

EXAMINING RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS FROM AN ATTACHMENT
THEORY FRAMEWORK: CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATTACHMENT SECURITY,
DEFENSIVE SELF-ESTEEM, AND ETHNIC-RACIAL IDENTITY AS A PRODUCT
OF ETHNIC-RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Navneet K. Thind

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Abstract

The experience of racial microaggressions negatively influences mental health in individuals. However, to date, little is known about individual differences that may contribute to an individual's experience of racial microaggressions. Attachment Theory (Ainsworth, 1969; Bowlby 1982/1969), which incorporates developmental and relational perspectives, may serve as an appropriate framework for examining such contributions. Thus, the present study was guided by Racial Microaggressions Theory (Sue et al., 2007) and Attachment Theory. Supported by results of a pilot study, the present study proposed to test two models that included attachment-related constructs, the constructs of defensive self-esteem, and ethnic-racial self-esteem to better explain the relationships between attachment and the perception of racial microaggressions in racially diverse students from the University of Houston. The models were slightly modified as the proposed models were not supported. Results of the modified models for the overall sample suggested direct and indirect relationships between attachment-related variables, defensive self-esteem, ethnic-racial self-esteem, and racial microaggressions indicating that these variables contribute to an individual's perception and experience of racial microaggressions. The results imply the appropriateness of Attachment theory as a framework to use when understanding individual experiences of racial microaggressions. Thus, clinical implications include using theory-guided interventions with individuals experiencing race-related distress are discussed. Limitations of the present study and future directions for research are also indicated.

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Chapter I

Introduction and Problem Statement

The experience of racism continues to beleaguer racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Some argue that the presence of overt racism has diminished in the past few decades; however, the United States is far from becoming a post-racial society. While covert racism may be the predominant manifestation of racism in modern society particularly since Japanese Internment and the Civil Rights movement, blatant racism is not dead. Countless incidents of overt racism that resulted in violence, destruction, and death have occurred across the United States since the beginning of the 21st century. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the concept of “Islamophobia” (anti-Islam sentiment) has emerged, and overt racist attacks against Middle-Eastern and South-Asian groups have occurred. For example, a mosque in Missouri was destroyed by suspected arson, a gunman who identified as a "White supremacist" attacked a Sikh Temple in Wisconsin which resulted in six deaths, a Bangladeshi cab driver was brutally beaten by a customer who thought he was Muslim, a Sikh man, whose turbaned appearance was mistaken for a terrorist's, was shot and killed in Meza, Arizona, and lastly, racial profiling in the form of "random security checks" targeting Middle-Eastern and South-Asian individuals across U.S. airports have occurred.

Moreover, brutality in the form of racism against Black individuals starting with George Zimmerman's acquittal in 2013 after the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin on February 26, 2012 in Sanford, Florida, resulted in the Black Lives Matter movement. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically targeted. This movement gained prominence after the wrongful deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City due to police action and brutality. Wrongful police-

related deaths also include the deaths of Sandra Bland (Waller County, Texas) who was found hanged in a jail cell, a 12-year-old youth Tamir Rice (Cleveland, Ohio) who was cruelly shot by police officers, and Samuel Dubose (Cincinnati, Ohio) who was also shot by a police officer. These are just a few of the many deaths of Black individuals in the United States which have occurred as a result of overt and systematic racism.

While the content of this dissertation acknowledges and does not dispute the unabashed existence of obvious racism against communities of color (as described above), this dissertation's focus is on *racial microaggressions* which have emerged in modern society (Sue et al., 2007). The term "racial microaggression," initially coined by African-American psychiatrist Chester Pierce in 1970 refers to "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges" that are perceived as "putdowns" regarding one's race or ethnicity (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 66). Sue and colleagues (2007) further contended that racial microaggressions are difficult to discern because they are often conveyed in an indirect and unconscious manner, leading the recipient of the microaggression to question whether a racial microaggression has occurred. This suggests that important individual differences may contribute to the perception and report of microaggression-related events.

Potentially, the understated nature of a racial microaggression may influence an individual to feel greater distress and psychological impairment because it is not as recognizable as an overt racial transgression. Individuals who readily perceive and internalize racial microaggressions are more likely to have poorer coping, and experience worse health outcomes (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011). In recent research, the perception of racial microaggressions has been associated with higher levels of anxiety, binge drinking, low self-efficacy, depression, negative affect, and somatic symptoms (Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny, 2012; Harwood,

Huntt, Mendenhall, & Lewis, 2012; Liao, Weng, & West, 2016; Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, & Sue, 2013).

Although prior research that will be reviewed below (a) indicates that persons of color are more likely than Whites to report the experience of microaggressions, and (b) offers some understanding of how individuals cope after perceiving racial microaggressions, there is currently no available research on other person characteristics that may contribute to individuals' report of prior racial microaggression experiences. It is possible that certain individuals have had prior relational experiences and have formed interpersonal expectancies that render them more susceptible to experience (and to report) racial microaggressions. Additionally, racial microaggressions may impact these individuals in a more adverse way.

Nadal (2011), the developer of the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS), recommended that future empirical studies examine how different aspects of one's identity or personality may "influence one's ability to recognize microaggressions" as well as "explore how microaggressions may impact personality development, coping, and resiliency" (p. 10). In accordance with Nadal's suggestions, the present study will explore whether individuals' attachment to parents contribute to their perceptions of racial microaggressions by way of their impacts on the nature of individuals' self-esteem and their adult attachment orientations. The present study will also explore whether attachment to parents contributes to perceptions of racial microaggressions by way of its influence on individuals' ethnic-racial self-esteem as a product of their ethnic-racial socialization. Because Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982/1969) provides a framework for understanding how individuals' internalized perceptions of the self and others influences their relational perceptions and emotional experiences, it may be a useful perspective

for understanding the precursors that may make one vulnerable to perceiving and reporting racial microaggressions.

It is important to emphasize that the aim of the present study is not to disqualify or discount the insidious nature of racial microaggressions that are perpetrated by others, or to minimize their detrimental effects, but rather to enhance understanding of the type of life experiences that make individuals more vulnerable to experience and report them. In particular, this study examines the contributions of (a) parental attachment security, (b) ethnic-racial self-esteem (identity) as a product of racial socialization, (c) defensive forms of self-esteem, (d) adult attachment orientations to the prediction of self-reported racial microaggression experiences. It is anticipated that a clarification of these construct interrelationships will advance understanding of microaggression experiences and thus help clinicians use theory-guided interventions when working with individuals who are struggling with their distressing psychological consequences.

The sections that follow will first discuss race, racism, racial microaggressions and related studies in detail. Next, the main tenets of attachment theory will be overviewed and key findings from the adult attachment literature that may have indirect relevance to examining racial microaggressions will be summarized. Following this, findings from a pilot study (Thind & Ramos, 2014) that examined interrelationships among parental and adult attachment security and racial microaggressions will be highlighted. Results from this study lead to exploration of the current literature on self-esteem prior to developing an attachment theory-guided model for predicting racial microaggression experiences. Next, key conceptual and empirical contributions from the contemporary self-esteem literature relevant to the proposed project will be overviewed. Then, relationships between defensive self-esteem, attachment, and racial microaggressions will be discussed. Later, the constructs of ethnic-racial socialization and identity will be introduced,

and the interrelationships among parent attachment, ethnic-racial self-esteem, and the perceptions of racial microaggressions will be discussed. Finally, an attachment theory-guided model for testing the contributions of parent attachment, ethnic-racial self-esteem, defensive self-esteem, and partner attachment to the prediction of college students' self-reported experiences of racial microaggressions will be discussed.

Race and Racism

Historically, in the United States, the concepts of *race* and *racism* are controversial. Race refers to the idea that individuals, based on their phenotype or genotype, warrant division into groups that are meaningfully different. In recent years, social scientists have ascertained that race is a social, rather than a biological construct, such that individuals' self identification of race versus others' perception of individuals' race may be completely discrepant (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010). From this perspective, individuals' racial identities are fluid, rather than fixed. In relation to race, racism is predicated on the belief that meaningful differences among racial groups merit denial of resources and privileges (Burton et al., 2010). Thus, racism is a hierarchical and inequitable system that is advantageous to White individuals and perpetuates adversity for individuals of color.

Despite the United States' changing demographic complexion over time and the civil rights movement, racism is firmly rooted within our society. Sue and colleagues (2007) cited President Clinton's Race Advisory Board which concluded that racism continues to divide people and "haunt current policies and practices that create unfair disparities between minority and majority groups" (p. 271). Because racial inequalities are so deeply engrained within the U.S., they have become invisible and difficult to discern. As a result, many White Americans are not aware of their privilege in this society, nor are they cognizant of how their viewpoints and

behaviors inadvertently discriminate against persons of color (Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race, 1998).

Unfortunately, Americans' efforts to move toward a post-racial society conflicts with racist ideology profoundly entrenched within the United States. On one hand, it is no longer politically correct to show overt racism, but on the other hand, racism is systemic and virtually inescapable. This issue gives way to the manifestation of more subtle forms of racism, which are more socially acceptable because of their ambiguous or concealed nature (Sue et al., 2007). Over the last two decades, researchers have identified several types of subtle racism such as *modern racism* (McConahay, 1986), *symbolic racism*, and *aversive racism* (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). The aforementioned constructs are similar in that they deviate from conventional and intentional bigotry; they are clandestine in nature, which makes them more difficult to recognize and accept. For example, aversive racists consciously believe in racial equality, but unconsciously espouse anti-minority feelings.

Sue et al. (2007) observed that much has been written about contemporary (and concealed) forms of racism; however, it remains difficult to quantify these occurrences. They argued that it is imperative to acknowledge and classify these experiences because they continue to cause harm, and are associated with poorer standards of living and negative mental health outcomes for people of color. In order to illuminate these phenomena, Sue and colleagues (2007) concluded that these experiences are best explained by the term *racial microaggression*.

Racial Microaggressions

As indicated earlier, Chester Pierce initially coined the term racial microaggression through his therapy work with Black Americans. In their seminal article regarding racial microaggressions, Sue et al. (2007) revived the term and noted that, to date, no conceptual or

theoretical model of racial microaggressions has been proposed in regard to clinical work with clients. In their research, racial microaggressions were described as “brief commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (p.273).

Sue and colleagues’ 2007 definition of racial microaggressions suggests that microaggressions can be communicated verbally or non-verbally (e.g., body language or avoidant behavior). Microaggressions can also be environmental, such that one’s racial identity is ignored or minimized in a work or school setting through the “sheer exclusion of decorations or literature” that is representative of that group (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Moreover, three forms of microaggressions are identified: *microassault*, *microinsult*, and *microinvalidation*.

Racial *microassaults* are often blatant, and intended to attack the victim. Although similar to historic acts of bigotry, microassaults are expressed when the perpetrator loses control and expresses a hidden attitude, while maintaining a sense of privacy and safety while committing it. Serving a White customer before a customer of color can be classified as a microassault. Conversely, perpetrators of *microinsults*, which can be communicated verbally or non-verbally, convey vulgar, but veiled messages that denigrate their victim’s racial heritage or identity. Indicating that someone is a “credit to their race” is an example of a microinsult because it suggests that individuals of that racial group are incompetent. Moreover, individuals who commit *microinvalidations* communicate a denial of their victims’ psychological and experiential reality as a person of color. Asking an individual born and raised in the United States where they are from, or if they speak English is a common microinvalidation.

In line with the aforementioned types of racial microaggressions, Sue and colleagues (2007) identified nine categories of racial microinvalidations with discrete themes: *alien in one's own land, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, criminality/assumption of criminal status, denial of individual racism, myth of meritocracy, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, second-class status, and environmental invalidations*. Nadal (2011) sought to measure several of these categories and themes through the development of his Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) which was validated with individuals across different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Although measures assessing racism and discrimination exist, prior to the construction of the REMS scale, there were no known measures of quantifying racial microaggression experiences across multiple racial groups. Around the same time the REMS measure was published, the 14-item Inventory of Microaggressions Against Black Individuals (IMABI) was also developed and validated on 385 college students who identified as Black or African-American American (Mercer, Ziegler-Hill, Wallace, & Hayes, 2011). Shortly after the publications of these measures, Torres-Harding, Andrade, and Diaz (2012) developed the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS) which yielded six factors (e.g., *invisibility, dysfunctional culture, sexualization, criminality, foreigner/not belonging, and environmental microaggressions*). More recently, a Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) which specifically assesses gendered racial microaggressions against Black females was developed by Lewis and Neville (2015). Their scale yielded four factors (*Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification, Silenced and Marginalized, Strong Black Woman Stereotype and Angry Black Woman Stereotype*).

Racial microaggressions in research studies. While discussing his rationale for the construction of the REMS measure, Nadal (2011) acknowledged that a number of qualitative studies have examined the negative effects of racial microaggressions on African-American, Asian-American, Aboriginal, Multiracial, Latino/a individuals, and other students of color. For example, Harwood et al. (2012) found that minority students at a predominately White university experienced over 70 racial microaggressions. Qualitative aspects of the study indicated that these students were fearful of social interactions with White students and did not feel comfortable confronting their aggressors.

In order to assess whether Asian-Americans were more susceptible to perceiving racial microaggressions, Wang et al. (2011) exposed both Asian-Americans and Caucasians to an ambiguous situation (i.e., the individual changed seats when the participant sat next to him or her) and found that Asian-Americans were more likely than Caucasians to attribute this situation to racism. Asian-Americans also felt greater internalized (sadness, shame, and anxiety) and externalized (anger, frustration, contempt) emotions. Caucasians attributed the ambiguous situation to their physical appearance or some other reason, and reported less intense feelings than Asian-Americans. Similarly, a study conducted over a two week period showed that 78% of Asian-Americans encountered racial microaggressions daily and reported higher levels of negative affect and somatic symptomatology on the days they experienced race-related distress (Ong et al., 2013).

Poolokasingham, Spanierman, Kleiman, and Houshmand (2014) examined the types of racial microaggressions experienced by various South Asian (e.g., Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Tamil) and found several novel microaggression-related themes to emerge such as: *perceived as fresh off the boat, excluded from social life, notion that being Brown is a liability,*

assumption of ties to terrorism, and compelled to be a cultural expert. Themes found in previous research with Asian-Americans were also found; these themes were: *ascription of intelligence in stereotypical domains, invalidation of interethnic and racial differences, and treated as invisible.*

Blume et al. (2012) discovered that African-American students reported higher levels of racial microaggressions than did White students, and thus encountered increased race-related distress. In response to these experiences, African-American students felt more anxious and coped by abusing alcohol. However, self-efficacy served as a buffer between experiencing racial microaggressions and alcohol abuse, suggesting that high self-efficacy beliefs lead to better coping after race-related prejudice. Perez-Huber and Cueva's (2012) qualitative study of Hispanic students in academic settings suggested that the experience of racial-microaggressions led to lower self-efficacy beliefs which inhibited these students from speaking in class, leaving a Spanish language class to go to an English language class, and applying to college. Additionally, these students expressed sentiments related to greater performance-related evaluative concerns given their membership in a negatively stereotyped group.

Further, studies with Aboriginal individuals and multiracial individuals imply a number of racial microaggression-related themes in their interaction with others. For example, Clark, Kleiman, Spanierman, Isaac, and Poolokasingham (2014) found that Aboriginal undergraduates encountered themes such as the expectations of primitiveness, endured unconstrained voyeurism, and withstood jealous accusations. They also experienced curricular elimination or misrepresentation and lived with day-to-day cultural and social isolation. Nadal, Sriken, Davidoff, Wong, and McLean (2013) discovered that multiracial individuals experience racial microaggressions from their own family members. Several racial microaggression themes surfaced, such as isolation within the family, favoritism within the family, questioning of

authenticity, denial of multiracial identity and experiences by monoracial family members and feelings about not learning about family heritage or culture.

More recently, quantitative studies using the REMS have emerged. Forest-Bank and Jenson (2015) investigated differences of microaggression experiences among Asian, Black, Latino, and White young adults. In comparison, the minority groups reported significantly more racial microaggressions. Each group experienced qualitatively different types of racial microaggressions. In Native American young adults, greater association with Native American culture lead to higher ratings of microaggressions, especially for males. Females felt more upset by the microinvalidations aspect of microaggressions (Jones & Galliher, 2015). Another quantitative study involving different Hispanic subgroups revealed differences among the type of microaggressions experienced. Puerto-Ricans self-identified as being treated as second-class citizens and self-identified Dominicans were likely to be exoticized. Younger Latino individuals with lower levels of education were more likely to experience microinvalidations (Nadal, Mazzula, Rivera, & Fuji-Doe, 2014). Furthermore, among Asian-Americans, experiences of racial microaggressions were related to higher levels of general mental health problems, and experiences of racial microaggressions differed based on age, education, and geographic location (Nadal, Wong, Sriken, Griffin, & Fujii-Doe, 2015). Lastly, a quantitative study with African-American individuals revealed that their experiences of racial microaggressions were associated with greater levels of anxiety (Liao et al., 2016).

The studies presented above suggest that individuals of color from different racial backgrounds (e.g., Asian, Hispanic, African-American, Aboriginal, and Multiracial) experience racial microaggressions more frequently than do White individuals. Additionally, the studies illustrate that these individuals suffer deep psychological distress due to their experiences with

racial microaggressions. It is possible that racial microaggressions are potentially more distressing than overt signs of racism or bigotry because (a) aggressors are frequently unaware of the offense, and (b) their offenses can create “attributional ambiguity” for the perceiver (Blume et al., 2012; Crocker, Voelkel, Testa, & Major, 1991). When attributional ambiguity occurs, victims of racial microaggressions are left questioning whether a racial microaggression was misinterpreted and intentional. This duality often influences individuals to expend a great deal of time and energy trying to analyze the occurrence of the transgression.

This state of self-doubt and ambiguity precipitates an amalgamation of internalized feelings such as anger, confusion, resent, sadness, shame, etc. (Wang et al., 2011). Moreover, the ambiguity and self-doubt resulting from racial microaggression experiences could tap into the model of the self, and bring up additional negative feelings and experiences from the past that are not necessarily related to the present racial microaggression. Thereby, a series of ambiguous racially-distressing (e.g., racial microaggressions) encounters can be more upsetting than explicit racist encounters; in openly racist situations individuals can at least be certain that a racial transgression has occurred. Additionally, because of this certainty, individuals experiencing overt racism may externalize the reason (e.g., this person does not like me because of my skin color), whereas individuals experiencing racial microaggressions may internalize (e.g., this person is my friend, but there is an unconscious part of them that does not accept me) the reason for the transgression. Thus, over time, the questions and feelings resulting from racial microaggressions compound and become exhausting, contributing to poor psychological health (Blume et al., 2012).

Although the available literature indicates that individuals experiencing racial microaggressions suffer psychological consequences, several important questions remain

unanswered. For example, who is more likely to interpret an attributionally ambiguous situation as a racial microaggression? Why are some individuals more negatively affected than others by racial microaggressions? What types of life experiences make an individual more vulnerable to poor psychological health and coping after experiencing racial microaggressions? What types of life experiences influence an individual's model of self to come into question after experiencing a racial microaggression? It is possible that previous significant interpersonal relationships have predisposed certain individuals to become more vulnerable to the perception and impact of a racial microaggression. Since attachment theory provides a lifespan developmental perspective that emphasizes the role of close relationships in affecting individuals' cognitive and affect regulation processes, it will be used to explore potential relational pathways that may contribute to microaggression experiences and thereby assist in responding to the questions above. First, however, some background on this theory and its core constructs and assumptions is offered.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory was collaboratively developed by John Bowlby, a trained psychoanalyst, and Mary Ainsworth, a developmental psychologist (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). An *attachment* is defined as an "affectional tie that one person forms to another specific individual" (Ainsworth, 1969, p. 2). Bowlby believed that infants were dependent on their caregivers for survival, and the attachment system, an innate motivational system used to control proximity to a caregiver was activated whenever they believed that they were facing a perceived environmental threat (Bowlby, 1958; Bowlby, 1982/1969). When operating normatively, the infant uses the attachment system to elicit the caregiver's attention, which enables the infant to maintain, or regain, felt security if he or she feels security is lost. Infants discover, through repeated interactions with their caregivers, whether their caregivers are reliable, warm, and able

to help them regain or maintain security. Depending on the responses of their caregivers, infants also determine whether they (infants) are worthy of love and care. Infants experiencing their caregivers as safe and consistent feel worthy of love and care; however, infants who experience their caregivers as inconsistent and unreliable may internalize the idea that they are not worthy of their caregivers' love and care. In this way, infants develop perceptions of the self and other, which contribute to the idea of internal working models (Vertue, 2003).

Once formed within the first year of life, internal working models are believed to be relatively stable mental representations that incorporate beliefs about the self and other, memories of attachment experiences, and relational strategies for seeking intimacy and/or avoiding rejection (Collins & Read, 1990). Internal working models are also presumed to direct social behavior and expectations in subsequent social relationships throughout the lifespan. The internal working model of the self is seen as either acceptable or unacceptable, and the internal working model of the other is accepting and trustworthy or not (Erozkan, 2009). Based on attachment-related experiences, these models of the self and other, assist in the formation of discrete attachment orientations. When caregivers are trustworthy, caring, and responsive, individuals develop and internalize a secure attachment orientation. However, when caregivers are rejecting, inconsistent, and untrustworthy, individuals formulate an insecure attachment orientation that heightens their interpersonal sensitivity and contributes to later difficulties in interpersonal functioning (Cummings-Robeau, Lopez, & Rice, 2009). Attachment orientations, however, initially emerged as a result of Mary Ainsworth's research with infants.

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) established the existence of three different attachment styles, *avoidant insecure attachment (avoidant)*, *secure attachment*, and *resistant-ambivalent insecure attachment (anxious)*. Infants with an avoidant attachment orientation

ignored their mothers and strangers when they were separated from their mothers, whereas infants with an anxious attachment orientation were extremely attached to their mothers, cautious of strangers and were inconsolable upon the mother's return. Securely attached infants explored their environments when the mother was present, cried when she left, stopped crying when she came back, and engaged with the stranger (Ainsworth et al., 1978). After reviewing footage of infants in various replicated versions of the strange situation, Main and Solomon (1990) identified that a fourth attachment style, *insecure-disorganized-disoriented attachment*, which encompassed infants displaying odd, unclassifiable, trance-like behaviors such as freezing, rocking, and falling in the presence of their parents. Although these attachment orientations were first developed in relation to infant-caregiver relationships, they were later extended to incorporate retrospective parent attachment and adult attachment in adulthood.

The Extension of Attachment Theory to Adult Relationships and Retrospective Parental Attachment

Main and Hesse (1990) theorized that the parents' own attachment experiences were contributing to their interactions with their infants. Parents' early attachment experiences influenced their infants' attachment experiences with them. Main then became interested in documenting parents' behaviors. Main's work led to the construction of the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1984) which retrospectively assesses adults' childhood attachment experiences.

Subsequently, several self-report measures assessing retrospective parental attachment have emerged. Measures assessing attachment to parents include the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979), which examines attachment on two dimensions, parental nurturance and parental overprotection, and the Parent Attachment

Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1985) which examines adults' retrospective perceptions of their parents as facilitators of autonomy, sources of emotional support, and the perceived affective quality of individuals' relationships with their parents. Another self-report measure of note is the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greensberg, 1987) which is a valid measure for individuals in late adolescence and early adulthood. Based on attachment theory, the IPPA measures attachment security (specifically trust, communication, and alienation) derived from relationships with significant others such as parents and peers. The idea behind assessing retrospective parental attachment is that it has some bearing on interpersonal functioning in adulthood.

Attachment theory also posits that parental and adult attachment are modestly related and influence adult interpersonal functioning in a similar fashion (Cummings-Robbeau et al., 2009). Parent attachment, however, may only distally and indirectly predict adjustment in adulthood, whereas other intimate relationships may have more proximal and direct relationships with adult interpersonal functioning. In adulthood, other intimate relationships, particularly attachments with romantic partners replace parental attachment and become more significant in regulating individuals' attachment security. Therefore, attachments with romantic partners (adult attachment) versus attachments with parents begin to have greater bearing on interpersonal functioning in adulthood (Mattanah, Lopez, & Govern, 2011).

Adult attachment. Based on Ainsworth and colleagues' (1978) model of attachment orientations in parents and children, Hazan and Shaver (1987) developed similar models of attachment orientations pertaining to adult romantic relationships. They categorized adult romantic relationships as secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-anxious/ambivalent. Individuals endorsing secure attachment orientations experienced their relationships as friendly,

happy, and trustworthy. Insecure-avoidant individuals, on the other hand, reported feeling inconsistent emotions and jealousy, fearing intimacy in their romantic relationships. Insecure - anxious/ambivalent individuals experienced intense sexual attraction to their partners, feelings of obsession and jealousy, and an insatiable desire for reciprocation in their romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) further refined Hazan and Shaver's (1987) model of attachment and proposed a four-category model. The secure and anxious/ambivalent, or *preoccupied* attachment styles were retained in their model. However, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) found that avoidant individuals had qualitatively distinct perceptions of the self, and thus developed two categories of avoidant attachment, *fearful avoidant* and *dismissive avoidant*. Fearfully avoidant individuals were classified as having negative perceptions of the self and the other, disengaging themselves from others because they anticipated rejection and deemed themselves as unlovable. Individuals with a dismissive avoidant attachment style, however, had positive perceptions of the self and negative perceptions of the other, feeling that they were worthy of love, but desired to avoid the inevitable disappointment they would face from others. Individuals with a secure attachment orientation maintained positive perceptions of the self and the other, whereas individuals with anxious-preoccupied attachment styles maintained negative models of the self, and positive models of the other. Based on these four attachment styles, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) created the Relationship Questionnaire.

Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) subsequently developed the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) measure which assesses dimensions of attachment *Anxiety* and attachment *Avoidance*. Individuals with high scores on the anxiety dimension typically fear rejection and abandonment from their partners, whereas individuals with high scores on the avoidance dislike

closeness and dependence on their partners. High scores on both dimensions reflected an attachment orientation similar to the fearful avoidant attachment style proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). Fraley and Waller (1998) presented evidence that support Brennan et al.'s (1998) measure such that categorical models of attachment were insufficiently sensitive for studying variation in romantic attachment, and that a dimensional model of individual differences was more suitable (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Later, the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), and a short form of the ECR, Experiences in Close Relationships Scale – Short Form (ECR-S; Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007) were developed. Subsequently, premised on the ECR measure, Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, and Brumbaugh (2011) designed the Relationship Structures (ECR-RS) measure to assess attachment patterns across parents, partners, and friends.

Racial Microaggressions from an Attachment Theory Framework

As indicated above, internal working models are central constructs of attachment theory. Starting at infancy, individuals develop internal working models of the self and other based on repeated interactions with their caregivers. Individuals who experienced insecure attachments with their parents in early childhood are likely to have internalized negative models of the self and/or other as a result of these less favorable relational experiences. Individuals carry these models of the self and other, as well as past attachment-related experiences into their later interactions with others. Individuals' past attachment-related experiences with their caregivers influence their relationships with others. During vulnerable interpersonal episodes with partners, individuals' heightened ability to decode nonverbal cues may be helpful in determining which behaviors can be employed to elicit safety from the partner and avoid rejection (Schachner, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2005).

Moreover, attachment experiences with caregivers, friends, and partners also influence first-time interactions, such that individuals differentially interpret, react to, and cope with social situations based on their attachment orientation (Roisman, 2006). Since individuals view novel situations from a lens informed by past attachment-related experiences, their perception of racial microaggressions may be affected by their orientation. Therefore, individuals with distinct attachment orientations may perceive the occurrence of racial microaggressions differently. It is possible that individuals may misconstrue the efforts of this dissertation and attempt to explain the illegitimacy of racism through an attachment theory framework. Such individuals may argue that people who have insecure attachments, since they hold negative perceptions of the self, other, or both, may enter interpersonal situations with the preconceived thought that the person they are encountering will be racist toward them. The argument could be made that such individuals may erroneously interpret non-racist interactions as racist.

Since individuals with insecure attachments have negative models of the self, the other, or both, they may be primed to perceive racial microaggressions more readily than individuals with secure attachments. For example, individuals with avoidant (or dismissive) attachment orientations have learned that others are not trustworthy and inclined to disappoint them. Avoidantly-attached individuals may already enter a racially-charged situation with the unconscious (or conscious) expectation that other will disappoint or injure them. For example, Mikulincer and Horesh (1999) found that avoidant individuals defensively projected their “unwanted” self traits onto others and used them as a reason to distance themselves.

Conversely, individuals with anxious (or preoccupied) attachment orientations have learned that the self is not worthy of love, care, or respect; therefore, they may enter a racially charged situation with the unconscious (or conscious) expectation that they are inherently flawed and will

elicit some type of rejection. Individuals who exhibit high levels of both anxious and avoidant attachment (fearful) behaviors have internalized the idea that the self is unworthy, and the other is untrustworthy, and thus may be most vulnerable to perceiving a racial microaggression.

However, the aforementioned argument does not attempt to dismiss or justify the true occurrence of a racial microaggression because most likely, an individual who perceives that they have experienced a racial microaggression, has truly experienced a racial microaggression. In fact, it is more likely for individuals who have personally experienced or witnessed racial microaggressions and other forms of racism against their racial or ethnic groups to identify a true act of racial microaggression against them. The usage of an attachment framework to understand the experience of racial microaggressions simply argues that individuals with insecure attachments have been more attuned to negative prior relational experiences (including racist encounters) that influence them to perceive the world as more threatening. Insecurely attached individuals, since they already potentially feel unworthy of others care and respect, may be more susceptible to the adverse psychological and physiological effects of racial microaggression experiences. Secure individuals, on the other hand, may perceive a racial microaggression experience, but may brush it off or feel less affected by it because they feel that they are worthy of love, care, and respect. While they acknowledge that they have been wronged, their own positive thoughts about themselves and others may buffer the negative psychological and physiological impacts of the experience of racial microaggressions.

Additionally, in comparison to their secure counterparts, individuals with insecure attachment dispositions may have a heightened sensitivity to interpret another's ambiguous remark or behavior as a racial microaggression. For example, individuals with anxious attachments may perceive non-verbal racial microaggressions at greater levels since anxiously

attached individuals perceive facial expressions more accurately than do individuals with secure attachments (Fraley, Niedenthal, Marks, Brumbaugh, & Vicary, 2006). Thus, insecurely attached individuals may perceive the occurrence of a racial microaggression with more accuracy than their securely attached counterparts. Similarly, when securely attached individuals do experience a racial microaggression, they may be less affected by it, or cope with it better than insecurely attached individuals.

Individuals with insecure attachments, particularly those high on attachment avoidance and anxiety may be more adversely affected or cope more poorly after experiencing racial microaggressions for multiple reasons. First, perceiving racial microaggressions more frequently than their secure peers, insecure individuals may feel more disillusioned and hopeless. Second, the experience of racial microaggressions may exacerbate the painful feelings underlying negative models of the self and/or others. Such individuals may become cognizant of, or react to previous experiences of rejection, failure, and dissatisfaction, even if they are unrelated to the racial microaggression. In this case, the racial microaggression may not only be injurious as an ephemeral transgression, but may further threaten an already fragile sense of self. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the intricate association between prior attachment experiences and current racial microaggression experiences.

An important aim of the present study is to empirically examine racial microaggressions from an attachment theory framework. As of yet, literature in this area is non-existent. However, limited research exploring the relationship between attachment and racism exists. Existing studies suggest that attachment security functions as a buffer in the relationship between racism and social competence in adolescents. Additionally, first-generation Asian -American individuals with insecure attachments are more likely to perceive racist experiences, and have a more

adverse reaction to them. Such individuals are also less likely to seek out social support in the United States (Chen, Mallinckrodt, & Mobley, 2002; Myrick & Martorell, 2011). Although this is not much support, these studies lend some credence to the argument that adult attachment security may function as important variable in the perception of racial microaggressions, and thus warrant further exploration. Prior to advancing a testable model for predicting self-reported microaggressions, and along with a colleague, the present author conducted a pilot study that explored interrelationships among parental bonds, adult attachment orientations, and racial microaggression experiences within a diverse sample of undergraduate college students (Thind & Ramos, 2014). As findings from this study prompted the consideration of some additional model-related constructs, the key findings from this pilot study will first be summarized. Following this, the findings from the contemporary literature on ethnic-racial socialization and self-esteem that were relevant to the development of the current model will be discussed.

Pilot Study

The pilot study was largely exploratory, and it was conducted to guide the current study. Key objectives of the pilot study included examining relationships among attachment experiences and perceptions of racial microaggressions, as well as determining which measures and subscales would yield support regarding the preliminary questions.

The pilot study sample was drawn from University of Houston undergraduate students through SONA. The sample was racially diverse (28% Caucasian, 16% African-American, 28% Hispanic, 21% Asian, 5% Multiracial, and 2% other) and consisted of 369 participants (311 female, 52 male, and 2 other). Participants had a mean age of 23 years ($SD = 7$), were mainly 2nd and 5th generation Americans, and came from lower-middle, and middle class backgrounds. Participants completed online self-report measures of attachment (ECR-S; Wei et al., 2007;

ECR-RS; Fraley et al., 2011; IPPA; Arnsden & Greenberg; 1987), Racial Microaggressions (REMS; Nadal, 2011). For the purposes of this study, scores on each of the REMS subscales of were summed to create a total racial microaggressions score.

Initially, it was hypothesized that racial minorities would more frequently perceive racial microaggressions than their White counterparts, and that mother and father alienation as well as attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance to partner would predict individuals' perceptions of racial microaggressions. The key findings from the pilot study were that African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, and Multiracial individuals perceived racial microaggressions more frequently than White individuals. According to the pilot study results, mother and father alienation (subscales from the IPPA; Arnsden & Greenberg, 1987), and attachment avoidance to partner (subscale from the ECR-S; Wei et al., 2007) predicted perceived experiences of racial microaggressions. Surprisingly, attachment anxiety to partner did not predict perceived experiences of racial micoraggressions in this sample. Also, mother and father alienation were not directly related partner avoidance, therefore, it is possible that another variable may be influencing the relationship between mother and father alienation and partner avoidance. In order to gain a better understanding of these results and relationships, the present study was planned to examine these relationships more closely.

The results of the pilot study further indicated that the parent alienation construct (IPPA; (Arnsden & Greenberg, 1987) and partner avoidance construct (ECR-S; Wei et al., 2007) had the strongest associations with the perception racial microaggressions. Although counter to the hypothesis, the partner anxiety construct did not have any bearing on the perception of racial microaggressions in the pilot study, the current study will examine this construct because it is theoretically supported and is a major dimension of insecure attachment. The pilot study findings

also prompted the examination of contemporary literature on self-esteem in the hopes of identifying a construct that might explain the non-significant direct relationships between parent alienation and partner avoidance in this particular sample. Self-esteem was chosen because it is a measure that assists in explaining one's self-concept, as does ethnic-racial self-esteem and how one experiences racial microaggressions. Therefore, the construct of *defensive self-esteem* and its potential relevance to attachment and racial microaggressions will be discussed in a later section.

Also, following further consideration of pilot study findings, the concept of *ethnic-racial self-esteem (identity) as a product of ethnic-racial socialization* also emerged as potentially salient to the study of the racial microaggressions because individuals' "attitudes regarding the significance and meaning of race" are integral to their perception and resiliency in the face of racial discrimination, and attitudes toward race are a product of ethnic-racial socialization (Neblett et al., 2010, p. 480). Therefore, the constructs of ethnic-racial socialization and self-esteem will also be discussed in a later section. Finally, the model to be tested in the present study which incorporates both the defensive self-esteem and ethnic-racial socialization constructs will be identified.

Contemporary Studies on the Nature of Self-Esteem

Since its inception in the research literature, the concept of self-esteem has undergone several definitional transformations. Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as "a personal judgment of the worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes of the individual toward himself" (p.4-5). Self-esteem has also been defined as an individual's evaluation of himself of worthy or unworthy (Baumeister, 1998). Typically, high self-esteem is associated with having a positive perception of the self and world, and good psychological health, whereas low self-esteem is associated with a negative self-perception and psychological distress (Heatherton & Wyland,

2003). However, some studies suggest that individuals with high versus low self-esteem may be more violent, destructive, and engage in risky health behaviors (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Baumeister, Cambell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). The conflicting findings in this literature lend support for the view that self-esteem is a heterogeneous construct with multiple subtypes (Lambird & Mann, 2007; Lopez et al., 2014).

Kernis (2003) proposed a distinction between *high self-esteem* and *optimal self-esteem*. Optimal self-esteem is seen as positive, stable, non-defensive, and based on non-contingent appraisals of self-worth, whereas other forms of high self-esteem are likely to be less stable, based upon external cues and appraisals of self-worth, and thus more vulnerable and reactive to environmental threats. Other investigators have conceptualized the latter problematic variant of high self-esteem as *defensive self-esteem* which is presumed to be comprised of high explicit self-esteem and low implicit self-esteem (O'Brien & Epstein, 1988). Explicit self-esteem is a more conscious, self-reflective process, whereas implicit self-esteem is less conscious and more automatic (Lambird & Mann, 2007). Individuals with defensive self-esteem overtly exhibit high self-esteem, but are prone to greater fluctuations in self-esteem stability since their self-esteem is contingent upon others' approval of them (Lopez et al., 2014).

In order to assess domains of contingent self-esteem, Crocker and Wolfe (2001) developed the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS). The CSWS has seven subscales (see "Methods" for more information). Four of seven CSWS domains of self-esteem (i.e., Academic Competence, Appearance, Competition and Others' Approval) are externally-contingent upon others' responses to the individual. *Externally contingent self-worth* (ECSW) refers to when individuals' self-esteem is dependent upon performance or activity-related facets. In this case, it is important for an individual to portray a specific image of themselves, act in a certain way, and

accomplish something in order to feel valued as a person. Individuals with ECSW have difficulty deriving a sense of self-worth from qualities that are intrinsic to them (Sanchez & Crocker, 2005). Such individuals are motivated to act or achieve to receive self-validation from external sources (Lopez et al., 2014). Thus, when these individuals are unable to receive validation from external sources, their self-esteem becomes fragile. Individuals with fragile self-esteem, who are unable to rely on themselves to feel worthy as persons, possess a low implicit self-esteem. However, when these individuals receive positive feedback from others, their explicit self-esteem becomes high, resulting in a defensive self-esteem which is comprised of high explicit self-esteem and low implicit self-esteem. Positive feedback and validation from others results in individuals expressing high explicit self-esteem by displaying positive attitudes toward the self.

Unfortunately, their high explicit self-esteem is truly masking underlying insecurities and self-doubts that are associated with low implicit self-esteem. Individuals with ECSW may actually overcompensate for their underlying negative self-perceptions by acting more secure than they seem. Because defensive self-esteem is reliant upon others' validation and thus ephemeral, it is constantly in flux. Self-esteem instability, which assesses fluctuations in self-esteem can be assessed using Chabrol, Rousseau, and Callahan's (2006) Instability of Self-Esteem Scale (ISES).

Therefore, the present study will use subscales measuring ECSW from the CSWS as well as the ISES to assess defensive self-esteem. ECSW subscales from the CSWS will measure self-esteem that is dependent on others, whereas the ISES will measure fluctuations in self-esteem. Individuals with higher scores on the CSWS and ISES may have defensive self-esteem because they are endorsing high externally contingent self-esteem, but are also endorsing self-esteem that is vulnerable and conducive to shifts depending on their environment.

Self-Esteem and Attachment

Previous research indicates that attachment security and optimal self-esteem are related (Foster, Kernis, & Goldman, 2007). However, Foster et al. (2007) posited that other aspects of self-esteem (e.g., self-esteem stability) need to be considered in relation to attachment. They found that, relative to their secure peers, individuals with preoccupied (high anxiety) and fearful (high anxiety and high avoidance) attachment orientations reported less stable self-esteem, suggesting that individuals with insecure attachment orientations are prone to more fluctuating experiences of self-esteem. It is possible that fearful and preoccupied individuals experience fluctuations in self-esteem because they are more likely to base their self-esteem on externally-contingent sources of self-worth.

Dismissive individuals, on the other hand, experienced the greatest discordance in implicit and explicit self-esteem, suggesting that dismissive individuals may employ a defensive strategy that entails a simultaneous presentation of a confident external façade and suppression of self-related emotional experiences (Dentale, Vecchione, De Coro, & Barbaranelli, 2012). This is aligned with the perception that dismissive individuals who have suffered intra-familial trauma have the tendency to view themselves as strong, independent, and self-sufficient, which enables them to use defensive strategies to distance themselves from painful memories and emotions associated with their caregivers (Muller, 2009). To some extent, it may be protective or adaptive for individuals with defensive self-esteem to have dismissive attachments and distance themselves from negative experiences. In fact, individuals with defensive self-esteem, in comparison to individuals with damaged self-esteem (e.g., low explicit self-esteem; high implicit self-esteem) reported less depression and suicidal intent. However, both defensive and damaged individuals reported feelings of loneliness, suggesting that defensive individuals are not

necessarily content with their state of being (Creemers, Scholte, Engels, Prinstein, & Wiers, 2012).

Individuals who experience perceived painful or traumatic attachment experiences in their childhood such as parental alienation may develop defensive self-esteem to cope with later life disappointments and challenges. These individuals have low implicit self-esteem because they have suffered inconsistent attachment, hurt, and rejection from their parents; however, because they do not want to recall or experience these wounding emotions and memories, they overcompensate by adopting a high explicit self-esteem. Having high explicit self-esteem allows them to present a strong, confident, and independent self-image to themselves and others. This need to appear self-sufficient and to ward off painful experiences may dispose them to distance themselves from people who may reject or disappoint them, thus contributing to their development of avoidant attachments to their partners. On the other hand, some individuals who have developed a defensive self-esteem in response to parental alienation and painful childhood experiences may feel the need to cling steadfastly to their partners to ensure that they do not abandon them in the same way they felt neglected by their parents, leading them to develop anxious attachment to their partners. Therefore, defensive self-esteem may function as an important mediating variable between experiences of parent alienation and attachment avoidance to partner.

Given the accumulation of such vulnerable experiences, parental alienation, the development of a defensive self-esteem, and insecure (anxious and avoidant) attachment to partner may collectively contribute to these individuals' heightened sensitivity to experience and report racial microaggressions more frequently relative to their peers who have benefited from more favorable attachments to parents and partners, and to their possession of more stable and

less contingent forms of self-esteem. As inferred from the results of the pilot study individuals experiencing parent alienation and insecure attachment to partner may experience a heightened sensitivity to racial microaggressions (Thind & Ramos, 2014).

Additionally, defensive self-esteem may relate to attachment since it is similarly based on how an individual may feel about oneself. Defensive self-esteem is an aspect of one's self concept which is not limited to one's attitudes, dispositions, self-worthiness, beliefs about oneself, ethnic-racial identity, gender identity. Moreover, defensive self-esteem, since it in part assesses one's feelings of worthiness may relate to attachment, which is similarly based on how worthy of love, care, trust, and security an individual feels. Hence, the inclusion of this construct may further clarify the relationships already identified in the pilot study, and thereby offer a more comprehensive understanding of how the attachment system influences the perception of racial microaggressions. Therefore, two models (one for each type of partner insecure attachment) will be investigated. In addition, the construct of ethnic-racial identity and its relationship to attachment and racial microaggressions will be incorporated in the final models that will be tested.

Racial and Ethnic Socialization

The constructs of *Racial* and *Ethnic Socialization* are similar, and defined as the methods through which parents communicate information about race and ethnicity to their children (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). Early notions of Racial Socialization emerged in the 1980s when scholars investigated how African-American parents prepared their children to navigate negative stereotypes, bias, and racial stratification directed at them in the United States. African-American parents communicated the importance of race-related discussions, instilled

racial pride, and maintained their children's high positive self-esteem which helped them become more capable in handling racial discrimination and race-related distress (Hughes et al., 2006).

Later, Ethnic Socialization research materialized, and specifically focused on how parents within Latino, Asian, African, and Caribbean subgroups worked to retain their children's sense of culture, identity, and in-group affiliation in response to their assimilation within dominant American society (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2009). According to Hughes et al. (2006) the term Racial Socialization mainly referred to research with African-Americans and originated in response to "Black-versus -White" race relations, whereas Ethnic Socialization refers to research with other ethnic groups, which includes African-Americans (p.748). However, both terms are considered applicable across all ethnic-racial groups and used interchangeably. The term *Ethnic-Racial Socialization* has been commonly used among researchers in more recent literature.

Assessment of Ethnic-Racial Socialization

Although research on ethnic-racial socialization has progressed within the last two decades, Yasui (2015) proposed that ethnic-racial socialization is a multidimensional construct, and methodological approaches for assessing it continue to be limited. Research studies assessing ethnic-racial socialization have largely used self-report measures, several of which are not validated or replicated in other studies. Moreover, existing measures of ethnic-racial socialization more often capture the *content* of messages transmitted by the parent instead of evaluating the method of parent to child *transmission* of ethnic-racial socialization messages to their children (Lesane-Brown, 2006). The content of ethnic-racial socialization messages include: cultural socialization, cultural pride reinforcement, cultural embeddedness, and enculturation of familial and cultural values. Parent to child ethnic-racial socialization content

relating to racial issues incorporates: racism awareness training, cultural alertness to discrimination, preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust, promotion of cross-cultural relations, and coping with discrimination (Yasui, 2015).

Lesane-Brown (2006) reviewed the transmission of racial socialization processes among Black families and discovered that the two central dimensions of *expression* and *intent* are integral to ethnic-racial socialization. Expression refers to how (verbal vs. nonverbal) ethnic-racial socialization messages are transmitted to youth, and intent refers to the "state of mind" in which such messages are delivered, and whether these messages were transmitted in a purposeful or inadvertent manner (Lesane-Brown, 2006, p.43). Research suggests that these messages are primarily assessed through self-report measures, and that they often focus on measuring verbal behaviors such as "talking, teaching, telling, or explaining" (Yasui, 2015, p.3). Unfortunately, relatively few measures have examined the nonverbal aspects (e.g., affective behaviors, modeling, exposure to objects) of parent to child ethnic-racial socialization (Yasui, 2015).

Hughes et al. (2006) conducted a review of existing measures of ethnic-socialization across various racial groups and identified the existence of multiple non-validated self-report Likert style measures and some binary and open-ended questions that assessed ethnic-racial socialization. According to their review, commonly used validated measures included the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) and Scales of Racial Socialization for Adolescents (Stevenson, 1994). However, these measures were solely validated on African-American populations. Similarly, Yasui (2015) conducted a literature review examining the existing measures of ethnic-racial socialization across various racial and ethnic groups and discovered that research studies used parent and youth self-report measures, interviews, and naturalistic observations to assess ethnic-racial

socialization. In Yasui's (2015) review, 20 of the 41 identified measures were replicated for use in other studies. After reviewing the literature, including Hughes et al. (2006) and Yasui's (2015) review of existing ethnic-racial socialization, it was noted that quantitative, validated self-report measures that collectively assessed an aspect of ethnic-racial socialization among various ethnic and racial subgroups were limited. Also, it was noted that ethnic-racial socialization is a complex and multifaceted construct that can be assessed in many ways. Additionally, the present study is conducted with adults and is retrospective in nature, which made it more reasonable to assess an outcome of ethnic-racial socialization which was likely instilled within these individuals in their childhood.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Outcomes. According to Hughes et al. (2006), literature regarding ethnic-racial socialization and youth outcomes is meager and underdeveloped because the literature "lacks a theoretical rationale" that specifically examines how ethnic-racial socialization might operate in relation to youth outcomes" (p. 761). However, youth's ethnic-racial identity and self-esteem have been the most commonly investigated outcome of parent ethnic-racial socialization because ethnic-racial socialization practices are usually targeted toward imparting cultural knowledge and pride to children. These aspects of the youths' self-system are considered most "proximal to their parents' socialization efforts" (Hughes et al., 2006, p. 761). Thus, for the purposes of the current study, the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) was used to assess individuals' ethnic-racial self-esteem (an aspect of ethnic-racial identity) which is a product of their ethnic-racial socialization. In particular, CSES assesses how worthy individuals feel of their identified racial or ethnic group, how good individuals feel about their identified racial or ethnic group, how positively other people evaluate their racial or ethnic group, and the importance of their group membership on their self-concept.

The Influence of Parent-Child Relationships on Ethnic-Racial Socialization

As indicated in the discussion above, ethnic-racial socialization is a complicated process that includes verbal and non-verbal messages from parents that are both deliberately and inadvertently transmitted to their children (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes et al, 2006; Stevenson, 1995). Due to the nebulous nature of these messages and communications, it is possible that children can misconstrue, misunderstand, or discard their parents' attempts at ethnic-racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2009). Thus, clear communication and the quality of parent-child relationships are instrumental to children's internalization of their parents' values and norms. Research shows that various aspects of parenting and parental experiences across a variety of ethnic-racial groups influence the quality of their children's ethnic-racial socialization (Brown, Tanner-Smith, Lesane-Brown, & Ezell, 2007; Derlan, Umana-Taylor, Updegraff, & Jahromi, 2015; Hagelskamp & Hughes, 2014; Tran & Lee, 2010). This research is summarized below.

Parent-Child Ethnic-Racial Socialization Research Studies. Parental warmth, among other variables, related to more frequent discussions of ethnic and racial heritages in a longitudinal study including Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and multiracial children (Brown et al., 2007). Moreover, adolescent daughters of Mexican-origin mothers who encouraged ethnic socialization, ethnic-racial identity exploration, resolution, and affirmation among their reported lasting ethnic-identity and self-esteem affirmation (Derlan et al., 2015). The type of ethnic-racial socialization appeared to be important in predicting social competence among Asian-American late adolescents in one research study (Tran & Lee, 2010). The results of this study indicated that Asian-American late adolescents who were imbued with racial socialization incorporating ethnic pride, history, and training in cultural practices were more likely to successfully navigate social relationships than adolescents who were exposed to

promotion of mistrust (e.g., warnings of other ethnic-racial groups). Lastly, the experience of work-related discrimination among African-American, Chinese, and Latino mothers lead to increased racial socialization and preparedness for racial bias in their adolescent children (Hagelskamp & Hughes, 2014). Research also illustrates that the quality of parenting and racial socialization are related to perceptions of racism and race-related distress. For example, Berkel et al. (2009) revealed that positive parenting and racial socialization were protective factors against negative responses to racism.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Racism

Across different groups, ethnic- racial socialization has been linked to more informed perceptions of racism (Alvarez, Juang, & Liang, 2006; Leslie, Smith, Hrapczynski, & Riley, 2013; McKown & Strambler, 2009; Neblett et al., 2008; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). For example, in a study of African-American children, Neblett et al. (2008) found that those who received high levels of positive racial socialization from their parents experienced less distress when faced with racial discrimination. Additionally, African-American and Latino children who were exposed to more racial socialization were able to better explain others' stereotypes and negative interracial encounters among Whites and people of color (McKown & Strambler, 2009). Similarly, racial/ethnic socialization and racial identity buffered the impact of recent negative race-related in African-American college students (Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). Additionally, among Asian individuals (mostly of Chinese and Filipino descent) Alvarez et al. (2006) found that racial socialization was related to perceptions of racism such that individuals who had more discussions of race with family members and friends felt more prepared to identify negative race-related interchanges. Racial socialization in trans-racial adoptive families lead to adopted adolescents feeling more prepared to face racism and experience less distress (Leslie et al, 2013).

Parent-Child Attachment, Ethnic-Racial Socialization, and Racism

As indicated above, the quality of parent-child relationships and communication influence the type of ethnic-racial socialization experienced by their children and hence the strength of their children's ethnic-racial self-esteem. Individuals' ethnic-racial self-esteem, as a result of their ethnic-racial socialization, in turn influences their perceptions of racism. Although, no studies exploring the relationship between parent-child attachment and ethnic-racial self-esteem exist, attachment is an important component of the parent-child relationship. Individuals with secure attachments to their parents hold the belief that their parents are available and responsive in their time of need (Cole, 2006). Secure attachments between individuals and their parents lead individuals to feel close to, and feel more trusting of their parents. Individuals who trust their parents are more likely to feel open to receiving and internalizing messages from them. Therefore, individuals who are securely attached to their parents and hence experience lower levels parental alienation, may be more likely to believe and internalize race, ethnicity, and ethnic-racial self-esteem-related messages (e.g., various aspects of ethnic-racial socialization) relayed to them by their parents. Although previously untested, it is reasonable that a relationship between parent attachment, particularly lower levels of parent alienation, and high levels of ethnic-racial self-esteem exists.

Additionally, research described above, shows that a relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and perception of racism exists, although to date, there is no research investigating the relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and the specific construct of racial microaggressions. Research findings already suggest that individuals who have experienced positive ethnic-racial socialization that results in positive ethnic-racial self-esteem are more likely to better cope with and adjust to differing forms of racism (e.g., overt racism, negative

stereotypes, and racial bias). Therefore, it is likely that individuals who have had exposure to ethnic-racial socialization are less likely to be affected by racial microaggressions such that they will be less affected by and perceive racial microaggressions less readily than those who have not. To date, although the relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions has not been tested, it is likely that a direct, negative relationship between the two constructs exists.

The present study seeks to assess relationships among the constructs of parent attachment (e.g., specifically parent alienation), ethnic-racial self-esteem and the perception of racial microaggressions. The sections above discuss the possibility of a relationship between parent attachment and ethnic-racial self-esteem. In the present study, parent attachment is assessed by parent alienation, the composite of mother and father alienation subscales from the IPPA. Individuals who experience parent alienation may feel misunderstood and emotionally neglected by their parents. Therefore, individuals endorsing alienation from their parents may not have internalized or received adequate messages surrounding ethnic-racial socialization from their parents, such that a negative relationship between parent alienation and ethnic-racial self-esteem may exist. Moreover, as discussed in the sections above, individuals reporting higher levels of ethnic-racial self-esteem may be less susceptible to perceiving and being affected racial microaggressions, such that there is a negative relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and perception of racial microaggressions. Since there are hypothesized relationships between parent alienation and ethnic-racial socialization, and ethnic-racial socialization and racism, the inclusion of ethnic-racial self-esteem as a variable may strengthen the relationship between parent alienation and perception of racial microaggressions because parent alienation may affect the quality of ethnic-racial socialization internalized by the individual (child) and result in a less

favorable ethnic-racial self-esteem. Individuals who have positively internalized their parents' ethnic-racial socialization and thus have a more favorable ethnic-racial self-esteem may feel more prepared to face racial microaggressions and thus to perceive them less frequently.

The Contributions of Attachment, Defensive Self-Esteem, and Ethnic-Racial Socialization to Racial Microaggressions: A Proposed Model

The first model (see Figure 1) under investigation proposes that parent alienation (both mother and father alienation) will indirectly (and positively) predict the perception of racial microaggressions through the constructs of defensive self-esteem, partner avoidance, and ethnic-racial self-esteem. Additionally, parent alienation will be indirectly (and positively) related to partner avoidance through defensive self-esteem and defensive self-esteem will be indirectly (and positively) related to racial microaggressions through partner avoidance. Moreover, direct (positive) relationships will be observed between parent alienation and defensive self-esteem, defensive self-esteem and partner avoidance, and partner avoidance and racial microaggressions. The model also proposes that direct (negative) relationships between parent alienation and ethnic-racial self-esteem and ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions will exist.

The second model (see Figure 2) under investigation proposes that parent alienation (both mother and father alienation) will indirectly (and positively) predict the perception of racial microaggressions through the constructs of defensive self-esteem, partner anxiety, and ethnic-racial self-esteem. Additionally, parent alienation will be indirectly (and positively) related to partner anxiety through defensive self-esteem and defensive self-esteem will be indirectly (and positively) related to racial microaggressions through partner anxiety. Moreover, direct (positive) relationships will be observed between parent alienation and defensive self-esteem, defensive self-esteem and partner anxiety, and partner anxiety and racial microaggressions.

The model also proposes that direct (negative) relationships between parent alienation and ethnic-racial self-esteem and ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions will exist.

Hypotheses

- 1) The first model will demonstrate an adequate goodness of fit to the data.
- 2) The second model will demonstrate an adequate goodness of fit to the data.

Chapter II

Method

Participants

Eligibility criteria for study participation included identifying as a racial minority, being over the age of 18, and English-speaking. Participants were able to sign up for the study through the University of Houston SONA online research system and receive one hour of research credit for their respective courses.

A sample of 311 (235 female, 72 men, and 2 other (self-identified as agender) undergraduate students from the University of Houston participated in a web-based online study. Participant age ranged from 18 to 58 ($M_{age} = 22.54$, $SD_{age} = 5.38$). The racial or ethnic make-up of participants was 35% Asian, 12.2% Black, 42.8% Hispanic, 6.4% Multiracial or Multiethnic (according to the data, individuals self-identified as: Black and Asian, Pakistani and Persian, Hispanic and Caucasian, Black and Hispanic, Black and White, Black and Native American, Native American, German, and Polish, Native American and White, Vietnamese and White, Middle-Eastern and Hispanic, White and Asian, and Italian and Indian), and 2.9% other (self-identified as Middle-Eastern, Arab, Persian, or North-African). Generational status in the United States was assessed with 28.9% of participants identifying as first generation, 52.4% , second generation, 2.6%, third generation, 3.5% fourth generation, and 11.9% identifying as fifth

generation Americans. Additionally, family of origin and current socioeconomic statuses (SES) were assessed by annual income. In relation to family of origin (SES), 9.4% reported a current household annual income below 20,000, 29.7% reported an income between 20,000-50,000, 39.4% reported an annual income between 50,000 and 100,000, 15.5% reported an annual income between 100,000 and 150,000, and 6.1% reported an annual income over 150,000. Comparatively, in relation to current SES, 40.5% reported an annual income below 20,000, 22.5% reported an income between 20,000-50,000, 22.2% reported an annual income between 50,000 and 100,000, 11.3% reported an annual income between 100,000 and 150,000, and 2.3% reported an annual income over 150,000. Please refer to Appendix C to view the demographics measure used in this study.

Procedures and Materials

Participants accessed the study through the University of Houston SONA online research website and completed measures online using SurveyGizmo © software. Participants first read a general description of the study and decided whether they wanted to register for the study. Once they registered for the study, participants clicked on a weblink leading them to the Survey Gizmo webpage. When the participants accessed the SurveyGizmo© page, they initially read a cover letter detailing the informed consent conditions. The cover letter explained the benefits and risks of participation, including the fact that they could withdraw or discontinue their participation at any time. The participants then decided whether they wanted to give their electronic consent by clicking on the "Yes" or "No" buttons. Once the participants electronically agreed to continue, they read the instructions for completing the measures. No identifying information was collected, and the participants' responses remained anonymous. After participants completed the measures,

they arrived at a page that thanked them for their participation and encouraged them to seek psychological assistance if they experienced distress.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. This measure collected information about age, gender, race or ethnicity, generational status in the United States, family of origin and current socioeconomic status.

Racial Microaggressions. The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) is a 45-item measure that uses a dichotomous scale ($0 = I$ did not experience this event and $1 = I$ experienced this event at least once in the past six months). The REMS consists of six subscales, Assumptions of Inferiority (e.g., "Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race"), Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality (e.g., "Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race"), Microinvalidations (e.g., "Someone told me they do not see race") Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity (e.g., "Someone wanted to date me only because of my race"), Environmental Microaggressions (e.g., "I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies") and Workplace and School Microaggressions (e.g., "Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups"). Cronbach's alpha values for each of the aforementioned subscales from the initial validation sample are: .86, .82, .79, .71, .77, and .75, respectively. In the present study Cronbach's alpha values for each of subscales in the same order were comparable: .86, .81, .80, .76, .75, and .76.

The REMS subscales can be summed to produce a total score, for which the internal consistency is .88 as measured by Cronbach's alpha in the original sample. For the purposes of the present study, the REMS subscales were summed to produce a total score. Thus, in the

present study, the internal consistency for the total REMS subscale score was .87 as assessed by Cronbach's alpha. As reported by Nadal et. al (2014), the REMS is correlated with existing measures of racism (i.e., Daily Life Experiences-Frequency scale; Harrell, 2000) and REMS total scores are also negatively correlated with depressive symptoms and lack of positive affect.

Parental Attachment. Attachment to parents was assessed using Armsden and Greenberg's (1987) Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) measure. The IPPA measures attachment across mother, father, and peer using the same 25 items for each attachment figure. There are three subscales for each relationship (alienation, trust, and communication). Each subscale ranges from 1 (*almost never or never true*) to 5 (*almost always or always true*). Since the mother and father alienation subscales were the only subscales from the IPPA that were significantly related to the experience of microaggressions in the pilot study sample which was similar to the population in this study (mostly female University of Houston undergraduate students recruited through SONA), only the mother and father alienation subscales of the IPPA were used in the present study. Mother and father alienation experiences include feelings of isolation, anger, detachment, and hopelessness resulting from unresponsive or inconsistently responsive attachment figures. Item examples included, "My mother expects too much from me" and "I feel angry with my father." In the original validation sample, internal consistencies of the father and mother attachment versions as measured by Cronbach's alpha were .89 and .87, respectively. The present sample yielded internal consistencies of .80 and .79 for father and mother alienation, respectively. For the purposes of this study, the mother and father alienation subscales were summed to create a composite scale, "Parent Alienation." The Parent Alienation scale in this study had an internal consistency value of .81 as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

According to Armsden and Greenberg (1987) scores on the IPPA subscales were moderately related in expected directions to subscale scores on the Family Environmental Scale (Moos & Moos, 1986). FES subscales include Family Cohesion (i.e., level of support family members have for one another), Family Expressiveness (i.e., the family's ability to directly express emotions) and Family Conflict (i.e., the family's ability to openly express conflict and anger).

Adult Attachment Orientations. Attachment to partners was assessed using the 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley et al., 2000) which consists of subscales respectively assessing attachment-related Anxiety and Avoidance, the two dimensions underlying adult attachment organization. The ECR-R is a revised version of Brennan et al.'s (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) measure. Fraley et al. (2000) used Item Response Theory (IRT) to improve the original ECR measure since it was less sensitive in assessing the secure ends of Anxiety and Avoidance dimensions relative to the insecure ends. Using IRT principles to study the item difficulty or threshold values, particularly those toward the lower end of the domains, Fraley et al. (2000) modified the wording of several ECR items to create ECR-R subscales and observed that these modifications "increased measurement precision by 50% to 100%" (p. 362).

The ECR-R uses a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). "I worry a lot about relationships," and "I am nervous when partners get too close to me" are respective item examples from the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales. The scores on the ECR-R are strongly correlated to the scores on the original ECR ($r = .95$; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In the present study, the ECR-R Avoidance and Anxiety subscales yielded Cronbach alpha values of .95 and .94. Additionally, ECR subscales are positively related to interpersonal difficulties,

splitting and self-concealment and negatively related to social self-efficacy and emotional self-awareness (Brennan et al., 2000; Lopez, Mitchell, & Gormley, 2002; Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) concluded that no significant gains in validity have been made in the ECR-R in relation to the ECR. Sibley, Fisher, and Liu (2005) reported that the ECR-R demonstrates good convergent validity with measures of diary ratings that assess attachment-related experiences in social interactions.

Defensive Self-Esteem. Two instruments were used to assess the construct of defensive self-esteem, the Instability of Self Esteem Scale (ISES; Chabrol et al., 2006) and the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). The ISES is a 4-item measure that assesses participants' perceived self-esteem fluctuations. The scale ranges from 0 (*disagree strongly*) and 3 (*agree strongly*). Item examples include, "Sometimes I feel worthless; at other times, I feel that I am worthwhile." ISES scores demonstrated an internal consistency of .89 as measured by Cronbach's alpha. Comparably, in the present study, ISES scores showed an internal consistent of .90 as assessed by Cronbach's alpha. Reportedly, the ISES has high concurrent validity as measured between the ISES and the variability of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a measure of global self-esteem. Of note, ISES and RSES scores were only weakly and positively correlated ($r = .20$), suggesting that the two scales measure somewhat distinct constructs. In respect to divergent validity, the ISES is more strongly correlated with Borderline Personality Symptomology than with Depressive Symptomology, whereas the RSES is more strongly correlated with Depressive Symptomology than with Borderline Personality Symptomology.

The CSWS (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001) is a 35-item measure that assesses self-reported experiences of contingent self-esteem in each of seven domains on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly*

disagree, 7 = strongly agree): Appearance (e.g., “My self-esteem is influenced by how attractive I think my face and facial features are,”) Academic Competence (e.g., “My self-esteem is influenced by my academic performance”), Competition (e.g., “Doing better than others gives me a sense of self-respect,”), Others Approval (e.g., “I don’t respect myself if others don’t respect me”) Virtue (e.g., “My self-esteem would suffer if I did something unethical,”) Family Support (e.g., “It is important to my self-respect that I have a family that cares about me” and God’s Love (e.g., “My self-esteem goes up when I feel that God loves me”).

Internal consistencies as measured by Cronbach’s alpha for each of the domains are: Appearance (.87), Competition (.88), Family Support (.89), God’s Love (.97), Virtue (.89), Approval from Others (.87), and Academic Competence (.86). For the purpose of this study, and in keeping with the findings of Crocker et al. (2003), four of the seven domains (i.e., Academic Competence, Appearance, Competition, and Others’ Approval) were summed and used to assess externally contingent self-worth. For the present study, Cronbach alpha values for the Academic Competence, Appearance, Competition, and Approval from Others domains were: .78, .74, .87, .80 respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the sum of all four domains was .87.

Correlations of these CSW subscale scores with global measures of self-esteem and personality are lower than .30, suggesting that externally contingent self-worth may capture a less stable and more vulnerable form of self-esteem (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003). In an academic setting, CSW predicted self-esteem in response to graduate school acceptances and rejections, and decreases in self-esteem in response to bad grades. Moreover, negatively-stereotyped students were especially likely to underperform when they based their self-worth on academic competence (Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn, & Chase, 2003; Lawrence & Crocker, 2011).

The CSWS and ISES were summed to create a composite variable, Defensive Self-Esteem. This variable had good internal consistency (.86) as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem. The Collective Self-Esteem Scale, Race-Adapted (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) version was used to assess Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem. The CSES (race-adapted) is a 16-item measure that assesses Membership Esteem, Private Collective Self-Esteem, Public Self-Esteem, and Importance to Identity on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The Membership Esteem subscale (e.g., I am a worthy member of my race or ethnic group) assesses how worthy individuals feel of their racial or ethnic group. The Private Collective Self-Esteem subscale (e.g., I often regret that I belong to my racial/ethnic group) assesses individuals' personal judgments of how good their racial or ethnic groups are. The Public Collective Self-Esteem subscale measures individuals' assessments of how positively others view their racial or ethnic group (e.g., In general, others respect my race/ethnicity). Finally, the Importance to Identity subscale (e.g., The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am) assesses the importance of one's racial or ethnic group to their self-concept.

Internal consistencies as measured by Cronbach's alpha for each of the subscales were: Membership Esteem (.75), Private Collective Self-Esteem (.72), Public Self-Esteem (.88), and Importance to Identity (.84). Comparatively, in the present study, internal consistencies as assessed by Cronbach's alpha were: .74, .83, .74, and .68 for Membership Esteem, Private Collective Self-Esteem, Public Collective Self-Esteem, and Importance to Identity. For the purposes of this study, the four subscales were summed to produce a total Collective Self-Esteem scale score. The Cronbach's alpha was .74 for the total Collective Self-Esteem scale score.

Three studies with a diverse group of undergraduate students were conducted to assess the validity of the CSES. The CSES was found to correlate with multiple scales in expected directions including the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Individualism-Collectivism Scale (Hui, 1988), Aspects of Identity Questionnaire-III (Cheek, Underwood, & Cutler, 1985) and Belief in Discrimination Scale (an informal 8-item measure of individuals' perceptions of discrimination against their group). Additionally, general CSES and the race-specific CSES were highly correlated, but there were enough differences between the two scales to suggest that they were not assessing the same construct. Among Asian, Black, and Caucasian individuals, scores of Asian students were most correlated on the CSES general and CSES race-specific version (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994).

For the purpose of this study, and in keeping with the findings of Crocker et al. (2003), four of the seven domains (i.e., Academic Competence, Appearance, Competition, and Others' Approval) were summed and used to assess externally contingent self-worth. For the present study, Cronbach alpha values for the Academic Competence, Appearance, Competition, and Approval from Others domains were: .78, .74, .87, .80 respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the sum of all four domains was .87.

Design and Primary Analyses

The present study used a single-time-point correlational design. The primary analyses focused on testing the proposed path models (see Figures 1 and 2) using the statistical software IBM® SPSS® AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures). Total scores for each of the variables were calculated in SPSS and were imported to AMOS. Scores from the Mother and Father Alienation subscales were summed to create one manifest variable, Parent Alienation. Total scores from the CSWS and ISES measure were also summed to create one manifest variable,

Defensive Self-Esteem. Total scores from the ECR-R avoidance subscale, ECR-R anxiety subscale, CSES (ethnic-racial self-esteem), and REMS (racial microaggressions) were used as manifest variables. Using AMOS technology, paths between the variables were drawn as shown in Figures 1 and 2. These models were then analyzed, and goodness of fit indices such as Chi-Square (X^2), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) were evaluated.

Chapter III

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations for each of the variables for the overall participant sample, Black participants, Asian participants, Hispanic participants, and Multiracial/Multiethnic participants as well as each of the variables are presented in Appendix A (Tables 6 -10). The numbers were reasonably consistent among all groups. Correlations among key variables are also presented in Appendix A (Tables 1 - 5). Key study variables demonstrated significant correlations in expected directions across most groups. For example, Defensive Self-Esteem was positively and significantly related to Parent Alienation, Partner Anxiety, Partner Avoidance, and Racial Microaggressions. Parent Alienation and Partner Anxiety, and Parent Alienation and Partner Avoidance were both positively and significantly related. Parent Alienation and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem were negatively and significantly related as expected. Partner Anxiety and Partner Avoidance were positively and significantly related, and Partner Anxiety and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem were negatively and significantly related. Racial Microaggressions were positively and significantly related to Partner Avoidance, Partner Anxiety, and Parent Alienation. Lastly, as predicted, Racial Microaggressions and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem were negatively

and significantly related. However, an unexpected negative and significant relationship was found between Ethnic-Racial Identity and Partner Anxiety ($r = -.124$).

Similar to the pilot study, which assessed relationships between attachment-related constructs and racial microaggressions, significant relationships between attachment-related variables and racial microaggressions were found as discussed below in the main analyses. The only difference was that partner anxiety was not related to racial microaggressions in the pilot study sample, whereas it was in this sample.

Main Analyses

Fit Indices. Fit indices such as NFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA were reviewed to determine fit for each of the models described below. Some sources suggest that NF, TLI, and CFI values above .90 are considered adequate; however, more recent sources suggest that values below .90 are poor fitting values, values between .90-.95 are marginal, and cut-off values at or above .95 are needed for adequate fitting models (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In regard to RMSEA, Hu and Bentler (1995) suggested values below .06 indicate good fit. The RMSEA values are classified into four categories: close fit (.00-.05), fair fit (.05-.08), mediocre fit (.08-.10), and poor fit (over .10). Suhr (n.d.) suggested that chi-square values can also be examined for fit in samples that are between 75-200 cases; however, larger sample sizes can cause chi-square values to become inflated (statistically significant) which erroneously results in a poor data-to-fit model.

Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesized model (see Appendix B, Figure 1) did not reveal an adequate goodness of fit across any of the indices reviewed, chi-square $X^2 (3, N = 311) = 19.9, p < .001$ NFI (.77), TLI (.59), CFI (.79) and RMSEA (.11). Due to poor fit across all indices, the model was not retained and was instead subsequently revised. The AMOS program offered modification indices to improve the initial model. Modification indices suggested the inclusion

of direct paths between Parent Alienation and Partner Avoidance, and between Parent Alienation and Racial Microaggressions would improve goodness of fit. A revised model was created once the modification indices were applied to the model.

Revised and Final Model 1. The revised model (see Appendix B, Figure 3) revealed adequate goodness of fit across all fit indices, chi-square $X^2(5, N = 311) = .94, p = .81$, NFI (.98), TLI (1.0), CFI (1.0) and RMSEA (.00). AMOS output offered values for total, direct and indirect variable effects. Direct and indirect effects are provided below.

Direct Effects. Parent Alienation had positive and significant direct effects on Defensive Self Esteem ($\beta = .18, p < .001$), Partner Avoidance ($\beta = .54, p < .001$), and Racial Microaggressions ($\beta = .14, p < .03$). Parent Alienation had a negative and significant direct effect on Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem ($\beta = -.46, p < .001$). Defensive Self-Esteem had a positive and non-significant direct effect on Partner Avoidance ($\beta = .16, p = .50$). Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem had a negative and non-significant direct effect on Racial Microaggressions ($\beta = -.05, p = .07$). Partner avoidance had a positive and significant direct effect on Racial Microaggressions ($\beta = .04, p < .02$).

Indirect Effects. The indirect (mediated) effect of Parent Alienation on Partner Avoidance through Defensive Self-Esteem was not significant, $\beta = .03$ [95% CI: -.042, .155]. The indirect (mediated) effect of Parent Alienation on Racial Microaggressions through Defensive Self-Esteem, Partner Avoidance and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem was significant, $\beta = .05, p < .05$ [95% CI .006, .089]. The indirect (mediated) effect of Defensive Self-Esteem on Racial Microaggressions through Partner Avoidance was not significant, $\beta = .007$ [95% CI: -.014, .036].

Hypothesis 2. The second hypothesized model (see Appendix B, Figure 2) did not reveal an adequate goodness of fit across several of the indices reviewed, chi-square $X^2 (5, N = 311) = 25, p < .001$, NFI (.90), TLI (.82), CFI (.91) and RMSEA (.10). Due to mediocre and poor fit across several indices (chi-square, TLI, and RMSEA), the model was improved by the inclusion of direct paths between Parent Alienation and Partner Anxiety, and between Parent Alienation and Racial Microaggressions. A revised model was created once the modification indices were applied to the model.

Revised and Final Model 2. The revised model (see Appendix B, Figure 4) revealed adequate goodness of fit across all fit indices, NFI (.99), TLI (1.0), CFI (1.0) and RMSEA (.00). AMOS output offered values for total, direct and indirect variable effects. Direct and indirect effects are provided below.

Direct Effects. Parent Alienation had positive and significant direct effects on Defensive Self Esteem ($\beta = .18, p < .001$), Partner Anxiety ($\beta = .53, p < .001$), and Racial Microaggressions ($\beta = .10, p < .03$). Parent Alienation had a negative and significant direct effect on Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem ($\beta = -.46, p < .001$). Defensive Self-Esteem had a positive and direct effect on Partner Anxiety ($\beta = 1.61, p < .001$). Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem had a negative and non-significant direct effect on Racial Microaggressions ($\beta = -.04, p > .001$). Partner Anxiety had a positive and significant direct effect on Racial Microaggressions ($\beta = .08, p < .001$).

Indirect Effects. The indirect (mediated) effect of Parent Alienation on Partner Anxiety through Defensive Self-Esteem was significant, $\beta = .30, p < .02$ [95% CI: .178, .481]. The indirect (mediated) effect of Parent Alienation on Racial Microaggressions through Defensive Self-Esteem, Partner Anxiety, and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem was significant, $\beta = .09, p < .02$

[95% CI: .036, .144]. The indirect (mediated) effect of Defensive Self-Esteem on Racial Microaggressions through Partner Anxiety was significant, $\beta = .13, p < .02$ [95% CI: .069, .194].

Chapter IV

Discussion

Racism continues to persevere despite the increasingly diverse nature of American society. While overt racism, along with covert racism in the form of racial microaggressions continues to occur in the United States, the examination of racial microaggressions was the focal point of this dissertation study. Previous research suggests that ethnic minorities who perceive greater numbers of racial microaggressions are more likely to have poorer coping and experience worse mental and physical health outcomes (Wang et al., 2011). However, to date, nothing is known about the personal factors that lead individuals to perceive and report greater racial microaggression experiences. Nadal (2011) suggested that future empirical studies examine how individuals' identities or personalities influences their ability to recognize racial microaggressions. In line with this recommendation, the present study used attachment theory as a framework (Bowlby, 1982/1969) to hypothesize that previous relational experiences and individual characteristics such as parent and partner attachment security, defensive self-esteem, and ethnic-racial identity influence individuals' perceptions of racial microaggressions.

Specifically, the aim of this study was to examine if parental alienation, defensive self-esteem and partner attachment (Avoidance and Anxiety) contributed to perceptions of racial microaggressions. Additionally, the study assessed whether ethnic-racial self-esteem was related to parental alienation and the perception of racial microaggressions. In order to examine the aforementioned relationships, two primary models were initially proposed. The first model hypothesized that a) parent alienation will indirectly (and positively) predict the perception of

racial microaggressions through the constructs of defensive self-esteem, partner avoidance, and ethnic-racial self-esteem, b) parent alienation will be indirectly and positively predict partner avoidance through defensive self-esteem, c) defensive self-esteem positively and indirectly predict racial microaggressions through partner avoidance, d) direct (positive) relationships will be observed between parent alienation and defensive self-esteem, defensive self-esteem and partner avoidance, and partner avoidance and racial microaggressions, and e) direct (negative) relationships between parent alienation and ethnic-racial self-esteem and ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions will exist

The second model under investigation hypothesized that a) parent alienation will indirectly (and positively) predict the perception of racial microaggressions through the constructs of defensive self-esteem, partner anxiety, and ethnic-racial self-esteem, b) parent alienation will be indirectly and positively predict partner anxiety through defensive self-esteem, c) defensive self-esteem will positively and indirectly predict racial microaggressions through partner anxiety, d) direct (positive) relationships will be observed between parent alienation and defensive self-esteem, defensive self-esteem and partner anxiety, and partner anxiety and racial microaggressions, and e) direct (negative) relationships between parent alienation and ethnic-racial self-esteem and ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions will exist.

Preliminary correlational analyses revealed that the key study variables related to one another in expected directions in regard to each of the hypothesized models for each of the racial and ethnic groups (see Appendix A). However, an unexpected negative and significant relationship between Partner Anxiety and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem was found, indicating that individuals with lower levels of ethnic-racial self-esteem have higher levels of partner anxiety. While the relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and partner attachment was not a focal

point in this study, this finding is consistent with previous research that suggests that students who are not as advanced in racial identity development have insecure attachments with others (Brown et al., 2013). There was also a positive relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions for Black participants, which was different than the negative relationship found with other racial and ethnic groups. However, the relationship between ethnic-racial self-esteem and racial microaggressions for each group was not significant. Although the means and standard deviations of the measures across different racial or ethnic groups (see Appendix A) were not tested for significance, Black participants reported higher means for ethnic-racial self-esteem than other racial and ethnic groups. It is possible that Black participants receive more self-esteem-related ethnic-racial socialization than other groups, and that ethnic-racial self-esteem plays a different role for Black participants than participants of other groups. However, there were many more Hispanic and Asian participants than Black participants which might explain some of the difference.

Importantly, the fit of the data to the first primary model was not adequate, indicating that Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Modification indices suggested the inclusion of direct paths between each of the attachment-related variables (Parent Alienation and Partner Avoidance) and Racial Microaggressions which significantly improved model fit. The fit of the data to the second primary model was not adequate, indicating that Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Modification indices again suggested the inclusion of direct paths between attachment-related variables (Parent Alienation and Partner Anxiety) and Racial Microaggressions, which resulted in good data to model fit.

While indirect relationships between the variables in both models (e.g., Defensive Self-Esteem, Partner Avoidance or Partner Anxiety) existed, the models were strongest when direct

paths between attachment-related variables and Racial Microaggressions were included.

Similarly, direct, positive, and significant relationships between Mother Alienation and Racial Microaggressions and Father Alienation and Racial Microaggressions were found in previous research conducted by Thind and Ramos (2014). Additionally, consistent with previous research which suggests a modest relationship between parental and adult attachment orientations, the present study found that individuals experiencing Parent Alienation are likely to experience Partner Avoidance (Revised and Final Model 1) and Partner Anxiety (Revised and Final Model 2) in the absence of other variables (Cummings-Robeau et al., 2009).

Additionally, in the first revised model, there were significant indirect effects between Parent Alienation and Racial Microaggressions through Defensive Self-Esteem, Partner Avoidance, and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem. The results suggest that these variables all play a direct and indirect role in an individual's experience of racial microaggressions. Similarly, in the second revised model, there were significant indirect effects between Parent Alienation and Racial Microaggression through Defensive Self-Esteem, Partner Anxiety, and Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem. However, different from the first model, in the second model, there were also indirect effects of Parent Alienation on Partner through Defensive Self-Esteem suggesting that Defensive-Esteem has a role in explaining the relationship between Parent Alienation and Partner Anxiety. Also, the indirect (mediated) effect of Defensive Self-Esteem on Racial Microaggressions through Partner Anxiety was significant, suggesting that Partner Anxiety has a role in explaining the relationship between Defensive Self-Esteem and Racial Microaggressions. Finally, the results lend credence to the fact that attachment theory is an appropriate framework for studying racial microaggressions since robust relationships between attachment-related variables and racial microaggressions emerged.

While the overall revised models were significant, Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem was not significantly related to Racial Microaggressions in either model as expected. However, the results were in expected directions such that Parent Alienation was negatively and significantly related to Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem and while the relationship between Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem and Racial Microaggressions was not significant, it was negative as expected. In this study, Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem was used as an outcome measure of Ethnic-Racial Socialization which is a multifaceted process that differs across various ethnic and racial groups. A basic self-report measure may not have adequately captured the Ethnic-Racial Socialization process in this study as Ethnic-Racial Socialization is a complicated and heterogeneous construct that is assessed in distinct ways across previous research. Thus, it is possible that a different way of assessing Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem would have yielded results that were more consistent with the hypotheses. Moreover, the variation of results could have been attributed to the fact that most of the participants in this study were Asian or Hispanic, and most existing research in this area has largely been conducted with African-American/Black and Hispanic populations. It is possible that the inclusion of more Multiracial/Multiethnic or African-American/Black students might have altered the results in a way that supported the initial hypotheses.

Practice Implications

While negative coping and health outcomes are already known to be associated with the experience of racial microaggressions in ethnic minorities, the present study provides greater understanding of the relational and personal factors that contribute to a person's perception of racial microaggressions while providing support for examining racial microaggressions from an attachment theory framework. Examining racial microaggressions from an attachment theory perspective does not discount the true existence or perception of racial microaggressions in

individuals who have secure attachments and are psychologically well-adjusted. Such individuals can and do experience racial microaggressions; however, it is possible that individuals who have insecure attachments and less psychological adjustment may be more deeply impacted by their experiences of racial microaggressions.

Moreover, the results of this study can also be interpreted as bi-directional, such that repeated racial microaggression experiences may result in insecure attachments with others. Repeated exposure to racial microaggressions may lead an individual to feel unsafe or untrusting of their environments and others. Additionally, since racial microaggressions are insidious in nature, the individual and others may question or discount the individual's experience with racial microaggressions. This questioning of others and the self could potentially reinforce negative models of the self (the self cannot be trusted) and other (others are unsafe and cannot be trusted) which is tantamount to insecure attachment.

Therefore, in the context of counseling relationships, it may be helpful to utilize interpersonal and/or attachment-based treatments when working with counseling clients who are affected by racial microaggressions (Daly & Mallinckrodt, 2009; Teyber & McClure, 2010). Interpersonal approaches may be helpful for clients since they take into account psychodynamic, attachment, and cognitive-behavioral elements. These approaches would allow for individuals to explore their early relationships, inclusive of parent-child attachment, ethnic-racial socialization, racial microaggression experiences (that might not have been fully understood at an earlier period in their lives) and important internalized self-related messages received from other significant individuals in their lives. It would be helpful for individuals to explore how their early relationships and internalized messages contribute to their subsequent relational experiences, including their racial microaggression experiences especially if they come from a trusted a peer

or family member. Individuals would also learn to challenge their thoughts about themselves and their microaggression experiences (e.g., deciding that someone directed a racial microaggression toward them since some microaggression experiences can leave a person questioning whether that experience occurred, and that the other person's indiscretion does not take away from their self worth or esteem of their own racial or ethnic identity).

Furthermore, clients may benefit from a therapeutic relationship that focuses on building trust and making clients feel validated, safe, and secure while encouraging them to openly discuss their microaggression experiences. Since racial microaggressions can be subtle, clients experiencing racial microaggressions may need a "sanity check" where they turn to others (e.g., therapists) to process their emotional reactions and receive validation that they have indeed experienced a distressful encounter (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008).

Moreover, clients with insecure attachments who have difficulty trusting themselves and others, or have negative perceptions of themselves or others may avoid interpersonal relationships or expect to be disappointed by them. Similarly, these clients may further avoid situations that could activate race-related rejection or distress due to previous unresolved negative race-related encounters. Such clients may also internalize racism and self-doubt that could lead to poor mental health outcomes (Nadal et al., 2014). It would be important for therapists to help clients process and work through their past experiences, challenge their current perceptions of race-related interactions, and to help clients respond and cope with difficult situations differently.

Lastly, therapists working with marginalized racial groups should also be mindful that various racial groups have differing microaggression experiences that affect them in different ways (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007). Additionally, clients with multiple minority

statuses (e.g., race, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status) may need greater validation and assistance in working through multilayered microaggression experiences.

Therapists who achieve this type of multicultural competence may be successful in creating a corrective relational experience for the client, instead of potentially re-victimizing the client.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has some noteworthy limitations, including its correlational design which precludes the inference of causal relationships. While a specific path model was tested for the purposes of this dissertation study, the results do not suggest that the insecure attachments, defensive self-esteem, or insufficient ethnic-racial socialization cause an individual to experience or perceive racial microaggressions. It is possible that some individuals may interpret these findings as justifying that racial microaggressions or racism does not exist. Such individuals may explain that individual's experiences of racism are based on erroneous thinking resulting from poor quality early relationships and subsequent insecure attachments with others. Unfortunately, interpreting these findings in this way would be a racial microaggression in it self. However, the experience of racial microaggressions can and does exist outside of the variables their proposed relationships in this study, and as previously indicated, the results of this study can be bi-directional. More specifically, it is possible that repeated racial microaggression experiences can influence individuals to have defensive self-esteem or insecure attachments with others. Thus, it is important to interpret the results with caution and not discount the actual experience of racial microaggressions or any other racism for that matter.

In addition, this investigation exclusively used self-report measures that were completed online which has its limitations. For example, responses required participants to retrospectively respond to their experiences and were limited solely to the participants' perception of relational

experiences. Moreover, participants were not monitored when responding to items online which could have led to hasty or inaccurate responses. The sample consisted of specific subset of undergraduate students from the University of Houston which limits the results' generalizability across different groups in the United States. The sample was primarily female, which also limits generalizability of the obtained findings across individuals who identify as male or other. Students in the sample primarily identified as Hispanic or Asian, which further limited generalizability across different racial groups. The inclusion of more students from other historically marginalized groups such as Black, Native American, or Multiracial/Multiethnic would have strengthened the results of this study. Furthermore, each racial group is not without ethnic differences and other within-group variables which were not assessed in the present study. Lastly, most of the students identified as first or second-generation Americans (81.3%) while only 18.7% of students identified as third generation Americans or higher which might have affected the results in unknown ways.

Future directions for research include using a mixed-method study (e.g., quantitative study that also uses focus groups) that could provide a richer data set and expansive understanding of participant experiences. Additionally, studies using experimental designs which include standardized exposures to racially microaggressive comments made by confederates in conjunction with measures assessing state attachment and other relational encounters may also enhance understanding of participant experiences. A more nuanced way of assessing ethnic-racial socialization and ethnic-racial identity might be helpful in future studies. Recruiting individuals from all over the United States as well as including other genders and ethnicities would strengthen the generalizability of the study. Further assessment of within-group and ethnic differences in racial groups would increase understanding of how ethnic groups within larger

racial groups respond differently to racial microaggression experiences. Future studies should also examine other personality variables and relational experiences that contribute to the perception of racial microaggressions.

Additionally, mental health outcome measures (e.g., depression, life satisfaction, anxiety, substance abuse) should be given and assessed in conjunction with individual and relational factors contributing to racial microaggression experiences in order to assess how individual factors relate to the perception of racial microaggressions which in turn affect mental health outcomes. Lastly, more studies utilizing an attachment theory framework when examining the perception of racial microaggressions would substantiate the results of this study, and solidify the relationship between attachment and racial microaggression theories.

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Appendix A

Tables

Table 1

Correlations among Predictor and Outcome Variables for All Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Defensive Self-Esteem	-	.32**	.42**	.11*	.13*	-.08
Parent Alienation		-	.31**	.23**	.24**	-.29**
Partner Anxiety			-	.34**	.32**	-.12**
Partner Avoidance				-	.18**	-.02
Racial Microaggressions					-	-.16**
Ethnic-Racial Self-Esteem						-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level * $p < 0.05$ level

Table 2

Correlations among Predictor and Outcome Variables for Black Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Defensive Self-Esteem	-	.33*	.32*	.28	.22	-.26
Parent Alienation		-	.38*	.21	.37*	-.29
Partner Anxiety			-	.16	.27	-.20
Partner Avoidance				-	.14	-.10
Racial Microaggressions					-	.19
Ethnic-Racial Identity						-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level * $p < 0.05$ level

Table 3

Correlations among Predictor and Outcome Variables for Hispanic Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Defensive Self-Esteem	-	.36**	.53**	.27**	.32**	-.08
Parent Alienation		-	.35**	.30**	.30**	-.25**
Partner Anxiety			-	.44**	.44**	0.01
Partner Avoidance				-	.29**	-.02
Racial Microaggressions					-	-.06
Ethnic-Racial Esteem						-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level * $p < 0.05$ level

Table 4

Correlations among Predictor and Outcome Variables for Asian Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Defensive Self-Esteem	-	.27**	.32**	-.12	-.05	.01
Parent Alienation		-	.25**	.11	.14	-.32**
Partner Anxiety			-	.43**	.15	-.21*
Partner Avoidance				-	.07	-.05
Racial Microaggressions					-	-.22*
Ethnic-Racial Identity						-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level * $p < 0.05$ level

Table 5

Correlations among Predictor and Outcome Variables for Multiracial/Multiethnic Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Defensive Self-Esteem	-	.04	.05	-.07	-.30	-.06
Parent Alienation		-	.03	.32	-.11	-.12
Partner Anxiety			-	-.26	.09	-.30
Partner Avoidance				-	-.01	.12
Racial Microaggressions					-	-.11
Ethnic-Racial Identity						-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level * $p < 0.05$ level

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables of All Participants

	PA	REMS	ANX	AVOID	CSES	DSE
Mean	31.86	14.43	58.56	56.40	78.75	26.17
SD	9.56	7.60	25.24	25.53	15.08	5.57
Min.	12.00	0.00	18.00	18.00	25.00	12.00
Max.	55.00	40.00	124.00	120.00	112.00	40.00

Note. PA=Parent Alienation; REMS =Racial-Ethnic Microaggressions;
 ANX=Partner Anxiety; AVOID=Partner Avoidance; CSES=Ethnic-Racial Esteem;
 DSE=Defensive Self-Esteem

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables for Black Participants

	PA	REMS	ANX	AVOID	CSES	DSE
Mean	31.56	13.95	54.92	59.59	80.31	26.17
SD	8.87	7.77	25.51	23.47	13.61	5.57
Min.	15.00	2.00	18.00	18.00	46.00	13.80
Max.	49.00	30.00	124.00	101.00	106.00	35.60

Note. PA=Parent Alienation; REMS =Racial-Ethnic Microaggressions; ANX=Partner Anxiety; AVOID=Partner Avoidance; CSES=Ethnic-Racial Esteem; DSE=Defensive Self-Esteem

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables for Asian Participants

	PA	REMS	ANX	AVOID	CSES	DSE
Mean	32.45	13.8	59.76	55.75	77.76	27.04
SD	8.90	6.77	21.88	21.28	15.43	5.43
Min.	12.00	1.00	18.00	18.00	25.00	15.00
Max.	55.00	25.00	111.00	109.00	112.00	40.00

Note. PA=Parent Alienation; REMS =Racial-Ethnic Microaggressions; ANX=Partner Anxiety; AVOID=Partner Avoidance; CSES=Ethnic-Racial Esteem; DSE=Defensive Self-Esteem

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables for Multiracial/Multiethnic Participants

	PA	REMS	ANX	AVOID	CSES	DSE
Mean	33.85	12.90	61.00	61.65	76.95	27.66
SD	9.09	8.35	24.63	24.78	11.52	4.62
Min.	12.00	3.00	18.00	29.00	53.00	17.40
Max.	48.00	38.00	103.00	117.00	94.00	34.20

Note. PA=Parent Alienation; REMS =Racial-Ethnic Microaggressions; ANX=Partner Anxiety; AVOID=Partner Avoidance; CSES=Ethnic-Racial Esteem; DSE=Defensive Self-Esteem

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables for Hispanic Participants

	PA	REMS	ANX	AVOID	CSES	DSE
Mean	30.93	15.01	58.27	55.04	76.35	26.14
SD	10.39	7.80	27.99	25.64	15.32	5.59
Min.	12.00	0.00	18.00	18.00	28.00	11.80
Max.	54.00	40.00	124.00	120.00	109.00	39.20

Note. PA=Parent Alienation; REMS =Racial-Ethnic Microaggressions; ANX=Partner Anxiety; AVOID=Partner Avoidance; CSES=Ethnic-Racial Esteem; DSE=Defensive Self-Esteem

Appendix B

Figures

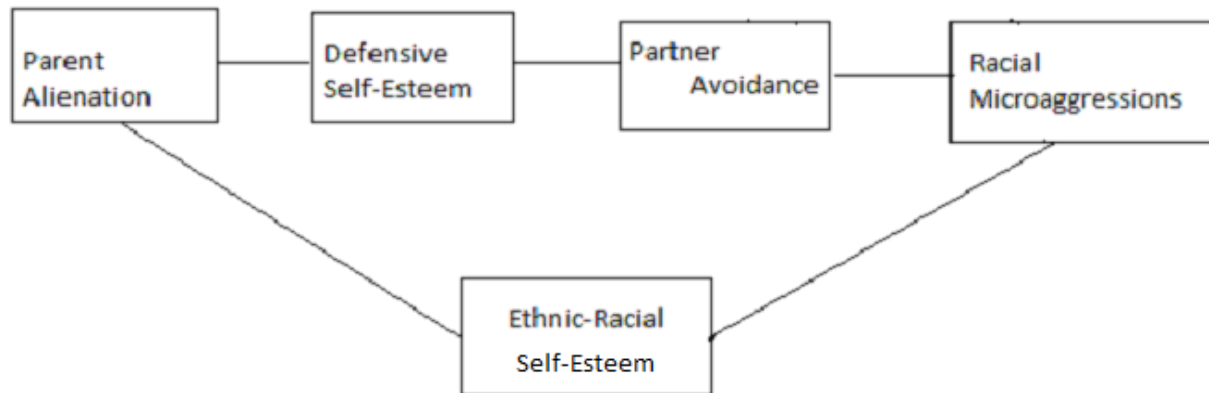


Figure 1. Proposed model one that was tested.

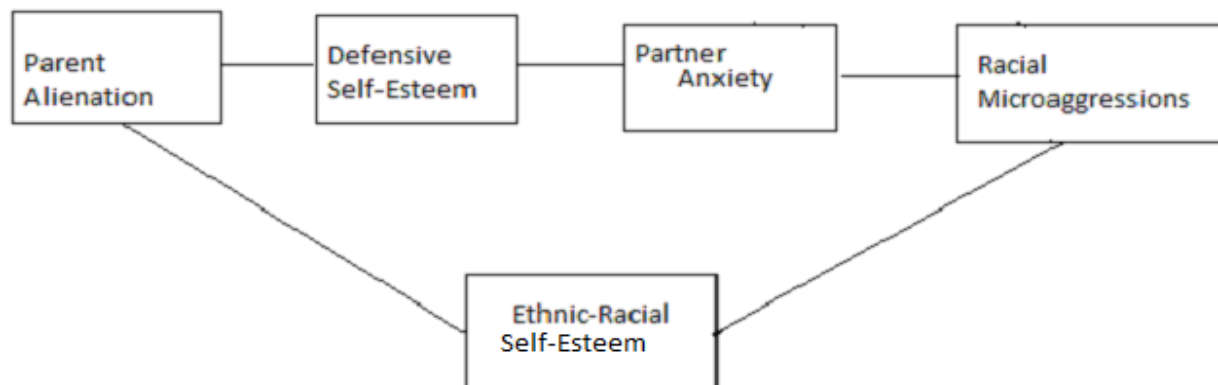


Figure 2. Proposed model two that was tested.

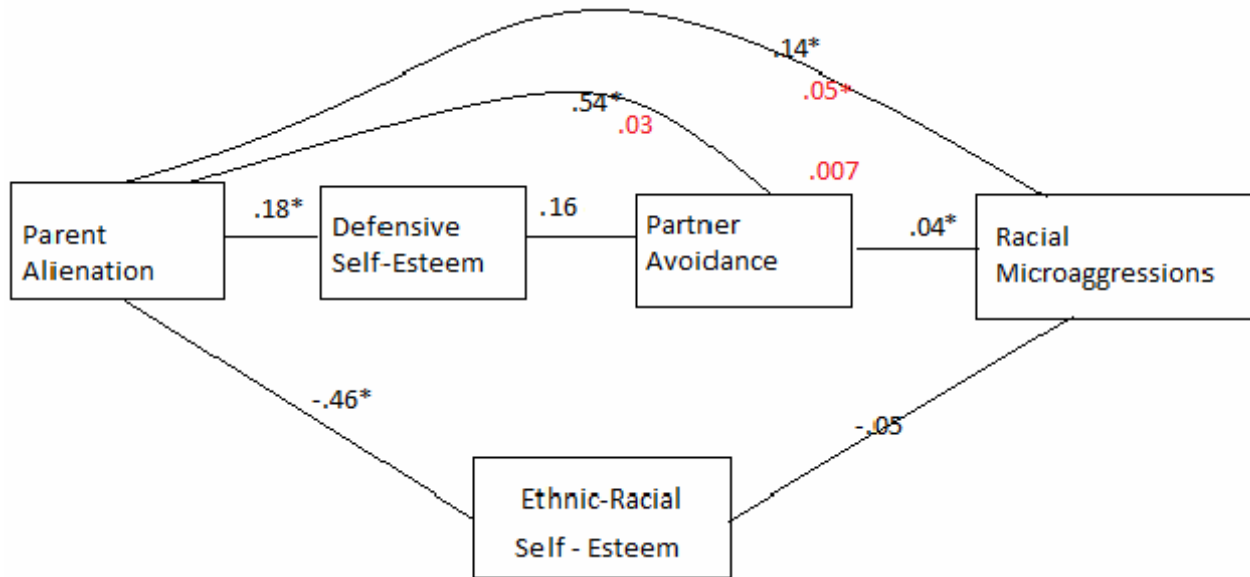


Figure 3. Final model one (Revised version of model one after modification indices were applied). Values in black are direct effects while values in red are indirect effects. The value .007 denotes the indirect effect of Defensive Self-Esteem on Racial Microaggressions. * $p < .05$

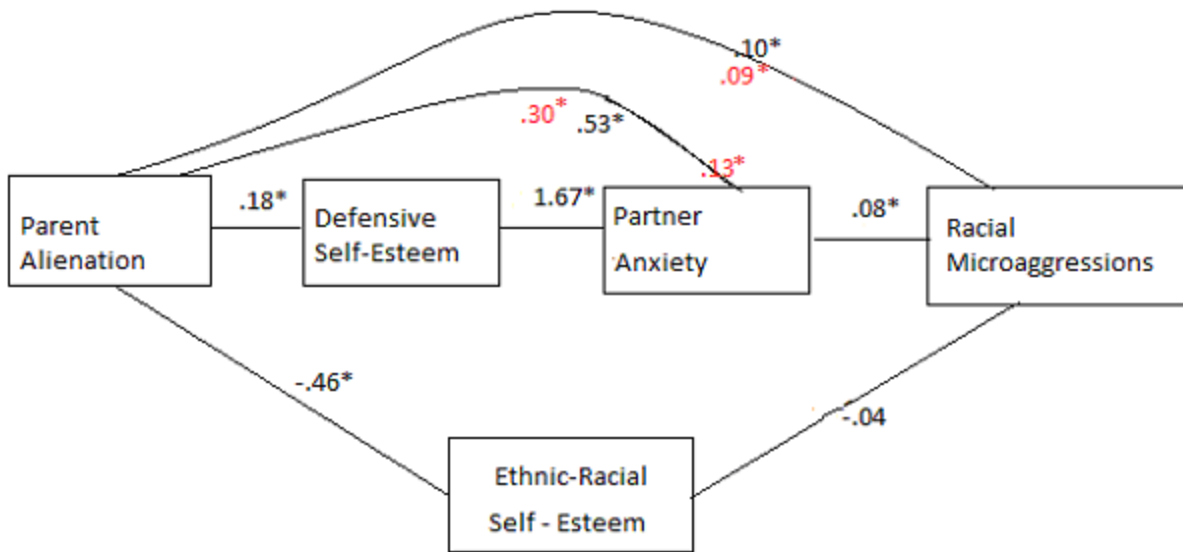


Figure 4. Final model two (Revised version of model one after modification indices were applied). Values in black are direct effects while values in red are indirect effects. The value .13 denotes the indirect effect of Defensive Self-Esteem on Racial Microaggressions. * $p < .02$

Appendix C
Study Measures

Demographics Measure

1. Please indicate your age: _____
2. Please indicate your gender:
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
 - C. Other (if you marked other, please indicate how you identify) _____
3. Please indicate the group(s) you most closely identify with.
 - A. Black
 - B. Hispanic
 - C. Asian
 - D. Multiracial/Multiethnic, which groups? _____
 - E. Native American/American Indian
 - F. If you identify with a group other than those that are listed here, please identify the group you identify with _____
5. Circle the generation that best applies to you. Circle only one.
 1. 1st generation = You were born in a country other than the USA.
 2. 2nd generation = You were born in USA; either parent born in a country other than USA.
 3. 3rd generation = You were born in USA; both parents born in USA and all grand parents born in country other than USA.
 4. 4th generation = You and your parents born in USA and at least one grandparent born in a country other than USA with remainder born in USA.
 5. 5th generation = You and your parents born in the USA and all grandparents born in the USA.
 6. If you do not know what generation you are, please estimate: _____
6. Please indicate which income level you most closely experienced in your family of origin:
 - A. Lower (less than 20,000)
 - B. Lower Middle (20,000 – 50,000)
 - C. Middle (50,000 – 100,000)
 - D. Upper Middle (100,00 – 150,000)
 - E. Upper (150,000 +)
7. Which income level do you currently identify with:
 - A. Lower (less than 20,000)
 - B. Lower Middle (20,000 – 50,000)
 - C. Middle (50,000 – 100,000)
 - D. Upper Middle (100,00 – 150,000)
 - E. Upper (150,000 +)

Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)

This questionnaire asks about your relationships with important people in your life; your mother, your father, and your close friends. Please read the directions to each part carefully.

Some of the following statements asks about your feelings about your mother or the person who has acted as your mother. If you have more than one person acting as your mother (e.g. a natural mother and a step-mother) answer the questions for the one you feel has most influenced you. Please read each statement and identify the ONE number that tells how true the statement is for you.

1 = Almost Never or Never True	2 =Not Very Often True	3 =Some- times True	4= Often True	5= Almost Always or Always True
---	---------------------------------	---------------------------	------------------	--

The next set of questions asks you about your relationship with your female Parent (i.e. mother or whomever takes care of you).

1. My mother respects my feelings.
2. I feel my mother does a good job as a mother.
3. I wish I had a different mother.
4. My mother accepts me as I am.
5. I like to get my mother's point of view on things I am concerned about.
6. I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my mother.
7. My mother can tell when I am upset about something.
8. Talking over my problems with my mother makes me feel ashamed or foolish.
9. My mother expects too much of me.
10. I get upset easily around my mother.
11. I get upset a lot more than my mother knows about.
12. When we discuss things, my mother cares about my point of view.
13. My mother trusts my judgment.
14. My mother has her own problems, so I don't bother her with mine.
15. My mother helps me to understand myself better.
16. I tell my mother about my problems and troubles.
17. I feel angry with my mother.
18. I don't get much attention from my mother.
19. My mother helps me to talk about my difficulties.
20. My mother understands me.
21. When I am angry about something, my mother tries to be understanding.
22. I trust my mother.
23. My mother doesn't understand what I am going through these days.
24. I can count on my mother when I need to get something off my chest.
25. If my mother knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it.

The next set of questions asks you about your relationship with your male Parent (i.e. father or whomever takes care of you).

1. My father respects my feelings.
2. I feel my father does a good job as a mother.
3. I wish I had a different father.
4. My father accepts me as I am.
5. I like to get my father's point of view on things I am concerned about.
6. I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my father.
7. My father can tell when I am upset about something.
8. Talking over my problems with my father makes me feel ashamed or foolish.
9. My father expects too much of me.
10. I get upset easily around my father.
11. I get upset a lot more than my father knows about.
12. When we discuss things, my father cares about my point of view.
13. My father trusts my judgment.
14. My father has her own problems, so I don't bother her with mine.
15. My father helps me to understand myself better.
16. I tell my father about my problems and troubles.
17. I feel angry with my father.
18. I don't get much attention from my father.
19. My father helps me to talk about my difficulties.
20. My father understands me.
21. When I am angry about something, my father tries to be understanding.
22. I trust my father.
23. My father doesn't understand what I am going through these days.
24. I can count on my father when I need to get something off my chest.
25. If my father knows something is bothering me, he asks me about it.

The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire

Generic Instructions: The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
6. I worry a lot about my relationships.
7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.
10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.
11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.
14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.
16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.
17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.
18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.
19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
30. I tell my partner just about everything.
31. I talk things over with my partner.
32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
36. My partner really understands me and my needs.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS)

Instructions: Think about your experiences with race. Please read each item and think of how many times this **event** has happened to you in the **PAST SIX MONTHS**.

0 = I did not experience this event.

1 = I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

1. I was ignored at school or at work because of my race.
2. Someone's body language showed they were scared of me, because of my race.
3. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.
4. I was told that I should not complain about race.
5. Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.
6. Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.
7. Someone told me that she or he was colorblind.
8. Someone avoided sitting next to me in a public space (e.g., restaurants, movie theaters, subways, buses) because of my race.
9. Someone assumed that I would not be intelligent because of my race.
10. I was told that I complain about race too much.
11. I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.
12. I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my workplace or school.
13. Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.
14. I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.
15. My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.
16. Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.
17. Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.
18. I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.
19. I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.
20. Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US.
21. Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.
22. Someone told me that I was "articulate" after she/he assumed I wouldn't be.
23. Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.
24. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.
25. An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race.
26. I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.
27. Someone told me that they "don't see color."
28. I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group.
29. Someone asked me to teach them words in my "native language."
30. Someone told me that they do not see race.
31. Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.
32. Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race.
33. Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of us.

34. Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.
35. Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.
36. Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race.
37. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.
38. Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.
39. Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.
40. Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.
41. I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state
42. Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.
43. Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.
44. An employer or co-worker treated me differently than White co-workers.
45. Someone assumed that I speak similar languages to other people in my race.

Instability of Self-Esteem Scale

The scale ranges from 0 (*disagree strongly*) and 3 (*agree strongly*).

Item 1: Sometimes I feel worthless; at other times I feel that I am worthwhile.

Item 2: Sometimes I feel happy with myself; at other times I feel very unhappy with myself.

Item 3: Sometimes I feel useless; at other times I feel very useful.

Item 4: Sometimes I feel very bad about myself; at other times I feel very good about myself.

Collective Self Esteem Scale - Race/Ethnicity Adapted

INSTRUCTIONS: We are all members of different social groups or social categories. We would like you to consider **your race or ethnicity** (e.g., African-American, Latino/Latina, Asian, European-American) in responding to the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the following scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree):

1. I am a worthy member of my race/ethnic group.
2. I often regret that I belong to my racial/ethnic group.
3. Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others.
4. Overall, my race/ethnicity has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
5. I feel I don't have much to offer to my racial/ethnic group.
6. In general, I'm glad to be a member of my racial/ethnic group.
7. Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on the average, to be more ineffective than other groups.
8. The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.
9. I am a cooperative participant in the activities of my racial/ethnic group.
10. Overall, I often feel that my racial/ethnic group is not worthwhile.
11. In general, others respect my race/ethnicity.
12. My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of a person I am.
13. I often feel I'm a useless member of my racial/ethnic group.
14. I feel good about the race/ethnicity I belong to.
15. In general, others think that my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.
16. In general, belonging to my race/ethnicity is an important part of my self image.

Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to each of the following statements by circling your answer using the scale from "1 = Strongly disagree" to "7 = Strongly agree." If you haven't experienced the situation described in a particular statement, please answer how you think you would feel if that situation occurred.

1. When I think I look attractive, I feel good about myself.
2. My self-worth is based on God's love.
3. I feel worthwhile when I perform better than others on a task or skill.
4. My self-esteem is unrelated to how I feel about the way my body looks.
5. Doing something I know is wrong makes me lose my self-respect.
6. I don't care if other people have a negative opinion about me.
7. Knowing that my family members love me makes me feel good about myself.
8. I feel worthwhile when I have God's love.
9. I can't respect myself if others don't respect me.
10. My self-worth is not influenced by the quality of my relationships with my family members.
11. Whenever I follow my moral principles, my sense of self-respect gets a boost.
12. Knowing that I am better than others on a task raises my self-esteem.
13. My opinion about myself isn't tied to how well I do in school.
14. I couldn't respect myself if I didn't live up to a moral code.
15. I don't care what other people think of me.
16. When my family members are proud of me, my sense of self-worth increases.
17. My self-esteem is influenced by how attractive I think my face or facial features are.
18. My self-esteem would suffer if I didn't have God's love.
19. Doing well in school gives me a sense of self-respect.
20. Doing better than others gives me a sense of self-respect.
21. My sense of self-worth suffers whenever I think I don't look good.
22. I feel better about myself when I know I'm doing well academically.
23. What others think of me has no effect on what I think about myself.
24. When I don't feel loved by my family, my self-esteem goes down.
25. My self-worth is affected by how well I do when I am competing with others.
26. My self-esteem goes up when I feel that God loves me.
27. My self-esteem is influenced by my academic performance.
28. My self-esteem would suffer if I did something unethical.
29. It is important to my self-respect that I have a family that cares about me.
30. My self-esteem does not depend on whether or not I feel attractive.
31. When I think that I'm disobeying God, I feel bad about myself.
32. My self-worth is influenced by how well I do on competitive tasks.
33. I feel bad about myself whenever my academic performance is lacking.
34. My self-esteem depends on whether or not I follow my moral/ethical principles.
35. My self-esteem depends on the opinions others hold of me.