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A Thematic Analysis of African American Fathers' Emotion-Related Beliefs and Behaviors

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A Thematic Analysis of African American Fathers' Emotion-Related Beliefs and Behaviors

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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List of Abbreviations

1. PES – parental emotion socialization

2. PMEP – parental meta-emotion philosophy

3. MEI – meta-emotion interview

4. ERSBs – emotion-related socialization behaviors

5. TA – thematic analysis

6. IRR – inter-rater reliability

7. ACSI – Africultural Coping Systems Inventory

Abstract

A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FATHERS' EMOTION-RELATED

BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of

Philosophy, at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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This study explored African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and

their children's negative emotions (i.e., parental meta-emotion philosophy and parental emotion

socialization). Participants included 58 African American fathers in the Midwestern region of the

United States between the ages of 29 and 40 ($M_{age} = 30.94$). 57 were biological fathers and one

was a stepfather to toddlers between 24 and 31 months of age. Participants were invited to

complete lab tasks, including the meta-emotion interview (MEI). The MEI is semi-structured interview of parents' and their children's negative emotion (i.e., sadness and anger). I selected a subset of questions to analyze participant responses for, and worked with a team to develop a qualitative codebook using a largely deductive approach. We coded 20% (i.e., 12) of the transcripts together before evaluating interrater-reliability. Upon achieving consensus in the training phase of coding (i.e., K = .70; n = 4), we proceeded to code 21 transcripts individually. After individual coding, I conducted a thematic analysis of participants' responses to the subset of MEI questions using a reflexive and codebook approach. I analyzed and interpreted five themes among codes of African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions including 1) responsibility for children's emotions, 2) complex relationship with anger, 3) reckoning negative emotions, 4) children at the center, and 5) actively working through emotions. Taken together, these five themes demonstrate that African American fathers are largely accepting of their own and supportive of their children's negative emotions. They are particularly oriented towards their kids in emotion-related behaviors, relying on them as sources of motivation for expression and regulation of their own negative emotion. Fathers described intense experiences with both sadness and anger. However, they clearly distinguished that anger is a dangerous emotion, requiring effort on one's part to address it for modelling appropriate emotional behavior for children. These findings contribute to the limited PMEP and PES literature on fathers generally, and suggest that the role of African American fathers specifically in the emotion socialization process can be one of a life coach through negative emotions at an early age.

Vita

Deon William Brown was born on September 10, 1994, in Richmond, Virginia. He attended Richmond Public Schools throughout his educational journey, and graduated from Open High School in 2012. He earned a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree in Psychology from Virginia Tech in the spring of 2016 and completed the Virginia Tech Post-baccalaureate Research and Education Program (VT-PREP) in the spring of 2017. Deon joined the Developmental Psychology doctoral program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2017. He served as the lab manager of the School Home and Internet contexts of EmotionaL Development (S.H.I.E.L.D.) Lab directed by Dr. Fantasy Lozada from Fall 2017-Fall 2019. The Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) presented him with the Committee on Equality and Professional Opportunity Student Award for Research on Minorities at their 64th annual meeting. His master's thesis project focused on exploring the contextual differences in emotion expression among African American/Black college students from different types of college campuses (i.e., predominantly White, historically Black, and racially diverse). He earned his Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Developmental Psychology at VCU in 2019. Deon was a member of community-based organizations/initiatives such as Building Legacies Around Cultural Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.) and "Cut to the Chase". Additionally, he served as the graduate student representative for the Developmental Psychology department during the 2021-2022 term. Overall, Deon is interested in the emotion-related behaviors of African Americans, and the role race, culture, and gender may play in emotion socialization among African American families. He is specifically interested in the mental health and wellness of African American males, and hopes to serve this population in his research career through collaboration with licensed mental health professionals.

A Thematic Analysis of African American Fathers' Emotion-Related Beliefs and Behaviors

Parental emotion socialization (PES), parent behaviors and messaging that teach children about emotions, has been linked to a number of youth outcomes including emotional competence, coping in the face of daily stress, mental health, and positive well-being (see Eisenberg et al., 1998 and Katz et al., 2012 for reviews). However, knowledge of PES processes is traditionally rooted in theories, perspectives, and data that are reflective of White American middle-class samples (Labella, 2018). While the number of PES studies that include samples from other racial and cultural backgrounds has increased over the last 10 years (e.g., Raval & Walker, 2019), much of this research has done little to explicitly conceptualize the cultural context of emotion socialization beyond noting broad cross-cultural differences in orientations to the self and emotion (e.g., collectivism-individualism). Dunbar et al. (2017) and Lozada et al. (2022) noted that empirical research that identifies both racial (i.e., racial discrimination) and cultural factors (i.e., Afrocultural orientations of collectivism, affect, orality, and expressive individualism) is needed to gain an accurate representation of the effects of PES on African American youth's developmental outcomes. Additionally, fathers' contributions to overall child development have been overlooked by researchers for a while (Lamb, 1975), especially in the realm of emotional support from men with ethnically minoritized, low-income backgrounds (Cabrera, Volling, & Barr, 2018). Nonetheless, there has been increasing recognition of the role that fathers, and particularly masculine norms, play in PES processes particularly (Cherry & Gerstein, 2021). To address these gaps related to African Americans' and fathers' PES, the current study will specifically seek to understand PES among low-income African American fathers through the lens of racial, cultural, and gender-specific experiences and orientations to emotion.

Several conceptions of PES include the specific understanding of the underlying emotion-related thoughts and beliefs of parents' emotion socialization agenda (e.g., Parker et al., 2012; Gottman et al., 1996; Lozada et al., 2016). One such conception of emotion-related beliefs is parental meta-emotion philosophy (PMEP) or parents' organized set of thoughts and feelings about their own and their children's emotions (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996). PMEP is most often represented by two philosophical classifications: emotion coaching (having awareness of one's own and children's emotions, approaching negative emotions as an opportunity for connection and teaching, and labeling, validating, and teaching children about emotions) and emotion-dismissing (being unaware or in denial of one's own and children's emotions, approaching negative emotions as something to be avoided or dealt with quickly, and communicating that emotions are not important; Gottman et al., 1997). Gottman and colleagues (1996; 1997) examined PMEP through interviews with parents that solicited their reflections on the ways they think about the value, expression, regulation, and experience of their own and their children's anger and sadness. Across various studies that have employed the parent meta-emotion interview (MEI; Gottman et al., 1996), its subsequent interview rating system or questionnaire for classifying parents' philosophies (Katz & Gottman, 1986), and associated observational methodologies (Paterson et al., 2012), emotion coaching philosophies have been associated with greater socio-emotional skills among children (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2004; McDowell, Kim, O'Neil, & Park, 2002; Snyder et al., 2003; Ramsden & Hubbard, 2002; Hooven, Gottman, & Katz, 1995). Conversely, emotion-dismissing philosophies have been associated with less socio-emotional competence, poor emotion regulation, and higher anxiety (Snyder et al., 2003; Lagacé-Séguin, & Coplan, 2005).

Similar to the broader PES literature, there remains little inclusion of fathers in PMEP research (Baker, Fenning, & Crnic, 2011; Parker et al., 2012; Castro, Halberstadt, Lozada, & Craig, 2015) despite early reflections from PMEP theorists that associations between emotion-related beliefs, behaviors, and even child outcomes were clearer among fathers relative to mothers. There is some evidence to suggest that fathers are less likely to reflect the emotion coaching philosophy overall in comparison to mothers (Katz & Hooven, 1997; Stocker et al., 2007; Gottman et al., 1996), yet the limited inclusion of fathers in PMEP research makes such conclusions tentative. Also, similar to the broader PES literature, there has been limited exploration of PMEP among African Americans (see Cunningham et al., 2009 for an exception), and those studies that have included African American samples have not systematically investigated PMEP from a lens that is inclusive of their cultural and racial experiences. The current study aims to explore African American fathers' PMEP through a qualitative examination of their interview responses to the MEI. The MEI method allows African American fathers to describe their emotion philosophies, experiences, and behaviors in their own words, which may yield unique insights into the racial, cultural, and gender orientation factors that shape PES.

Theoretical Grounding

I rely on multiple theoretical models to ground the current study and organize previous literature on African American fathers' PES, broadly, and PMEP, specifically, including the heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998a; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998b), parental meta emotion philosophy (PMEP; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996), the integrative model of adaptive racial/ethnic and emotion

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socialization (Dunbar, Leerkes, Coard, Supple, & Calkins, 2017), and the Black Masculine

Identity Model (Jackson & Dangerfield, 2004).

The Heuristic Model of the Socialization of Emotion

First, the heuristic model of the socialization of emotion describes parents' emotion-

related socialization behaviors (ERSBs), including modeling of emotion expression, responding

to emotions, discussing emotion, and niche/situation selection, and how these behaviors predict

youth's emotion-related outcomes (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998a; Eisenberg,

Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998b). Modeling of emotion expression is the way that parents

express their emotion around their children, teaching children about emotion expression and

regulation by example. Responses to emotions are the ways in which parents react to children's

display of emotion, which can teach children which emotions are okay to express and in what

context it is okay to express them (Halberstadt, 1986; Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, &

Robinson, 2007). Parents' responses have often been categorized as supportive (e.g.,

encouraging emotion expression, problem-solving around the source of emotion, soothing or

distracting from emotion) and nonsupportive (e.g., punishment, minimization; Fabes, Leonard,

Kupoanoff & Martin, 2001). Discussion of emotion is conversation of emotion with or around

children, which can also communicate to children how to understand specific emotion

experiences and how to manage emotions. Selection/modification of situations is the selection of

situations by parents in which they expose their children to emotional information and manage

their children's opportunity to learn about emotion (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Cumberland, 1998b).

The heuristic model situates these ERSBs within cultural emotion norms and parental

characteristics (e.g., beliefs, gender). Cultural emotion norms or display rules are societal or

within-group expectations for emotion expression (Hayes & Metts, 2008). These cultural norms

of emotion shape beliefs about emotion (e.g., when, how, and which emotions should be expressed and managed) and have implications for how parents view their own and their children's emotion-related behaviors. For instance, parents in a culture that believes that sadness is acceptable may share this belief and teach their child that it is ok to express intense levels of sadness around different audiences. In addition to cultural norms, parents' gender also has implications for their ERSBs and how they think about their own and their children's emotions. For instance, mothers and fathers differ in their responses to children's emotions particularly (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Finally, Eisenberg and colleagues (1998) also acknowledge that culture influences the extent to which a behavior is desirable and that views of acceptability differ within and across families.

The heuristic model is important for the theoretical grounding of the current study because it specifies parental ERSBs and links them to parents' beliefs about emotions. Despite considering parents' beliefs about emotions, the model does not clearly specify the various types of emotion-related beliefs because of the focus on parents' specific emotion behaviors. Further, Eisenberg and colleagues consider cultural factors and gender in shaping parental ERSBs, yet the conceptualization of these factors are general and do not specifically provide guidance on how aspects of culture and gender may shape both parental beliefs about emotions and ERSBs. These limitations of the heuristic model affect its generalizability to the study of African American fathers' emotion socialization practices in specific and actionable ways. Thus, additional theoretical guidance is needed to more specifically understand parents' beliefs about emotion and the role that race and gender may play in African American fathers' emotion socialization agenda.

Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy Theory

Gottman and colleagues' (1996) parental meta emotion philosophy (PMEP) theory describes parents' beliefs and thoughts about their own and their children's emotions and how these beliefs are related to parenting practices and children's subsequent emotional development (e.g., physiological and emotional regulatory abilities). Based on observations and interviews with parents, Gottman and colleaguesargued that parents demonstrated different philosophies toward emotion. Emotion-coaching philosophy reflects parents' beliefs about the value and opportunity of emotions, their awareness of emotions, and their use of active or intentional behaviors to teach about emotion. Emotion-coaching philosophy is related to scaffolding-praising, a dimension of positive parenting that they argued extends beyond warmth and includes "a positive structure, responsive, enthusiastic, engaged, and affectionate parenting" (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997, p. 246), and "the inhibition of parental derogation" (e.g., stepping in for child too soon, mocking or belittling child during teaching tasks). Furthermore, emotion-coaching philosophy promotes children's emotion-related outcomes such as using emotion word labels, expressing emotions in socially appropriate ways, and social competence. Laissez-faire philosophy reflects beliefs that emotions are a natural and even common experience. While parents of this philosophy tend to be aware of emotions, they do not specifically engage in active or intentional behaviors to teach or shape their children's emotional experience (Katz & Gottman 1986). Emotion-dismissing reflects parents' beliefs that emotions are bad for children (particularly negative emotions such as anger and sadness), that they need to react to change their children's emotions quickly, and that they should correct their children's emotion-related behaviors. Parents with an emotion-dismissing philosophy tend to reject their children's emotion and prefer to resolve their children's emotion instead of addressing the cause of the emotion. Gottman, Katz, & Hooven (1996) tested PMEP theory and found empirical support for the

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pathway from meta-emotion to parenting, suggesting that parents' thoughts and feelings about emotion are connected to their parenting practices. PMEP theory supports the heuristic model in the theoretical grounding that parents' beliefs about emotion are an important aspect of their PES, and that there is variation among parents' motivation for engaging in various emotion-related behaviors that shape children's emotional experiences. However, similar to the heuristic model, PMEP theory does not describe racial, cultural, or gender orientation factors that likely shape PMEP and manifest within parental ERSBs. For instance, it may be that some fathers tend to endorse fewer aspects of emotion coaching philosophy (Katz & Hooven, 1997; Stocker et al., 2007; Gottman et al., 1996) because emotion-coaching philosophy may be in direct contrast to masculine ideas of emotion (e.g., emotional stoicism, toughness; Smiler & Heasley, 2016). Additionally, although emotion-coaching dimensions such as acceptance of emotions have been effectively measured among African American samples (e.g., Cunningham et al., 2009), there may be additional aspects of parental acceptance of children's negative emotions that are relevant to African American populations given their experiences with stereotypes and bias toward their open expression of negative emotions (Callanan, 2012; Consedine & Magai, 2002). Given these limitations, further theoretical support is needed to support the conceptualization of PES, generally, and PMEP, specifically, among African American fathers.

Integrative Model of Adaptive Racial/Ethnic and Emotion Socialization

The integrative model of adaptive racial/ethnic and emotion socialization holds that African American parents' emotion socialization practices are part of a broader racial/ethnic socialization agenda among African American families to prepare children to adapt to a historical context of racism and oppression (Dunbar, Leerkes, Coard, Supple, & Calkins, 2017). Specifically, Dunbar and colleagues (2017) describe that African American parents may often

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use an emotion socialization approach that is inclusive of both supportive (or emotion-coaching) beliefs and behaviors *and* nonsupportive (or emotion-dismissing) beliefs and behaviors. This description of emotion socialization approaches is different from the predominant conception of PES and PMEP, which tend to suggest that parents primarily use one type of approach. Further, to better conceptualize why "nonsupportive" behaviors may exist alongside supportive behaviors among African American families, Dunbar et al. (2017) asserted that African American parents' use of nonsupportive responses to children's emotions (e.g., punishment or minimization) are meant to explicitly teach children how to suppress the expression of their negative emotions instead of representing parents' discomfort for or disengagement with their children's emotions. Thus, they argued for a more evaluative neutral label for these responses as "suppression responses", because of the potential protective goals of African American families against racial discrimination experiences. Furthermore, Dunbar and colleagues described emotion socialization practices that foster coping skills as a part of preparation for bias racial socialization (e.g., suppression responses to children's negative emotions, supportive responses to emotions from race-related events and conflicts, and discussing emotions vigilantly) as "emotion-centered racial coping". Such an approach reflects a high awareness of their child's emotion and the need to address emotion-related behaviors before racial outsiders and, particularly, White, authority figures misperceive them. Taken together, within the integrative model, Dunbar and colleagues suggest that parental socialization processes among African American families necessarily considers the threat of racism, and thus, the consideration of emotion socialization within African American families must examine this process through a lens of or in concert with racial/ethnic socialization practices. Further, the integrative model holds that the unique combination of emotion socialization and racial/ethnic socialization shapes children's

development through emotion understanding and emotion regulation. Although the Integrative Model does not explicitly include PMEP or other emotion-related beliefs, the assertion of the salience of race and protection against racism within African American parents' emotion socialization agenda warrants the inclusion of a racial lens in the exploration and understanding of African American fathers' PMEP.

Black Masculine Identity Model

All of the theories so far support the study of parental ERSBs and PMEP among African Americans. However, none of these theories specifically articulate the role of gender or gendered experiences in emotion-related parenting. Further, to my knowledge there are no specific theories that engage the intersectional experiences of being African American and being a man as it relates to emotion-related behaviors that I might extend to apply to African American fathers' emotion beliefs and emotion-related parenting. Despite these theoretical limitations, various qualitative researchers of African American fathers have noted the unique manifestation of masculinity that appears to be present in African American men's fathering behaviors (e.g., Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Doyle et al., 2015). Given the current goals of the study to understand African American fathers' PMEP from a culturally-relevant lens of African American men's experience of emotion, I argue that it is important to consider African American men's masculine identity as a potential lens for understanding their emotion beliefs and behaviors. Jackson & Dangerfield (2004) proposed the Black Masculine Identity Model to counter pathological narratives of Black masculinities. They defined masculinity as a dynamic identity for Black men because they must negotiate their masculinity in the midst of negative societal stereotypes about Black men. These negative stereotypes shape others' perceptions of Black men which have consequences for their social interactions for both the relationships they

have with significant others in their lives (e.g., siblings, parents, friends, mothers of their children, their children) and others in their lives more generally (e.g., coworkers, strangers, police, etc.). While these stereotypes are not deterministic for Black men's' behavior, the authors argue that one cannot address the topic of Black masculinity without acknowledging the risks that these stereotypes pose to Black men's development.

The Black Masculine Identity Model describes five factors that shape the positioning and manifestation of Black masculinity: struggle, recognition, independence, achievement, and community. Struggle refers to the behaviors Black men use to manage the sense of order/disorder within their lives through their self-efficacy and attachment to the multiple cultural experiences they must navigate (i.e., mainstream White American culture and African American culture). Recognition is the political act of acquiring approval of one's authentic self (and its associated behaviors) by others. In this way, masculinity is socially constructed by others, and thus, when others fail to recognize and validate a Black man's masculine behaviors this can result in his ceasing of those behaviors or the experience of social costs for continuing those behaviors. Independence is a Black man's evolution of autonomy and self-expression across the life course and can be conceived of as resistance to others' influence, control over situations, and (from a deficit perspective) delinquency. Achievement is a matter of personal and collective success for Black men. This is rooted in African American perspectives of accomplishment in which the "survival of the collective" is contingent on individual journeys of achievement. To successfully achieve, a Black man must engage with both African American culture (e.g., collectivism, cooperation, interconnectedness) and European American culture (e.g., competitiveness, individualism, conquering) to accomplish goals while maintaining appropriate cultural boundaries so as to not 'sell out' one's connection to African American

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culture. Lastly, community refers to one's distal (e.g., the Black diaspora) and/or proximal (e.g., neighborhood) social collective in which one's masculinity and manhood are validated. The range from distal to proximal social reference points allows for multiple relative manifestations or enactments of Black manhood and thus, makes it so there is no universal criteria for Black manhood. The community assigns Black men their value according to their ability to produce, suggesting that manhood is a transaction by which men give to the community and the community affirms Black male identity.

The Black Masculine Identity Model is important for the theoretical grounding of the current study because it both humanizes the experiences of African American men and describes the factors that contribute to the variation in African American men's behaviors that are dictated by their conceptions of and impression management related to masculinity. African American men are challenged to contend with historical oppression and the stereotypes that have emerged from this oppression while navigating their role in present-day society. The fatherhood role may empower them to discover their strengths, particularly as it relates to engaging with others. For instance, African American fathers likely seek recognition from their children and significant others as legitimate father figures amidst pervasive stereotypes of the absent Black father (Poindexter, 1998; Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis, 1993; Wilson et al., 1995). As a set of examples applied to African American fathers' PMEP, the Black Masculine Identity Model may be used to describe how African American fathers manage the struggle against the absent Black father stereotype (e.g., placing higher importance on being physically present than emotionally present), gain and maintain recognition as a good Black father (e.g., placing high value in actively teaching their children about emotions or other aspects of self management), assert independence as a strong Black father figure (e.g., choosing to model emotional control or

suppression to convey the expression), support personal achievement in having a good

relationship with his children (e.g., prioritizing being emotionally available to his children), and

raising children that reflect well on and contribute to the Black community (e.g., teaching

children how to have empathy for others' emotions and experiences in their community).

Summary of Theories

Taken together, the theories above suggest that an understanding of PES, generally, and

PMEP, specifically, among African American fathers requires an analytic lens inclusive of race,

culture, and gender orientation. Specifically, applying Dunbar and colleagues' (2017) Integrative

Model, the salience and anticipation of the African American experience of racial discrimination

may be manifested in the ways that African American fathers describe the acceptance of their

own and their children's emotions, the types of opportunities and risks that African American

fathers see in emotion eliciting experiences, and their perceived role in socializing their

children's emotions. Additionally, given the various factors that shape Black masculinity

(Jackson & Dangerfield, 2004), African American fathers' conceptions of Black masculinity are

likely to also be reflected in the acceptance of their own and their children's emotions (especially

as applied to their sons), the ways in which they seek to manage their emotions and help their

children manage their emotions, and in whether they believe they have a specific role or

responsibility in teaching their children about emotions. Both theories also, in some ways, help

to conceptualize that priorities in maintaining African American cultural orientations (e.g.,

collectivism, cooperation, interconnectedness) may also be reflected in African American fathers'

PMEP as African American men negotiate their racialized experiences in the larger society with

close familial and community relationships. As such, this collection of theories suggest that

African American fathers' PMEP is likely best understood as more complex than the pervasively

used emotion-coaching, emotion-dismissing, and laissez-faire philosophies. To further support my conceptions of African American fathers' PMEP, I review the limited empirical literature of African American fathers' PES and PMEP, as well as other studies that further assert the role of race and gender in African American fathers' parenting.

African American Father's PES

As mentioned earlier, most PES literature is based on maternal socialization practices. This is especially true for studies with African American families. There are a few studies on African American fathers' PES practices. Brown, Craig, & Halberstadt (2015) explored cultural and gender differences in PES among a sample of African American, European American, and Lumbee American Indian mothers and fathers of 4-10 year olds. They assessed both parental modeling of emotion expression and responses to children's negative emotions with self-report methods. They distinguished between negative-submissive emotions (e.g., sadness, fear) and negative-dominant emotions (e.g., anger, contempt) when possible. They found, generally, that mothers and fathers across ethnic groups modeled similar levels of negative emotions for their children. However, fathers were less likely to model negative-submissive emotions than mothers. As for responses to children's negative emotions, African American mothers and fathers had similar levels of supportive responses to their children's negative submissive emotions, a finding that was unique to African American families relative to European American and Lumbee American Indian families. Authors interpreted this finding as evidence for "greater gender equity in parents' support for children's emotions among African American parents". However, child gender qualified the finding for parental responses such that African American mothers of girls were more supportive of their negative submissive emotions than fathers of girls and mothers of boys were less supportive of their negative submissive emotions than fathers of boys. Authors

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interpreted the findings on African American fathers' supportives responses to children's negative submissive emotions as consistent with previous literature that suggests African American fathers display "less gender stereotyped" behaviors towards their children, generally. Fathers of all ethnicities engaged in more nonsupportive responses to their children's negative emotions than mothers. Authors suggest that fathers' responses to negative emotions, broadly, are aligned with biological origins of gender differences and sociological constructions of father roles (i.e., fathers are disciplinarians). Taken together, these findings suggest that child gender may be important for African American fathers' emotion socialization practices, but further work is needed to understand this relationship more clearly.

Garrett-Peters, Mills-Koonce, Zerwas, Cox, & Vernon-Feagans (2011) investigated the relationship between social context and emotion talk among African American and non-African American fathers of infants. Participants included 549 biological mothers and biological fathers of 7-month-old children, 111 of which were African American. Most caregivers were married and from low-income backgrounds. Researchers assessed fathers' emotion talk through a wordless picture book task. They observed fathers' interactions with their infants and operationalized positive and negative emotion talk as the rate of positive words and negative words that fathers used per minute. They found that African American fathers used more negative emotion words with their children during the picture book task than non-African American fathers. This finding was further qualified with the interactive effect of income and ethnicity such that African American fathers of higher income status used more negative emotion words during the picture book task than African American fathers of lower income status. This finding was unique in that a previous study of African American mothers found no effect of income on emotion talk (Garrett-Peters et al., 2008). Authors interpreted it within the context of

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Triple Quandary Theory (Boykin, 1986), which posits that African Americans must navigate three realms of experience: the mainstream, the minority, and the Black cultural experience. Given previous work that found that higher income African American families are more likely to emphasize the Black cultural realm of experience (e.g., affect, communalism, orality; Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002) and higher income African American fathers in particular feel a greater sense of responsibility within the socialization process (Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine, 1992), they suggest that the finding of higher emotion talk among higher income fathers is a reflection of the socialization goals of fathers from these backgrounds, which include instilling Black cultural values that are important for one's sense of self. Additionally, they suspected that racial discrimination experiences may also have also contributed to this finding of greater emotion talk of negative emotions among higher income African American fathers given previous work that has found the experience of discrimination to be more intense for African American men, more perceptible by and damaging to higher income African American men, and associated with a state of vigilance in which individuals, African Americans especially, are sensitive to emotional cues (Pieterse & Carter, 2007; Gary, 1995; Pearlin, Schieman, Fazio, & Meersman, 2005; Garrett-Peters et al., 2008; Matsumoto, 1993; Vrana & Rollock, 2002). The authors did not directly measure racial discrimination experiences themselves, so their interpretations should be taken with caution. However, a related study from the same research group and among the same sample found that that more frequent racial discrimination experiences among African American mothers was associated with greater emotion talk with their infants (Odom et al., 2016). Taken together, there appear to be some contributions of racial, cultural, and SES factors that may drive African American fathers' attention to emotion in conversation with their children.

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Dunbar et al. (2015) investigated profiles of African American mothers' and fathers' racial and emotion socialization practices using retrospective reports of parents' responses to young adults' negative emotions during childhood. Most of them were women, in their first two years of college, and identified their financial context growing up as "middle-income". Three profiles emerged for fathers' socialization: multifaceted, low engaged, and high bias preparation. Authors largely interpreted results in comparison to mothers' profiles, in which a low engaged pattern emerged as well. They suggest that the higher percentage of fathers in the low engaged profile (i.e., 39.1%) compared to mothers (i.e., 24.1%) was consistent with previous work that has found fathers overall to engage in less emotion socialization than mothers (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2010). They found a higher number of profiles of racial and emotion socialization for mothers compared to fathers. Authors interpreted this finding as evidence that fathers' styles of emotion socialization are less distinctive than mothers. Nonetheless, the multifaceted profile was the largest profile of fathers' socialization, unique to fathers, and emerged as a novel pattern of socialization relative to previously described patterns in the literature. These findings suggest that African American fathers may utilize a nuanced approach to their emotion socialization. Furthermore, gender and family income predicted fathers' profiles of socialization such that young adult men were more likely to be in the high bias preparation profile compared to the low engaged profile and both young adult men and higher income young adults were more likely to be in the multifaceted profile than the low engaged profile. Authors interpreted these findings as consistent with a previous study that found African American fathers to be more engaged in emotion socialization of sons than daughters (Wong, McElwain, & Halberstadt, 2009). These findings affirm the first need for empirical examination of the heterogeneity of African American fathers' emotion socialization approaches and (similar to conclusions from Brown et al., 2015),

the role that child gender may play in shaping African American fathers' emotion socialization agenda.

PMEP among African American Families

To my knowledge, there are a few studies of PMEP or beliefs about emotion, more generally, among African American populations. Cunningham, Kliewer, & Garner (2009) is the only published empirical study to investigate PMEP with the use of the Meta Emotion Interview (MEI; Gottman et al., 1997) among an African American only sample. In this study, researchers examined PMEP as a predictor of school-aged children's emotion regulation among a sample of urban African American mothers with a high incidence of exposure to community violence. Five indicators of PMEP were used to score interview responses: mother coaching (e.g., goal-setting for teaching child about emotions), mother awareness (e.g., "parent has no problem distinguishing this emotion from others"), child awareness (e.g., "parent is descriptive of child's experience of this emotion"), mother acceptance (e.g., "parent says it is important to express this emotion"), and child acceptance (e.g., "parent wants child to know it is OK to have this feeling"). To examine if there was some evidence of validity for the use of the MEI and assessment of PMEP among an African American sample, Cunningham and colleagues (2009) reported adequate interrater reliability estimates that reflected similar interrater reliability obtained in other parenting samples and an exploratory factor analysis that supported a one factor structure of emotion-coaching meta-emotion philosophy among the five measured indicators. As such, the five indicators were averaged together to create one score of meta-emotion coaching philosophy. Additionally, researchers found associations between PMEP and maternal education such that African American mothers who had completed high school demonstrated more awareness, coaching, and acceptance of their own and their children's emotion. The insights

from this study support the use of the MEI among African American samples and the potential adequacy of the MEI scoring system for capturing cohesive emotion coaching philosophies among African American mothers. Yet, this one investigation of PMEP among African American mothers provides little guidance for African American father populations. Further, Cunningham and colleagues (2009) did not describe any further investigation of MEI responses in ways that may have revealed unique insights into the manifestation of PMEP among African Americans. Finally, I note that this study suggests, similar to Garrett-Peters et al. (2011), that parent SES contributes to variation in PMEP.

Beyond specific investigation of Gottman et al.'s (1997) PMEP framework, an additional study provides insights regarding parents' beliefs about children's emotions (a component of PMEP) among African American families. Parker et al. (2012) investigated themes of emotion beliefs among 12 parent focus groups across African American, European American, and Lumbee American Indians. Conducting focus groups by racial group (4 African American parent groups, 5 Lumbee American Indian groups, and 3 European American groups) allowed for the comparison of emotion beliefs across cultures. Across all racial groups, five belief dimensions were identified: the value of emotions, the role of parents in emotion socialization, emotional control, the relational nature of emotions, and the changeability of emotions. Generally, analyses of the focus group data revealed that there were many similarities across racial groups with regard to the types of emotion beliefs discussed. However, there were some unique insights related to fathers and African American parents. For instance, at least one focus group with fathers from each ethnic group endorsed the belief that children should move on from their experience of emotions instead of dwelling on them. This suggests that fathers generally have a laissez-faire meta-emotion philosophy, and adds to literature that has found fathers less likely to

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coach emotions (Katz & Hooven, 1997; Stocker et al., 2007; Gottman et al., 1996). There were some unique considerations for African American parents. For instance, the study suggested that the theme of support for the emotion expression of boys was particularly evident among African American parents. This demonstrates the nuances in emotion-related beliefs for African Americans and suggests that child gender is likely to play a role in parental ERSBs. Additionally, African American parents demonstrated greater acceptance of emotion expression in the family context than parents of other ethnic groups. This suggests that their meta-emotion and ERSBs are nuanced in the sense that they view emotion expression as a valid form of communication and may support their children's emotional displays, but within the confines of family and around other African Americans. In terms of African American fathers specifically, the finding that African American parents' closeness with their children extends beyond emotions and reflects community values and neighborhood concerns suggests that African American fathers' broader parenting practices (e.g., monitoring) are emotion-related.

Although limited, the two studies that explicitly assess parents' thoughts and feelings about emotion among African American families yield some insights that can guide the current study on PMEP among African American fathers. Specifically, the use of the MEI in assessing PMEP shows promise for yielding cohesive insights related to an emotion coaching philosophy among an African American population (e.g., Cunningham et al., 2009). Additionally, African American parents expressed some unique insights regarding emotion beliefs among this population, yet they appeared to express similarities in terms of the emotion belief domains that they considered, such as the value of emotions, role of parents in socialization, control of emotions, the relational aspect of emotions, and changeability of emotions. Finally, both studies demonstrate that parental SES (i.e., parent education, family income) also contributes to

variation among African American parents' emotion beliefs and PMEP. Taken together, these studies support the notion of the validity of PMEP, yet a specific analysis lens that considers the experience of race, culture, and gender orientation is needed to more fully understand how African American parents' PMEP reflects their unique positionality and lived experience within the US.

Race and African American Fathering about Emotions

The integrative model of adaptive racial/ethnic and emotion socialization argues that the emotion socialization practices of supportive and suppression responses overlap with the ethnic-racial socialization practices of preparation for bias and cultural socialization in African American families. There is emerging evidence that African American parents' emotion socialization behaviors are different in racialized scenarios compared to general scenarios (Lozada & Riley, 2019; Lozada, Catherine, Riley, & Brown, 2022). Lozada & Riley (2019) found that African American parents engage in higher levels of supportive emotion socialization (focusing on problem-solving around the cause of the emotion and encouraging their children to express their emotions) and higher levels of parental distress (parents reporting their own negative emotions in the response to their child's expression of negative emotions) when their child was experiencing negative emotion in response to racial discrimination compared to general emotion-eliciting scenarios. The previous focus in the emotion socialization literature on only general emotion-eliciting contexts without the consideration of the experience of negative race-related emotion-eliciting contexts (i.e., racial discrimination) may explain why emotion socialization researchers tend to find that there is less use and endorsement of supportive responses and greater use of and endorsement of suppressive responses to children's negative emotion expressions among African American families in comparison to White families (e.g.,

Nelson et al., 2012). Dunbar and colleagues (2017) suggest that among African American families, suppression responses may be appropriate in attempts to prepare children for racial bias with the concern that the public will scrutinize their children's negative emotional displays due to racial bias and prejudice. The acknowledgement and encouragement of children's negative emotional displays experiences or activity may be harmful in public contexts. However, it is plausible that African American parents are less likely to suppress their children's emotions following racialized scenarios when their children are seeking refuge in them. In this way, parental emotion socialization among African American families is contextual.

I argue that researchers have documented racial socialization practices among African American families more frequently than emotion socialization practices. Nonetheless, work on both emotion socialization and racial socialization practices on focuses on mothers. The limited studies on African American fathers' practices are comparative to African American mothers' practices (Brown, Linver, & Evans, 2010; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990; Dunbar, Perry, Cavanaugh, & Leerkes, 2015) and limits our understanding of the nuances in African American fathers' ERSBs. I look to parenting practices literature to gain insight to African American fathers' emotional behavior. Researchers have found that African American fathers demonstrate acceptance, affection, nurturance, and closeness in their relationships with their children (Doyle et al., 2015). African American fathers' general parenting style includes acceptance and control (Toth & Xu, 1999). Staples & Johnson (1993) found that a sample of low-income African American fathers were likely to display affection despite their preferences for physical forms of punishment compared to verbal discipline. Similar to parental suppression responses to children's negative emotions, African American fathers' disciplinary practices may be appropriate for the racialized context of African American families.

Doyle et al. (2015) explored African American fathers' parenting practices using semi-structured, qualitative interviews. Participants included 30 biological fathers of preadolescent sons between the ages of 8 and 12 at risk for the development of aggressive behavior, depressive symptoms, or both. Researchers were interested in how these fathers' thoughts about their attempts "to promote healthy behaviors and emotions, as well as positive-coping". Researchers took an iterative approach to the development of codes and a codebook. They used open, axial, and selective coding (see original article for details). Four themes of African American fathers' parenting practices emerged: managing emotions, encouragement, discipline, and monitoring. Managing emotions was a novel construct in the parenting practices literature. I will focus on the encouragement, discipline, and monitoring themes for now. Encouragement, discipline, and monitoring are all consistent with quantitative literature on African American fathers' parenting practices. One caveat is that the fathers in this sample particularly endorsed discipline and monitoring, aspects of the parental control dimension in parenting practices literature. Evidence for the parental acceptance dimension of parenting practices literature (i.e., encouragement, warmth, nurturance) was scant; African American fathers mostly referenced encouragement in their parenting practices without specific mention of love or support.

The fathers in the sample employed various discipline strategies in addition to physical punishment. Their use of spanking was purposeful in the sense that they aimed to "develop a child's sense of self control and responsibility" instead of abusing their authority. These limits for spanking as described in African American fathers parenting practices may map onto the limits set by parents with an emotion-coaching philosophy in which they aim to teach children about situations that evoke negative emotion (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996). Neighborhood context shaped fathers' endorsement of monitoring such that fathers in neighborhoods exposed to

gangs and crime were more likely to describe their parenting practices as monitoring. African

American fathers' attention to physical conditions with monitoring parenting practices may be

related to their emotional awareness or heightened vigilance (Garrett-Peters et al., 2011). As a

result, they may couple monitoring with discussion of emotion or emotion talk socialization

behaviors. Taken together, the findings discussed here from Doyle et al. (2015) suggest that

African American fathers include emotion as a part of their parenting practices spontaneously

and that their use of parental control (i.e., discipline, monitoring) may have implications for their

emotion-related beliefs and behaviors.

Doyle, Magan, Cryer-Coupet, Goldston, & Estroff (2016) conducted a qualitative study

with African American fathers that focused on their socialization values. They conducted semi-

structured interviews in which they asked them about the values that guide their parenting

behaviors and the modes of transmission of these values. Sample demographics and data analysis

was nearly identical to Doyle et al. (2015). Five themes and four subthemes emerged: cultural

messages (managing racism and cultural pride), education (educational attainment, and social

intelligence and exposure), respect, responsibility, and modeling. The first four themes

represented values fathers aimed to instill in their sons and the fifth theme (i.e., modeling)

represented a mechanism by which they do so. Culture was an important part of for African

American fathers' socialization. Some fathers' responses reflected the subthemes of managing

racism and cultural pride. Authors suggested an association between participants' racial

socialization practices and their racialized awareness, personal experiences, and race-related

beliefs for their sons. Most African American fathers in the sample described managing racism

as a part of the value of cultural messages. Authors interpreted this finding as consistent with

quantitative literature on African American fathers' racial socialization practices in which they

focus on preparation for bias with sons. It may be that managing racism is aligned with masculine roles of fathers as protectors, and African American fathers are more likely to view it as a part of their parenting role. Less fathers endorsed the subtheme of cultural pride. Nonetheless, these fathers aimed to teach their sons about their cultural heritage, which they described as one's racial background and the African American or Black experience, and to take pride in their cultural heritage. African American fathers in the sample described a value of education, which included formal and informal types of learning outside of culture and history. The authors note that participants stressed the importance of education despite not finishing college themselves.

African American fathers expressed a desire to teach their sons respectful behaviors that honor the self and others. Respect of self included "a sense of self-worth, pride, making the best of situations, and being a good person (or doing good things)", and respect of others included "being courteous and tolerant". These descriptions as summarized by authors suggest that African American fathers' value of respect has implications for their emotion-related behaviors such as regulation. Fathers specified examples of "others" including women, father figures, and elders. The theme of responsibility encompassed independence, preparation for the role of provider, commitment to school and/or work, and owning up to mistakes. Fathers described independence as "their sons' ability to care for themselves and complete chores such as cooking and cleaning. Authors interpreted the themes of respect and responsibility as representations of cultural aspects of masculinity that African American men have previously endorsed. They concluded that masculine ideologies are a value that fathers of preadolescent sons aim to transmit.

While the notions of respect and responsibility are largely developmentally appropriate for preadolescence, their emergence as themes from this study suggest that masculine ideologies influence the parenting behaviors of African American fathers. Participants described modeling as a mode of transmission of values that provides their sons examples of what behaviors to engage in (e.g., healthy interactions with others, working hard) and what behaviors to avoid (e.g., smoking and cursing). They particularly modeled behaviors that demonstrated the masculine ideologies of responsibility and respect of self and others. The authors interpreted the theme of modeling as consistent with empirical literature on parenting among African American families in which mothers and fathers have used role modeling and communication as socialization strategies, broadly. This suggests that there is overlap with African American fathers' broad socialization strategies and the emotion-related behavior of discussion of emotion or emotion talk.

Taken together, the findings from Doyle et al. (2015) and Doyle, Magan, Cryer-Coupet, Goldston, & Estroff (2016) suggest that race is important for African American fathers' parenting beliefs. Managing racism was one of the most representative themes of African American fathers' values. Masculine ideologies appeared to be critical to African American fathers' values and socialization behaviors. It is possible that there is some overlap between their general socialization strategies and ERSBs, and that African American fathers use them in tandem when socializing their children. These studies provide a foundation for the investigation of African American fathers' values and/or beliefs in an emotion-related context.

Gender, Masculinity, and African American Fathering about Emotions

Gender is a complex subject among African American families. There are some mixed findings with regard to how it influences parenting. As mentioned earlier, Brown, Craig, &

Halberstadt (2015) found that African American mothers and fathers displayed similar levels of supportive responses to children's negative emotions overall. This was not the case for suppression responses; fathers of all ethnic groups were more likely to report engaging in nonsupportive responses than mothers. They concluded that punishment and minimization tend to align with traditionally masculine characteristics and parenting roles such as toughness and disciplinarian, respectively. However, Doyle et al. (2015) found that African American fathers are not into punishing their pre-adolescent sons for the sake of it, implying that their purpose for using such practices is different from fathers from other ethnic groups. This is consistent with Dunbar and colleagues' reframing of punishment and minimization as suppression responses within the context of African American families. However, the fragmenting of parental emotion socialization literature and parenting practices literature makes it hard to understand a repertoire of supportive parenting by African American fathers and families, broadly. It may be helpful to merge the two bodies of literature to increase understanding African American fathers' emotion-related beliefs and behaviors. The studies I reviewed above support this argument.

Findings from qualitative studies on African American families' PES, African American fathers' parenting practices, and African American men's' construction of masculinity suggest that framing matters for how researchers conceptualize these respective constructs. Doyle et al. (2015) found support for the parenting practice of encouragement among African American fathers' descriptions of parenting practices, but not necessarily warmth and nurturance. As mentioned earlier, these all make up the parental acceptance dimension of parenting practices. They interpreted this finding as an embodiment of a nuanced masculinity that includes both traditional characteristics such as restrictive emotionality and rejection of the feminine and cultural features such as emotional connectedness and responsibility (Hammond & Mattis, 2005;

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Hunter & Davis, 1992; 1994). They concluded that encouragement and "being there" are culturally relevant forms of parenting among African American fathers and more socially acceptable than warmth and support within the context of the masculine identities and phenomenology of African American men. This suggests that "being there" is a form of support by African American fathers that encompasses PES practices. This is consistent with the cultural variation of the emotional connectedness theme that emerged from Parker et al. (2012).

I noted earlier that emotional connectedness is a part of African American men's culturally based masculine ideologies. This may be one of the dimensions of masculinity for African American men that influences their ERSBs and parenting practices. Doyle et al (2015) cites previous work in which scholars have found that African American men's masculinity ideologies and conceptions of manhood are multidimensional in the sense that they reflect messages from the dominant society, African American culture, and local community. More specifically, African American men ascribe to notions of traditional or hegemonic masculinity (e.g., power, strength, control), "culturally based masculinity" (e.g., showing love towards and being a role model for significant others), and "interconnected masculinity" (i.e., standing up for others and leaving a legacy within community; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Hunter & Davis, 1992; 1994; Hammond, 2012; Caldwell, Antonakos, Tsuchiya, Assari, & De Loney, 2013; Roberts-Douglass & Curtis-Boles, 2013). These three ideologies may be conflicting at times, and manifest within African American men's emotion-related behavior. Traditional masculinity encourages men to be emotionally restrictive, but African American men endorse emotional and family connectedness as masculine ideals, so they likely experience some tension with regard to emotion in parenting roles. The emergence of the managing emotions theme supports this hypothesis.

Doyle et al. (2015) also found that African American fathers of preadolescent sons described a desire to promote positive coping and health outcomes for their sons by teaching them about how to manage emotion. They interpreted this finding as evidence of African American fathers' awareness of emotion-related traditional masculine ideologies (e.g., stoicism) and resistance to dominant narratives that men cannot be expressive through support, approval, and encouragement of their sons' emotions. However, it is important to note that their acceptance of negative emotion was largely in reference to anger, which again supports African American men's endorsement of traditional masculinity. This suggests that African American men internalize values of dominant culture and actively work through them in parenting roles, which may require unlearning to connect with others more deeply. Furthermore, it suggests that African American fathers may be more accepting of anger relative to sadness, and demonstrate a range of emotion-related behaviors based on their multidimensional masculinity ideologies and conceptions of manhood.

It is important to note that the qualitative studies I reviewed on African American fathers' parenting practices only include fathers of pre-adolescent sons (Doyle et al., 2015; Doyle, Magan, Cryer-Coupet, Goldston, & Estroff, 2016). Parker et al. (2012) included African American fathers of both boys and girls and found that African American parents overall were particularly likely to endorse the belief that parents should be especially supportive of boys' emotion expression. Although this study did not find many gender differences in parental emotion beliefs, it is possible that African American fathers are more likely to demonstrate this belief because they have personally realized the effects of suppression responses on their emotion-related outcomes. Perhaps this may account for differences between African American mothers and fathers when it comes to supportive responses to children's emotions (Nelson,

Leerkes, O'Brien, Calkins, & Marcovitch, 2012; Lugo-Candelas, Harvey, Breaux, & Herbert, 2015). Furthermore, there may be overlap between the themes of support for for boys' emotion expression and generational change in parenting styles for African American fathers particularly because of the racialized lens through which African American parents see emotion. Thus, it is important for researchers to consider race and gender in the PMEP of African American families.

Emotion Socialization in Toddlerhood

Lastly, it is important to consider the developmental stage for emotion socialization in the current study. Toddlerhood is a critical time for socialization of emotion-related competencies (Bocknek, 2018). Children begin to engage in the larger family system during toddlerhood through increased language skills and understanding in play activities, and expanded emotional development and experiences (Brophy-Herb, Bocknek, Choi, Senehi, & Douglas, 2018). They are learning to express complex emotions and recognize emotions among others. Thus, a toddler can likely sense their parents' emotional state even if the parent has not communicated it directly. This has implications for general parenting behaviors such as setting rules and structure and parental ERSBs such as modeling of emotion expression and responses to negative emotions.

Current Study

The goal of the current study was to explore African American fathers' thoughts and feelings about their own and their children's negative emotions. I was interested in answering the following research question: what are African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions? My hypothesis was that African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions will include controllability (i.e., emotions are temporary and one should not fixate on

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them), suppression, support of boys' emotion expression (particularly anger, but suppression of grief and sadness), connectedness with family members' emotions, and generational change in parental socialization. I conducted a deductive thematic analysis of African American fathers' Meta-Emotion Interview (MEI) responses to answer my research question.

Methods

Participants

Data for the current study included a subset of secondary caregivers from a larger study of resilience among high-risk families of young children (i.e., Toddlers' Emotional Development in Young Families; Bocknek, 2018; Bocknek et al., 2021). Researchers recruited families from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinics in the Detroit, Michigan area. Researchers conducted the consent process at these clinics and invited families who chose to participate in the study to the lab for completion of related tasks, questionnaires, and interviews. Data for this study included semi-structured interviews. Eligibility criteria included having a target child between the ages of 24 and 31 months. Biological mothers nominated secondary caregivers based on instructions to invite another parent who they would most describe as their parenting partner with priority of biological fathers who see their children regularly and consistently. Fathers in the larger study reported varying levels of exposure to trauma including loss of loved ones unexpectedly (68.2%), serious accident, fire, explosion (47.2%), natural disaster (23.1%), non-sexual assault by family member/someone you know (30.8%), non-sexual assault by stranger (46.2%), sexual contact with someone older (25.0%), imprisonment (26.9%), and more.

Participants in the current study included 58 African American fathers between the ages of 29 and 40 (M_{age} = 30.94). All fathers had biological connections to their children except for

one (i.e., stepfather). Target children were 28 months on average (i.e., 2.34 years old). Fathers largely held residential status (82%), with non-residential status including shared custody (9%), regular contact (7%), and inconsistent contact (2%). Fifty-seven percent of toddlers were male and forty-three percent were female. The range for the total number of children that fathers had was 1-13 ($M = 3.64$). Roughly half of fathers were high school or GED educated (48%), with the remainder varying on some high school education (19%), some college credit (25%), a trade (5%), and a bachelor's degree (2%). 53% of fathers reported an annual income of less than $15,000.

Measures

Fathers' Meta-Emotion Philosophy

Fathers' beliefs about and experiences with emotion were assessed using the Meta-Emotion Interview (MEI; Katz & Gottman, 1986). The MEI is a semi-structured interview with parents about their personal experiences of negative emotion, "philosophy of emotional expression and control, and their feelings, attitudes, and responses to their children's [expression of negative emotion]" (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997, p. 45). Interviewers asked parents about their own and their children's sadness and anger (see Appendix A for full interview). Interviewers included male and female Arab American and White undergraduate and graduate students from the Detroit area who were largely able-bodied and spoke English as a first language. The research team, including a postdoctoral scholar, doctoral students, and post-baccalaureate research assistants mostly matched interviewers with interviewees on gender, and originally audiotaped and transcribed interviews.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis Orientation and Approach

To answer my research questions, I analyzed participants' responses to a subset of questions from parts one and two of the MEI (i.e., questions about the interviewee and target child's sadness and anger; see Appendix A). I selected questions based on the extent that they represented the primary research constructs of interest for the current study (i.e., beliefs about and experiences with negative emotion). I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis (TA) of transcripts of participants' MEI responses using Dedoose Version 9.0.17 (2021). TA is a process of identifying patterns of findings across a dataset that are relevant to one's research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2019; 2021). Braun & Clarke classified TA as a "family of methods" that generally involves two orientations (i.e., inductive or data-driven and deductive or theory-driven) and three broad approaches (i.e., coding reliability, reflexive, and codebook). They argue that these approaches exist on a continuum and suggest that relative differences are based on the purpose of coding, the conceptualization and timing of theme development within the research project, and the reliance on researchers for the analysis of themes. Given the previous state of both the emotion socialization and Black fathering literature, I believed that there was enough theoretical grounding to use a predominantly deductive orientation to my TA of African American fathers' beliefs and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions, with the possibility for inductive coding that would be derived from my initial familiarization with the data. A theoretical TA is distinct from a general TA because of the opportunity to use existing literature and theory to conceptualize code development in combination with codes that were derived from the data of the current project. In addition to using a deductive orientation to TA, I also utilized the three approaches of coding reliability, reflexive, and codebook. Specifically, my research questions were guided by the heuristic of socialization of emotion, parental meta-emotion philosophy (PMEP), integration of adaptive

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racial/ethnic and emotion socialization, and Black Masculine Identity models described above, and thus, I developed and structured codes based in these literatures for the purpose of establishing reliability among coders (coding reliability). Additionally, I generated themes that represent "topic summaries of codes" (codebook and coding reliability) based on my "analytic and interpretive work" towards the end of the project (reflexive). To conduct my theoretical TA, I engaged in the six phases of TA that are typically associated with the reflexive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019): (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) coding the data, (3) generating initial themes, (4) reviewing and further theme development (5) final theme refinement, definition and naming, and (6) writing up the report of themes.

I familiarized myself with the data by reviewing roughly half of the interview transcripts (n = 28) and checking them against the audio files for accuracy. I made revisions for the transcripts during this phase and saved copies of files for documentation purposes. I also made note of possible codes across transcripts for the coding phase of TA.

Code Creation, Training, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

Coding within thematic analysis is a process of "organising your data into meaningful groups" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). I created initial codes using my hypotheses based on previous literature and my notes of possible codes from the familiarization phase of TA. I organized the codes into a codebook and presented it to my coding team upon the training phase of coding. The coding team engaged in an iterative process of codebook development and refinement. Codes for the current study were based on several qualitative and quantitative studies of African American parents' beliefs about emotion and ERSBs and African Americans' coping strategies in general (Parker et al., 2012; Halberstadt et al., 2013; Utsey, Adams & Bolden; 2000; Ford, Lwi, Gentzler, Hankin, & Mauss, 2018; Spielberg, Stewart, Levin, Miller, & Heller, 2008;

Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998a; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998b; Gross

& John, 2003; Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, & Madden-Derdich, 2002). I revisited these bodies of

literature consistently during the codebook development and refinement process (see Appendix

C)

The training phase of coding took 2 weeks total, and involved a series of meetings in

which the coding team and advisor reviewed initial codes, reviewed transcripts in Microsoft

Word, practiced applying the initial codes to transcript excerpts, refined the initial codes, and

started applying codes to transcript excerpts in the Dedoose software. I solicited the coding team

and advisor's feedback on code definitions and examples that I created during the familiarization

stage. The coding team coded 20% of transcripts completely (i.e., 12 total, Father's and child's

sadness and anger) together and discussed discrepancies before assessing inter-rater reliability

and individually coding transcripts in Dedoose. The coding team consisted of two coders (1

African American male; 1 biracial Black female). The principal investigator coded four

transcripts in Dedoose completely and served as the primary coder for inter-rater reliability

(IRR) tests. Dedoose calculates Cohen's Kappa for the application of codes "on an 'event' basis"

in which excerpts represent events and coders are evaluated on whether they applied a code or

not. Only codes applied at least twice were eligible for the tests. The primary coder created IRR

tests for four transcripts. Results indicated that coders consistently applied codes for the select

excerpts in each test (85%-91%). The coding team proceeded to code 21 transcripts individually.

Researcher Positionality

Principal Investigator (Primary Coder and Researcher). My positionality includes

that of a 27-year old, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, Black man, raised in a

roughly middle class, two-parent family, with one sibling, in an urban environment. I consider

myself a supporter of all forms of Black cultural expression, particularly Hip-Hop. I essentially

consider Black culture and Hip-Hop as synonymous, and have been challenged to appreciate the

heterogeneity of Black experiences in my research. I enrolled in a developmental psychology

doctoral program in 2017 and have been studying parental emotion socialization practices and

youths' emotional competence among African American populations. My interest in parental

emotion socialization (PES) stems from my personal experiences with emotion-related behaviors

growing up, in which I received seemingly conflicting emotional messages from my mother and

father. On one hand, emotional expression was healthy and encouraged. On the other hand,

emotional expression was discouraged in favor of showing respect for authority figures (i.e., my

father). These messages informed my understanding of Black cultural norms and racialized

experiences around emotion, which I now study as the cultural and contextual factors that

researchers have historically overlooked in PES literature.

I conducted this study in part because I believe race and culture are important for

understanding African Americans' emotion-related behavior and I am committed to the mental

health and wellness of African American male populations in particular. It was a perfect

marriage of my interest in Black families, PES, and African American male populations. I admit

that I was eager for some results to emerge that would counter the often-negative depictions of

African American men in the media. The deductive orientation to thematic analysis challenged

me to hold off on interpretation until the end of the project. However, the incorporation of the

reflexive approach seemed fitting for my social constructionist approach to research broadly. My

hope is that my subjectivity did not unduly influence the findings for the project. I believe my

orientation and approach to analysis was flexible enough to utilize my researcher subjectivity as

a tool for the data.

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Coder 2 (Secondary Coder). I am a Biracial Black woman raised predominantly by a White mother. My father, a Black man, was of non-residential status and a primarily distant parent. I have consistently maintained a close relationship with others in my paternal family. I acknowledge that my own father-daughter relationship may raise questions about my viewpoint on how I approached the current study. However, I understand that my experience is my own, and is likely different in various degrees from others. I approach all research with an understanding that although culture and heritage will contribute to similarities across and within groups, our own experiences can vary immensely. My goal is always to increase my knowledge about the topics I study with the hope of disseminating findings to others

Analysis of Codes and Theme Development

After completion of individual coding, we began analyzing the codes to build a narrative of participant responses. This process entailed viewing all of the excerpts for which we applied codes for, noting the number of transcripts we applied them for throughout the sample, and noting patterns in participants' responses. The coding team analyzed codes individually for the sake of time and re-convened to discuss what the participants said for each code (i.e., what the codes mean for them or appear to be capturing). Data analysis also included the use of Dedoose visualization features (e.g., packed code cloud, 3D code cloud, code co-occurrence, and code presence). The code co-occurrence feature allowed us to see how many times we applied two codes for the same excerpt and across transcripts. This was helpful for building a comprehensive understanding of African American fathers' PES and PMEP.

The coding team individually compiled shared word documents with summaries of each code and co-occurrences among codes, met to share notes, and reviewed code applications to refine summaries for theme development. I generated themes based on narratives that we noted

from participant responses captured by codes. Finlay (2021) reported that Braun and Clarke previously recommended "2-6 themes for a single journal article or dissertation" and that researchers use subthemes sparingly. I initially generated eight themes based on the coding team's narrative of codes. I reviewed and developed these eight themes. I consulted with the coding team and advisor on overlap of themes and combined themes that we interpreted as related. This included the refinement, defining, and naming of themes. Braun & Clarke (2012) suggested that good theme names are "informative, concise, and catchy". I interpreted five themes to summarize codes based on my research question: what are African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions? Below, I present findings by each theme.

Findings

Qualitative coding of African American fathers' MEI responses about anger and sadness resulted in five themes of their beliefs about their own and their children's negative emotions: 1) responsibility for children's emotions, 2) complex relationship with anger, 3) reckoning negative emotions, 4) children at the center, and 5) actively working through emotions.

Responsibility for Children's Emotions

In fathers' discussion of their own and their toddler's negative emotions, fathers seemed to communicate beliefs and behaviors that represented feelings of responsibility for their children's emotions. They felt compelled to teach their children important life lessons about emotion while responding supportively to their needs as toddlers. Their emotion socialization practices often included selective validation of their children's emotions and disciplinary practices that bordered along the lines of dismissal or ignoring of emotion (i.e., suppressive responses). Fathers decided whether the cause of their child's emotion was worthy of a response.

Thus, I defined responsibility for children's emotions as careful examination of children's negative emotions to determine an appropriate reaction.

> "My first reaction is to find out what's wrong. Once I find out what's wrong, depending on the situation, I either try to address it accordingly or responsibly, to the best of my ability. If I can't address it at that time, I go to her mom and ask her to take care of it… If she's sad because she's hurting, it makes me feel like I let her down, if she hurt herself. If she's sad because I gave her a direct order, that lets me know I'm doing my job. If she's sad because she's mad at her sister, I explain to her she can't be mad at her sister. Ya'll need to get along. Go over here and play"

Another father explicitly describes minimizing his child's sadness. However, it is important to note that he does not necessarily have any ill intentions. He is simply considering his choice of socialization behaviors.

> "How should I handle it-should I baby her or should I just you know? Just let her pout it out, let her figure out that she can't always have her way. It just depends on how serious the situation might be or if it's to me something small, I just might let it go and just let it die down there. Tell her mom to handle this, something like that."

Fathers' responsibility for children's emotion appeared to be rooted in a belief that their children are too young to reason through emotions themselves. This manifested as fathers explicitly referred to their children's age as a potential barrier to emotional understanding and implicitly shared lessons they intend to teach their child about emotion that appeared contingent on their child's development.

"Just teach him how to cope with it and not throw a temper tantrum sometimes. Just actually think about it. But, see, he's too young to know those types of things now, so that's why I just try to let him, you know, go with the flow sometimes, just try to instill in him that it's not always right to cry, you know? You're not a crybaby, and stuff like that."

"I don't like to see him sad, of course. My thoughts is more like what can I do to help him get over it without babying him, even though he's 2? He's only 2 but still. That's just how I am, and that's how I think of it. I don't like to baby him. I was spoiled, and I grew up pampered. It hindered me in some way, so that's why I'm so – you got to learn for yourself. I was pampered, so I'm trying not to go overboard with it. At the same time, I want to make sure that he doesn't do what I did."

Fathers' feelings of responsibility to their children's emotions were also sometimes represented in their reflections on their own past experiences with their parents growing up. Some described their parents' methods and responses to their own emotions as harsher and less sensitive than the ones they are implementing with their own kids now. They largely referenced their parents' disciplinary practices as opposed to emotion socialization, specifically, or they alluded to their parents (sometimes specifically, their fathers) being less emotionally involved then they are with their kids now, and this serving as motivation for them to take responsibility for their children's emotions.

"A lotta things go through my head. When he's sad, and I see it, I imagine me not ever bein' there, and what he gon' do. So, I do the opposite, I just be there. It's what I can do, it's the only thing I can do, and show him, he got his own emotions and so he gotta hold

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it out on his own. I can show him how to do it. Can't really do nothin' about it, because that's just how he feels like, emotions- you're a person, it's whatchu go through…he be sad like I used to when I was- I was his age, see my dad wasn't around. I used to always wanna be around my dad. I was always sad, and then my mom wasn't there. She was [inaudible] she never really cared, so you know, I just went outside. He like two. I would go outside, and do everything, and my mom wouldn't pay attention. And to think about that, and I said, I need to be in his life 24/7, if I ever wanna leave or for nothing happen to me. And then, that hurt me, just thinkin' about it. You know what I'm sayin'? Like I can fix this, all I gotta do is say somethin'. Like his sadness was my sadness, and now I can fix it. You know what I'm sayin'? When I was younger I couldn't fix it. But he feel the same way, I can fix it. I knew exactly what to do and what to say now, cuz that's me."

In this responsibility, fathers' emotion socialization behaviors sometimes conflicted with their perceived roles as disciplinarians. This tension may involve experimentation with parenting behaviors that suit fathers best.

"Well, not really. See, my mother, back when—I'm 38, so, you know, I was born in the late '70s, so back then, we got whippings, so that's how my mother dealt with us as far as, you know, if we're out of line, we got a whipping … So yeah, I have to look at my childhood and see what not to do as far as what my mother and them did with me. Because, you know, those ways now are not really—you know, we are not allowed to do that nowadays, so yeah, I have to look at my childhood and say, "Well, when I did that, I got a whipping, so I can't really whip her for that. We've got to find another way around it." A lot of times, you know, you talk, and nowadays, where the internet, television, it's there, so they can kind of see a lot of stuff. You can show them, "See? See what I was

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just telling you? Look at them." I kind of use that now. With [my child], she's still kind of too young for that, so, you know, you kind of just deal with talking with her, you know? "Look." Try little punishments where, okay, like I said, "You look like you're having a bad day. It's time for you to take a nap." You know, that's where I go to. "Okay, you take a nap." Give her a little cup, give her a bottle, change her, make sure she's not wet, and have a good hour, you know? "Go ahead and lay down." So that's the way I do that now, so yeah, I would have to look at my childhood and go about it differently."

At the same time, fathers also expressed the desire to acknowledge their child's innocence in their emotion-related behaviors and regulation.

"Interviewer: Another thing you mentioned too was that whenever he's sad you want him to be happy cuz this is the happy time of his life?

Father: Yeah.

Interviewer: In terms of that, and what you also just said, you think this relates to anything from your past?

Father: No, cuz I had my mother and father who's there, and taught me very well. It was just more like self-educating myself on – because I got – I wanted to learn more about emotions, and human psychology, stuff like that. I just – I was always taught that a child has a right for their happiness regardless of the situation, they always have the right for their happiness, and that's something I try to make sure I deliver as a parent."

Fathers described a connectedness to their children in which they often experience negative emotions along with them, demonstrating not only that they felt responsible for their children's emotions, but that in some ways they may also be responsible to their children's emotions.

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Responsibility "for" children's emotions reflects having control or authority over the child's emotions, whereas responsibility "to" children's emotions is more like being controlled by their child's emotions.

> "I'm sad. I mean, who's not sad? When their children's sad, I'm sad about anything. I can't show him that I'm sad, so I've got to make him calm down in order for me to not to be sad. When he's crying, I'm crying inside. Even when I'm disciplining him..."

> "Father: It kills me.
>
> Interviewer: "It kills you, you said? So you hate seeing her sad and cry?"
>
> Father: "Yeah, that's the most thing that kills me more than everything else. I can handle everything else. I can cut my arm off. I can handle that."
>
> Interviewer: "So you'd rather any physical pain versus seeing your daughter sad."
>
> Father: "Yeah, any pain. You can do anything to me besides that."

Sometimes fathers mentioned getting irritated or frustrated in reaction to children's negative emotions, emotions that were not quite the same as the ones their child was experiencing. In these cases, they had to regulate their own negative emotions in order to provide support for their children.

> "I don't know. It kind of an irritation. I get irritated a little bit, probably, because of her reaction to her being sad, because she's whining and moping, so I might be a little irritated, you know? That be my reaction, is irritation, because she's probably irritated. So, you know that's, I try to not get as irritated, because I'm not sure what's wrong with her. She might just not being having a good day. She just want to whine. But that's her

being sad, so, you know, I just try to cope with that as much as I could as far as, you know, just finding out the problem with her..."

Complex Relationship with Anger

I named the complex relationship with anger theme after a fathers' response who appeared to capture the nuance that many fathers in the study described.

"Just like sadness, it's a complicated area. Anger is just not good in general, but it's a complex emotion. Everybody deals with it in different ways. It's just something that I feel people should work on better to have a better relationship or be a better person, know how to cope with anger and deal with it in positive ways."

I defined the theme as the reluctance to label or personally identify with anger despite intense personal experiences with it, physically removing oneself from situations once recognizing the emotion, and the belief that one should handle anger wisely because of its dangerous consequences. Many fathers said it "takes a lot" for them to get angry when initially asked about the emotion. However, when interviewers probed fathers about their experiences of anger, fathers went on to provide vivid descriptions of anger.

"Interviewer: Now I want to move onto anger. What is it like for you to be angry?

Father: It's pretty hard. I tend to not get angry a lot. I'm more of a calm, cool, collected person. For me to get angry, it really must be something really hard or something that I'm dealing with that's just really getting to me."

"Angry? I don't get too much angry, it's got to be to a point cuz I'm like a laid back person, so if I'm angry, it will, some involve with my kids, my family, other than that I really don't care too much. I don't let it get to me."

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"Interviewer: Okay. What do you feel inside when you're angry?

Father: A fireball. I just wanna blow up some time…

Interviewer: What's the fireball? Do you – does it feel like you have hot energy coursing throughout your body or do you start sweating?

Father: Yeah. It's like hot energy, it's like I can feel my blood rush sometimes if I get that mad, so I always go for a walk or something like that."

Overall, questions about anger seemed to evoke strong feelings and images of violence that fathers captured in their responses. Fathers' experiences of anger clearly overwhelmed them and at times, they indicated they were having trouble verbalizing or even remembering the feelings associated with the emotion or anything that they might say to others when they are angry because of how consuming the emotion felt.

"Rage, fire, just blinded like, I feel blinded- even though I couldn't really tell you though, like I'll really just feel – I'll really just feel that rage, the fire, I couldn't really – I'm, really am not in my right mind, so I really wouldn't really know how I really feel or what I'm thinking, cuz I'm not really thinking. So when-until I calm down, and that's when I start thinking, and hopefully I didn't uhh-do nothing stupid, cuz people tend to do stupid things when they're mad or say stupid things and they'll say – hopefully I don't say nothing stupid. Then I have to repair all the damage that I made after I calm down."

"...Sometimes, I just want to punch something, but I know I can't or I just hit a punching bag, I got to get another one, but that used to work though. You just really throw some

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gloves on, just go down there and sweat it out, but other than that that's how I'd really be

feeling half of the time that's why I always hate anger cuz it always – it could always lead

to violent thoughts, which really is not my MO anyway cuz I'm not a violent person, but

it's just – it takes so much for me to get angry when it comes out it could come out the

wrong way, my words, then I might say something that I really don't mean, but it might

be at that time. My anger might push me to say what should cause me to apologize once

the situation – once the conflict calms down, but other than that, no. That's about it.

Fireball and I might say a couple of harsh words."

Similar to the father above who described being blinded by his anger and hoping that he did not

do anything "stupid", fathers often used the word "stupid" when responding about their beliefs

about and experiences with anger. They suggested that the emotional state of anger can cause

faulty decision-making, and that it is not wise for one to act out of anger.

"Mr. Anger. Everything. I do stupid stuff, though. I mean, I make the stupid decisions,

like I really – I'd get upset about…"

"...It's like a character trait. Being angry is not really healthy because it leads to too much

bad things happening. If you've got anger on your mind, a person drinks alcohol, and that

leads to something stupid. The way I look at anger, I look at it like it's something that

everyone is born with it, but there's a certain way you can use it. If it's really majorly

important to be angry, then you use it. Some people just use it out of character. Some

people go around harming people just because they feel like that's what they want to do.

When people commit murders and everything like that, you know that's just – anger is

like good and evil. Either you're going to be good all the way or you're just going to be

evil all the way. I look at anger as people who are evil who have a lot of anger built up and doing stuff the wrong way."

Many fathers said they avoided getting angry altogether and some described having a heightened sense of awareness (i.e., vigilance) for situations and people that might trigger their anger.

"When I'm angry? … A walking, ticking time bomb. I don't like being angry. I don't like being around people who make me angry because you're trying to figure out a way to throw me off my square. That's how I look at it…To me it's like I can't be around anybody who is going to make me yell, make me scream, anything like that...I haven't been around anybody that makes me angry in so long. I can see what type of person people are. If I know you're the type of person that are a mess or if you're the type of person that have your head on straight and you really don't like being around anybody, I can't be around anybody that makes me angry."

"Anger in general is mostly unnecessary, mostly. Being angry in a lot of situations can be completely prevented, and the majority of people, especially living here in Detroit, you learn that a lot of people are angry, so you have to think, and you have to be logical. You have to do a lot of things to stay away from angry people and keep yourself from being angry."

Fathers described anger as a powerful emotion, as many of them still experienced it against their will. Their resolution for anger was physically removing themselves from or abandoning situations that elicited the anger.

"Interviewer- "Ok, so again, what is it like for you to be angry?" Parent- "...World War 3. [Laughs]. Yeah I just, it's- it's a whole another ball game. A whole another world.…..all that "count to 10" stuff, that whack. I just- just leave, that's the only thing you can do, just misplace yo self from the situation [laughs]...Just walk away. Just leave. That's what I do to anger now, just misplace my self from the whole situation. Just leave it alone."

"Interviewer: Is there anything that you try to do to resolve feeling that?

Father: Breathe, take a deep breath. Yeah.

Interviewer: And that works?

Father: Yeah, and the quicker I get just away from the situation, I think that helps me out a lot too. Just the quicker I get away from whoever, if I get to arguing or something, just the quicker I get away from the situation, I think that helps me out. That helps me out a lot, because I think the more you stand there and look at the stuff or argue with somebody, it just goes farther, yeah…"

Many fathers characterized the experience of anger as unfortunate. Many fathers expressed the belief that anger has dangerous, and even deadly consequences. They associated anger with pain, jail, death, and the devil.

"But 85%, 90% of the time, anger is unnecessary, and it's something that you should learn to control early, like very early, or you're going to grow up to be an adult who can't control themselves. You're going to get yourself hurt or killed or in jail…I've seen that personally."

"It's not good. It's uhh--a …poisoning to your mind and your body other people around you…and it's damaging to your mind and body, and everything around you, and then your soul so, especially…damaging to your soul umm-. It's it's definitely something uhh-it's definitely something you stay away from."

"I think anger is very scary. I think anger is the gateway to unlimited BS or anything negative. I think anger can trigger stuff in you that you didn't think you had in you. That's why I try not to embrace that."

Lastly, some fathers recognized the value of anger. They spoke of the motivational aspects of the emotion, and even implied that the emotion is necessary when asked what their thoughts were about anger in general.

"You know, anger is sometimes—not even sometimes. Rarely. Rarely, anger possibly can solve the situation, because sometimes you have to be angry with certain kinds of people, you know, to get your point across to them and to let them know that their behavior is unacceptable."

"I think it's – sometimes I think it's good…
Sometimes I think you need to get angry sometimes because if you don't get angry, how is you going to let those feelings out? …
You never probably get all those feelings out or all your frustrations if you're always nice or always you know? Like everybody can get angry you know?"

"I think it's a necessary emotion because it inspires an individual to get things done. It may not be the right way about going about doing it all the time but you get some type of results."

Reckoning Negative Emotions

I defined this theme as processing negative emotions as a part of everyday life while resisting their dominant tendencies. Fathers' attitudes toward negative emotions overall were that they are natural feelings. A critical part of this theme is the idea that negative emotions are unpredictable or that once those feelings occurred, they did not necessarily have a say in where the emotions might take them. The unpredictability of emotions seemed to intrude on the ways that they viewed themselves and their personalities.

[Talking about sadness.] "I don't be the same person I'll be, like I normally be all happy and smiling and just – I'm here. That's how I normally be, but if I'm sad, I don't be smiling or I'm not excited about things or just excited about myself. I'll just-just be down."

"Um, it m- immobilizes me sometimes, I don't really feel like doin' much if I'm sad. Umm, t- yeah, I just kinda wanna stay to myself, um, that's pretty much it…"

Fathers similarly described that negative emotions are capable of taking over one's body and typically described intense emotional experiences. For sadness in particular, words did not always capture the heaviness of the emotion that fathers felt.

"Just feel defeated and weak, just wanting to just shut myself away from everybody, pretty much. That's my basic sad. I'm not sad very often but when I am, that's normally how it goes."

"I can say…probably like – the only thing I feel like – well, I feel empty, you know lonely basically. as far as- cuz one person, I have my family or whatever, but it's just especially on the inside since I lost my mom. That really took a toll on me, inside and out, it just – it really got to me- it's just – its barely – I'm trying to explain it, but inside, I just feel like I don't want to be bothered or I don't want to communicate if I'm sad, real sad. I just don't want to be bothered, communicate wit nobody, cut everybody off."

"It's rough. I basically feel heartbroken. It's kind of a hard thing to describe…like umm, God- I just feel like there is no one there. It's just me locked in a room or something, and just there is despair…"

Despite the unpleasant and sometimes consuming nature of sadness and anger, fathers described learning to live with them as a part of life and appreciate them for what they are: emotions.

"Anger is a part of life. You get angry about things, you know? We all got our own different feelings about situations so, you know what I'm saying? Sometimes, anger can be good and motivates you to do some things and then sometimes, it motivates you to do bad things, you know what I'm saying…"

[Talking about sadness.] "It's just part of life. Life wouldn't be what it really, you know what it's made to be, if it you was there but it's all just happy, you know? It'd be like, if

everybody happy, I don't think that would be cool. It kind of like-that's kinda what makes

you turn into like a stronger person in life you know, to expect the unexpected or

something like that. If you always happy and everything is always good you know, that's

cool, but Ion really feel like that would be fair…"

"Feeling of sadness, I don't like it. You know, personally, I feel like it's an emotion that

is – I mean, we – God created us with because you know, things…wanna make us sad,

you know, whether it's a relationship or like I said, a death or something like that. You

know, some things, I could deal with basically. I mean, try to come out of positively and

happy, you know."

Along with recognizing that negative emotions were inevitable parts of being human, fathers

emphasized human agency in the experiences of these emotions. They suggested that it is

important for one to take control of their negative emotions, and expressed a desire to teach their

children how to do so.

"Interviewer: Right. What do you want to teach her about sadness?

Father: It's pretty much letting her – saying it's okay to be sad it's unavoidable, and the

way you handle your sadness is pretty much the biggest thing. Sometimes there are going

to be times where you can't help but butt it out and do what you have to do to get better

but don't let that really consume you. You know it happens, you feel a certain way, but

my dad aspect comes out after a while. Dust yourself off, keep on rolling because

whatever's making you sad, this is not permanent. It's temporary. Just feel how you have

to feel. We give you your grieving whatever you need to do, but after a while it's time to get back on the bike and start riding again."

"Uhhh, that it happens. That I mean, regardless of how sad you get, you can't take it out on the next person, you can't take it out on nobody else. Tryna figure out your own way to deal with it [Int: mhm]. You know, even if it's just sittin' off in a corner, or readin' a book or listen to a music, somethin'. That's- your own way, find your own way to deal with being sad [Int: mhm]. Cuz that's what I had to do, deal with it. I had to find my own way so [Int: mhm]. You know, I don't want her to have to depend on me the rest of her life, whenever she gets sad, "Well I'll come run to daddy." [Int: mhm]. You know, I want her to be able to have to deal with it herself [Int: mhm]. That's probably it. [Int: ok]."

Children at the Center

Throughout fathers' descriptions of their experiences with negative emotions, they often came back to thinking about their children in ways that they thought about their emotion expression and regulation serving as a model for their children or even in the ways that being with their children helped them to cope with their negative emotions. Fathers clearly oriented their lives toward their children, deriving joy from them during their experiences with negative emotion. Thus, I defined children at the center as the orientation of all emotion-related behaviors to children.

"Interviewer: Is there anything you do to try and get through feeling angry?

Father: Yeah, sit by myself a lot you know, keep me from being angry, depending on who it is-you know like. If it's one of my kids or something like that, then I can get over being angry you know. I'm not going to be angry at my child. But if it's something like

somebody like the-, another person or something like that, a guy or another female,

something, then yeah, I'll probably be still angry. But as far as with my kids, no, I'll

probably sit with my child you know-and keep from being angry and talk to them and

stuff like that."

"Yeah, playing with them, playing with my babies. That keep me from being angry a

lot."

"I like to stay mad for a minute. Maybe if I stay – cuz sometimes when I stay there for a

reason it's like I get special attention, like my kids they wanna really be bothered. Let me

go upstairs and sit and watch TV with my daddy, or my kids would come upstairs and

find me in the bed, don't wanna be bothered come in jump into bed with me and we all

lay back watching TV and popcorn. Sometimes, I just act like I'm mad for a reason, so

they can just come upstairs and just jump into bed and just sit up there...just lay back

family day, today. Nobody going outside, and if we do go outside, I'd go outside turn on

the fire hydrant, throw them into the water, they squish me in water it's just – that's why I

love my kids…"

Fathers mentioned that they were mindful of their expression of negative emotions because now

their child was around to witness those expressions. This suggests that fathers understand their

children to be susceptible at their age, and believe it is important for people, parents in particular,

to manage experiences of negative emotion properly as an example for their children.

"... I mean ever since I had my son, I really don't like being sad cuz I don't want him to be seeing me sad all the time…"

"Ion like seeing him sad, can't stand seeing my son sad, or I don't like being sad either, because I feel like it ain't no reason to be sad no mo', you know I got my kid, we all good…"

" I really want [child's name] to learn from my example because he's seen me and his mom cranky. I'm trying to lead by example. Hopefully that teaches him."

Actively Working Through Emotions

Fathers reported that they engage in multiple emotion regulation strategies to manage and work through negative emotions such as engaging in physical activity, doing creative emotional debriefing activities such as making music or drawing, spending time with loved ones, praying, or doing activities that tend to give them positive feelings. Most often, fathers mentioned using more than one strategy to work through their emotions, particularly if a previous strategy did not work. Fathers seemed to benefit from directing the energy generated from negative emotions into an outlet. As a result, I defined the actively working through emotions theme as engaging in a range of emotion regulation strategies that appear to relieve emotional distress temporarily.

"Like, I try to take walks, take deep breaths and I do like to exercise, so… Sometimes I just like to drive around all day or play video games."

"Uhhhh- I do things that I enjoy to do. [Int: ok]. and that's how it brings such as, I go to school now, for cooking. Culinary. I love cookin', uhhh I love gardenin', I have a garden

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like … so, things like that… pull me out of it. Yeah I just embrace myself into those things and then, kinda pulls out."

"Yup, I usually go play with my kids [laughs]. Talk with them or I go take a ride or walk. I like drawin', I … go draw me a picture...Takes my mind off of it…then if that person that I'm sad about, or that situation that I'm sad about, will probably be done got resolved or be in a different state then, you know? Or if that person…if I'm mad at somebody, that person may not be mad at me anymore, or you know, my mind may be on a different thing, like I won't be sad anymore."

Fathers particularly employed these strategies when navigating negative emotions that derived from conflict. For anger specifically, fathers often described trying to deal with anger on their own first, often to avoid in-person confrontation with loved ones. Other times fathers described trying to handle their emotions internally before going to talk with someone they care about. Other times fathers described staying in the presence of others while regulating emotion, particularly if trying to talk through conflict before continuing to work through the emotion on their own.

"It depends on the level of sadness. Sometimes if I'm like, just irate, I just go for a walk or something, but I never just wanna just punch nobody or just hit no one like that. It's just always more like it's my personal – me as an individual, it's my emotions, so I deal with it on my own. If it's that much, I always have my girl, I could talk to my mother or somebody like that."

"There's a few different things. If I'm too angry to the point where I can't cope with it, if I'm angry at [presumably fiancée's name] or if we have a disagreement, I'll leave. I will take a drive, get my head together, really think about the situation, give her a call on the phone and we'll talk about it rather than be face-to-face with it to avoid more confrontation. More than likely I'll just leave…"

"Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything that you do, any sort of strategy that you use to kind of get through those moments of sadness?

Father: Stay to myself.

Interviewer: Stay to yourself, okay.

Father: Yes.

Interviewer: So you like to be around people, but are you talkative with those people to try to work through it?

Father: I talk, and then eventually, it gets to the point where I need my alone time.

Interviewer: Okay. So it's both sides. You like to be alone for a bit, and then also talk through it. Okay. How well does that work for you usually?

Father: It actually works quite good, because like I said, with me being alone, I have time to sit and think of the reason why I'm sad, what can I do to improve on, why I'm sad. Then when I have somebody to talk to, I can get other people's input so I can figure out what I need to do."

Although the onset of anger prompted fathers to remove themselves from situations in order to gather their thoughts, sadness appeared to invade their thoughts and cause them to ruminate on

traumatic life events associated with sadness (e.g., loss of a loved one). Additionally, some fathers described their experiences of sadness as "depressing", suggesting that fathers think of sadness as consuming and debilitating.

"I think about, you know, some of the people who have passed away in my life, and I get sad and start, you know, dreading back on that."

"Yeah. Depends on the situation. Depends on what it is. Like I said, if you lose someone – I lost a few people during my lifetime, it's a very emotional situation. I tend to go back thinking about some people in my life that I enjoy and stuff like that. I mean, that's about it, nothing too major. Nothing that wanna make me hurt myself, nothing like that, but just going through the emotion of losing someone close."

"Sad. It be depressing sometimes. There's a lot of thinking that I'm doing when I'm sad. Especially when you lose a loved one or something like that, it's like a downtime for me, and not so up."

Nonetheless, significant others were vital to fathers' navigation of sadness. They described romantic partners, children, and friends as "interrupting" their internal processing, an action that was likely beneficial for them overcoming sadness. Instead of "gathering their thoughts", they shared time with loved ones as a form of relief from the potential burden that sadness can become.

"[daughter's name]…I just play with her, I just like, "Give me a hug." Or "Give me a kiss." Then nine times...out of 10 would help me."

"My kids [to resolve feeling sad]. Play with my kids to keep a smile on my face. When I'm sad they just take it away…"

"I listen to some music and play with my kids. Yeah, have them around me, cuz they actually – if I'm down and out they actually know. Yeah, they know. From the baby – anything wrong with me, from the baby til' on up they know what's wrong with me, so they come over, they be by me, they lean on me try to-you know-to talk to me say, "What's wrong?" Especially [daughter's name]. She asked me, "What's wrong daddy? You okay? What happened?" When she – that's what – it lift me up when I see those smile going, they lift my spirits up and make me try to get up outta that situation."

Fathers also described trying to distract themselves from the emotion, only if temporarily, and talked about redirecting their thoughts elsewhere or engaging in emotion suppression.

"Interviewer: Is there anything that you do to try and get through to resolve feeling sad?
Father: Eat candy sometimes, snacks.
Interviewer: Does that help?
Father: No, not really. It helps, but only for a few minutes, probably 15 minutes or so. Then I'll turn on the TV and try to watch something to distract me. There's not many things that are really a so-called pick me up, but I have a lot of distractions."

"Yeah, I kind of think about a happier moment or something, something better that's how we carry it or something…"

"Interviewer: Could I tell if you were sad? What do you look like when you're sad? What would I see?

Father: That's the thing. You probably wouldn't because you wouldn't see it. To me, that's a private matter. I'm just honest. In public, I can hide a whole lot of shit. I'm not even going to lie with you. I can hide a lot in public. "

Discussion

This study explored African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions through interview data. My primary research question was what are African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions? To answer this research question, I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis of African American fathers' responses to the anger and sadness components of a commonly used measure of meta-emotion, the Meta Emotion Interview (MEI; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). From my theoretical thematic analysis (TA), I generated five themes based on a set of deductive codes derived from previous literature on parents' beliefs about emotion, emotion socialization, and African American coping, and inductive codes derived from the familiarization phase of TA. The five themes generated from the coding were: 1) responsibility for children's emotions, 2) complex relationship with anger, 3) reckoning negative emotions, 4) children at the center, and 5) actively working through emotions. Taken together, these findings contribute to the limited parental meta-emotion philosophy (PMEP) and parental emotion socialization (PES) literature on fathers, generally, and for African American fathers, specifically. These findings may help to broaden previous meta-emotion philosophies identified in the literature (e.g., emotion-coaching, laissez-faire, and emotion-dismissing) to include more

complex philosophies that simultaneously engaged aspects of each type of meta-emotion philosophy, at least with regard to the emotions of anger and sadness. The current findings also provide a foundation for understanding the nature of emotion-related beliefs, behaviors, and socialization among low-income African American fathers in particular. This is a departure from previous narratives of parenting in low-income African American households which have (1) focused primarily on mother-headed households with little recognition of the fathers that are present in children's lives and (2) focused on familial and environmental stress and lack of resources as the most salient and relevant socialization context for children's early development without considering the extent to which parents in these families consider and make room for their own and their children's emotions.

Across the five themes identified, I note that fathers primarily relied on supportive responses to their toddler's negative emotions and demonstrated the belief that emotions are natural and a part of life. Fathers also often admitted that they saw negative emotions such as anger as being a dangerous emotion, but that they were willing to see their children's negative emotions as opportunities to observe their skills and provide information on when fathers needed to jump in to help their children learn from the experience of anger and sadness. This combination of meta-emotion philosophies complicates the empirical understanding of how meta-emotion philosophies may currently exist among African American father populations. Additionally, fathers' discussion of their own emotions corroborated previous conceptions of African American coping through fathers' accounts of using a combination of general (e.g., cognitive reappraisal, suppression; emotion focus Gross & John, 2003; Fabes et al., 2002) coping and Africultural coping strategies (e.g., collective coping, emotion debriefing; Utsey, Adams, & Bolden, 2001). Yet, even further, African American fathers described engagement in multiple

forms of emotion coping and regulation strategies, which may reveal a broader repertoire for emotion regulation strategies among African American men than previous empirical literature on emotion regulation and coping suggests. Below I further describe how the five themes I identified compliment, complicate, and reflect previous theory and literature on meta-emotion philosophy, emotion socialization, and African American men and father's emotion beliefs and experiences.

Responsibility for Children's Emotions

African American fathers reported a painstaking involvement in PES processes as well as describing ways in which they felt they needed to teach their children about their negative emotions and to protect their children from the disruptive nature of negative emotions. These set of perspectives and behaviors reflected a deeply felt responsibility for their children's emotions. This theme is consistent with guidance beliefs about children's emotions (Parker et al., 2012). Although fathers primarily reported being responsive to their child's needs, they also were careful not to create unrealistic expectations for their children in doing so. Sometimes, fathers' PES behaviors cohered with their child's mother's practices, consistent with findings from Baker et al. (2011), who noted coherence between mothers' and fathers' PES during middle childhood among a predominantly White, middle-class sample. Previous qualitative research on African American fathers in co-parenting relationships, specifically, found that they valued respect of differences in disciplinary behaviors and "consistency between parents, shared rules, and common standards of parenting" in those relationships (Doyle et al., 2014).

African American fathers' ERSBs in the current study heavily overlapped with disciplinary practices. This is likely due to the salience of gender roles (e.g., protector and provider) in PES processes (Brown, Craig, & Halberstadt, 2015), which may speak to fathers'

masculine identities and encourage them to value ERSBs that are aligned with these roles, such as punishment and minimizing responses. Traditionally, punishment and minimizing responses were theorized to be nonsupportive practices in response to children's emotions (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998), yet newer theoretical assertions about African American PES recognize that the use of these responses may serve a specific parenting goal of teaching African American children the necessary emotion regulation strategy of suppression to avoid being the target of bias or racism (Dunbar et al., 2017). For African American fathers, these suppressive strategies likely allow them to establish a sense of authority with their children as a part of their masculine identities, as well as guide children in developing an adaptive cultural emotion regulation response to cultural expectations for African American emotion (Lozada et al., 2022).

African American fathers also demonstrated developmental-related beliefs about emotional development that reflected what they deem might be changes in the way that their responsibility to guide their children's emotions shift with age. This was present often in fathers' responses to the MEI question about what they wanted to teach their child about anger and sadness. Some fathers appeared to scoff at interviewers' questions about teaching their child about emotion at the early age of 2, implying that they believe emotion socialization behaviors are premature during toddlerhood, and other times explicitly stating that there was not much to teach their child at 2 years of age, but that they knew what they planned to do with their children later. Instead, fathers settled for more age appropriate co-regulation strategies such as comforting their child through physical touch, food, and drinks, which we coded as supportive responses to children's negative emotions. These emotion beliefs appear to be consistent with previous literature on parents' beliefs about children's emotions in which beliefs about whether parents or children are responsible for guiding children's emotions have been identified along with there

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being developmental beliefs about children's emotion-related behaviors and emotional styles (Parker et al., 2012; Castro et al., 2015). While African American fathers may perceive these behaviors to be developmentally appropriate during toddlerhood, particularly comforting through physical touch, it is possible that their emotion socialization practices are having unintended consequences and they are underestimating their children's emotion-related abilities at this age. Children learn to engage in basic self-regulation behaviors (e.g., self-talk, help-seeking, problem solving and distraction; Brophy-Herb et al., 2018) during toddlerhood. These are essentially the foundation for emotion-related behaviors that adults learn to use later in life. Thus, there is potential to help African American fathers expand their beliefs about the utility of toddlerhood for their child's overall development.

Complex Relationship with Anger

African American fathers' experiences with negative emotions seemed to challenge them, but I observed a wide range of orientations for anger, especially. The complex relationship with anger theme was one of the most expansive themes in the study, suggesting that anger is a dominant emotion (Halberstadt, Cassidy, Stifter, Parke, & Fox, 1995) with which African American fathers experienced a great deal of tension. The complexity of anger for African American fathers is not surprising given societal stereotypes about the "angry Black man", which dictate the ways that others interact with and monitor African American men's emotions (Durik et al., 2006). When first asked about anger, many fathers responded that they rarely got angry. I interpreted this as fathers distancing themselves from anger or avoiding contexts and situations that might elicit anger because of past experiences (i.e., personally and vicariously) in which they internalized the cost of anger. When fathers did share about their anger, they appeared to have visceral reactions that sometimes led them to share intimate details about their experiences

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and thoughts, while continuing to assert that they were not an angry person or that being angry was not characteristic of them.

This tension between sharing about anger while distancing themselves from the emotion may have been reflective of fathers engaging in impression management. Fathers demonstrated this in their interview responses, even if they did not describe it in their personal experiences. For instance, they clarified that they are not physical or violent people when sharing experiences of anger in which they may have resorted to physical means of expression. Majors & Billson (1992) conceptualized impression management as a part of African American men's resistance to racism and oppression through a coping mechanism called "Cool Pose". "Cool Pose" is a manifestation of traditional masculinity that includes multiple modes of expression (i.e., verbal, posture) to convey that one is in control of his environment. This supposed de-identification with anger may be an attempt to negotiate the persistent racial stereotype of the "angry Black man". Additionally, Cool Pose may also overlap with Stevenson and Davis' (in press) description of the "Catch-33" dilemma for African American men in which they are faced with countering the negative racial stereotypes that abound about them or surrendering to these narratives at risk of increasing fear of Black males and their bodies. They argue that Black men solve this dilemma by taking on a "damned if I do, damned if I don't" attitude (i.e., one of indifference towards the outcome of life events).

Regarding the socialization of anger for their children, fathers in this study appeared to experience some tension between their experiences with negative emotions and their intentions to teach children about negative emotions. I attributed this to the racialized context of emotion socialization practices in African American families (Lozada et al., 2022). Although interviewers did not ask fathers directly about racial socialization practices, they spoke on challenges of

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negotiating their role in emotion socialization with their lived experiences as Black men. It is

hard to divorce the two, and thus, I assume that their experiences with racism shaped some of

their beliefs about anger. Many fathers clearly expressed the belief that anger can be dangerous.

They spoke of jail and death as consequences of anger. This makes sense, considering that 68.2%

and 26.9% of fathers from the larger study reported traumatic loss of a loved one and

imprisonment as traumatic experiences (Bocknek, 2018). Several participants mentioned anger

management classes, with a few specifying that they took these classes in jail. Fathers appear to

have developed a warranted caution about the emotion that prevents them from getting in any

further trouble because of it. This was most evident in the withdrawal (WIT) code. While the

coding team applied codes for other regulation strategies more often than WIT, it was one of the

most striking codes to us. I defined withdrawal as "avoiding the experience of emotion by

physically removing oneself from a situation". Spielberg, Stewart, Levin, Miller, & Heller

(2008) suggested that withdrawal involves "suppressing outward facial and verbal expression of

anger as well as leaving anger-provoking situations". It is interesting that African American

fathers' multidimensional masculine ideologies and conceptions of masculinity (Hammond &

Mattis, 2005; Hunter & Davis, 1992; 1994; Hammond, 2012; Caldwell, Antonakos, Tsuchiya,

Assari, & De Loney, 2013; Tsuchiya, Assari, & De Loney, 2013; Roberts-Douglass & Curtis-

Boles, 2013) are flexible enough for parental ERSBs, but their own personal experiences with

anger led them to violate "Cool Pose".

  As a part of their multidimensional masculine ideologies, African American fathers may

ascribe to traditional notions of masculinity such as rejection of the feminine and toughness

(Smiler & Heasley, 2016). One would think that the "Cool Pose" calls for them to withstand

conflict while angry, even sometimes at the risk of physical health and safety. However, that was

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not the case for the fathers in this study. Many avoided anger "at all costs". They were not

willing to take the chance of getting angry, no matter how justified they could have been in their

emotion. They fled from anger at the first sign of it. This finding may suggest that anger is such a

powerful emotion that it causes African African men to disregard masculine role norms and

ascribed behaviors such as "Cool Pose" or perhaps, more importantly, the role of father has

superseded that of any other projections on their identity that call for them to seek validation

through behaviors that can be dangerous and allowed them to exercise a sense of agency that was

previously inaccessible before becoming fathers. In this way, fatherhood revolutionized these

African American men's lives, leading to a greater self-worth that is reflected in their

experimentation with emotion-related behaviors that better suit their overall values while serving

in the father role.

Some fathers described that they were typically able to recognize the onset of anger, but I

wondered if their reluctance to get angry and/or aversion toward the emotion inhibited their

ability to recognize its effects on them. Previous literature on emotional suppression suggests this

regulation strategy generally has negative effects on social and health outcomes, but that culture

may buffer these effects such that it is potentially adaptive when used among racially minoritized

groups (Chervonsky & Hunt, 2017; Nelson et al., 2013). Although fathers described intense

experiences of anger that caused them temporary dysfunction, they were able to verbalize

physical health consequences of anger when it came to their children in particular. They

expressed intentions to teach their children that the emotion can be bad for your health. They

referenced anger as a burden when responding about their children's emotion, and implied that

they should not project it on others. Fathers were essentially encouraging the practice of

emotional suppression. However, they still emphasized the importance of releasing anger. They

encouraged their child to talk to others than themselves. I suspected that fathers' past intense experiences of anger were beneficial for them in some ways. They spoke on intense experiences with anger as if they were instrumental for their perspectives on life in general. They were not necessarily proud of some of the things they did while angry, but appeared to learn valuable lessons from the emotion that the journey of fatherhood has now allowed them to share. Taken together, these phenomena may help to explain the tension that African American fathers may experience around anger and may provide direction for future inquiry that allow African American fathers to further reflect on racialized and gendered expectations about anger and the implications that these expectations have on their emotion expression, regulation, and socialization with their children.

Reckoning Negative Emotions

African American fathers' reckoning of negative emotions included descriptions of anger and sadness as being consuming and unpredictable emotions while also acknowledging that these emotions were normal and a part of everyday life. This latter conception of emotions being a part of daily life in many ways is consistent with parental emotion beliefs identified in empirical literature such as the "emotions are just a part of life" belief (Parker et al., 2012; Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011) and the emotion beliefs that are a part of the laissez-faire meta-emotion philosophy (Katz & Gottman 1986). However, African American fathers' descriptions of emotions being unpredictable and consuming in combination with this belief leads to a more powerful depiction of emotions than previously captured by either of these belief sets.

Analyses revealed that African American fathers were more willing to accept sadness as a part of life than anger. However, the emotion of sadness appeared to be reserved for serious life events such as a death in the family. Fathers reckoned its ability to consume them by searching

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for a coping strategy, typically settling on questioning the associated cause of sadness and searching for comfort in the presence of others (i.e., physically and spiritually). They believed sadness to be an emotion that particularly illustrated the unpredictable nature of emotions. This was most evident by fathers' responses explaining that sadness changes their demeanor. Despite Halberstadt & colleagues' (1995) conceptualization of sadness as a submissive emotion, African American fathers expressed the weight of sadness in their lives. They emphasized the internal aspect of the emotion and seemed to conceive of it as qualitatively different from anger. Fathers implied that sadness affected their self-image and personality. This felt different from my observation of fathers' impression management for anger, in which they felt compelled to justify their character based on their responses to questions about their experiences. Perhaps there was less pressure for them to present their sadness in a particular way, so they volunteered information about their experiences. There were some exceptions, including fathers who often responded "it depends" to the question "would I be able to tell if you were sad". Some interviewers probed further, which I particularly appreciated as a researcher conducting secondary data analysis. I felt honored to have access to the data, and hoped the interviewers appreciated participant responses as much as I did.

Children at the Center

The presence of others was central to African American fathers' experiences with negative emotion. Many of them described children as "taking them out of their anger" or "lifting their spirits". Children seemed to be the motivation for fathers learning how to handle their anger better. The presence of their children alone shifted how they approached emotion-related behaviors. Fathers did not always speak of this concerning emotion, but just being a role model in general. This is relevant for other qualitative studies that have found similar themes

among African American fathers (Doyle et al., 2016; Rodgers, Sperry, Levant, 2015). The emotion socialization behavior of modeling may fit within cultural conceptions of fathering and masculinity for African American men. It is surprising that we did not find more examples of the code in our sample. One explanation for this may be our emotion-specific definition of the code as a part the deductive orientation to thematic analysis (i.e., "parent describes his own emotion expression as teaching their child about emotion expression"; see Appendix C). Such a definition does not necessarily account for physical presence and general emotional availability that African American fathers may place emphasis on considering the stereotypical narratives of father absence among Black communities. Nonetheless, the reflexive approach allowed us to incorporate codes that were both universal and specific to African American fathers' experiences with emotion.

Actively Working Through Emotion.

African American fathers responded that they engaged in two common types of emotion regulation: emotional suppression and cognitive reappraisal. They seemed to reference emotional suppression as a pattern of emotion regulation they engaged in previously. This suggests that fathers are actively learning how to regulate or "work through" their emotions, behaviors that are often driven by their children. Based on African American fathers' reports of intense experiences of negative emotions, it would make sense that they relied on distraction techniques of coping. However, African American fathers defied convention in some of their emotion regulation strategies, including emotion debriefing, withdrawal, emotion-focused coping, and problem-focused coping.

Emotion debriefing was initially an inductive code that we defined as the channeling of emotion through constructive activities. Apparently, the term is common in the counseling field,

and is a tool that therapists or mental health professionals use to get clients to do quite the opposite: address their emotions directly. It also was a subscale of the Africultural Coping Systems Inventory (ACSI; Utsey, Adams, & Bolden, 2000). However, after referring to the ACSI for a definition of emotion debriefing, it did not quite fit how we were thinking of the code, despite the name "creative" in the respective ACSI subscale (i.e., cognitive/creative emotional debriefing). We definitely wanted to emphasize the potentially creative aspect of coping for African American men, and our findings suggested that fathers engaged in a number of creative activities to distract themselves from negative emotions (e.g., music, video gaming, riding/taking a drive). Additionally, withdrawal would not classify as completely avoidant. There was a temporal component in which fathers described returning to the situation or person that made them mad after some time had passed and they perceived themselves to be calm enough to address the conflict appropriately. In this way, withdrawal was a wise way of handling anger that may be particularly adaptive for African American men.

African American fathers approached their sadness in somewhat different ways than their anger. They did not necessarily distract themselves from this emotion as much. Many fathers described ruminating on sadness by thinking of the situation that made them sad and what they could have done better (i.e., emotion focus, EF). They also described thinking about loved ones who were no longer here in the physical with them, which exacerbated the sadness sometimes and redirected their thoughts from the sadness other times. The latter seemed to include a spiritual component with fathers deriving strength and guidance from their ancestors. I expected to capture this regulation strategy within the spiritual-centered coping (SC) code. However, admittedly, the coding team had trouble expanding this code in a way that was affirming of the connectivity that exists throughout African American life. This may explain why we did not

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apply this code often across the sample. Along with emotional suppression and cognitive reappraisal, my coding team and I applied the following codes frequently throughout the sample: emotion debriefing, emotion-focused, problem-focused, physical activity, and collective coping. Emotion debriefing was the most common for African American fathers among all these. Fathers also expressed engaging in self-soothing techniques that we did not code, such as deep breathing and positive self-talk. These emotion-related behaviors were relevant, but did not necessarily fit neatly into our codes of physical activity (PA) and cognitive reappraisal (CR).

Strengths and Limitations

The use of the MEI measure was a strength of the current study, particularly with the sample of African American fathers who PMEP and PES researchers usually understudy. Participants largely seemed comfortable with the MEI format of measurement, as they shared intimate beliefs about and experiences with their own emotion and their children's emotion. They were particularly eager to share lessons from negative emotions with their children. The MEI appeared to capture unique information about African American fathers' emotion-related beliefs and experiences that may have otherwise been hidden in standardized response format measurement that is often used in more quantitative approaches to assessing emotion beliefs (e.g., Parents' Beliefs about Children's Emotions Scale; Halberstadt et al., 2013) and behaviors (e.g., Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale; Fabes et al., 2002) that they may have been hesitant to speak on otherwise. For instance, while previous research has documented mean levels of African American fathers' endorsement of emotion beliefs and socialization behaviors and correlations between beliefs and behaviors (Brown, Craig, & Halberstadt, 2015; Baker, Fenning, & Crnic, 2011), fathers' responses on the MEI provided insights about their beliefs and

behaviors that are informed by fathers' reflections on their emotion experiences, their experiences with their parents growing up, and their goals for raising their children.

While the MEI provided a meaningful contribution to PMEP and PES literature for African American fathers, specifically, the measure is limited for this population because of its lack of questions about their racialized and gendered experiences as African American men. I included the Black Masculine Identity Model in my theoretical grounding because this framework contextualizes African American men's experiences, generally, and the PES practices of African American families. It is possible that some of the themes that I interpreted reflect constructs from these models (e.g., struggle, independence) that speak to African American men's sense of self-determination, particularly in the face of negative racial stereotypes. However, the MEI is not equipped to capture such nuances. Thus, researchers considering using the MEI with African American male populations moving forward should consider modifying the measure to add questions about their race-related experiences and cultural background.

Researcher subjectivity was a tool in the current study given the incorporation of a reflexive approach in thematic analysis. However, the deductive orientation may have limited the study from making sense of African American fathers' MEI responses beyond a semantic standpoint. For example, fathers' responses to questions about their PES practices often included descriptions of a general presence and availability for their children that is likely important for fathers and children alike. However, we did not necessarily apply supportive codes to these excerpts unless they met the criteria of teaching children about the emotion that they are experiencing. On the other hand, our definition of the suppressive responses code was more general (i.e., "dismissing, punishing a child for their emotion expression…"; see Appendix C for code definitions and examples). These dimensional code definitions do not necessarily capture

the purpose behind parenting and parental socialization overall in African American families that emotion socialization behaviors are typically situated in. Future studies should consider incorporating an inductive orientation to the study of African American fathers' PMEP and PES to account for this populations' meaning making of their parenting behaviors.

Implications

The findings of the current study have implications for African American men's mental and physical health, broadly. The range of emotion regulation strategies that this study illuminated for African American fathers has strong overlap with coping strategies. African American fathers in the study perceived strategies such as emotion debriefing, collective coping, and withdrawal effective for at least temporarily relieving both their personal experiences and their children's experiences of emotional distress. Additionally, many fathers spoke of physical health when sharing their beliefs about negative emotion (anger in particular) and PES behaviors with children. This suggests that children are the motivation for these fathers' emotion-related behaviors and that the emotion-regulation strategies revealed in this study may sustain their well-being over time. Thus, future studies should evaluate the relationship between African American men's emotion-related behaviors and health outcomes.

Conclusion

Taken together, themes of African American fathers' beliefs about and experiences with their own and their children's negative emotions suggest that African American fathers were largely accepting and supportive of sadness and anger. They are particularly oriented towards their kids in emotion-related behaviors, relying on them as sources of motivation for expression and regulation of negative emotion. African American fathers described intense experiences with both sadness and anger, but particularly spoke of a complex relationship with anger that includes

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the belief that the emotion is dangerous, an attempt to maintain a healthy distance from it, and acknowledgement of its unhealthy qualities. While it is possible that fathers are describing a more complex emotion (e.g., resentment), and that their relationship with anger is a function of racism and oppression, the current study was not equipped to address these structural features. Nonetheless, fathers described actively working through negative emotions overall through a range of strategies that may allow them to temporarily divert emotional distress with the possibility of creating healthy behaviors in the future. These findings suggest that the role of African American fathers, specifically in the emotion socialization process, can be one of a life coach through negative emotions at an early age.

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Appendix A

Meta-Emotion Interview

Parent Meta-Emotion Interview

Lynn Fainsilber Katz
John M. Gottman

v 3.0, Revised 5/29/2008

This interview contains changes from the original Katz & Gottman (1986) Meta-Emotion Interview, based on changes to the PMEI Coding Manual (Hunter, Hessler, Katz, Hooven, & Mittman, 2007). Additional questions are asked and other minor modifications were made to the phrasing of the questions

DO NOT DUPLICATE

PARENT META-EMOTION INTERVIEW

<u>Introduction</u>

Interviewer (I): In this part of your visit, we would like to ask you some questions about how you feel about different emotions.

What we are looking for is your natural responses to the questions. There is a broad range of answers for questions about emotions. Take surprise for example. Some people don't ever like being surprised. They hate surprise parties, and if you throw them a surprise party, they wouldn't like it at all. On the other hand, some people love to be surprised and love surprising others. They go out of their way to experience that emotion more often. In both cases, people experience the emotion of surprise in very different ways and neither is right or wrong. The same is true for the emotions that we will talk about today. People are just different.

We are going to talk about three emotions today: sadness, anger and fear. Each emotion is broken into two parts: how you feel today and how (child's name) feels. Even though the questions may begin to sound familiar to you, they are addressing different emotions you feel.

Again, there are no right or wrong answers. What I am going to be asking you about is your own feelings regarding your emotions. How you experience different feelings and how you feel about feelings in general, OK? Before we start do you have any questions?

Part One: The Father's and Child's Sadness

    I: Let's talk about feeling sad.

- □ What is it like for you to be sad?
- □ What do you look like? If I saw you could I tell if you were sad? What would I see?
- □ What are you feeling inside?
  - ◊ Do you have any physical sensations when you're sad?
- □ What do you think about when you're sad?
  - ◊ Are there any thoughts or images that go through your mind?
- □ Is there anything you do to try to get through (resolve) feeling sad?
  - ◊ Does this work for you?
  - ◊ (Ask appropriate follow-up questions as necessary for remediation strategies: e.g., "Do you talk with your friend to help you work through your sadness or to forget about your sadness?")
- □ When you are sad, do you prefer to be around others or do you prefer to be alone?
- □ Can you give me a recent and vivid example of one time that you were sad? What happened, who was there, what was said and how did you resolve it (try to get a play-by-play account of what happened)?
- □ What do you think about sadness in general?
- □ How do you feel about the way other people experience and express their sadness?

I: Let's talk about your child's sadness.

- □ What about _____ (the child)? Can you tell when (s)he's sad?
- □ What does (s)he do when sad or a little blue?
- □ Is there anything (s)he does to try to get over feeling sad?
- □ What do you do to help your child get over this emotion?
   - ◊ What skills do you teach ____(child) to help him/her deal with his/her sadness on his/her own?
- □ What are your reactions, thoughts and feelings when _____ (the child) is sad?
- □ In terms of your reactions, thoughts and feelings, does this relate to anything in your past? Tell me a story of that.
- □ Can you give me a recent and vivid example of one time that ____ (child) was sad? What happened, who was there, what was said and how did he/she get over it. (try to get a play-by-play account of what happened)?
- □ What do you want to teach ___(child) about sadness?

Part Two: The Father's and Child's Anger

I: Let's talk about feeling angry.

- □ What is it like for you to be angry?
- □ What do you look like? If I saw you could I tell if you were angry? What would I see?
- □ What are you feeling inside?
   - ◊ Do you have any physical sensations when you're angry?
- □ What do you think about when you're angry?
   - ◊ Are there any thoughts or images that go through your mind?
- □ Is there anything you do to try to get through (resolve) feeling angry?
   - ◊ Does this work for you?
   - ◊ (Ask appropriate follow-up questions as necessary for remediation strategies: e.g., "Do you go for a walk to help you work through your anger or to forget about your anger?")
- □ When you are angry, do you prefer to be around others or do you prefer to be alone?
- □ Can you give me a recent or vivid example of one time that you were angry? What happened, who was there and what was said (try to get a play-by-play account of what happened)?
- □ What do you think about anger in general?
- □ How do you feel about the way other people experience and express their anger?

I: Let's talk about your child's anger.

- □ What about _____ (the child)? Can you tell when (s)he's angry?
- □ What does (s)he do when angry?
- □ Is there anything (s)he does to try to get over feeling angry?
- □ What do you do to help your child get over this emotion?

◊ What skills do you teach _____(child) to help him/her deal with his/her anger on his/her own?

☐ What are your reactions, thoughts and feelings when _____ (the child) is angry?
☐ In terms of your reactions, thoughts and feelings, does this relate to anything from your childhood? Tell me a story of that.
☐ Can you give me a recent and vivid example of one time that _____ (child) was angry? What happened, who was there, what was said and how did he/she get over it. (try to get a play-by-play account of what happened)?
☐ What do you want to teach ___(child) about anger?

Part Three: The Father's and Child's Fear

I: Let's talk about feeling fear.

☐ What is it like for you to be afraid now?
☐ What do you look like? If I saw you could I tell if you were feeling fear? What would I see?
☐ What are you feeling inside?
◊ Do you have any physical sensations when you're afraid?
☐ What do you think about when you're afraid?
◊   Are there any thoughts or images that go through your mind?
☐ Is there anything you do to try to get through (resolve) feeling afraid?
◊ Does this work for you?
◊ (Ask appropriate follow-up questions as necessary for remediation strategies: e.g., "Do you take deep breaths to help you work through your fear or to forget about your fear?")
☐ When you are feeling afraid, do you prefer to be around others or do you prefer to be alone?
☐ Can you give me a recent and vivid example of one time that you were afraid? What happened, who was there, what was said and how did you resolve it (try to get a play-by-play account of what happened)?
☐ What do you think about fear in general?
☐ How do you feel about the way other people experience and express their fear?

I: Let's talk about your child's fear.

☐ What about _____ (the child)? Can you tell when (s)he's afraid?
☐ What does (s)he do when afraid?
☐ Is there anything (s)he does to try to get over feeling fear?
☐ What do you do to help your child get over this emotion?
◊ What skills do you teach _____(child) to help him/her deal with his/her fear on his/her own?
☐ What are your reactions, thoughts and feelings when _____ (the child) is afraid?
☐ In terms of your reactions, thoughts and feelings, does this relate to anything in your past? Tell me a story of that.
☐ Can you give me a recent and vivid example of one time that _____ (child) was afraid? What happened, who was there, what was said and how did he/she get over it. (try to get a play-by-play account of what happened)?

□   What do you want to teach ___(child) about fear?

Appendix B

Table 1

Analyzed MEI Questions

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1. What is it like for you to be sad?

2. What do you look like? If I saw you could I tell if you were sad? What would I see?

3. What are you feeling inside?

   Do you have any physical sensations when you're sad?

4. What do you think about when you're sad?

   Are there any thoughts or images that go through your mind?

5. Is there anything you do to try to get through (resolve) feeling sad?

   Does this work for you?

   Ask appropriate follow-up questions as necessary for remediation strategies: e.g., "Do you talk with your friend to help you work through your sadness or to forget about your sadness?"

6. What do you think about sadness in general?

7. What are your reactions, thoughts and feelings when ___ (the child) is sad?

8. In terms of your reactions, thoughts and feelings, does this relate to anything in your past? Tell me a story of that.

9. What do you want to teach ___ (child) about sadness?

10. What is it like for you to be angry?

11. What do you look like? If I saw you could I tell if you were angry? What would I see?

12. What are you feeling inside?

    Do you have any physical sensations when you're angry?

13. What do you think about when you're angry?

Are there any thoughts or images that go through your mind?

14. Is there anything you do to try to get through (resolve) feeling angry?

> Does this work for you?
>
> Ask appropriate follow-up questions as necessary for remediation strategies: e.g., "Do you go for a walk to help you work through your anger or to forget about your anger?"

15. What do you think about anger in general?

16. What are your reactions, thoughts and feelings when _____ (the child) is angry?

17. In terms of your reactions, thoughts and feelings, does this relate to anything from your childhood? Tell me a story of that.

18. What do you want to teach ___(child) about anger?

Table 2

Code Definitions and Examples

Beliefs about negative emotions	
	Definitions / Example
Emotions Just Are[1,2] (EJA)	The belief that emotions are just a part of life and that all humans experience them. Example: "Natural. It's supposed to happen, it's a learning process."
Emotions Are Valuable[1,2] (EAV)	The belief that emotions are useful to experience and express. Example: "Sadness is something great. I think it's something that the average person should get out. I think they should embrace it. I really do, but just for me, at the moment, it's not for me. You know what I'm saying?"
Dangerous Consequences of Emotion[1,2] (DCE)	The belief that negative emotion is bad, especially if experienced and expressed too intensely, and sometimes there are negative consequences for the display or expression of negative emotion. Example: "You mad at a kid or something you smack them up or you hit them with something, you can go to jail for that or you can be in juvenile or something."
Emotions Over Time[1,2] (EOT)	
Change[1,2] (C)	People change how they express, manage, and experience emotions over time. Example: " [...] it's definitely a feeling that you will feel as you grow, and it's just something you've got to learn how to deal with."
Stability[1,2] (S)	People do not change in how they express, manage, and experience emotions over time. Example:
Protecting Children (PC)	Children should be protected from emotions. Example: "I was always taught that a child has a right for their happiness regardless of the situation [...]"

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[1] Parker et al., 2012

[2] Halberstadt et. al., 2013

Emotion Expression Matters (EEM)	The belief that regardless of how one feels inside, the expression of emotion is what matters. Example: "[...] but one thing I do know about emotions [...] it's how you broadcast it out that what's really what's inside."
Emotions are Uncontrollable[3] (EAU)	The belief that people have very little over their emotions and that emotions cause different reactions. Example: "[...] it comes random, and events and stuff happens, so can't always be prepared for it."

Experiences with Negative Emotions	
	Definition / Example
Experience	
No experience/ Infrequent experience of emotion (NE/IE)	Rarely experiencing an emotion at all. Example: "I'm very seldom afraid."
Overlap in Emotion Expression	Describing the experience of one emotion as similar to another. Example: "A mixture of anger, and I just lay down cuz I see a lot of myself to stoop to a level of being sad and anger [...]"
Emotion Feels Consuming (EFC)	Describe an experience of an emotion as 'draining' and taking over one's experience. Example: "Sadness is like – sadness is just depressing. I feel that's just a big energy drain."
Desire to Control/ Conquer Emotion (DTC)	Describing the experience of an emotion as something to 'get through' or overcome and requiring effort to control. Example: "I don't get angry much, like I really laugh it off, I'd rather not be angry, like if I laugh it off cuz I already, cuz there's not a lot of things that can anger me, so, to get rid of that I'd laugh it off."
Expression	
Verbal (V)	Telling others directly about the emotion you feel. Example: "And I try to find somebody to talk to."
Non-verbal (NV)	Displaying emotion through facial expressions and describing physical sensations that accompany the experience of an

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[3] Ford, Lwi, Gentzler, Hankin, & Mauss, 2018

	emotion (i.e., without words). Example: "I'd probably have watery eyes or something like that."
Regulation	
Emotional Suppression[4] (ES)	Deliberately withholding and not expressing emotion, inhibiting emotion expression. Example: "Uhh I mean, I try to keep it in, all insider tho [...]"
Emotion Debriefing (ED)	Distracting oneself from the experience emotion and channeling or unpacking emotion through activities that occupy your mind (e.g., entertainment, creativity, cleaning). Example: "Listen to music… Music has always been the one thing that has always kept me calm for years[...]"
Problem Focus[5] (PF)	Focusing on the cause of an emotion to address it or change it. Example: "What scared him, how can I get rid of it, what do I need to do to make sure he isn't scared anymore."
Emotion Focus[5] (EF)	Ruminating on the emotion, internalizing the emotion, externalizing the emotion, emotion-based decisions. Example: "I think about why – the reason I'm angry, I just keep thinking about over and over to make myself more and more mad. Just keep thinking about why I'm mad. Thoughts, yeah, but my images, like my thoughts be like, 'What if I did this? Would I still be angry? Would that make me feel better?' Something like that."
Cognitive Reappraisal[5] (CR)	Thinking about something else or thinking about it differently. Example: "I try to think about positive things like my kids or something."
Substance Use (SU)	Distracting oneself from the experience of an emotion through the use of substances. Example: "Ummm, maybe have a drink, smoke a cigarette, or somethin' like that."
Withdrawal[6] (WIT)	Avoiding the experience of emotion by physically removing oneself from a situation. Example: "I just- just leave, that's the only thing you can do, just misplace yourself from the situation [...]"

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[4] Gross & John, 2003

[5] Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, & Madden-Derdich, 2002

[6] Spielberg, Stewart, Levin, Miller, & Heller, 2008

Collective Coping[7] (CC)	Coping with an emotion through group-centered activities such as gathering with family and friends. Example: "If it's that much, I always have my girl, I could talk to my mother or somebody like that."
Physical Activity (PA)	Distracting oneself from the experience emotion through the use of physical activity. Example: "Sometimes if I'm just irate, I go for a walk or something…"
Physical Restraint of Emotion (PR)	Deliberately expressing emotion in alternative ways to physical means. Example: "Just try not to be so physical, not physical at all. Don't be physical when you get mad because that will not be good if you do it at an older age."
Spiritual-Centered Coping[7] (SC)	Coping with emotion through reliance on a 'higher power' (e.g., God, the universe, ancestors) for guidance with life events that are beyond one's control. Example: "Read the Bible."
Socialization	
Mirroring/matching child's emotion (MCE)	Parent describes feeling the same emotion the child is feeling or expressing. Example: (reaction to child's sadness) "I feel sad."
Modeling Emotion Expression[8] (MEE)	Parent describes his own emotion expression as teaching their child about emotion expression. Example: "I wouldn't want him to see me, you know, fight anybody or throw anything or bust some windows or something like that, I wouldn't want him to see it. So I'm tryna work on that, cuz, for him, cuz I wouldn't want him to do the same thing that I did by bein' mad or angry, you know."
Discussing Emotion[8] (DE)	Having direct conversations about emotion. Example: "I talk to her like a little person [...] So I try to tell her, 'don't be angry at people.'"
Situation Selection[9] (SS)	Choosing specific situations or experiences for the child to either experience an emotion, not experience an emotion, or

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[7] Utsey, Adams & Bolden; 2000

[8] Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998a

[9] Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Sprinrad, 1998b

	learn to deal with the emotion. Example: "Well you should try let- let other people have fun. Just because she havin' fun, you don't have to be mad. Yes it's yours. If you want it, I will get it for you. But you should share, that's good."
Intergenerational Intention[1][2] (II)	What a parent does in relation to how they were raised around emotions.
Change[1][2] (C)	Example: "I never was showed to show my emotions and feelings in the past, so for me, this is something new."
Stability[1][2] (S)	"The same thing that my dad and my mom taught us, controlled anger versus uncontained anger. It's okay. Anger is unavoidable. There are going to be, like I say, things and people that are going to make you mad. But how you handle that hanger pretty much defines you; it defines one of your characteristics as a person. Like I say, it's okay, there's going to be some things where you just want to go and rip someone's head off…"
Supportive Responses to Child Emotion[5] (Support)	Coaching; teaching about emotion, encouraging emotion expression, comforting emotion, fixing/addressing the cause of the emotion. Example: (Reaction to son's sadness) "What's wrong with him? What can I do to help him, and just let him know that I'm here."
Suppressive Responses to Child Emotion[10][10] (Suppress)	Dismissing; punishing a child for their emotion expression, minimizing the emotion, ignoring the emotion. Example: "[...] just try to instill in him that it's not always right to cry, you know? You're not a crybaby, and stuff like that."

[10]Dunbar, Leerkes, Coard, Supple, & Calkins (2017)

Distress[5] (Distress)	Parents feeling their own negative emotions. Example: "And that's what I try to tell her, 'You- I don't whoop you because I like to. I don't wanna see you cry, that hurt daddy's feelings'."

Table 3

Final Themes and Definitions

Theme	Definition
Responsibility for Children's Emotions	Careful examination of children's negative emotions to determine an appropriate reaction
Complex Relationship with Anger	Reluctance to label or identify with anger despite intense experiences with it, physically removing oneself from situations once recognizing the emotion, and the belief that one should handle anger wisely because of its dangerous consequences
Reckoning Negative Emotions	Processing negative emotions as a part of everyday life while resisting their dominant tendencies
Children at the Center	Orientation of all emotion-related behaviors to children
Actively Working Through Emotions	Engaging in a range of emotion regulation strategies that appear to relieve emotional distress temporarily