 2008; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000). A study that tracked trends marital happiness between 1973 and 2006 by race and gender does indeed reveal that African American husbands and wives report lower satisfaction than their White American counterparts (Corra et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, Allen and Olson's (2001) study suggests that there are similarities between African American and White American couples with respect to the structure of happy and ailing marriages on dimensions of communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, children and parenting, egalitarian roles, personality issues, family and friends, and religious orientation. Using cluster analyses, they replicated the typology of marriages described by Olson and Fowers (1993) in over 400 African American marital couples presenting for treatment. The results indicated great similarities in typology of marriages compared with White American couples previously studied. These results also revealed that on average, for African American couples classified as *happy* or *vitalized*, both halves of the couples in these groups were fairly accomplished and economically stable. Ninety percent of these couples reported

being either *satisfied* or *extremely satisfied*. In contrast, *conflicted* couples experienced more discrepancies in the spouses' education levels with wives often having achieved more. The most distressed couples, *devalitized* couples, reported the lowest scores across each of the dimensions of marriage measured and low levels of marital dissatisfaction. On average, this group reported lower education, more struggles with full-time employment, and less frequent employment in professional occupations.

Religion is a major feature of many African American marriages (Brown et al., 2008; Furdyna et al., 2008). Religious African Americans are more likely to marry (Clarkwest, 2006). Engagement in religious practices (e.g., church attendance) also predicts marital stability (Brown et al., 2008). Marks et al. (2008) interviewed 30 African American married couples residing primarily in urban centers around the country that self-identified as couples in long-term happy marriages. Though the sample is small, it is also notable that participating couples were more affluent on average than other African Americans at the time they were interviewed. Interview data revealed that couples relied on their religious beliefs as a way to weather external challenges to the marriage and using thoroughly open and respectful communication to resolve marital conflict.

Studies also indicate that religiosity can have differing effects on spouses' marital satisfaction or happiness. Furdyna et al. (2008) found that religious African American wives reported less marital happiness when they earned substantially more income than their husbands than those earning incomes somewhat more or equal to that of their husbands. They suggest highly religious African American wives may hold traditional beliefs about the male breadwinner role. They may also wish to focus more on their domestic duties. When the marital reality conflicts with this belief system, wives may feel less satisfied or fulfilled in the marriage.

Beyond religiosity, only a handful of studies have attempted to examine other general or culturally relevant factors or processes occurring within African American marriages that impact

overall well-being, satisfaction, and related constructs (Lincoln & Chae, 2010). Goodwin's (2003) study of marital well-being in their third year of marriage addresses the thorny issue of low levels of marital trust among African American wives as one source of marital tension that serves to undermine marital relations in African American couples. She found that marital trust and a sense of "underbenefitting" from the marriage predicted lower levels of marital well-being at twice the rate of White American wives in the sample. African American women also trusted their spouses less after 3 years of marriage.

Kelly and Floyd's (2001, 2006) studies actually measure cultural attitudes directly (e.g., Afrocentricity, endorsement of negative African American stereotypes) to assess their impact on dynamics within the marital and committed couple relationship. Their 2006 study was notable for a complex set of relationships between religious well-being, Afrocentric beliefs, marital trust, and their outcome variable. Specifically, Afrocentric beliefs benefited husbands' marital trust only when religious well-being was low and when socioeconomic status was high. They found that among husbands with low incomes, Afrocentricity actually had a negative impact on marital trust. Findings yielded a negative association between endorsement of negative stereotypes about African Americans and marital trust among husbands. Against conventional thinking, Afrocentric beliefs yielded no direct relationship to marital trust or adjustment for husbands or wives in their sample. They cite issues with measurement of Afrocentricity as one potential source of the pattern of findings. These patterns may also be a function of incompatible beliefs between religion and Afrocentricity. Afrocentricity may be a buffer for African American husbands in white-collar professions where they are in the extreme minority. These findings might also suggest that husbands with less income may find that a focus on Afrocentricity might heighten their awareness of their gender role struggles as African American men in ways that are detrimental to marital trust.

The incredibly small handful of studies on micro-level processes in African American mar-

ried and cohabitating couples highlights the need for significant programmatic research in this area. It also highlights the paucity of research on the role of cultural beliefs and similar factors (e.g., racial identity, racial discrimination) in marital processes and couples relationships more generally. Similarly, more research is sorely needed at the dyadic level to understand more comprehensively the factors that undermine and support African American marriages and the role of attitudes and emotions about mate selection, dating, and cohabitation in marital outcomes.

Parenting and Children's Outcomes in African American Families

The impact of African American parenting behaviors on child developmental outcomes has long garnered substantial attention from researchers (Baumrind, 1972; Brody & Flor, 1998; Harrison et al., 1990; Lesane-Brown, 2006; McAdoo, 2002; Spencer, 1983; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). In contrast to the research on family formation, which often used designs that compared African American families to other racial/ethnic groups, a growing number of the studies on parenting in the last 10 years focused on within-group variation in African American families. There is also a greater focus on internal processes within families (Brody et al., 2002).

As noted, the nature of African American parenting continues to be a subject of research scrutiny, particularly regarding whether it is best described as authoritarian (i.e., low warmth with high discipline and control) or whether it is actually authoritative parenting expressed in a distinctly African American cultural manner, or an adaptation to the risks embedded in the ecological contexts in which African American families reside (e.g., no-nonsense parenting, Brody & Flor, 1998). We know more today about the nature of African American parenting than we did 10 years ago. Still, researchers often fail to measure culture or cultural variables explicitly (Hill & Bush, 2001) and race-comparative studies often still continue to substitute race for culture and/or ethnicity (Phinney & Landin, 1998).

There was a substantial increase in the number of studies addressing racial socialization relative to the number of published articles on the topic in the decade prior. In terms of the age group of the children studied, most studies contain samples of schoolagers and adolescents. I have organized the next section to take into account the way the literature has developed during this period. It begins with studies that have a primary focus on general parenting. We define general parenting as those studies that focus on parent–child relationship quality, discipline, monitoring, psychological control, and those studies examining the impact of different forms of family structure on children’s outcomes.

General Parenting

A topic receiving longstanding attention in the literature on African American families is the nature and effectiveness of parenting in African American families (Baumrind, 1972; Chase-Lansdale, Brooks-Gunn, & Zamsky, 1994; Gonzales, Caucé, & Mason, 1996; McAdoo, 2002). In the past decade, researchers have worked to identify more precisely the nature of parenting in this regard and to a certain degree; they have been more diligent in taking into account context and cultural influences (McLoyd, 2006). Studies in this area attempt to capture the wide array of family structures that characterized these families by making more explicit efforts to assess the caregiving arrangements of single-parent families in particular, rather than assuming that no other adults are present in such families (e.g., Conger et al., 2002). In so doing, researchers and policy makers have been able to identify the more vulnerable family configurations and to tease out why they are more vulnerable (e.g., Hummer & Hamilton, 2010; Jackson, Brooks-Gunn, Huang, & Glassman, 2000).

One ongoing debate in the field entails whether African American parents primarily use an authoritative (e.g., high warmth, high structure) or authoritarian parenting style (e.g., low warmth, high structure; McGroder, 2000; Pittman & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, research findings seemed to indicate that traditional definitions of authoritative and

authoritarian parenting did not apply to African American families (Brody & Flor, 1998; Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999; Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert, & Stephens, 2001). Moreover, the function and usefulness of strict parenting styles typically conceptualized as authoritarian neglected to account for the kinds of contextual risks that African American children face (Gonzales, Caucé, Friedman, & Mason, 1996; Mason, Caucé, Gonzales, & Hiraga, 1996; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Daddis, 2004).

African American parents raise their children with a heightened awareness of the risks to healthy development their children face such as residence in or adjacent to low-income, high crime communities (Lambert, Brown, Phillips, & Ialongo, 2004; Patillo-McCoy, 1999), and vulnerability to racial stereotyping regarding their intellect (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and criminal involvement (Bynum, Best, Barnes, & Burton, 2008; Sanders-Phillips, 2009). Still, studies that rely upon race-comparative designs have a limited capacity to explaining the cultural nuances of African American parenting specifically. There has been improvement in researchers’ awareness of the need to attend to confounding of race and socioeconomic class at the recruitment phase (e.g., Hill & Bush, 2001; Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002). Statistically controlling for socioeconomic status continues to be an inadequate remedy as many race-comparative studies often have groups that are discrepant on socioeconomic class at the outset (e.g., Jackson-Newsom, Buchanan, & McDonald, 2008; Steinberg & Fletcher, 1998).

Parenting research focused on African American infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in the last 10–20 years largely focuses on parenting processes in low-income, single-parent families (Jackson, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2009). These studies often involve a focus on risk for children’s negative developmental outcomes (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Several of the recent within-group studies examine the factors that undermine competent parenting among African American single mothers parenting young children and their subsequent impact on children’s developmental outcomes (McLoyd, 1990; Murry, Bynum, et al., 2001).

Earlier research revealed that the fewer economic resources families have, the more difficult single mothers find the task of raising young children (Jackson et al., 2000). Inadequate economic resources reduce mothers' confidence and increase their psychological distress, which in turn, results in harsher parenting and less warmth in parenting interactions with children (Brody & Flor, 1997). It also undermines children's outcomes as well in several arenas (McLoyd, 1990, 1998). Jackson's (2003) study of African American single mothers of young schoolagers (6–8 years of age) found that in particular, low-wage employment and residence in poor-quality neighborhoods predicted higher levels of behavior problems 2 years later. Depressive symptomology and parenting a son worsened these outcomes. Jackson also conducted several studies in the 1990s and early 2000s with urban African American single mothers of preschoolers. Her work indicated that parenting a male child (Jackson, 1998) is more stressful, and this challenge might be especially difficult when mothers have less education on average and when they report greater role strain (Jackson, 1993, 1994).

Parenting studies involving young African American children that attempt to disentangle socioeconomic class or culture/ethnicity from race in the study design phase continue to be rare. In one observational study of the families of young infants (i.e., 3–4 months) in low-, middle-, and high-income African American families, fathers were observed to participate in more social stimulation than mothers and more displays of affection in comparison to mothers (Roopnarine et al., 2005). Another study investigated maternal socialization of emotion regulation in African American preschoolers (Garner, 2006). The study revealed that emotion matching (defined as the displaying emotion considered to be an appropriate reaction to a child's emotional display), discussion of emotion, and maternal distraction predicted greater emotion competence in children.

A small amount of evidence suggests that parental intrusiveness during children's play may function differently in interactions between African American parents and their young children.

Parental intrusiveness is typically defined as the degree to which parents control or direct children's play in ways that interfere with the natural pacing of children's play and mastery of given skills. It is generally thought to be a negative parenting behavior because of linkages to negative developmental outcomes in young children (Egeland, Pianta, & O'Brien, 1993). However, in the case of intrusiveness as well as with other constructs focused on some aspect of parental control relevant to later stages of child development, recent studies seem to indicate that high control in the presence of high warmth does not translate into negative developmental outcomes for African American children in the way it seems to for White American children.

For instance, Ipsa et al. (2004) longitudinal study investigated the impact of maternal intrusive behaviors when children were 15 months old on three child outcomes at 25 months of age: dyadic mutuality, engagement of mother, and child negativity toward mother (e.g., anger, dislike). They also examined these processes in African American, White American, and Mexican American families with two different degrees of acculturation to determine whether ethnicity (e.g., culture) moderated the impact of intrusiveness. At the mean level, African American mothers and less acculturated Mexican American mothers had higher scores on intrusiveness than the White American mothers in the sample, suggesting that these behaviors are more normative in the former two groups. Though mothers rated as higher on intrusiveness also had children who displayed greater negativity towards them, this relationship did not exist for African American families when mothers were high on warmth. Intrusiveness did not predict child engagement with the mother in any of the three ethnic minority groups. They acknowledge, however, that the probability levels only approached significance in the statistical models. Similarly, Pungello and colleagues (2009) found that maternal intrusiveness (time 1 = child 12 months old) was unrelated to growth in children's expressive language skills over 4 time points (18–36 months) (Pungello, Iruka, Dotterer, Mills-Koonce, & Reznick, 2009). Analyses did reveal racial differences in the

indicators of language development between the two groups despite extensive efforts to recruit equivalent groups with respect to socioeconomic status and efforts with regard to sample restrictions and statistical controls to make the groups as equivalent as possible.

Collectively, these results indicate that African American mothers' engagement of their young children in ways that are currently labeled as intrusive may have a different meaning within their cultural context. It is also possible that maternal warmth reduces any potential negative impact of intrusive or dominating behaviors in dyadic interactions. Moreover, racial differences in the developmental outcomes in question may be a function of socioeconomic class and other unmeasured factors that also covary with racial-ethnic group membership. Placing our understanding of how African American parents engage and structure their children should also reflect the cultural emphasis on respect for elders in African American families (Boykin & Toms, 1985). The pattern of findings here and in the sections to follow highlights a need to attend directly to cultural belief systems and practices in parenting study designs going forward.

Physical discipline and corporal punishment. As we move up the age spectrum, studies reflect continued interest in constructs assessing various dimensions of parental control in African American parenting and potentially different meanings in the context of African American families. Spanking is defined as mild forms of physical punishment (e.g., striking the child on the buttocks, slapping the child's hand). Though it can vary in intensity (McLoyd & Smith, 2002), it does not rise to the level of physical abuse (Christie-Mizell, Pryor, & Grossman, 2008). Considered a controversial parenting practice, physical punishment is widely used in the United States (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Petit, 2004). Evidence suggests that it is used often by African American parents (Lau, Litrownik, Newton, Black, & Everson, 2006). Previous research has linked corporal punishment to negative developmental outcomes in children in the form of greater externalizing behaviors,

and more recently, depressive symptoms (Christie-Mizell et al., 2008; Lau et al., 2006; McLoyd, Kaplan, Hardaway, & Wood, 2007).

In the last 10 years, several studies have shown that the negative linkages between child outcomes and physical punishment commonly reported for White American families do not hold up consistently when African American families are considered (Horn, Joseph, & Cheng, 2004). Recent studies using large, representative samples and smaller samples suggest that factors such as maternal warmth (McLoyd & Smith, 2002) and maternal endorsement of spanking as an appropriate disciplinary strategy (McLoyd et al., 2007) attenuate the linkage between spanking and externalizing and internalizing problems, respectively. Findings from the 2007 study indicated the following: (1) physical punishment was associated with greater maternal psychological distress regardless of endorsement status; (2) the association was stronger for nonendorsers than endorsers; (3) the use of physical punishment longitudinally predicted greater depressive symptoms by mothers who did not endorse physical punishment as appropriate parenting strategy; and (4) there was no association between physical punishment and later child depressive symptoms by endorsing mothers.

Lansford et al. (2004) found that physical discipline in the early childhood years and during early adolescence predicted lower externalizing problems in African American 11th graders. These findings reinforce the notion of considering the context in which spanking is applied in African American parenting. Some argue that this pattern reflects greater cultural acceptance of corporal punishment (Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Petit, 1996), even though cultural beliefs are not directly assessed. The relative consistency of these patterns coupled with the longitudinal nature of the data underscore the need to measure cultural beliefs about the meaning and interpretation of physical punishment by both African parents and children.

Parenting studies involving adolescents in the last 10 years also reflect this continuing theme that parental control constructs may have a different meaning in African American families.

In a series of rigorous studies, Smetana and colleagues assessed cultural processes embedded in autonomy granting process in middle-class African American families with adolescents (Smetana, 2000; Smetana et al., 2004). Middle- to upper-class African American parents reported that all areas of decision-making involving various facets of their adolescents' lives fall under their purview and that they had the legitimate authority as parents to make decisions in this area. These parents also engage in more joint decision making with their adolescents than previously seen in studies on White American middle-class adolescents, with parents granting more autonomy to adolescents as adolescents grew older (Smetana et al.). This work provides evidence that the nature and perception of parental authority during the adolescent years differs in distinct ways from White American families that she has previously studied.

Racial Socialization

The area receiving perhaps the greatest increase in attention in the African American parenting literature in the last 10 years is racial socialization. There are several existing, overlapping definitions of racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Stevenson et al., 2002). In this chapter, we define racial socialization as a set of parenting strategies designed to prepare African American children for the developmental challenges of being a person of color in the United States. These challenges include coping with exposure to racial discrimination and exposure to negative racial stereotypes that threaten healthy identity development and coping with racial discrimination in its various forms (Boykin & Toms, 1985). As the press to understand African American children and families within their cultural context has gained currency as an acceptable research approach in the field, the growth in this research area allows us to make some observations about what we have learned about the nature and impact of this culturally relevant parenting activity.

Racial socialization practices are common in African American families, and can be considered normative (Bowman & Howard, 1985;

Demo & Hughes, 1990; Lesane-Brown, 2006) though the content of the messages and strategies vary from family to family (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Racial socialization refers a variety of message types and frameworks, but comprehensive reviews narrowed the topics to four broad areas: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarian attitudes/silence about race (Hughes et al., 2006). In this review, we provide a general description of the progress in this area and give a synopsis of findings on how African American parents prepare children to cope with racial bias and messages about cultural socialization and related constructs (e.g., cultural pride).

Recent studies also indicate that specific demographic factors like parent gender, parent education, child age, child gender, and family socioeconomic status are associated with frequency, content, and timing of racial socialization strategies. Parents that are more affluent and more educated seem to engage in more racial socialization strategies than families with less income (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2009; Neblett et al., 2008). It has been speculated that African American parents from more educated, affluent backgrounds are likely to have more contact with White Americans and thus, may encounter more discrimination (Hughes, 2003; White-Johnson, Ford, & Sellers, 2010). It also appears that the child's age (Demo & Hughes, 1990) and degree of racism exposure impacts when certain topics get introduced (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; McHale et al., 2006; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009), suggesting that parents are consciously adapting the timing and introduction of certain race-related content based on the racial context and developmental needs of their children.

Recently, researchers have devoted more attention to the role of gender in racial socialization. One study found that mothers appear to engage in more cultural socialization than fathers (McHale et al., 2006). A smaller qualitative study of maternal racial socialization found that mothers did not differ in the amount of racial socialization messages delivered to sons and daughters (Frabutt, Walker, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 2002).

Parents living in different racial contexts likely socialize their children about race in ways as a function of those racial contexts (Caughy, Nettles, O'Campo, & Lohrlink, 2006). Maternal warmth is associated with racial socialization globally (Frabutt et al., 2002), and specifically with greater cultural socialization and preparation for bias (McHale et al., 2006). These findings suggest that supportive and involved mothering involves teaching children important life lessons about race. Fathers that were warmer, more educated, and older were more likely to engage in cultural socialization and preparation for bias. This effect was especially pronounced for sons as compared to daughters.

Cultural socialization. Cultural socialization messages, also referred to as messages aimed at instilling a sense of racial pride, teach children about African American history and cultural traditions (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Stevenson et al., 2002). These types of racial socialization messages seem to be the most frequently occurring (Brega & Coleman, 1999; Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Moreover, this aspect of socialization seems to come from parents where as other areas of racial socialization may be more likely to be prompted by external events or children's accounts of their experiences with racial discrimination (Hughes et al., 2006). Studies suggest that cultural socialization appears to be positive for the psychological functioning of children and young adults (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007), but some conflicting findings have been reported.

Several different measures with slightly different construct definitions exist in this area (e.g., cultural pride, racial pride, cultural legacy appreciation, Africentric home environment). This may account for some of the mixed findings. For example, cultural socialization predicted fewer depressive symptoms and positive ethnic identity in school-aged children from two-parent families, especially when both mothers and fathers delivered these messages (McHale et al., 2006). Cultural legacy appreciation predicted specific aspects of racial identity, nationalism, and racial

centrality in adolescents (Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). In one study of preschoolers residing in different types of neighborhoods, a home environment infused with African American culture predicted better cognitive skills and vocabulary knowledge among girls but not boys and fewer internalizing problems in boys and girls (Caughy et al., 2006). The impact of the home environment was more pronounced among children from high-risk neighborhoods. However, counterintuitively, girls in similar environments from low-risk neighborhoods exhibited more externalizing problems. More research is needed to clarify under which conditions cultural socialization is beneficial for children's developmental outcomes.

Preparation for bias. Preparation for bias is defined as messages designed to make children aware of the possibility of racial bias and discrimination and to provide a way to cope in the face of these possible biases (Hughes et al., 2006). Findings regarding the impact of preparation for bias have been mixed. On the one hand, it can be helpful to know that such barriers exist so that children may be able to interpret them and develop the capacity to cope with them. However, too many messages about the realities of racial bias can backfire, and result in greater psychological distress (Bynum et al., 2007).

Results from a self-report study investigating the buffering effects of racial socialization on African American eighth-graders indicated that moderate levels of preparation for bias buffered their self-esteem from the impact of racial discrimination (Harris-Britt et al., 2007). In contrast, low or high levels of preparation for bias seemed to render adolescents more vulnerable to racial discrimination experiences. High levels of preparation for bias can result in lower levels of locus of control if mothers are teaching about it and fathers are not (McHale et al., 2006). Preparation for bias has been associated with more internalizing problems in young African American children (Caughy et al., 2006) and older children (McHale et al., 2006), but these findings need to be replicated. Taken together, these study results suggest at a minimum that parents must be careful with respect to how they deliver such

messages and to take into consideration whether they are delivering similar messages to children about the realities of racial bias.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The research literature on African American families has made substantial advancements in the last 10 years in some key areas. There is greater recognition of the need for more attention to the internal variation in family processes within this population as well within other ethnic minority groups in the United States. Greater attention to internal variation in African American families has occurred more often in the parenting literature. Future research should be devoted towards understanding the internal dynamics of mate selection processes, and also, cohabitation and marital relationships. Large population studies are useful for identifying broad trends, but they are limited in revealing the underlying the meaning of personal choices regarding family formation in these studies. In this arena, race-comparative frameworks can only go so far in terms of showing how African Americans are different. Given that this approach dominates the family formation literature, there is an opening for researchers to complement this work with smaller scale studies using more intensive methods. More qualitative research, observational methods, and more extensive assessments of psychological and cultural constructs would answer many questions about the meaning of family formation decisions and guide policies that support African American families.

Furthermore, future studies need to take into account the race-based external pressures on African American families (Lundquist, 2006). Within the parenting literature, investigators have begun to incorporate experiences with racial discrimination into study designs to illustrate how they undermine parenting and child outcomes (e.g., Brody et al., 2008; Caughy, O'Campo, & Muntaner, 2004; Murry, Brown, Brody, Cutrona, & Simons, 2001). Similar attention is needed to understand how African American men and women manage the challenges of racial discrimination and the process by which it impacts

romantic relationships in each stage or type (e.g., dating, cohabitation, marriage). Specific attention to how the dynamics of racial identity and racial discrimination experience intersect with the gender role expectations that affect mate selection (Collins, 1998) is needed. Scholars have presented compelling conceptual thinking about these particular dynamics that undermine African American marriages, but more empirical data at the dyadic level are sorely needed. To the extent that marriage is a valued outcome in our society, more attention is needed in this arena.

This review also underscores the need for more research on middle-class African American families of all types. Within these studies, researchers need to expand their measurement of cultural variables (e.g., racial identity, exposure to racial discrimination, cultural beliefs). There is a wide array of measures available that can be incorporated into study designs to illuminate within group variation within this population. It is no longer necessary to rely as heavily on racial-ethnic group membership as an indicator of culture processes or endorsement of culturally based belief systems. New measures should also be developed in subfields where they are lacking. Assumptions about variation (or lack thereof) within racial-ethnic groups need to be tested by measuring culturally based beliefs in all such groups enrolled in our studies. Lastly, making explicit efforts to study more affluent families and to measure cultural processes explicitly will improve our understanding of the role of culture and socioeconomic class in African American family life (Bynum, 2007).

In conclusion, the state of the research on African American families is a portrait of progress and potential. The field has made substantial progress in documenting the lives of African American families where they live. Researchers also attend more to the factors that shape African American family life to a greater extent than occurred 10 years ago. Still, the field should not rest on its laurels; this review generated as many questions as it has attempted to answer. The wealth of research conducted to date establishes a clear foundation for researchers to chart new paths in the knowledge base on African American families.

Acknowledgments This chapter was prepared with the support of the National Institute of Mental Health (7R21MH083986-02). I would like to thank Dr. Sandra L. Barnes and Dr. Sharon Lambert for feedback on an earlier version of this chapter. I would also like to thank Tiffani Stevenson and Dr. Ndidi Okeke for their assistance in the preparation of this chapter.

References

- Allen, W. D., & Olson, D. H. (2001). Five types of African American marriages. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 27*, 301–314.
- Allen, W. R. (1978). The search for applicable theories of black family life. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 40*, 117–129.
- Amato, P. (2010). Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*, 650–666.
- Baumrind, D. (1972). An exploratory study of socialization of effects on black children: Some black-white comparisons. *Child Development, 43*, 261–267.
- Berger, A. S., & Simon, W. (1974). Black families and the Moynihan report: A research evaluation. *Social Problems, 22*, 145–161.
- Billingsley, A. (1968). *Black families in White America*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Billingsley, A. (1992). *Climbing Jacob's ladder: The enduring legacy of African American families*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Booth, A., & Amato, P. (1991). Divorce and psychological stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 32*, 396–407.
- Bowman, P. J., & Howard, C. (1985). Race-related socialization, motivation, and academic achievement: A study of Black youths in three-generation families. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 24*, 134–141.
- Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black families in therapy: Understanding the African American experience*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Boykin, W. A., & Toms, F. (1985). Black child socialization: A conceptual framework. In H. McAdoo & J. McAdoo (Eds.), *Black children: Social, educational, & parental environments* (pp. 32–51). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Brega, A. G., & Coleman, L. M. (1999). Effects of religiosity and racial socialization on subjective stigmatization in African American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 22*, 223–242.
- Brody, G. H., Chen, Y. F., Kogan, S. M., Murry, V. M., Logan, P., & Luo, Z. (2008). Linked perceived discrimination to longitudinal changes in African American mother's parenting practices. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70*, 318–331.
- Brody, G. H., & Flor, D. L. (1997). Maternal psychological functioning, family processes, and child adjustment in rural, single-parent, African American families. *Developmental Psychology, 33*, 1000–1011.
- Brody, G. H., & Flor, D. L. (1998). Maternal resources, parenting practices, and child competence in rural, single-parent African American families. *Child Development, 69*, 803–816.
- Brody, G. H., Flor, D. L., & Gibson, N. M. (1999). Linking maternal efficacy beliefs, developmental goals, parenting practices, and child competence in rural single-parent African American families. *Child Development, 70*, 1197–1208.
- Brody, G. H., Kim, S., Murry, V. M., & Brown, A. C. (2004). Protective longitudinal paths linking child competence to behavioral problems among African American siblings. *Child Development, 75*, 455–467.
- Brody, G. H., Murry, V. M., Kim, S., & Brown, A. C. (2002). Longitudinal pathways to competence and psychological adjustment among African American children living in rural, single-parent households. *Child Development, 73*, 1505–1576.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*, 723–742.
- Brown, E., Orbuch, T. L., & Bauermeister, J. A. (2008). Religiosity and marital stability among Black American and White American couples. *Family Relations, 57*, 186–197.
- Brown, S. L. (2000). Union transitions among cohabitators: The significance of relationship assessments and expectations. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 62*, 833–846.
- Bryant, C. M., Taylor, R. J., Lincoln, K. D., Chatters, L. M., & Jackson, J. S. (2008). Marital satisfaction among African Americans and Black Caribbeans: Findings from the National Survey of American Life. *Family Relations, 57*, 239–253.
- Burton, L. M. (1990). Teenage childbearing as an alternative life course strategy in multigenerational black families. *Human Nature, 1*, 123–143.
- Burton, L. M., Bonilla-Silva, E., Ray, V., Buckelew, R., & Freeman, E. H. (2010). Critical race theories, colorism, and the decade's research on families of color. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*, 440–449.
- Burton, L. M., & Tucker, M. B. (2009). Romantic unions in an era of uncertainty: A post-Moynihan perspective on African American women and marriage. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 621*, 1321–1348.
- Bynum, M. S. (2007). African American mother-daughter communication about sex and daughters' sexual behavior: Does college racial composition make a difference? *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 13*, 151–160.
- Bynum, M. S., Best, C., Barnes, S. L., & Burton, E. T. (2008). Private regard, identity protection, and perceived racism among African American males. *Journal of African American Studies, 12*, 142–155.
- Bynum, M. S., Burton, E. T., & Best, C. (2007). Racism experiences and psychological functioning in African American college freshmen: Is racial socialization a

- buffer? *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13, 64–71.
- Campione-Barr, N., & Smetana, J. G. (2004). In the eye of the beholder: Subjective and observer ratings of middle-class African American mother-adolescent interactions. *Developmental Psychology*, 40, 927–934.
- Caughy, M. O., Nettles, S. M., O'Campo, P. J., & Lohrfink, K. F. (2006). Neighborhood matters: Racial socialization of African American children. *Child Development*, 77, 1220–1236.
- Caughy, M. O., O'Campo, P. J., & Muntaner, C. (2004). Experiences of racism among African American parents and the mental health of their preschool-aged children. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94, 2118–2124.
- Caughy, M. O., O'Campo, P. J., Randolph, S. M., & Nickerson, K. (2002). The influence of racial socialization practices and behavioral competence of African American preschoolers. *Child Development*, 73, 1611–1625.
- Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Zamsky, E. S. (1994). Young African American multigenerational families in poverty: Quality of mothering and grand-mothering. *Child Development*, 65, 373–393.
- Cherlin, A. (2005). Marriage in the first half of the 20th century. *The Future of Children*, 15, 33–55.
- Christie-Mizell, C. A., Pryor, E. M., & Grossman, E. R. B. (2008). Child depressive symptoms, spanking, emotional support: Differences between African American and European American youth. *Family Relations*, 57, 335–350.
- Clark-Nicholas, P., & Gray-Little, B. (1991). Effect of economic resources on marital quality in Black married couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 53, 645–655.
- Clarkwest, A. (2006). Premarital characteristics, selection into marriage, and African American marital disruption. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 37, 361–380.
- Clarkwest, A. (2007). Spousal dissimilarity, race, and marital dissolution. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 639–653.
- Collins, P. H. (1998). Intersections of race, class, gender, and nation: Some implications for black family studies. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29, 27–36.
- Conger, R. D., Wallace, L. E., Sun, Y., Simons, R. L., McLoyd, V. C., & Brody, G. H. (2002). Economic pressure in African American families: A replication and extension of the Family Stress Model. *Developmental Psychology*, 38, 179–193.
- Corra, M., Carter, S. K., Carter, J. S., & Knox, D. (2009). Trends in marital happiness by gender and race, 1973–2006. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30, 1379–1404.
- Cutrona, C. E., Russell, D. W., Abraham, W. T., Gardner, K. A., Melby, J. N., Bryant, C., et al. (2003). Neighborhood context and financial strain as predictors of marital interaction and marital quality in African American couples. *Personal Relationships*, 10, 389–409.
- Deater-Deckard, K., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., & Petit, G. S. (1996). Physical discipline among African American and European American mothers: Links to externalizing behaviors. *Developmental Psychology*, 32, 1065–1072.
- Demo, D. H., & Hughes, M. (1990). Socialization and racial identity among Black Americans. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 53, 364–374.
- Dixon, P. (2009). Marriage among African Americans: What does the research show? *Journal of African American Studies*, 13, 29–46.
- Dubois, W. E. B. (1908). *The Negro family*. Atlanta: Atlanta University Press.
- Edin, K., Kefalas, M. J., & Reed, J. M. (2004). A peek inside the black box: What marriage means for poor unmarried parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 1007–1014.
- Egeland, B., Pianta, R., & O'brien, M. A. (1993). Maternal intrusiveness in infancy and maladaptation in early school years. *Development and Psychopathology*, 5, 359–370.
- Faulkner, R. A., Davey, M., & Davey, A. (2005). Gender-related predictors of change in marital satisfaction and marital conflict. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 33, 61–83.
- Frabutt, J. M., Walker, A. M., & MacKinnon-Lewis, C. (2002). Racial socialization messages and the quality of mother/child interactions in African American families. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 22, 200–217.
- Furdyna, H. E., Tucker, M. B., & James, A. D. (2008). Relative spousal earnings and marital happiness among African American and white women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70, 332–344.
- Gadsden, V. L. (1999). Black families in intergenerational and cultural perspective. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *Parenting and child development in "nontraditional" families* (pp. 221–246). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- García Coll, C. T., Lamberty, G., Jenkins, R., McAdoo, H. P., Crnic, K., Wasik, B. H., et al. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development*, 67, 1891–1914.
- Garner, P. W. (2006). Prediction of prosocial and emotional competence from maternal behavior in African American preschoolers. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 12, 179–198.
- Gibson-Davis, C. (2011). Mothers but not wives: The increasing lag between nonmarital births and marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73, 264–278.
- Goldscheider, F., & Kaufman, G. (2006). Single parenthood and the double standard. *Fathering*, 4, 191–208.
- Gonzales, N. A., Cauce, A. M., Friedman, R. J., & Mason, C. A. (1996). Family, peer, and neighborhood influences on academic achievement among African-American adolescents: One-year prospective effects. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24, 365–387.
- Gonzales, N. A., Cauce, A. M., & Mason, C. A. (1996). Interobserver agreement in the assessment of parental behavior and parent-adolescent conflict: African American mothers, daughters and independent observers. *Child Development*, 67, 1483–1498.

- Goodwin, P. Y. (2003). African American and European American women's marital well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 65*, 550–560.
- Goodwin, P. Y., Mosher, W. D., & Chandra, A. (2010). *Marriage and cohabitation in the United States: A statistical portrait based on Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stats 23(28). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Gutman, H. (1976). *The Black family in slavery and freedom, 1750–1925*. New York: Pantheon.
- Harris-Britt, A., Valrie, C. R., Kurtz-Costes, B., & Rowley, S. J. (2007). Perceived racial discrimination and self-esteem in African American youth: Racial socialization as a protective factor. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 17*, 669–682.
- Harrison, A. O., Wilson, M. N., Pine, C. J., Chan, S. Q., & Buriel, R. (1990). Family ecologies of ethnic minority children. *Child Development, 61*, 347–362.
- Haskins, R. (2009). Moynihan was right: Now what? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 621*, 281–314.
- Hatchett, S., Veroff, J., & Douvan, E. (1995). Marital instability among black and white couples in early marriage. In M. B. Tucker & C. Mitchell-Kernan (Eds.), *The decline in marriage among African Americans: Causes, consequences, & policy implications*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Haynes, F. E. (2000). Gender and Family ideals: An exploratory study of black middle-class Americans. *Journal of Family Issues, 21*, 811–837.
- Hill, N. E., & Bush, K. R. (2001). Relationships between parenting environment and children's mental health among African American and European American mothers and children. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 954–966.
- Hill, N. E., & Herman-Stahl, M. A. (2002). Neighborhood safety and social involvement: Associations with parenting behaviors and depressive symptoms among African American and Euro-American mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 16*, 209–219.
- Hill, S. A. (2006). Marriage among African American women: A gender perspective. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 37*, 421–440.
- Hill, S. A. (2009). Why won't African Americans get (and stay) married? Why should they? In H. E. Peters & C. M. Kamp Dash (Eds.), *Marriage and family: Perspectives and complexities*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Holland, R. (2009). Perceptions of mate selection for marriage among African American, college-educated, single mothers. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 87*, 170–178.
- Holzer, H. J., Raphael, S., & Stoll, M. A. (2006). How do employer perceptions of crime and incarceration affect the employment prospects of less-educated young black men? In R. B. Mincy (Ed.), *Black males left behind* (pp. 67–86). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Horn, I. B., Joseph, J. G., & Cheng, T. L. (2004). Nonabusive physical punishment and child behavior among African American children. A systematic review. *Journal of the National Medical Association, 96*, 1162–1168.
- Hughes, D. (2003). Correlates of African American and Latino parents' messages to children about ethnicity and race: A comparative study racial socialization. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 31*, 15–33.
- Hughes, D., & Johnson, D. (2001). Correlates in children's experiences of parents' racial socialization behaviors. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 981–995.
- Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E. P., Johnson, D. J., Stevenson, H. C., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology, 42*, 747–770.
- Hummer, R. A., & Hamilton, E. R. (2010). Race and ethnicity in fragile families. *The Future of Children, 20*, 113–131.
- Ipsa, J. M., Fine, M. A., Halgunseth, L. C., Harper, S., Robinson, J., Boyce, L., et al. (2004). Maternal intrusiveness, maternal warmth, and mother-toddler relationship outcomes: Variations across low-income ethnic and acculturation groups. *Child Development, 75*, 1613–1631.
- Jackson, A. P. (1993). Black, single, working mothers in poverty: Preferences for employment, well-being and perceptions of preschool-age children. *Social Work, 38*, 26–34.
- Jackson, A. P. (1994). Psychological distress among single, employed, Black mothers and their perceptions of their young children. *Journal of Social Service Research, 19*, 87–101.
- Jackson, A. P. (1998). The role of social support in parenting for low-income single Black mothers. *The Social Service Review, 72*, 365–379.
- Jackson, A. P. (2003). Mothers' employment and poor and near-poor African American children's development: A longitudinal study. *The Social Service Review, 77*, 93–109.
- Jackson, A. P., Brooks-Gunn, J., Huang, C. C., & Glassman, M. (2000). Single mothers in low-wage jobs: Financial strain, parenting, and preschoolers' outcomes. *Child Development, 71*, 1409–1423.
- Jackson-Newsom, J., Buchanan, C. M., & McDonald, R. M. (2008). Parenting and perceived maternal warmth in European American and African American adolescents. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70*, 62–75.
- Johnson, L. B., & Staples, R. (2005). *Black families at the crossroads: Challenges and prospects* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kane, E. W. (2000). Racial and ethnic variations in gender-related attitudes. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*, 419–439.
- Kelly, S., & Floyd, F. J. (2001). The effects of negative racial stereotypes and Afrocentricity on Black couple relationships. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*, 110–123.

- Kelly, S., & Floyd, F. J. (2006). Impact of racial perspectives and contextual variables on marital trust and adjustment for African American couples. *Journal of Family Psychology, 20*, 79–87.
- Kim, J. (2010). A diverging trend in marital dissolution by income status. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 51*, 396–412.
- Lacy, K. R. (2004). Black spaces, black places: strategic assimilation and identity construction in middle-class suburbia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 27*, 908–930.
- Lacy, K. R. (2007). *Blue-chip black: Race, class, and status in the new black middle class*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lambert, S. F., Brown, T. L., Phillips, C. M., & Ialongo, N. S. (2004). The relationship between perceptions of neighborhood characteristics and substance use among urban African American adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 205–218.
- Lansford, J. E., Deater-Deckard, K., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., & Petit, G. S. (2004). Ethnic differences in the link between physical discipline and later adolescent externalizing behaviors. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 45*, 801–812.
- Lau, A. S., Litrownik, A. J., Newton, R. R., Black, M. M., & Everson, M. D. (2006). Factors affecting the link between physical discipline and child externalizing problems in black and white families. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 89–103.
- Lesane-Brown, C. L. (2006). A review of race socialization within Black families. *Developmental Review, 26*, 400–426.
- Lewin, A. (2001). A tale of two classes: The Black poor and the Black middle class. *The Black Scholar, 21*, 7–13.
- Lincoln, K. D., & Chae, D. H. (2010). Stress, marital satisfaction, and psychological distress among African Americans. *Journal of Family Issues, 31*, 1081–1105.
- Lincoln, K. D., Taylor, R. J., & Jackson, J. S. (2008). Romantic relationships among unmarried African Americans and Caribbean Blacks: Findings from the National Survey of American Life. *Family Relations, 57*, 254–266.
- Lundquist, J. H. (2006). The black-white gap in marital dissolution among young adults: What can a counterfactual scenario tell us? *Social Problems, 53*, 421–441.
- Manning, W. D. (2001). Childbearing in cohabitating unions: Racial and ethnic differences. *Family Planning Perspectives, 33*, 217–223.
- Marks, L. D., Hopkins, K. H., Chaney, C., Monroe, P. A., Nesteruk, O., & Sasser, D. D. (2008). “Together, we are strong”: A qualitative study of happy, enduring African American marriages. *Family Relations, 57*, 172–185.
- Mason, C. A., Cauce, A. M., Gonzales, N., & Hiraga, Y. (1996). Neither too sweet nor too sour: Problem peers, maternal control, and problem behavior in African American adolescents. *Child Development, 67*, 2115–2130.
- McAdoo, H. P. (2002). African American parenting. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Vol. Social conditions and applied parenting* (2nd ed., pp. 47–58). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McGroder, S. M. (2000). Parenting among low-income African American single mothers with preschool-age children: Patterns, predictors, and developmental correlates. *Child Development, 71*, 752–771.
- McHale, S. M., Crouter, A. C., Kim, J., Burton, L. M., Davis, K. D., Dotterer, A. M., et al. (2006). Mothers’ and fathers’ racial socialization in African American families: Implications for youth. *Child Development, 77*, 1387–1402.
- McLoyd, V. C. (1990). The impact of economic hardship on Black families and children: Psychological distress, parenting, and socioemotional development. *Child Development, 61*, 311–346.
- McLoyd, V. C. (1998). Socioeconomic disadvantage and child development. *American Psychologist, 53*, 185–204.
- McLoyd, V. C. (2006). The legacy of *Child Development’s* 1990 special issue on minority children: An editorial retrospective. *Child Development, 77*, 1142–1148.
- McLoyd, V. C., Cauce, A. M., Takeuchi, D., & Wilson, L. (2000). Marital processes and parental socialization in families of color: A decade of review of research. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 62*, 1070–1093.
- McLoyd, V. C., Kaplan, R., Hardaway, C. R., & Wood, D. (2007). Does endorsement of physical discipline matter?: Assessing moderating influences on the maternal and child psychological correlates of physical discipline in African American families. *Journal of Family Psychology, 23*, 165–175.
- McLoyd, V. C., & Smith, J. (2002). Physical discipline and behavior problems in African American, European American, and Hispanic children: Emotional support as a moderator. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*, 40–53.
- Mincy, R. B., Lewis, C. E., & Han, W. (2006). Left behind: Less-educated young black men in the economic boom of the 1990s. In R. B. Mincy (Ed.), *Black males left behind*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
- Mitchell, S. J., Lewin, A., Horn, I. B., Valentine, D., Sanders-Phillips, K., & Joseph, J. G. (2009). How does violence exposure affect the psychological health and parenting of young African-American mothers? *Social Science & Medicine, 70*, 526–533.
- Moynihan, D. P. (1965). *The Negro family: The case for national action*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Murry, V. M., Brown, P. A., Brody, G. H., Cutrona, C. E., & Simons, R. L. (2001). Racial discrimination as a moderator of the links among stress, maternal psychological functioning, and family relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 915–926.
- Murry, V. M., Bynum, M. S., Brody, G. H., Willert, A., & Stephens, D. (2001). African American single mothers and children in context: A review of studies on risk and resilience. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 4*, 133–155.

- Neblett, E. W., Smalls, C. P., Ford, K. R., Nguyễn, H. X., & Sellers, R. M. (2009). Racial socialization and racial identity: African American parents' messages about race as precursors to identity. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*, 1573–6601.
- Neblett, E. W., White, R. L., Ford, K. R., Philip, C., Nguyễn, H. X., & Sellers, R. M. (2008). Patterns of racial socialization and psychological adjustment: Can parental communication about race and reduce the impact of racial discrimination? *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 18*, 477–515.
- Nobles, W. W. (1974). Africanity. Its role in black families. *The Black Scholar, 5*, 10–17.
- Ogbu, J. (1981). Origins of human competence: A cultural ecological perspective. *Child Development, 52*, 413–449.
- Olson, D., & Fowers, B. (1993). Fives types of marriage: An empirical typology based on ENRICH. *Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 1*, 196–207.
- Orbuch, T. L., Veroff, J., Hassan, H., & Horrocks, J. (2002). Who will divorce?: A 14-year longitudinal study of black couples and white couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 19*, 179–202.
- Patillo-McCoy, M. (1999). *Black picket fences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Phillips, J. A., & Sweeney, M. M. (2005). Premarital cohabitation and marital disruption among White, Black, and Mexican American women. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 67*, 296–314.
- Phinney, J. S., & Landin, J. (1998). Research paradigms for studying ethnic minority families within and across groups. In V. C. McLoyd & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Studying minority adolescents: Conceptual, methodological, and theoretical issues* (pp. 89–109). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pinderhughes, E. B. (2002). African American marriage in the 20th century. *Family Process, 41*, 269–282.
- Pittman, L. D., & Chase-Lansdale, P. L. (2001). African American adolescent girls in impoverished communities: Parenting style and adolescent outcomes. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 11*, 199–224.
- Pungello, E. P., Iruka, I. U., Dotterer, A. M., Mills-Koonce, R., & Reznick, J. S. (2009). The effects of socioeconomic status, race, and parenting on language development in early childhood. *Developmental Psychology, 45*, 544–557.
- Roopnarine, J. L., Fouts, H. N., Lamb, M. E., & Lewis-Elligan, T. Y. (2005). Mothers' and fathers' behaviors toward their 3- to 4-month old infants in lower, middle, and upper socioeconomic African American families. *Developmental Psychology, 41*, 723–732.
- Ruggles, S. (1997). The rise of divorce and separation in the United States, 1880–1990. *Demography, 34*, 455–466.
- Sanders-Phillips, K. (2009). Racial discrimination: A continuum of violence exposure for children of color. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 12*, 174–195.
- Sayer, L. C., & Fine, L. (2011). Racial-ethnic differences in U.S. married women's and men's housework. *Social Indicators Researchers, 101*, 259–265.
- Sellers, R. M., Smith, M. A., Shelton, J., Rowley, S. A. J., & Chavous, T. M. (1998). Multidimensional model of racial identity: A reconceptualization of African American racial identity. *Personality & Social Psychology Review, 2*, 18–39.
- Slaughter-Defoe, D. T., Garrett, A. M., & Harrison-Hale, A. O. (2006). Our children too: A history of the Black Caucus of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1973–1997. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 71*(1, Serial No. 283).
- Smetana, J. G. (2000). Middle-class African American adolescents' and parents' conceptions of parental authority and parenting practices: A longitudinal investigation. *Child Development, 71*, 1672–1686.
- Smetana, J. G., Campione-Barr, N., & Daddis, C. (2004). Longitudinal development of family decision making: Defining healthy behavioral autonomy for middle-class African American adolescents. *Child Development, 75*, 1418–1434.
- Spencer, M. B. (1983). Children's cultural values and parental child rearing strategies. *Developmental Review, 3*, 351–370.
- Spencer, M. B. (2006). The “history” of two milestone developmental publications on black children. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 71*, 113–120.
- Spencer, M. B., Dupree, D., & Hartmann, T. (1997). A Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST): A self-organization perspective in context. *Development and Psychopathology, 9*, 817–833.
- Stack, C. (1978). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a black community*. New York: Basic Books.
- Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*, 797–811.
- Steinberg, L., Dornbusch, S. M., & Brown, B. B. (1992). Ethnic differences in adolescent achievement: An ecological perspective. *American Psychologist, 47*, 723–729.
- Steinberg, L., & Fletcher, A. C. (1998). Data analytic strategies in research on ethnic minority youth. In V. C. McLoyd & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Studying minority adolescents: Conceptual, methodological, and theoretical issues* (pp. 279–294). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Stevenson, H. (1994). Validation of the scale of racial socialization for African American adolescents: Steps toward multidimensionality. *Journal of Black Psychology, 20*, 445–468.
- Stevenson, H. C., & Arrington, E. G. (2009). Racial/ethnic socialization mediates perceived racism and the racial identity of African American adolescents. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15*, 125–136.

- Stevenson, H. C., Cameron, R., Herrero-Taylor, T., & Davis, G. Y. (2002). Development of the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale: Correlates of race-related socialization frequency from the perspective of black youth. *Journal of Black Psychology, 28*, 84–106.
- Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Briggs, R. D., McClowry, S. G., & Snow, D. L. (2008). Challenges to the study of African American parenting: Conceptualization, sampling, research approaches, measurement, and design. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 8*, 319–358.
- Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., Tucker, B. L., & Lewis, E. (1990). Developments in research on black families: A decade review. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 52*, 993–1014.
- Teachman, J. D., & Tedrow, L. (2008). Divorce, race, and military service: More than equal pay and equal opportunity. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70*, 1030–1044.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, D., & Stainback, K. (2007). Discrimination and desegregation: Equal opportunity progress in U.S. private sector workplaces since the Civil Rights Act. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 609*, 49–84.
- Tucker, M. B., & Mitchell-Kernan, C. (1995). *The decline in marriage among African Americans: Causes, consequences, and policy implications*. New York: Russell Sage.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (1993). *We the Americans: Blacks*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, August). We the people: Blacks in the United States. *Census 2000 special reports*. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/censr-25.pdf>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2007, February). The American community—blacks: 2004. *American community survey reports*. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/acs-04.pdf>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2008). Table A1. Marital status of people 15 years and over, by age, sex, personal earnings, race, and Hispanic origin/1, 2008. *America's families and living arrangements: 2008*. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010, December). *2009 American community survey* [Data file]. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- Vespa, J. (2009). Gender ideology construction: A life course and intersectional approach. *Gender and Society, 23*, 363–387.
- White-Johnson, R., Ford, K. R., & Sellers, R. M. (2010). Parental racial socialization profiles: Association with demographic factors, racial discrimination, childhood socialization, and racial identity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16*, 237–247.
- Wickrama, K. A. S., Bryant, C. M., & Wickrama, T. K. A. (2010). Perceived community disorder, hostile marital interactions, and self-reported health of African American couples: An interdyadic process. *Personal Relationships, 17*, 515–531.
- Wildsmith, E., & Raley, R. K. (2006). Race-ethnic differences in nonmarital fertility: A focus on Mexican American women. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68*, 491–508.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.