

Adopted Child's Race and Sex Predict Parent's Engagement in Cultural Socialization

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Background

- Cultural socialization, the transmission of the child's birth culture (e.g. traditional foods, cultural festivals, support groups, etc.)
- Linked to positive adoptive child outcomes (Feldman & Masalha, 2010; Yoon, 2001; Mohanty, Keoske, & Sales, 2006)
- Engagement in cultural socialization may vary based on sex (Lee et al, 2006), motivated by child's appearances (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001)
- Little research in domestic transracial adoptions; increasingly common in the United States (AFCARS, 2006)

Study Objectives

- To examine the effect of child's race/ethnicity and sex on parent's cultural socialization practices in domestic transracial adoptions

I was unprepared for "how much racism by family members and the community would affect us."
 – *Adoptive parent*

Method

Participants

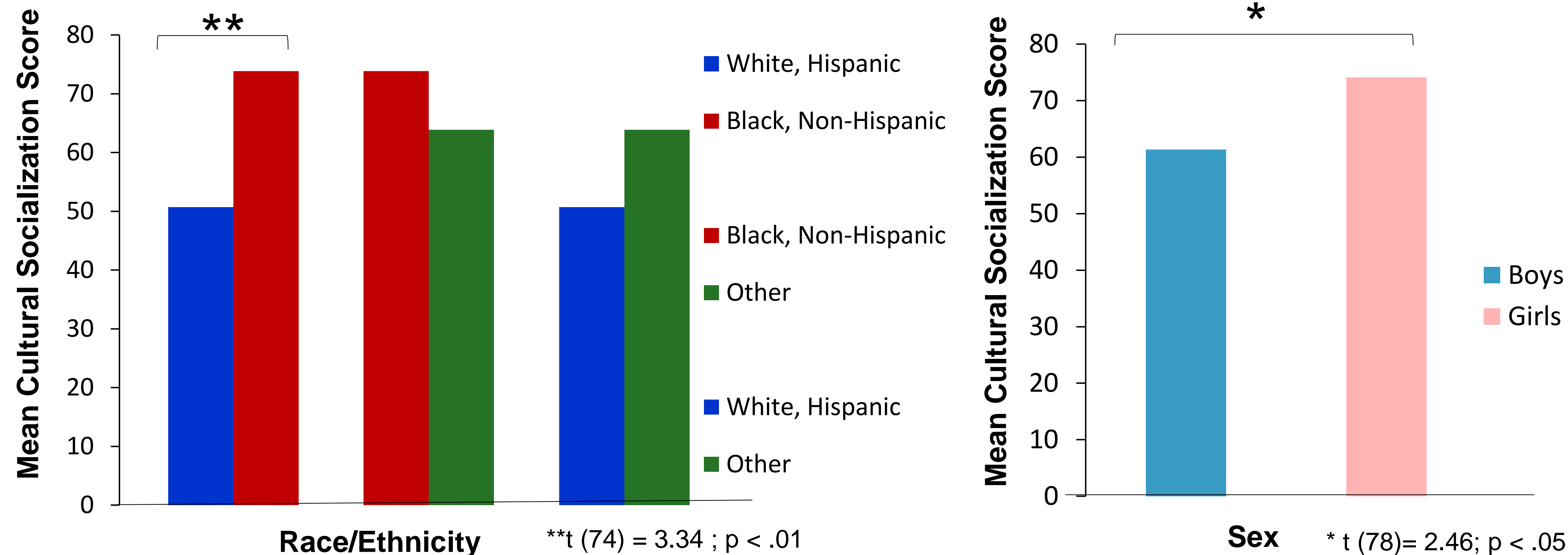
- Early Growth and Development Study (EGDS) (Leve et al., 2007)
- N=561 sets of birth parents, adoptive parents and child in two cohorts Cohort I (N = 361, 6.5 years old) and Cohort II (N = 200, 36 months)
- A sub sample (N=112), adoptions in which the race/ethnicity of the child was different than both adoptive parents

Measures

- Cultural Activities with Child(ren) (Paulsen & Merighi, 2009)



Results



Implications

- Adopted child's race and sex may unknowingly evoke unique cultural socialization
- May have implications for racial and ethnic identity development
- Interventions may need to target cultural socialization practices for parents of Latino/Hispanic and male children
- Adoptive parents whose child's ethnicity is less salient may have the flexibility to downplay cultural issues in order to facilitate assimilation

Interpretation

- Adoptive parents engage in many cultural socialization activities at least once a year
- Race related differences
 - May be motivated by child's appearance
- Sex related differences

"Love is not enough. We need to find and cultivate friendships with black families."
 - *Adoptive parent*

	White/Hispanic	Black/Non-Hispanic
Female	N=7	N=16
Male	N=12	N=28

Child Demographics

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