# U.S. Black Parents' Preferences and Choices of Media to Support Their Children

By

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, my students, and my mentees

– past, present, and future.

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## Abstract

The overarching focus of this dissertation concerns Black parents' use of media to socialize their children about race. Black parents have been found to socialize their children about race (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006), and media may be used in these processes (McClain & Mares, 2022). Study 1a examined U.S. Black parents' ratings of the types of depictions of Black characters and experiences they wanted their child to see. Preferences were examined within the framework of motivations theorized in Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) Selective Exposure Self- and Affect-Management (SESAM) model (self-consistency, self-enhancement, and self-improvement). Parents indicated a desire for frequent depictions of everyday, unambiguous depictions of Black characters, Black-led discussions of pride, culture, and history, and depictions of contemporary racism. Child age did not predict parents' preferences but parents' ethnic-racial identity strength and (less consistently) their perceptions of their child's identity strength did predict their preferences. As an initial examination of what content is actually available for Black families, Study 1b involved a thematic summary of Common Sense Media's 2022 Black identity-related children's media lists. Results suggest that identity-relevant content may be limited in quantity and theme diversity, especially for young children. Study 2 was an online experiment designed to assess how Black parents use media following their child's experiences with racism, comparing predictions afforded by Zillmann's (1988) Mood Management Theory (preference for positive, unrelated content) versus predictions afforded by identity-related theorizing (preference for race-related content, including mixed-valence content featuring racial bias). A total of 498 Black parents of 3- to 5-year-olds, 9- to 11-year-olds, and 15- to 17-year-olds were randomized to read a vignette about their child experiencing racism or having "an okay day" and asked to select TV content for their child from four trailers that varied

by topic (racial, nonracial) and valence (positive, mixed). When asked to pick one show, parents in the racism condition (vs. okay day condition) had greater odds of selecting racial content (including mixed-valence depictions of racial bias) over nonracial content, consistent with "approach" rather than "avoidance" coping. When rating each trailer separately, there was no effect of condition: Parents rated that they would encourage their child to see racial content (whether positively valenced or not) more than nonracial entertainment content. Perceptions of child identity strength were related to those preferences. Parents also reported on intentions to use media to talk about race with their child. Overall, Studies 1a and 2 highlight Black parents' use of media to engage in ethnic-racial socialization, including in helping their child navigate experiences of bias. Study 1b highlights the ongoing need for more identity-relevant content, particularly for young viewers.

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# Chapter 1

## General Introduction

Black Americans have been calling for increased and more favorable media racial representation for decades. Over 40 years ago, scholars were theorizing about the importance of favorable ingroup representation for children of color (Berry & Mitchell-Kernan, 1982). Yet relatively little is known about how Black parents use media to socialize their children about their ethnic-racial identity, the types of depictions they would prefer their child to see or avoid, and the ways in which parents' media preferences and choices are shaped by their perceptions of their child's development and experiences. The goal of the current project is to examine these issues.

Three theoretical/research literatures are relevant to Black parents' socialization around media. The first concerns parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices. The second concerns parents' socialization of their children's media use (parental mediation). The third concerns selective exposure to media content, including special attention to the cognitive appraisal processes that can be involved in particular parental mediation situations, such as selecting or encouraging content for a child in the wake of an interpersonal experience with racism. Below, I review the core aspects of each, before working to unite them and propose two studies.

### Ethnic-Racial Socialization

The idea that parents have the ability to shape the development, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of their children is a fundamental premise of parenthood in the United States as well as the subject of multiple fields of psychological and sociological research. All parents socialize their children in various ways via efforts that are sometimes intentional and sometimes unintentional. Numerous minoritized groups have faced challenges helping their children

navigate identities, including various immigrant groups throughout U.S. history (e.g., Rana et al., 2019). Literature on parental ethnic-racial socialization examines predictors, processes, and outcomes around the ways in which parents socialize their children around race and ethnicity. There is also literature on the ways in which white (e.g., Hamm, 2001) and non-Black families engage in ethnic-racial socialization (see Priest et al., 2014, for a review), but the present project focuses exclusively on ethnic-racial socialization as practiced by Black parents as this group has been the most studied within the developmental psychology literature. This project builds on what is known about Black families' ethnic-racial socialization practices and dedicates continued attention to a community with a set of unique historical and contemporary racial struggles.

Parental ethnic-racial socialization includes verbal and nonverbal messaging, such as conversations, the availability of culturally-relevant household items, encouragement of the use of culturally-relevant toys, and participation in culturally-relevant events (Priest et al., 2014). In synthesizing the research on ethnic-racial socialization among minoritized families, Hughes et al. (2006) proposed four constructs of ethnic-racial socialization themes which are commonly accepted today. The most frequently reported type is *cultural socialization* (messages about cultural history and pride). Another common message theme is about *egalitarianism* (messages about ethnic-racial equality and "mainstream" values such as working hard, educational attainment, etc.). Somewhat less common are *preparation for bias* themes (messages about the presence of, and preparation for, racism). Even less common are *promotion of mistrust* themes (messages encouraging physical and psychological distance from outgroup members). Although these themes have been treated as distinct constructs that vary in frequency and developmental trajectory, they can all be conceptualized as part of an overall goal of helping marginalized children succeed in a biased society such as the U.S.

In their theorizing about ethnic-racial socialization in minoritized families, one of Hughes et al.'s (2016) core propositions is that ethnic-racial socialization, identity development, and racial bias experiences are "interdependent, cooccurring – indeed mutually defining – elements of a system of racial knowledge that youth configure, reconfigure, and act upon" (p. 5). Building on earlier work (Hughes & Chen, 1997), Hughes et al. (2016) define racial knowledge as "children's understanding of themselves as ethnic-racial group members, their attitudes towards their own and other groups, and their understandings of racial hierarchies, systems of social stratification, as well as associated processes of prejudice and discrimination" (p. 3). Given their proposition about these phenomena's interconnectedness, Hughes et al. (2016) argue that researchers should consider issues of ethnic-racial identity, racism, and ethnic-racial socialization simultaneously, as opposed to in isolation.

As Hughes et al. (2016) theorize, parents adapt their messages based on their perceptions of the child's development and their preparedness to handle the severity and abstractness of messages about race. Those perceptions change as their children develop their identities further and often have more of a willingness to grapple with, and understand, racial identity (Hughes et al., 2016). For example, positive racial pride and history messages (i.e., cultural socialization) may be common from parents with children in early childhood through adolescence (Hughes et al., 2006). Messages of egalitarianism, which again emphasize racial equality and prosocial values like the importance of hard work, may also generally be common across childhood and adolescence, with some seminal work finding that parents were more likely to report this type of socialization than any other (Marshall, 1995).

In contrast, the more abstract, serious, and sometimes negative messages around preparation for bias are generally reported at higher rates as children get older and as their

parents deem them as more able to handle, and as being more receptive towards, such messages (Hughes et al., 2016). Importantly, however, even parents of preschoolers have reported moderately high rates of preparation for bias with their children. Among the Black parents of three- and four-year-olds in Caughy et al.'s (2002) study, 66.5% indicated that they engaged in preparation for bias at least somewhat frequently. Although promotion of mistrust is less common than preparation for bias, this type of socialization also tends to increase with child age (Hughes et al., 2006). There are also noteworthy positive associations between ethnic-racial socialization and youth identity measures. For example, there are positive associations between child ethnic-racial identity strength and rates of both cultural socialization and preparation for bias (Huguley et al., 2019).

Hughes et al. (2016) make a second proposition: That children's environments – the contexts in which they are socialized, develop their identities, and experience biases – can affect the "dynamic" interplay of their socialization, identity development, and discrimination experiences (p. 5). In line with Hughes et al.'s (2016) argument about the role that environmental context may have in affecting youths' socialization, identity development, and bias experiences, there is evidence that parental perceptions of their neighborhood predict ethnic-racial socialization rates. Black parents have been found to report more ethnic-racial socialization in racially integrated neighborhoods, likely because of heightened salience around racial issues and the greater probabilities of interracial encounters (Hughes et al., 2006). In addition, compared to parents who reported that their child had not experienced racism, Black parents who reported that their child had experienced racism were more likely to report higher rates of preparation for bias (Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

However, although Hughes et al. (2016) postulate that environmental contexts such as neighborhoods and schools are critical factors to be considered in the study of ethnic-racial socialization, discrimination, and identity, media content as part of this broader context of racial dynamics in child development has yet to be thoroughly considered. Importantly, there is a whole literature about parental socialization of children's media use that can be integrated with theorizing about ethnic-racial socialization to examine how race-related factors may play out in mediated contexts.

**Parental Mediation**

Parental mediation refers to the ways in which parents (of any race/ethnicity) guide, encourage, and regulate their child's media use. Beyens et al. (2019) define parental mediation as the practices and conversations with children that aim "to either stimulate positive media effects or counteract negative media effects" (p. 226). Building on seminal work by Nathanson (1999), Beyens and colleagues (2019) propose three constructs for parental mediation. The most common is *positive active mediation* and refers to encouraging and scaffolding prosocial or educational content. The next most common strategy is *negative active mediation*, which refers to the mediation strategy of critiquing problematic or inappropriate content, in order to try to mitigate potential negative effects from such content. Finally, there is *restrictive mediation*, which involves setting rules and limits around problematic or inappropriate content, again with the goal of trying to mitigate potentially harmful media effects. Importantly, parents across all ethnic-racial backgrounds engage in parental mediation, and Black parents are no exception; they engage in guiding and limiting their child's media use, with recent data even suggesting that Black parents of young children are more likely than White parents of young children to have

concerns about negative depictions in their child's media content, including gender and racial stereotypes (Rideout & Robb, 2020).

Just as Hughes et al. (2016) theorize that parents' ethnic-racial socialization strategies reflect their perceptions of their child's identity-related needs, capabilities, and experiences, Beyens et al. (2019) theorize that parents' socialization strategies for their child's media use reflect parental perceptions of the child's current developmental ability (e.g., comprehension level, ability to self-regulate), as well as parents' aspirations around potential media benefits (e.g., children's learning from media), their perceptions of possible risks for their child from exposure to violence or inappropriate content, as well as the child's media preferences (e.g., desire for independence) and the child's and parent's needs, experiences, and capacities. In a three-year longitudinal study in the Netherlands, Beyens et al. (2019) found that all three types of parental mediation increased from age 3, peaked between the ages of 7 and 9, and then decreased again across preadolescence. As Beyens et al.'s (2019) account argues, after the early childhood years when children often seek out faster-paced, more edgy content, parents may perceive the need to engage in more parental mediation: encouraging positive content and critiquing and restricting access to less positive content. As children enter preadolescence and adolescence, and simultaneously are perceived by their parents to be less at risk of negative media outcomes (because of greater media literacy, abstract-thinking skills, etc.) and are also more averse to their parents' interventions/commentary related to their media use, parental mediation rates are expected to decline. However, the age trajectory observed by Beyens et al. (2019) might not apply to all children. Beyens et al.'s (2019) sample came from the Netherlands. Perhaps there might be different trajectories for minoritized parents in the U.S. who may be particularly

concerned with helping their children succeed and who may need to help their children navigate threats to their identity and well-being.

All of this taken together, it is important to examine the specific kinds of media content that Black parents might prefer when it comes to socializing their children around race, as well as whether there are specific conditions under which Black parents might be inclined to encourage particular kinds of race-related content for their children and engage in media-based identity socialization.

**Intersections of Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Parental Mediation**

Nationally representative surveys continue to show that Black children and adolescents use high amounts of daily screen media (Rideout & Robb, 2019; Rideout et al., 2021), with rates on the rise among younger and older Black children (Rideout & Robb, 2020; Rideout et al., 2021). Earlier work also suggests that these patterns of disproportionate and higher media use by Black youth held even after accounting for demographic factors like parental income and education (Rideout et al., 2011). Amidst this high media use, there were also ongoing anti-Black biases in media (e.g., Dixon, 2017), and Black parents have reported concerns about negative stereotypes (Rideout & Robb, 2020).

Thus far, little work has examined how Black parents try to socialize their children's media use around identity. In one early study, Hughes and Chen (1997) asked Black parents three items about their use of media with their children. They found that approximately 26% of parents of 4- to 14- year-olds reported that they had "read [their] child Black story books" in the past year "often" or "very often," and approximately 22% reported that they had "read [their] child Black history books" in the past year "often" or "very often". Approximately 20% reported

that they had “explained to [their] child something [their] child saw on TV that showed poor treatment of Blacks” in the past year “often” or “very often” (p. 206).

Since then, McClain and Mares (2022) sought to build on Hughes et al.’s (2016) theorizing about ethnic-racial socialization as a first attempt to merge the research on parental mediation and ethnic-racial socialization. They surveyed 399 U.S. Black parents of children ages 3 to 17, with quotas for education to approximate U.S. census distributions. They found evidence of four types of what they termed media-based ethnic-racial socialization (MBERS). MBERS strategies included: (1) media-based pride/equality (e.g., discussing, pointing out, and encouraging exposure to messages of pride and equality), (2) media-based preparation for bias (e.g., discussing, pointing out, and encourage exposure to messages about racism), (3) media-based critiques of anti-Black stereotypes/bias (e.g., criticizing negative African American stereotypes in content seen/heard with child), and (4) media-based restrictions of anti-Black stereotypes/bias (e.g., restricting child’s access to content with negative African American stereotypes).

On average, frequencies for all four of these socialization strategies were reported above the midpoint, suggesting that-Black parents not only reported frequent rates of encouraging, discussing, and pointing out aspects of positive racial content (e.g., content involving Black history, positive portrayals of Black Americans), but also content with racism as well as racial media stereotypes. In addition, the stronger parents perceived their child’s ethnic-racial identity to be, the more they tended to report higher rates of media-based ethnic-racial socialization (as well as non-media ethnic-racial socialization and parental mediation). Parents of older children were more likely to report higher rates of media-based preparation for bias (as expected from the

ethnic-racial socialization literature), and lower rates of media-based restrictions (as expected from parental mediation).

Compared to Black parents who perceived lower frequencies of anti-Black media stereotypes, Black parents who perceived higher frequencies of anti-Black stereotypes were more likely to report higher rates of media-based racial pride/equality socialization and preparation for bias, as well as non-media cultural socialization and preparation for bias. In other words, parents who perceived more bias in the media aspect of their child's broader racial context were more likely to report engaging in higher rates of ethnic-racial socialization, both using media and without media. Perceptions of media utility also predicted ethnic-racial socialization strategies. The more available parents perceived content to be for teaching about race and racism, the more likely they were to report engaging in media-based racial pride/equality socialization and media-based preparation for bias with their child. These findings suggest that part of what Black parents respond to in their children's racial worlds are mediated aspects of their environments.

McClain and Mares (2022) found that their sample of parents gave statistically equivalent ratings of their perceptions of the prevalence of racially biased content and the availability of content that is useful for teaching their child about race and racism, indicating that they perceived a mixed valence of racial representation in their child's media (i.e., positive and negative content both available). In light of the frequent reported uses of the MBERS strategies, McClain and Mares therefore found evidence to suggest that their sample of Black parents were leaning into media as resources to socialize their child around race, despite – or perhaps because – they perceived their child's media environment to be both racially biased and racially useful.

**Key Research Gaps**

Although there is some empirical support for the notion that ingroup – and especially favorable ingroup – representation is desired by minoritized families (e.g., Children Now, 1998; Ellithorpe & Bleakley, 2016; Mares et al., 2015), there is a need for more clarification around the specific types of depictions that Black parents do and do not want for their child, the potential relationship between their media preferences and their perceptions of the child's developmental state, and how available curated content may stack up to the types of depictions they prefer. This need is underscored by the fact that selective exposure research has tended to prioritize the study of intergroup differences as it relates to race/ethnicity, as opposed to intragroup differences, which has limited our understanding about the specific intragroup preferences that may exist for particular kinds of race-related content. At the same time, there is also a need for theory-driven, experimental examination of the specific conditions under which parents seek out or avoid particular types of content for their children. Parents may report wanting particular types of content to be more or less frequent, but is some content most preferred under particular circumstances? For example, do preferences vary based on parental perceptions of their child's situation and needs, such as when a child is facing an identity threat due to a racism experience?

Although McClain and Mares (2022) described the conversation strategies in which Black parents tried to navigate ethnic-racial depictions with their child, their study did not probe what specific types of depictions and messages Black parents considered useful or helpful to have their child watch, or what Black identity-related content may be curated for families today. In addition, McClain and Mares (2022) did not probe whether preferences vary by perceptions of the child's development and experiences. My two-study dissertation aims to examine these issues by applying Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) Selective Exposure Self- and Affect-Management Model (SESAM) as the primary theoretical framework.

**Central Questions of the Present Dissertation**

The present dissertation will first ask in Study 1: What is it that Black parents reported wanting their child to see in media depictions, and what may be curated for them? Study 1a examines Black parents' preferences about the types of media depictions they wanted their child to see frequently, and the types they would prefer their child not see as often. Survey data were gathered from 310 Black parents in the summer of 2020, at a peak moment in the U.S. Black Lives Matter protests, asking how often (if ever) they'd like their child to see specific types of depictions. Their responses were analyzed in a secondary analysis in Study 1a within the broad framework of Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM as described below. The goal was to explore whether Black parents' preferences may map onto SESAM's theorized motivations, and whether there was evidence of SESAM's proposed role of identity in media preferences in this parental sample. Study 1b then presents a thematic summary of the curated Black identity-related content available in early 2022 on Common Sense Media's recommended children's media content lists for families and educators.

In Study 2, I then ask the question of whether Black parental media preferences and choices vary by situation, such as when a child has experienced racism. I ran an online experiment with 498 Black parents in February 2022. In Study 2, I apply SESAM and build on its application of appraisal theory (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Smith, 1991), to inform predictions about what might happen in the particular situation of a Black parent selecting and encouraging media for their child after an experimentally manipulated child racism experience. Specifically, I examine (1) whether a perceived identity threat to the child (i.e., child experienced racism vs. child experienced an okay day) might causally affect parental media choices and intended encouragement of particular content for the child, (2) whether parental reports of

particular parental racial socialization goals (e.g., wanting the child to feel good about being Black) mediate the relationship between a perceived identity threat and parental media choices (Study 2 experiment), and (3) whether a perceived identity threat might causally affect media-based ethnic-racial socialization intentions. Study 2 also examines the role that child identity strength may play in these processes, controlling for child age.

The goal of these studies is to help fill the need for more theory-building, theory-testing, and experimental work that can work to explicate the patterns and processes involved in Black parents' uses of media as resources to help their children navigate race in the U.S. Given the evidence to suggest that media are used by U.S. Black parents to help their children navigate a precarious world, there is an obligation to examine whether particular kinds of representation are more desired than others, and if those preferences vary by specific child, family, or situational factors. Given the high rates of racism experienced by Black youth (e.g., English et al., 2020) and the evidence to suggest that non-media ethnic-racial socialization may mitigate negative outcomes from bias (Hughes et al., 2006), there is also a specific need to investigate how media can serve as resources for parents who are helping their children prepare for, and cope with, racism experiences. The current sociopolitical climate in the U.S. and the resulting amplified ongoing attention to issues of media racial representation underscore the urgency of this work.

# Chapter 2

## Study 1 – Black Parents' Hopes for Their Children's Media: Predictors of Preferences for Different Types of Representation

Like U.S. youth of all races and ethnicities, U.S. Black youth live in ecosystems that are saturated with media, but to date, relatively little is known about how Black parents use media to socialize their children about identity or about the depictions they prefer their child to see or to avoid. The present study is a reanalysis of 2020 survey data. The goal is to integrate the developmental literatures of ethnic-racial socialization and parental mediation with Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) Selective Exposure Self- and Affect-Management Model (SESAM) to examine types of content that a sample of U.S. Black parents reported desiring at various rates for their children. SESAM is designed to explain individuals' selections of and responses to media content and has been applied to examine ethnic-racial differences in media choices (as well as in other identity-related contexts, such as political affiliation), but has not yet been applied in the context of parental socialization around a child's ethnic-racial identity.

### The Media Landscape

U.S. media have improved representation by some measures, such as by the numbers of Black characters in broadcast and cable shows (e.g., GLAAD, 2021), but they also have continued to feature racial biases (e.g., Tukachinsky, 2017). Positive Black protagonists starring in contemporary high-budget productions are available from major children's media organizations including Disney (e.g., *Doc McStuffins*) and Nickelodeon (e.g., *Tyler Perry's Young Dylan*). The free PBSKIDS video platform offers a number of shows with Black leads for preschoolers, including *Sesame Street.* In addition, efforts have increased to make positive Black media content more accessible, with streaming platforms like Netflix having created curated

catalogues with specific Black representation (e.g., “Black Lives Matter Collection”) and nonprofit organizations like Common Sense Media publishing curated recommended lists of media content focusing on Black identity.

At the same time, Hamlen and Imbesi (2019) found that white, non-Hispanic characters are almost two times as likely to be featured as preschool show protagonists than non-white, non-Hispanic characters. Although this proportion of representation on preschool television reflects 2020 U.S. Census data about the white, non-Hispanic population (an estimated 61.6% of the population), having proportional on-screen representation in gross numbers does not necessarily indicate equity in terms of representation quality. There can still be widespread biases and problematic, limited depictions among the available representations. Clearly, widespread options and complexity exist in the media landscape when it comes to racial representation for Black families, but what kinds of depictions do Black parents actually want their children to see and how frequently? Hints of possible answers come from prior work on ethnic-racial socialization in Black families, research on parental mediation, and theorizing about media selection processes. In the present study, I reanalyze data from U.S. Black parents, in which they rated how often they wanted their child to see particular types of representations in their child’s media. Although the SESAM motivations were not directly assessed, the data allow for a secondary examination of the extent to which parents’ perceptions of their child’s ethnic-racial identity strength, and their own identity strength, predicts their interest in their child seeing the type of content suggested by SESAM’s self-consistency, self-enhancement, and self-improvement motives. The data also allow for consideration of the kinds of variability that may exist in preferences for particular kinds of Black depictions for children.

**Overview of Ethnic-Racial Socialization**

In this paper, ethnic-racial socialization refers to the processes through which parents socialize their children around race and ethnicity, and the focus of the present paper is on ethnic-racial socialization among ethnically/racially minoritized families (see Hughes et al., 2006, for a review), and in particular U.S. Black families. According to Hughes et al. (2006), among ethnically/racially minoritized families, the most frequently reported type of ethnic-racial socialization is *cultural socialization* (messages about cultural history and pride). Another common theme is *egalitarianism* (messages about ethnic-racial equality and "mainstream" values such as hard work, educational attainment, etc.). Somewhat less common is *preparation for bias* (messages about, and preparation for, racism).

Hughes et al. (2016) theorize that parents adapt their ethnic-racial socialization based on perceptions of the child's ability and "readiness" to handle the severity and abstractness of racial messages (p. 11). Their theorizing suggests that this includes their perceptions of their child's identity development, including around how that identity may change over time. Positive racial pride and history messages (i.e., cultural socialization) have been found to be generally frequent and encouraged by Black parents across child development (Hughes et al., 2006). More abstract, serious messages around preparation for bias are generally reported at higher rates as children get older and as their parents deem them as more able to handle, and as being more receptive towards, such messages. However, even parents of preschoolers have reported preparation for bias with their children (Caughy et al., 2002). Child ethnic-racial identity strength is also a positive predictor of both cultural socialization and preparation for bias (Huguley et al., 2019).

**Overview of Parental Mediation**

Beyens and colleagues (2019) built on Nathanson's (1999) seminal work, proposing three constructs for parental attempts to guide and regulate their children's media use: *positive active*

*mediation* (i.e., encouraging and scaffolding prosocial or educational content), *negative active mediation* (i.e., critiquing problematic or inappropriate content), and *restrictive mediation* (i.e., setting rules and limits around problematic or inappropriate content). Just as Hughes et al. (2016) theorize that ethnic-racial socialization choices reflect perceptions of child identity-related needs and capabilities, Beyens et al. (2019) theorize that parental mediation choices reflect perceptions of the child's developmental ability as well as the parents' aspirations around media benefits and perceived media use risks for the child, as well as the child's and the parent's needs, experiences, and capacities more broadly.

**Intersections of Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Parental Mediation**

U.S. Black youth continue to report high amounts of daily screen media (Rideout & Robb, 2019, 2020), with rates that may be rising among both younger and older Black youth (Rideout & Robb, 2020; Rideout et al., 2021). Earlier work suggested that patterns of disproportionate and high media use by Black youth held even after accounting for demographic factors like parental income and parental education (Rideout et al., 2011). Content analyses have reported anti-Black media biases in the news (e.g., Dixon, 2017), and Black parents of young children have expressed concern about negative media stereotypes (Rideout & Robb, 2020). However, little work has examined how Black parents try to socialize their children around identity using children's media. Hughes and Chen's (1997) seminal ethnic-racial socialization study included three items about media use in their broader ethnic-racial socialization scales. Approximately 26% of parents of 4- to 14-year-olds reported that they had "often" or "very often" "read [their] child Black story books," and approximately 22% reported that they had "often" or "very often" "read [their] child Black history books" in the past year. Approximately

20% reported that they had “often” or “very often” “explained to [their] child something [their] child saw on TV that showed poor treatment of Blacks” (p. 206).

One study (McClain and Mares, 2022) built on the work of Hughes and Chen (1997) and on Hughes et al.’s (2016) theorizing about ethnic-racial socialization to examine strategies reported by U.S. Black parents for socializing their children, ages 3 to 17, around race using media. In this study, Black parents reported using media not only to help their child feel positively about their racial identity, but also to prepare their child for racism and to point out and restrict access to negative media racial stereotypes. The study also found that child age was not curvilinearly associated with Black parents’ reports of general parental mediation (i.e., positive active mediation, negative active mediation, and restrictive mediation). Instead, child age was negatively associated with reported frequencies of engaging in parental mediation strategies, but child age predicted some of the ethnic-racial socialization strategies involving media. Parents of older children reported higher rates of using media for preparation for bias and lower rates of restricting access to negative media racial stereotypes. However, the stronger and more consistent predictors of socialization strategies had to do with child identity strength.

Parental perceptions of child identity strength positively predicted all three types of parental mediation. These findings add nuance to Beyens et al.’s (2019) theorizing that parents tailor their mediation to perceptions of the child’s development; they suggest that part of what parents are considering in their mediation practices are their perceptions of the child’s identity. Perceptions of child ethnic-racial identity strength also positively predicted rates of all media-based ethnic- racial socialization strategies. To examine the question of which specific types of media content might be useful for parents in such media-based ethnic-racial socialization practices, I turn to Knobloch-Westerwick’s (2015) SESAM model for a theoretical framework.

**Overview of SESAM**

Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM is a framework for studying media selections and effects. The model proposes that an individual's selection of media content is based on their affect and arousal, their currently salient identity self-concept(s), and their anticipation of the possible effects of available media content. SESAM proposes that media use is not just ritualized or happenstance; individuals sometimes make selection choices, motivated to use media to fulfill different needs. As will be discussed, those needs can be conceptualized to include parental identity socialization needs based on factors affecting their child.

As part of its foundation, SESAM incorporates Zillmann's (1988) Mood Management Theory's emphasis on selections being driven in part by current affect and arousal and an overarching drive toward optimizing pleasure and minimizing negative affect. However, it also incorporates social identity theorizing (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the idea that particular types of content may be more or less attractive to a person because of that person's salient identity(ies).

Social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) postulates that social identities are important components of how good and how valued people feel, because part of a person's self-concept is derived from the value and status of their salient social group(s). SIT postulates that we all want to maintain a "positive and secure self-concept" related to our ingroup status, and to achieve that, individuals tend to compare their group to other groups (Hornsey, 2008, p. 2017). With this in mind, Hornsey (2008) identified strategies aligned with SIT that marginalized groups with lower status could apply to achieve a positive ingroup identity. According to Hornsey (2008), marginalized individuals can (1) reframe (e.g., focus on positive aspects of the group and minimize unfavorable dimensions), (2) try to change the group status in society, (3)

engage in downward comparisons between the ingroup and groups of even lower status, and/or (4) try to dissociate themselves from the group. Although individuals are theorized to have a "dynamic self-concept" with the salience of particular aspects of their identity depending in part on contextual cues, SESAM also considers that certain identities may be chronically primed and relevant. Notably Markus and Wurf (1987) argue that identities that are central to individuals are the ones expected to have the most potential to affect behavior and the processing of information. Black individuals have been found to rate their ethnic-racial identity strength higher than White individuals (Phinney, 1992). Based in part on this emphasis on identity, Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) specifies three clusters of motivations theorized to underlie patterns of media choices: "self-consistency," "self-enhancement," and "self-improvement."

***Self-Consistency Motivation***

Self-consistency is the default motivation for selections in SESAM and is expected to drive choices in situations in which there are no identity threats to the activated self-concept (which would drive self-enhancement motivated media use), and no salient identity-related needs that could lead individuals to want to better themselves or adapt (which would drive self-improvement motivated media use). When driven by self-consistency, individuals are expected to look for content that reinforces their salient identity(ies) at the time of selection. As such, they look for messages that make them feel affirmed about, and "seen" (represented) as, who they are in terms of their attitudes, beliefs, and emotions. In other words, individuals driven by self-consistency are expected to prefer/select disposition-consistent content (e.g., reinforcing messages about their self-concepts).

There is some empirical work to support the self-consistency motivation for selective exposure among Black adults. Abrams and Giles (2007) tested whether the strength of Black

undergraduates' ethnic-racial identity (which Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015, has considered an antecedent for the working self) was positively related to their (1) "ethnic identity gratifications selection" (i.e., their ratings of how much they liked watching TV for race-related reasons such as feeling racial pride, seeing ingroup members), and (2) "ethnic identity gratifications avoidance" (i.e., how much they avoided TV altogether because of stereotypes, lack of representation, etc.) (p. 123). They found that Black college students' ethnic-racial identity strength did not predict how much they reported liking TV for ethnic identity gratifications, but it did predict how much they avoided watching television because of perceived under-representation and racial stereotypes. Participants with stronger identities were more likely to report avoiding television altogether, suggesting that they may have been acting to preserve their existing self-concept by avoiding media that negatively depicted their ingroup.

### *Self-Enhancement Motivation*

Self-enhancement is another motivation postulated in SESAM and is theorized to be a response to identity threat. Integrating social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) with selective exposure, SESAM proposes that when perceiving an identity threat, individuals may choose media that is perceived as being able to make them feel better about their identity, for example via expressly favorable ingroup depictions. According to Knobloch-Westerwick (2015), individuals driven by self-enhancement are expected to "favor positive messages about ingroup members" as a way to improve self-esteem (p. 971). Self-enhancement motives might lead a person to desire particularly uplifting, inspiring, positive ingroup depictions that show that a person's ingroup can be successful, respected, etc., as well as ones that contain explicit verbal affirmations of success and pride. In doing so, such depictions might really "center" (focus on) that particular ingroup. This contrasts with self-consistency motives, which might lead a person

to seek more mixed-valence ingroup representations that feel realistic and familiar. When an individual is motivated by self-enhancement, they may be trying to think better of their salient group identity by finding evidence and depictions of their own group as successful and positive.

SESAM also proposes that people motivated by self-enhancement might seek out media that offers negative outgroup depictions, and/or media that makes a person's ingroup seem superior in some way to an outgroup. However, it is important to note that this latter notion of outward derogation has become controversial in the SIT literature as Hornsey (2008) suggests that there may be insufficient evidence to conclude that what is often thought of as outgroup derogation is not merely ingroup favoritism.

***Self-Improvement Motivation***

The third SESAM motivation is self-improvement. Self-improvement is theorized to be a response to a perceived need, such as an appraised need to improve, change, or adapt oneself. As Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) proposes, the need for self-improvement motivates viewers to seek out media that might not protect or bolster their egos, but instead challenges some aspect of themselves, contains discordant information, or might make them engage in upwards comparison. In this way, SESAM proposes that individuals driven by self-improvement can sometimes use media in ways that might make them uncomfortable, given that this motivation can expose people to content, for example, which can show them how they are not measuring up to particular standards. However, the key is that, as a result, such exposure can lead people to change or improve themselves in some way. Thus, one of SESAM's contributions is that it expands on Knobloch-Westerwick's (2003) Mood Adjustment Theory to offer a model for thinking about under which circumstances individuals might be driven to consume media that is not simply reinforcing their pre-existing attributes or current self-concepts or uplifting their egos.

Since the self-improvement motivation can account for when people might prefer content that helps them learn how to do something or adapt, it suggests that individuals driven by this motivation might be especially likely to prefer similar behavioral models for observation and learning around the targeted areas of growth.

In an experimental study, Appiah et al. (2013) found that Black undergraduates were more likely than White undergrads to select online news stories about other Black people, as opposed to White people. In alignment with what SESAM would predict through its self-enhancement motivation, Black participants spent more time looking at negative, as opposed to positive, stories about White people, and they also were more likely to spend greater amounts of time reading positive ingroup news stories than positive outgroup news stories. However, Black participants were also more likely to select and spend time with the ingroup (Black) news story regardless of whether that story was positive or negative. In this way, Appiah et al.'s (2013) findings also may reflect a second motivation of self-improvement. As Appiah et al. suggest (but did not directly test), this finding might be explained by informational utility. It may be the case that Black individuals sometimes perceive utility and value in selective exposure to negative ingroup depictions because it can be seen as helpful for preparing them for success in a biased society. This idea was also raised by Harwood (1999) when talking about social identity gratifications more than a decade earlier, when he noted that marginalized groups might use media to bond over social identity and to combat bias.

All in all, SESAM ultimately proposes that individuals select their media in a way that can help them in "activating and maintaining a self-concept" (Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015, p. 967). The identity-related motivations that SESAM proposes are ripe for integration with the kinds of identity-related motivations that have been documented in Black parents' ethnic-racial

socialization practices. Indeed, when combined with the literatures of ethnic-racial socialization and parental mediation, SESAM provides a framework for considering the types of motivations minoritized parents might have for their children with regard to the activation and maintenance of their child's self-concept and for predicting parental preferences for particular child content.

***Parental Motivation for Their Child to See Self-Consistent Content***

Given that SESAM's self-consistency motivation is about maintaining a self-concept, media selection driven by self-consistency is expected to prioritize messages and depictions that align with how a person sees themselves and their identity group. In other words, it is about seeking out representations that match one's own notion of their group's characteristics. As such, there are a number of expectations that can be derived about the content that Black parents would prefer when trying to help their child "see" themselves and their community as they see them. Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) does not specify what types of representations might be identity-consistent for Black audiences, but it is possible that such representations would include a mixed valence of representations (some positive, some negative) so long as they are perceived as accurate and familiar representations of themselves and their experiences. In other words, depictions that affirm who they see and know themselves to be.

Black parents motivated to help their child achieve self-consistency could be expected to desire diverse depictions of Black characters/people with easily identifiable, diverse Black phenotypes, since Black individuals and experiences are diverse. This would also be expected to include characters/people that the parent perceives as similar to their child (in terms of skin color, hair, age, and gender), in order to help the child "see themselves" on screen.

Part of self-consistency could be highlighting a group's history and struggles, but those are not the only kinds of depictions that marginalized communities are likely to want to see.

Centering only historical or racial challenges as spotlights on diversity can be frustrating for communities of color. For example, in the summer 2020 as #TheHelp was trending on Twitter and people reacted to the idea of the movie *The Help* as a resource for anti-racism, Black people were vocal critiques of the film as setting racism too much in the past and as too much of an individual-level, as opposed to system-level, problem (Henderson, 2020). There is simultaneously a push to feature everyday experiences from Black individuals. For example, Richard's (2020) short commentary on the need for everyday representation notes:

> We've seen the stories of struggle. Civil rights and slavery, the subject of movies flooding streaming platforms right now. Stories of stereotype, criminals are just as numerous. Don't get me wrong these stories need to be told, especially from a Black perspective. However, we also need more everyday images of Black people, just living. (para. 1)

Writing in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020, Stone (2020) shares a similar perspective in her opinion piece about her impression of youth literature as a teenager:

> Black kids don't go on adventures. Solve mysteries. Save the universe. Fall in love. Black people's stories aren't important and shouldn't be read if they don't have to do with slavery, racism, oppression, or hardship. Black lives didn't matter in books unless they were fighting their way out of abusive relationships or killing their children to keep them out of the bonds of slavery. Black people were sidekicks. Lesson bearers. Plot devices to teach the white son and daughter of the failed white lawyer that racism is *real.* (para. 12)

Similarly, and again in response to the Black Lives Matter protests, in a 2020 interview with the *New York Times*, children's book author Christine Taylor-Butler noted: "I want stories

about kids in a pumpkin patch, and kids in an art museum... Not only do we want our kids to read, but we want white kids to see – we're not the people you're afraid of… I see students clamoring for books that speak to heart, not oppression based on civil rights" (Grose, 2020).

This push extends with everyday social media users explaining their views on positive representation for youth via platforms like Reddit (see Figure 1). Additionally, popular nonprofit organizations that specialize in anti-bias children's literature, such as the Conscious Kid, are applauded on social media for their efforts to include titles that highlight the everyday experiences of marginalized children and their families. Taken together, this anecdotal evidence suggests what I find to be a clear interest and need for recognition of the complicated reality of being Black in the U.S., which includes both positive and negative experiences, told in ways that are authentic, familiar, and realistic.

Another type of affirmation that could arise from a motivation of helping a child achieve self-consistency might be to help their child feel as normalized as majority race members. Black parents might therefore want their children to frequently see Black characters going through everyday experiences with friends and family and at school and work like everyone else, as opposed to Black characters predominantly being featured in stories of historical racism.

However, a desire for everyday life depictions does not imply that depictions that ignore race, via ambiguous or metaphorical depictions of race, would be highly favored. The tendency to feature anthropomorphized characters is well-documented in contemporary preschool television (Hamlen & Imbesi, 2019). Anthropomorphism removes or avoids race by using non-human, raceless characters. Black parents may want fewer anthropomorphized characters than Black characters with easily identifiable Black phenotypes. In addition, they may prefer easily identifiable Black phenotypes to racially ambiguous cartoon humans, since clear phenotype

markers may make it easier to identify characters as Black, potentially rendering such depictions as more useful for identity-consistency than characters that are harder to place racially.

With all of these self-consistency related observations noted, I ask a series of questions about Black parents' content preferences that might reflect motivation for their child to see "self-consistent" depictions.

RQ1a: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see the following kinds of self-consistency depictions at fairly high frequencies (above the midpoint): (1) *clear Black phenotypes and similarity to child* and (2) *everyday Black life experiences*?

RQ1b: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see higher rates of *clear Black phenotypes similar to child* than of *metaphorical racial depictions*?

RQ1c: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see higher rates of *everyday Black life experiences* than of *historical racism*?

### *Parental Motivation for Their Child to See Self-Enhancing Content*

As noted above, SESAM's self-enhancement motivation is about feeling better about one's group identity, especially in response to a perceived identity threat. It is under this motivation that SESAM postulates that individuals would be most likely to prefer depictions of their ingroup that could be ego-enhancing, and therefore would be most likely to prefer content that explicitly depicts their group as positive and successful. As such, they are expected to be likely to seek out content that is especially uplifting, positive, and affirming of their group

identity. Black parents motivated to make their child feel better about their ethnic-racial identity may want their child to frequently see explicit, affirming racial pride messages, since this kind of ingroup representation and messaging could be expected to be a clear way of affirming and bolstering a positive Black self-concept. In addition, Black parents could be expected to desire successful Black characters who may signal to children the greatness that they are capable of.

Importantly, ethnic-racial identity self-concepts are still developing throughout childhood and adolescence (see Quintana, 2008), and ethnic-racial socialization is theorized to be a part of that identity construction (Hughes et al., 2016). As such, Black parents can also be expected to desire content that could help their child learn about their identity, culture, and history in order to develop a positive and strong racial self-concept, as well as to help them achieve cultural goals and adopt particular beliefs. It is reasonable to expect that Black parents would want their child to see affirming depictions of Black culture, history, and success, including history that represents how Black individuals have prevailed and shown courage in the face of racism, such as during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. In addition, it is reasonable to expect that they would want depictions of the types of affirming conversations and leadership that are going on in the Black community. As such, it is possible that parents would prefer Black characters (as opposed to non-Black characters) to be the ones discussing Black identity, culture, and history, thereby centering Black voices.

Despite all the progress that has been made in mass media representation for Black individuals, it is common Black cultural knowledge that explicit mass media messages that are pro-Black and anti-racist are still lacking. When such messages are given airtime, it is reasonable to expect that Black parents would want Black characters to take the lead/have the floor, as the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement largely pushes for holding spaces for Black

experiences as told by Black people, and by initiatives led by those who are marginalized. This idea is also supported by social identity theorizing (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), in that individuals would be interested in seeing their group as a reference group of success and agency. Hornsey (2008) also proposes that marginalized individuals may also seek to try to change their social group's status in society. Centering Black voices in media may be favored as a form of agentic advocacy towards such efforts. However, I still argue that it is reasonable to expect that non-Black characters' discussions of Black history and culture would still be fairly highly desired since such depictions would be positive and affirming of Black identity; they would just not be as desired as similar, Black-led discussions. As such, I ask a series of questions about Black parents' content preferences that might reflect motivation for their child to see "self-enhancing" depictions.

RQ2a: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see the following self-enhancement depictions fairly frequently (above the midpoint): (1) *Black characters' success, culture, and history*, (2) *Black characters discussing Black pride, history, and culture,* and (3) *non-Black characters discussing Black history and culture*?

RQ2b: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see higher rates of *Black characters discussing Black pride, history, and culture* than of *non-Black characters discussing Black history and culture*?

***Parental Motivation for Their Child to See Self-Improving Content***

Self-improvement motivation is expected to be driven by an identity-related need. To fulfill that need, individuals are expected to seek out content that can show them how and why they could or should improve/develop themselves with regard to that identity. A large body of work has already demonstrated the ways in which minoritized parents, including Black parents, try to support the development of their child's learning about identity and their adaption to a racist society via ethnic-racial socialization (see Hughes et al., 2006, for a review). If the construct of self-improvement is conceptualized broadly to be about self-growth and self-development, the parallel to the ethnic-racial socialization practice of preparation for bias is clear. Ethnic-racial socialization is one way in which Black parents actively work to help their children grow and develop into the best versions of themselves. Part of this is premised on ensuring that children are ready and able to deal with threats to their identity (i.e., preparation for bias) (Hughes et al., 2016). Research suggests that this type of socialization increases as children get older (Hughes et al., 2016), but even Black parents of young children have reported talking explicitly with their children about racism in order to help them thrive, including with media (Caughy et al., 2002; McClain and Mares, 2022). Even though preparation for bias socialization could understandably make a child (and the parent) uncomfortable, unhappy, or not feel great in the moment, the fact that these conversations have been documented among U.S. Black families for decades underscores the severity of Black parents' need to prepare their children for discrimination.

The possibility that Black parents might be motivated to encourage their children to occasionally see content with racism – because they may perceive it to contain socialization value – is underscored by prior work. As noted above, Hughes and Chen (1997) asked about parents' strategies for preparing their child for bias. As one of the strategies, they found that

20.4% of parents reported having discussed televised depictions of "poor treatment" of Black individuals with their children "often" or "very often." Building on this work, McClain and Mares (2022) found Black parents reported fairly high frequencies of (1) encouraging their child to see/hear media "with examples of racial bias" and "ways of dealing with racial bias," (2) discussing with their child "media instances of racial bias" and strategies for handling "the types of bias shown," as well as (3) pointing out "moments in media content when individuals deal positively with racial bias."

However, the question remains of *how* Black parents might want racism depicted, addressed, and whether those patterns vary by child age. For example, in keeping with Black parents' overall ethnic-racial socialization goal of helping their child thrive, Black parents are unlikely to want their child to see rampant racism but may still want them to see some (and in varied forms, such as explicit and subtle depictions) so that they are aware that it exists and so that they are more prepared to face it. They may also be likely to want to help their child understand that this kind of treatment is wrong, by having them exposed to depictions of racism being called out or punished. I expected that Black parents would prefer depictions of explicit condemnation or punishment of racism over what might be called politically correct anti-racism responses: depictions of responses to racism that could be described as glossing over real solutions or the structural issues involved in racism (e.g., insisting that everyone belongs but never mentioning race; framing kindness as the solution to racism and thereby framing racism as an individual, not institutional, problem).

One reason to anticipate these preferences is that Black parents may be likely to want low frequencies of "White talk," which as McIntyre (1997) describes, are messages that minimize the complicity and active roles that white people play or have played in racism. This can sometimes

be enacted as the avoidance of conversations about racism or the argument that racism is confined only to our society's history (Lazar & Offenberg, 2011). As such, although I expect racism depictions to be preferred at an occasional rate, I expected Black parents to be less likely to report wanting to see depictions of racism set in historical times, or of slavery, and more likely to report wanting to see racism depicted as happening in contemporary times.

As such I ask a series of questions about Black parents' content preferences that might reflect motivation for their child to see "self-improving" depictions.

RQ3a: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see occasional frequencies (below the midpoint, but above never) for *racism depictions?*

RQ3b: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see higher rates of depictions of *called-out and punished racism* than of *politically correct anti-racism*?

RQ3c: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see higher rates of *contemporary racism* than of *historical racism*?

RQ3d: Do Black parents report wanting their child to see higher rates of *contemporary racism* than of *slavery*?

### *SESAM and the Role of Child Age and the Role of Identity Strength*

As theorized by Hughes et al. (2016) with regard to ethnic-racial socialization and Beyens et al. (2019) in parental mediation, as youth get older, parents perceive different

socialization needs. More work is needed to establish whether Black youths' perception of racism experiences increase (or decrease) as they get older but theorizing from Hughes et al. (2016) nevertheless suggests that parental perceptions about the child's needs, including needs related to identity threat, affect their socialization strategies. For example, parents' perceptions of their child being more able/ready to handle particular kinds of ethnic-racial socialization themes is theorized to predict their choice of socialization strategies, such as preparation for bias (Hughes et al., 2016). As such, I expected that parents' interest in self-improvement types of items would increase with child age.

H1: Black parents with older, as opposed to younger, children will show stronger preferences for content that is aligned with identity improvement motives.

However, there is reason to expect that child ethnic-racial identity strength (as perceived by the parent) and parental ethnic-racial identity strength would also predict Black parents' media preferences for their child over and above the influence of child age. As noted above, ethnic-racial identity strength has been found to predict selective exposure preferences for individuals selecting media for themselves (e.g., Abrams & Giles, 2007; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2008). SESAM's theorizing about the salience of one's identity playing a role in media selection suggests that people with stronger ethnic-racial identities would be more likely than people with less strong ethnic-racial identities to have particular kinds of goals, such as more self-consistency, more self-enhancement, and more self-improvement related to that group identity.

As has been noted, McClain and Mares (2022) found that parents who perceived their child to have stronger ethnic-racial identities were more likely to report socializing their child around racism using media, even after controlling for child age (which also significantly and positively predicted MBERS preparation for bias). This suggests that these parents (whose children were perceived as having stronger/more salient ethnic-racial identities) might be more motivated to help their child achieve self-improvement/development around resilience in the face of racism. Given SESAM's theorizing, it is also possible that the more parents perceive their child to have a stronger ethnic-racial identity, the more they will seek out content to help their child achieve self-consistency (e.g., via realistic ingroup representation) and/or self-enhancement (e.g., via positive ingroup representation). In other words, the preferences for the three types of content outlined above might be especially pronounced among Black parents who perceive their child to have stronger (more salient) ethnic-racial identities.

> H2: Over and above the effect of child age, parents who perceive their child to have stronger, as opposed to weaker, ethnic-racial identities will show stronger preferences for content that is aligned with identity consistency motives (H2a), content that is aligned with identity enhancement motives (H2b), and content that is aligned with identity improvement motives (H2c)?

Finally, a number of scholars have proposed that Black parents may consider their own experiences with racism when socializing their children around race (e.g., García Coll, 1996). As such, it is possible that as parents consider the kinds of race-related content they want their children to see and at what frequencies, they reflect on who they are themselves, including in

regard to their own identity strength. This raises a question about whether parental ethnic-racial identity strength will predict preferences for the three types of content, over and above any effects of child age and perceived child ethnic-racial identity strength. It is possible that Black parents with stronger ethnic-racial identities might be more likely to want to show their child high frequencies of identity consistent, identity enhancing, and identity improving content since their own racial identity (and perhaps the importance of instilling that identity in their children) might be particularly salient.

McClain and Mares (2022) found some support for parental ethnic-racial identity predicting MBERS strategies. Specifically, the stronger the parent reported their ethnic-racial identity to be, the more likely they were to report MBERS pride/equality (encouraging/discussing content related to racial pride and equality) and MBERS restrictions (encouraging their child to avoid anti-Black stereotypes in media). However, the relationships between parental ethnic-racial identity and MBERS preparation for bias, and parental ethnic-racial identity and MBERS critiques, were not significant. As such, I pose the following final research question:

> RQ4: Over and above the effect of child age and (perceived) child ethnic-racial identity strength, will parent ethnic-racial identity strength predict preferences for content that is (1) aligned with identity consistency motives, (2) aligned with identity enhancement motives, and/or (3) aligned with identity improvement motives?

## Methods

### Procedure

As approved by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institutional Review Board (Study ID #2020-0881), participants completed an online survey. Parents with more than one

child were asked to complete the survey about the child with the birthday closest to their own. Responses were all anonymous. The average completion time was approximately 22 minutes.

## Sample

An online sample of Black parents of children ages 3 to 17 were recruited by the professional polling company Qualtrics in July and August 2020 and compensated by Qualtrics according to their standard practices. The final $N = 310$.

### *Child Age and Gender*

Quotas were used to ensure approximately equal numbers of parents with children within each child age group of 3 to 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 11, 12 to 14, and 15 to 17. Male and female children were roughly equally represented.

### *Parent Age and Gender*

Parent age averaged 37.7 years. Most participants identified as female (n = 214, 69.0%). Other genders identified include male parents (n = 66, 21.3%), nonbinary individuals (n = 10, 3.2%), and gender fluid individuals (n = 3, 1.0%). Overall, 276 (89.0%) of parents identified as cisgender, 17 (5.5%) of parents identified as a transgender or gender expansive identity, and 17 (5.5%) of parents identified as "other."

### *Parental Education*

Quotas approximated U.S. 2019 Census data for Black adults. Parents with a high school degree or less comprised 45.8% of the sample (n = 142), 29% (n = 90) had an associate's degree, 16.1% (n = 50) had a bachelor's degree, and 9% (n = 28) had a graduate degree.

### *Annual Income*

Parents who reported annual household incomes of less than $30,000 a year comprised 44.2% of the sample (n = 137), those who earned $31,000 to $60,000 comprised 29.4% (n = 91),

those who earned $61,000 to $90,000 comprised 14.2% (n = 44), those who earned $91,000 to $120,000 comprised 6.1% (n = 19), and those who earned $120,000 or more made up 6.1% (n = 19).

### *Perceptions of Neighborhood Ethnic-Racial Integration*

Parents responded to one item asking them about neighborhood racial integration. In the sample, 8.4% (n = 26) perceived their neighborhood to be "almost all not African American," 15.2% (n = 47) to be "mostly not African American," 38.1% (n = 118) to be "half African American," 22.6% (n = 70) to be "mostly African American," and 15.8% (n = 49) to be "almost all African American."

## Measures

### *Parent Ratings of Content for Their Child*

Parents were given the following instructions to pick only one child if they had more than one child aged 3 to 17: "Choose one child whose birthday month is closest to your birth month and answer all of the following questions for that child." Parents were asked to think about their child at their current age and asked to rate how frequently (1 never, 7 very often) they would like their child to see certain types of content in fictional television and films. Forty items were created based on cultural knowledge and expectations about the types of content that might be useful for the MBERS pride/equality and MBERS preparation for bias socialization strategies found in McClain and Mares (2022). Exploratory factor analyses with oblimin rotation were conducted with all 40 items in the solution. One item (*unresolved racism*) was dropped because it loaded poorly, and another item (*metaphorical depictions of racism*) was dropped because it lowered the reliability of the relevant measure (*metaphorical and/or ambiguous depictions* composite). Results suggested the presence of 8 factors, comprised of a total of 35 items and explaining a total of 62.5% of the variance. Three separate single items (*contemporary racism*,

*historical racism*, *slavery*) were retained for comparison purposes. Based on Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM theorizing and the identity-related literature noted above, I proposed that the variables described below might map onto SESAM's three motivations in the following ways: *self-consistency*-aligned content (clear Black phenotypes and similarity to child; everyday Black life experiences; metaphorical and/or ambiguous depictions), *self-enhancement*-aligned content (depictions of Black success, culture, and history; Black characters discussing Black pride, history, and culture; non-Black characters discussing Black pride, history, and culture*)*, and *self-improvement*-aligned content (racism depictions; called-out and punished racism; politically correct anti-racism; contemporary racism; historical racism; slavery*)*.

**Clear Black Phenotypes and Similarity to Child.** Parents rated eight items about how often they wanted their child to see Black characters "…with natural hair, …with dark skin, … with light skin, …roughly same age as child, …same gender as child, …similar to child in skin color, …similar to child in hair texture," as well as "mixed-race/multiracial characters." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis ($\alpha = .93$), these 8 items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Everyday Black Life Experiences.** Parents rated four items about how often they wanted their child to see: "Black characters going through everyday things with their family and friends," "Black characters going through everyday life at school or work," "stories emphasizing Black friendship," and "stories emphasizing interracial friendship." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis ($\alpha = .89$), these four items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Metaphorical and/or Ambiguous Depictions.** Parents rated three items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see: "cartoon humans who are racially ambiguous,"

"cartoon animals who don't have any race," "fantasy characters who don't have any race (e.g., aliens)." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (α = .76), these three items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Depictions of Black Success, Culture, and History.** Parents rated five items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see depictions of "Black culture in the U.S.," "African roots, African civilizations, and/or African culture," and "Black leaders, scientists, doctors, and/or heroes," as well as depictions of the "Civil Rights Movement" and "Black characters advocating for racial justice." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (α = .85), these four items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Black Characters Discussing Black Pride, History, and Culture.** Parents rated three items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see depictions of "Black characters saying they're proud of being Black," "Black characters saying they're proud of the way they look (proud of their appearance)," and "Black characters discussing Black history or culture." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (α = .89), these three items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Non-Black Characters Discussing Black History and Culture.** Parents rated two items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see depictions of: "non-Black characters discussing Black history or culture" and "White characters discussing Black history or culture." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (*r* = .83), these two items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Racism Depictions.** Parents four items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see depictions of "police brutality against Black characters," "racist physical aggression against Black characters," "explicit verbal racism against Black characters, and "more subtle,

unspoken racism against Black characters." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (α =.95), these four items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Called-Out and Punished Racism.** Parents rated three items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see depictions of: "racism that is called out by Black characters," "racism that is called out by non-Black characters," and "racism that is punished in some way." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (α =.88), these three items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Politically Correct Anti-Racism.** Parents rated three items about the frequency that they wanted their child to see depictions of: "characters framing kindness as the solution to racism (e.g., if everybody is kind, racism will go away)," "characters talking about everybody belonging without ever mentioning race," and "characters saying that all races are equal." Based on EFA results and reliability analysis (α =.88), these three items were averaged into a composite variable; descriptive statistics are available in Table 1.

**Contemporary Racism.** One item measured the frequency parents wanted their child to see depictions of "racism shown as happening now."

**Historical Racism.** One item measured the frequency parents wanted their child to see depictions of "racism set in historical contexts."

**Slavery.** One item measured the frequency parents wanted their child to see depictions of "slavery."

***Perceived Child Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength***

Parents indicated their agreement (1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly disagree) with 3 slightly modified items from Phinney and Ong's (2007) MEIM-R scale. Items were adapted to

reference the child rather than the individual completing the survey and to allow for multiracial identities (e.g., "your child has a strong sense of being a member of their racial group(s)"). Items were averaged into a composite ($M$ = 5.7, $SD$ = 1.4; α = .91). A complete list of items can be found in Appendix B, Table B3.

***Parental Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength***

Parents indicated their agreement (1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree) with 3 items from Phinney and Ong's (2007) MEIM-R scale. These items paralleled the three items from the child ethnic-racial identity strength scale, including slight modifications to allow for Black multiracial/ethnic identities (e.g., "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group" changed to "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own racial/ethnic group(s)"). Items were averaged into a composite ($M$ = 6.2, $SD$ = 1.3; α = .81) A complete list of items can be found in Appendix B, Table B3.

## Results

### RQ1a, 2a, and 3a Describing Content Preferences

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the various composite variables that I proposed might be aligned with SESAM's *self-consistency*, *self-enhancement*, and *self-improvement* content motivations. RQ1a, RQ2a, and RQ3a asked how often Black parents would want their child to see examples of *self-consistency* aligned content (clear Black phenotypes and similarity to child everyday Black experiences*)*, *self-enhancement* aligned content (Black characters' discussing Black pride, history, and culture; depictions of Black success, culture, and history; non-Black characters' discussing Black history and culture), and *self-improvement* aligned content (racism).

As shown in Table 1, mean frequency ratings for *self-consistency*-aligned and *self-enhancement*-aligned content were consistently above the midpoint. With the exception of the composite for racism depictions, which measured the frequency with which parents reported wanting their children to see explicit physical and verbal racism depictions as well as subtle, unspoken ones, mean frequency ratings for *self-improvement*-aligned content (e.g., depictions of contemporary racism, politically correct anti-racism) were above the midpoint as well.

Table 2 shows the correlations between frequency ratings for each type of depiction. As can be seen in Table 2, most content preferences were positively correlated. Parents who gave higher frequency ratings to self-consistency content tended to also give higher ratings for self-enhancement and self-improvement content. Some depictions within the same theorized motivation (e.g., self-consistency) were highly correlated ($r \geq .50$); for example, the *everyday Black life* variable was highly positively correlated with the *clear, Black phenotypes and similarity to child* variable ($r = .65$). Similarly, the *historical racism* variable was highly positively correlated with the *slavery* variable, as well as with *contemporary racism.* However, some depictions that I had proposed might be aligned with the self-consistency motivation were highly positively correlated with depictions that I had proposed might be aligned with the self-enhancement. For example, *everyday Black life* depictions were highly positively correlated with *Black characters' discussing Black pride, culture, and history* (r = .60), as well as with *Black characters' success, culture, and history* (r = .62).

**Preferences for Specific Types of Representation**

As has been noted, I expected that specific types of depictions would be preferred within each of the three proposed broad motivational categories. To examine my research questions related to which depictions within each of these categories parents might prefer more or less, I

ran a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post hoc Sidak comparisons to probe differences. Results are summarized in Table 1.

***Preferences for Specific Types of Self-Consistency Content***

RQ1b examined whether Black parents would want their child to see higher rates of *clear Black phenotypes and similarity to child* than of *metaphorical and/or ambiguous depictions*. As shown in Table 1, *clear Black phenotypes and similarity to child* were preferred at higher frequencies than *metaphorical and/or ambiguous depictions*.

In addition, RQ1c compared preferences for *everyday Black life depictions* to *historical racism* depictions. As shown in Table 1, *everyday depictions* were favored over depictions of *historical racism*.

***Preferences for Self-Enhancement Content***

RQ2b examined whether Black parents would want their child to see more *Black characters discussing Black pride, history, and culture* than *non-Black characters discussing Black history and culture*. As shown in Table 1, *Black characters discussing Black pride, history, and culture* was preferred at a higher frequency than *non-Black characters discussing Black history and culture.*

***Preference for Self-Improvement Content***

RQ3b, RQ3c, and RQ3d examined whether Black parents would want specific types of racism depictions over others. As shown in Table 1, Black parents gave higher ratings to *contemporary racism* than to *historical racism*. They gave higher ratings to *contemporary racism* than to *slavery.* Black parents gave higher ratings to *politically correct anti-racism* than to *called-out and punished racism*.

**H1 – 2 and RQ4 Predictors of Parents' Preferences**

H1 predicted that parents with older, as opposed to younger, children would give higher ratings to *self-improvement*-aligned content. H2 predicted that (even with age in the model) parents who perceived their child to have stronger, as opposed to weaker, ethnic-racial identities would give higher ratings to *self-consistency*-aligned content (H2a), self-enhancement-aligned content (H2b), and *self-improvement*-aligned content (H2c). RQ4 asked whether parents' ethnic-racial identity strength would also be significantly associated with these ratings.

To avoid running many regressions and thereby inflating Type I error, I ran three regressions predicting ratings of one of the top-rated depictions for each type of SESAM motivation. The content depictions with the highest mean within each proposed motivation grouping were selected as the dependent variables: (1) *everyday Black experiences* (self-consistency), *Black characters discussing of Black pride, culture, and history* (self-enhancement), and (3) *contemporary racism* (self-improvement). These three dependent variables were reflected and log-transformed. As shown in Table 3, I entered child age, perceived child ethnic-racial identity strength, parental ethnic-racial identity strength, parental education, annual household income, and perceived neighborhood integration on the same step.

Contrary to H1, child age was not positively associated with ratings for *self-improvemen*t-aligned depiction (contemporary racism). Indeed, as shown in Table 3, child age was not associated with parents' ratings of any of the three types of content.

In contrast, consistent with H2a and H2c, the perceived strength of the child's ethnic-racial identity significantly and positively predicted the *self-consistency*-aligned depiction (everyday Black experiences) and the *self-improvement*-aligned depiction (contemporary racism). The higher parents perceived their child's ethnic-racial identity to be, the more often they wanted their child to see such identity-consistent and identity-improvement content. H2b

did not receive support: Perceptions of the child's identity strength did not predict preferences for identity-enhancement content.

Finally, relevant to RQ4, parental ethnic-racial identity strength also positively predicted parents' ratings for all three types of content.

Notably, parental education, annual household income, and perceived neighborhood integration were not significantly related to ratings for any of the three types of content.

## Discussion

The current project aimed to explore the potential value of integrating Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM with research from ethnic-racial socialization and parental mediation via a secondary analysis of 2020 survey data measuring U.S. Black parents' preferences for entertainment media content for their children. The study builds on evidence to suggest that media are used by U.S. Black parents to help their children navigate a precarious world (e.g., McClain and Mares, 2022) by offering insight into the specific types of content that may be more or less desired as they socialize their children. The findings suggest the potential versatility of Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM theorizing, providing evidence for Black parents desiring their child to have frequent exposure to identity-related depictions. These content preferences show some signs of mapping onto the three types of content theorized by SESAM.

Importantly, however, the correlation analyses in the present study also leave open the possibility that there may be alternative configurations and possibilities for motivations than the ones proposed in SESAM among U.S. Black parents. For example, the high positive correlations between some of the depictions that I had proposed as identity-enhancing and identity-consistent raise the possibility that the motivations of self-consistency and self-enhancement may not be as

distinct as theorized among this subgroup. It is possible, for example, that depictions that explicitly affirm Black identity (e.g., via discussions of Black culture, pride, and history), and depictions that feature everyday Black life experiences, are perceived as both identity maintaining and identity affirming. Such content could be perceived as able to help a Black child feel seen as who they are, as well as feel better about their identity. Without asking about preferences *and* about the reasons for those preferences, arguments about motivations for preferences remain somewhat speculative.

Future work should continue to probe for distinctions in content preferences, including examining whether the constructs of identity consistent and identity enhancing content for Black children have a meaningful distinction in the eyes of Black parents. One initial next step would be to conduct focus groups with U.S. Black parents, asking them to describe the kind of media depictions (real or imaged) that they do, or would, consider valuable and useful to their children in helping them maintain or bolster their identity self-concepts. One could then examine whether and how such exemplars can be organically mapped onto Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM motivations, whether there is overlap between SESAM's theorized motivations, and whether other motivations emerge.

In the domain of identity-consistency, I had postulated that Black parents would be interested in having their child see high frequencies of content that featured diverse, easily identifiable Black character visual cues. As such, for visual depictions, I expected parents to prefer Black characters with dark skin, with natural hair, as well as those perceived as similar to the child and that had features that might be perceived as those of Black mixed-race and multiracial characters (e.g., lighter skin). I had also expected that parents interested in maintaining their child's self-consistency would also be interested in their child seeing high

frequencies of depictions of everyday Black life experiences. As expected, these two types of *self-consistency*-aligned content were desired at fairly high frequencies.

In addition, as anticipated, easily identifiable Black characters (clear, Black and mixed-race Black characters, and characters similar to child) were desired for children at higher frequencies than metaphorical and ambiguous depictions (i.e., depictions of raceless or racially ambiguous, anthropomorphic characters). These findings add to Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) propositions about the kinds of identity-maintaining content that might be desirable for those driven by the self-consistency motivation. For Black parents socializing their children, clear, diverse phenotypic depictions of Black identity and ones perceived as similar to the child may be perceived as more able to help maintain a child's Black identity than metaphorical and ambiguous ones. Future work will need to explore if having easily identifiable ingroup characters is especially important for children (as opposed to adults) given young children's tendency to struggle with metaphorical depictions (e.g., Mares & Acosta, 2008).

Also as expected, Black parents desired higher frequencies of everyday Black life depictions for their children than of historical depictions of racism. This finding aligns with recent calls for everyday Black representation (e.g., Stone, 2020). Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) theorizes that self-consistency is about maintaining a self-concept and as such, would allow for both positive and more negative ingroup depictions to be desired, so long as those depictions are seen as accurate and familiar. However, the findings about the preference for everyday depictions over historical racism suggest that there may be nuances with accuracy and familiarity. Even though historical depictions of racism are accurate for Black families – and they may be familiar via shared Black cultural knowledge – when it comes to maintaining their child's identity, such depictions may not be as desired by Black parents as everyday Black life

depictions for their children because they are not *as* familiar or *as* accurate for contemporary child's everyday experiences in the U.S. Everyday depictions may be seen as more helpful for helping children see themselves and thereby maintain their identities.

I proposed that parents would be interested in helping their child achieve identity-enhancement and as such, I expected them to show evidence of seeking content to help their child feel good or better about their Black identity. I hypothesized that with this motivation, Black parents would want their child to see depictions of Black culture, history, and success, as well as explicit verbal messages about Black pride, history, and culture – especially by Black characters. As expected, these types of content were desired at high frequencies. In addition, when calling attention to Black issues, Black parents most preferred depictions that centered Black voices. These findings align with Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) conceptualization of self-enhancement, which suggests that positive ingroup depictions will be especially favored because they are expected to be ego-enhancing. This can include content that prioritizes uplifting the voices of one's ingroup identity. Adding to this, I argue that when Black voices are centered, it may also be seen as a form of reclaiming space and narratives that have long been siloed and underrepresented in children's media, which may also offer a form of identity affirmation.

Additionally, I had proposed that Black parents would show an interest in content theorized to be driven by identity-improvement, including various depictions of racism. As noted above, such depictions could theoretically help a child prepare to deal and cope with their own racism experiences. As anticipated, I found that Black parents wanted their child to see occasional depictions of explicit and subtle racism, as well as frequent depictions of contemporary and historical racism. Contrary to what I had anticipated, however, what I had termed politically correct anti-racism depictions were more desired by parents than depictions of

characters calling out and punishing racism. Black parents seemed to be more interested in having their children see positive verbal affirmations towards inclusivity, over characters merely labeling something as racist or characters enforcing retribution for racism. Although depictions of framing kindness as the solution to racism, characters discussing belonging without mentioning race, and saying that all races are equal may not be ideal or complete exemplars of the kind of advocacy that minoritized families may want to see for their children on screen, these actions perhaps offer more promise to parents than depictions of simply calling out or punishing racism.

Hornsey (2008) had proposed that one option for marginalized individuals to attain a positive social group identity was to reframe their circumstances – to focus on positive aspects of the group and minimize unfavorable dimensions. Perhaps, what I termed politically correct anti-racism depictions might be more appealing to Black parents than calling out racism, or retribution for racism, because the politically correct anti-racism approach might be seen as more positive, agreeable, and less focused on explicit racial differences. However, future work will need to carefully probe more specifics about the kinds of on-screen responses to on-screen racism that Black families would find favorable. For example, more explicit social justice advocacy – especially as led by Black characters and people – might be an even more appealing response to on-screen racism because Black parents might be motivated to seek out content that can teach their child how to advocate for racial justice in their own lives. This would also be aligned with theorizing from social identity theory, in that Hornsey (2008) proposed that another way that marginalized individuals could attain a positive self-concept is by working to challenge their position in society. As such, Black parents may want to seek out advocacy depictions for

their child for the modeling that such depictions could offer their children for how to improve their advocacy skills.

In terms of predictors, I examined whether child age, perceptions of the child's ethnic-racial identity strength, and the parents' self-reported ethnic-racial identity strength would predict their preferences for their child to see highly desired identity-consistent, identity-enhancement, and identity-improvement depictions: (1) *everyday Black life experiences*, (2) *Black characters discussing pride, history, and culture*, and (3) *contemporary racism*, respectively. Contrary to my prediction, child age did not predict preferences for the *self-improvement*-aligned depiction (i.e., *contemporary racism*), nor did it predict preferences for the *self-consistency*-aligned depiction (*everyday Black life experiences*) or the *self-enhancement*-aligned depiction (*Black characters discussing pride, history, and culture*).

However, with child age in the model, I found effects of perceived child identity strength on the *self-consistency*-aligned depiction (*everyday Black life experiences*) and the *self-improvement*-aligned depiction (*contemporary racism*). Parents who rated their child as having stronger (as opposed to weaker) ethnic-racial identities were more likely to desire depictions of everyday Black life experiences and contemporary racism. Perceptions of child identity strength did not predict the self-enhancement depiction (*Black characters discussing pride, history, and culture*). In addition, over and above effects of child age and perceptions of the child's identity, parents' own reported ethnic-racial identity strength predicted their preferences for all three types of content. Parents who reported themselves to have stronger (as opposed to weaker) ethnic-racial identities were more likely to report wanting their children to see higher rates of each of the three types of content. These findings suggest that when applying SESAM to the realm of race-related parental mediation, it may be needed to simultaneously consider the self-concepts of

both the child *and* the parent. The findings suggest support for theorizing by García Coll et al. (1996) who proposed that parents' own experiences and backgrounds can affect how they socialize their children around identity.

My findings about perceptions of child identity strength align with Hughes et al.'s (2016) and Beyens et al.'s (2019) theorizing about parents' adaptive socialization based on perceptions of child needs and "readiness" (Hughes et al., 2016, p. 11). In both ethnic-racial socialization and parental mediation, parents adaptively socialize based on their perceptions of who their child is and what they need. It may be that for Black parents, depictions that they perceive as identity-consistent and identity-improving may seem most appropriate when parents perceive their child to be at a particular (strong) point in their ethnic-racial development. Future work should explore how such media content is actually implemented in ethnic-racial socialization contexts, and in particular whether such content is seen as especially valuable in specific situations, such as when the child has experienced racism.

This study was a first step in examining whether particular types of content theorized to be tied to SESAM's three motivations may apply to Black families' desires for children's television and film media content when it comes to their ethnic-racial socialization. Altogether, these findings suggest the versatility of SESAM and suggest avenues for continuing to examine and build upon the theory as it relates to intersections with parental mediation and family identity socialization.

Moving forward, there is a need for experimental examination of the specific conditions under which Black parents might seek out or avoid particular content for their children. Parents reported wanting particular depictions more or less frequently, but what content is most preferred under particular circumstances? Given the high rates of racism experienced by Black youth (e.g.,

English et al., 2020) and the evidence to suggest that non-media ethnic-racial socialization may mitigate negative outcomes from bias (Hughes et al., 2006), there is a need for future work to investigate how media can serve as resources for parents helping their children prepare for, and cope with, racism.

Given that I used correlational data collected during a unique moment in U.S. history, during widely attended and highly public protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, the patterns observed here warrant replication. Future work should also examine intersectional identities, as Black (and other racially marginalized) parents raise diverse children who may not only be racially marginalized but also marginalized by other factors such as socioeconomic status or by belonging to the LGBTQ+ community. The identity-based parental mediation strategies that families employ to support children with multiple marginalized identities warrant further attention. Although the findings of the present study must be contextualized within the period of U.S. history in which the data were collected, these findings highlight the importance of continued work in this domain and also raise key questions about the kinds of nuance that may matter in intragroup representation for parents socializing their children in the 21st Century.

# Chapter 3

## Study 1b – Thematic Summary of Black Identity-Related Curated Content

Study 1a (Chapter 2) provided insights into the kinds of content that U.S. Black parents might prefer for their children and at which frequencies. The present study (Study 1b) is intended to provide an initial account of what type of media content (TV, streaming, films) is being recommended to parents (via Common Sense Media's curated lists) as relevant to Black identity and/or issues of race.

Rather than being a systematic content analysis of the media universe for U.S. Black families, Study 1b's objective is to describe broad themes and child audience age patterns of the landscape as identified and curated by Common Sense Media. Common Sense Media is a respected source of children's media recommendations for U.S. families and educators. According to their website, millions of families access their website daily, and Common Sense Media describes themselves as "the leading source of entertainment and technology recommendations for families and schools."

As part of their open-access services, Common Sense Media regularly publishes free "Best of" lists on their website, which include curated recommendations of children's television, streaming content, films, books, and digital content (such as apps) for families and educators. Each "Best of" list contains a set of themed sub-lists. Each sub-list includes a list of specific media offerings selected by Common Sense Media. For each offering, Common Sense Media rates a target minimum audience age (e.g., age 8+) and provides a short review of the content. In addition, for a $30 annual fee in 2022, users could gain unlimited access to Common Sense Media's more detailed reviews of each media offering, which feature in-depth reviews, including

a “What Parents Need to Know” section for each show or film. As such, the Common Sense Media website offers a resource for parents to find appropriate content.

Of particular interest is the fact that Common Sense Media has curated lists of films, TV programs, and streaming content relating to race and ethnicity, including lists specifically focused on Black individuals and experiences. Analysis of these lists provides a way of surveying the media landscape available to Black parents for their socialization efforts, without undertaking a large-scale content analysis.

The present chapter describes a thematic summary of Black identity-related content featured on the curated lists of Common Sense Media’s website between January and February 2022. The broad themes were coded via a bottom-up grouping process based on the keywords in the lists’ titles, as opposed to being based a priori on SESAM motivations or specifically on Study 1a’s findings. However, the variables of Study 1a did inform the creation of an initial list of keywords that were used to designate lists as Black identity-related lists, as described below in the methods section. I present counts of the number of unique (non-duplicate) media offerings across all themes, and then within each theme, I count the number of unique offerings per theme, the number of unique offerings that are cross-listed across one or more themes, and the number of unique offerings overall and per theme by age group.

## Methods

### Sample

In January and February 2022, I examined all of Common Sense Media’s website’s posted “Best of” lists for children’s media. During this period, Common Sense Media’s website featured ten “Best of” lists, four of which exclusively related to television, streaming video, and film. These included: “Best Movies for Kids,” “Best TV for Kids,” “Best Streaming Picks for Kids,” and “Best for Character Development for Kids.” Since the remaining five “Best of”

categories referred only to games, apps, books, and websites, they were not included in the present analyses. Within these four "Best of" lists, there were a total of 365 sub-lists included, each of which listed and reviewed a set of television, streaming, and film options for children, selected by Common Sense Media.

Across these 350 sub-lists, I identified Black identity-related sub-lists using a set of keywords based on Study 1s's findings about types of desired representation. Specifically, I counted the number of sub-lists that had one or more of the following in their title: (1) racial identity words (i.e., Black, African American, African, race, and/or racial), (2) Black organizations and institutions (e.g., NAACP), (3) racism and social justice words (i.e., racism, bias, hate, social justice, Black Lives Matter), (4) structural racism, institutional racism, and/or systemic racism (e.g., prison to school pipeline), or (5) police brutality or the name of an unarmed Black person who was killed (e.g., Trayvon Martin). Using this approach, I identified 14 (3.8%) of the 365 sub-lists as Black identity-related sub-lists.

Across these 14 Black identity-related sub-lists, a total of 816 media offerings were listed. Once duplicate listings were removed, the total number of unique (non-duplicate) TV shows, streaming programs, and films recommended for children ages 2 to 13+ fell to 480.

## Coding

### *Themes of Each Sub-List*

Each of the 14 sub-lists was coded for theme(s) based on the words in the sub-list titles. By examining the titles of the 14 sub-lists, three theme categories emerged: (1) *Black history*, (2) *racism and social justice*, and (3) *general ingroup representation*. The theme coding was not mutually exclusive, such that a particular sub-list could be coded as belonging to more than one theme (e.g., *Black history* and *racism and social justice*). Table 4 provides a summary of the 14

sub-lists and how they were coded. Table 5 includes exemplar titles of content within each theme.

Sub-lists were coded as belonging to the *Black history* theme if the sub-list titles mentioned the word "Black history." Sub-lists were coded as belonging to the *racism and social justice* theme if their sub-list title included the words "racism," "social justice," or the name of a racial social justice movement (e.g., Black Lives Matter). Sub-lists received the *general ingroup representation* designation if their titles included words that signaled that their media offerings prominently or positively featured Black individuals (e.g., "TV Shows with Black Leads," "Movies with Inspiring Black Women and Girls," "NAACP Image Award" nominees).

The media listings within each sub-list were automatically coded with that theme. For example, the film *Dreamgirls* (only) appeared on the sub-list "Movies with Inspiring Black Girls and Women." Since this sub-list was coded as belonging to the *general ingroup representation* theme, this individual movie's theme was coded as *general ingroup representation.*

***Recommended Minimum Age Groups***

On Common Sense Media's "Best of" lists, each media offering's individual review includes a minimum child audience age. Common Sense Media also allows families to filter the media entries on their lists by child age range (2 to 4, 5 to 7, 8 to 9, 10 to 12, and 13+). Based on the minimum age listed, I coded each offering into one of those age ranges. Thus, for example, a film listed as minimum age 5 was coded as the 5 to 7 range.

***Unique Offering by Theme***

Within each theme, I calculated the number of unique offerings by only counting a title once, even if it appeared on multiple sub-lists for that theme. For example, the movie *Hidden Figures* appeared on four sub-lists, two of which ("Black History Movies That Tackle Racism"

and “Black History on Screen – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math”) were coded as *Black history*. To calculate the unique offerings available across the *Black history* lists, I only counted the *Hidden Figures* listing once in the Black History theme. The movie *Hidden Figures* also appeared on two *general ingroup representation* sub-lists but was also only counted once in the *general ingroup representation* theme. (*Hidden Figures* was also counted as a unique offering for the *racism and social justice* theme, having appeared on the “Black History Movies That Tackle Racism” sub-list, which was double-coded as both the *Black history* theme and *racism and social justice* theme.)

***Exclusive Offerings by Theme***

Within each theme, I calculated the number of unique offerings that were exclusive to that theme (i.e., offerings that were only coded as one theme). For example, the program *Bridgerton* appeared only on the “2021 NAACP Image Award – TV Shows” sub-list and was only coded as *general ingroup representation*; Bridgerton was coded as *exclusively general ingroup representation*. The film *Chasing Trane: The John Coltrane Documentary* appeared on two sub-lists, both of which were coded as only *Black history*; as such this film was coded as *exclusively Black history*. The television program *America to Me* appeared only on the “TV About Racism and Social Justice” sub-list and as such was coded as *exclusively racism and social justice*.

***Multi-Themed Offerings***

I calculated the number of unique offerings that were multi-themed, meaning that they were coded as belonging to more than one theming category. First, all offerings in the sub-lists that included keywords about Black history *and* racism and social justice in their titles (i.e., “Black History Movies that Tackle Racism” and “Black History on the Screen: Activism, Civics,

and Social Justice") were coded as belonging to both the *Black history* and the *racism and social justice* theme. For any additional offering that appeared on more than one sub-list, and those on sub-lists that were coded as belonging to more than one theme (e.g., *Black history* and *general ingroup representation*), that offering was counted as a "multi-themed" offering. For example, *Becoming*, a biographical movie about Michelle Obama, was listed on five sub-lists, which together covered all three themes: *Black history*, *racism and social justice*, and *general ingroup representation*.

## Results

### Total Content Offerings

Table 4 presents a summary of the media offerings by theme (*Black History*, *racism and social justice*, and *general ingroup representation*), including the individual sub-list names included within each theme, the number of unique (non-duplicate) media offerings within each theme, and the number of exclusive offerings by theme. Table 5 includes exemplar titles from each theme.

### Theme Representation

As Table 4 shows, with duplicates removed within each theme, the theme with the most amount of unique media entries was the *general ingroup representation* theme, with 338 unique media entries. The *Black history* theme had almost 100 fewer options, with 239 unique listings, and the *racism and social justice* theme had the fewest, with 151 unique listings.

In terms of exclusive offerings by theme, there were 199 media offerings that only appeared in the *general ingroup representation*, 78 media offerings that only appeared in the *Black history* theme, and 28 unique media offerings that only appeared in the *racism and social justice* theme.

I also calculated the number of multi-themed offerings across the lists and found that 119 shows that were coded as both *Black history* and *general ingroup representation.* There were 115 offerings were coded as belonging to both the *Black history* and the *racism and social justice* themes., There were 81 offerings coded as *racism and social justice* and as *general ingroup representation*. There were 70 offerings that were coded as all three themes.

**Audience Age Patterns**

As Figure 2 depicts, among the unique 338 coded as *general ingroup representation* offerings, the vast majority of the available content on the 14 Black identity-related sub-lists was rated as age appropriate only for older children, especially teenagers. Preschoolers had the lowest amount of total count, with increased amounts of content for children as they got older, especially for adolescents. Content for adolescents towered those of other age groups, with a total of 224 options.

The number of offerings tended to increase with child audience age among the 149 unique *Black History* offerings, as shown in Figure 2. Content for adolescents for this age group topped 70% of the total *Black History* content, with substantially smaller amounts of choices for younger children, especially those in the youngest two age ranges.

As Figure 2 shows, the audience age by availability trend was also observed among the 151 unique *racism and social justice* media offerings and was most pronounced in this category. Preschoolers had 2 options (1.3%), both of which were from Sesame Workshop. One entry was the *Sesame Street* series itself, and the other was a *Sesame/CNN: Standing Up to Racism* special that aired specifically in the wake of George Floyd's death in the summer of 2020. Options for 5- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 9-year-olds, and 10- to 12-year-olds were also limited in comparison to the number of offerings for adolescents (79.3%).

In total, across all of the 480 unique shows across all three theming categories, a mere 12 (2.5%) of shows were available for preschool audiences. There was a total of 23 (4.8%) options for 5- to 7-year-olds, 37 (7.7%) options for 8- to 9-year-olds, and 81 (16.9%) options for 10- to 12-year-olds. In comparison, there were 327 unique shows and films rated as age appropriate for teenagers, which constituted 68.1% of the total listed programs.

Since in a naturalistic setting, families would browse these sub-lists and look at the age ratings themselves, it is worth noting that half (7) of the Black identity-related sub-lists did not include a single television or film for children ages 2 to 4. In addition, eight of the 14 Black identity-related sub-lists featured only single-digit percentage offerings for 8- to 9-year-olds (and one list had 0 offerings); there were two lists that contained single-digit percentage offerings for children ages 10 to 12. In contrast, 10 of the 14 sub-lists contained over 60% adolescent content.

## Discussion

The present study was intended to systematically examine the types of curated content available to today's U.S. Black families from a trusted resource for children's media recommendations. The results help paint some of the picture of how various kinds of available content may or may not align with the types of depictions Black parents reported desiring in Study 1a. The results also highlight remaining questions that warrant further examination given the patterns of media-based ethnic-racial socialization observed among Black parents in McClain and Mares's (2022) study.

Common Sense Media should be applauded for their efforts to create easily accessible Black identity-related curated recommendations. At the same time, it is critical to note that the overall number of Black identity-related sub-lists were only a small fraction (4%) of the total available 350 sub-lists on the website related to television, streaming, and film. In addition,

among the 14 Black identity related sub-lists, only 60% of the listings were unique (non-duplicate) offerings, leaving only 480 Black identity-related recommended options for Black families. Overall, these findings suggest that more Black identity-related children's media content should be created. Given that Black youth media use rates have risen among both younger and older Black children and teens (Rideout & Robb, 2020, 2021), and that Ellithorpe and Bleakley's (2016) study suggested that Black youth were consuming more media in pursuit of more ethnic-racial diversity, having fewer than 500 recommended offerings that are explicitly tagged as focusing on or portraying Black identity issues seems limited.

The theme with the most offerings (by count of unique shows) was general ingroup representation – in other words, content coded as positively or prominently featuring Black individuals. However, there were 70 offerings coded as all three themes, and another 119 shows were coded as pertaining to both general ingroup representation and Black history. In addition, there were 81 offerings coded as relating to both general ingroup representation and racism/social justice. This suggests that a fair deal of the content framed as Black-centered and as reflective of positive Black identity also had an emphasis on issues of Black history as well as on racism and social justice. Finally, 115 offerings were coded as relating racism/social justice and Black history. This implies that a substantial proportion of the recommended content that focused on racism and social justice was set in historical contexts.

Future work will be needed to systematically analyze (by viewing) the actual individual media offerings contained within these themes in more detail, but it is nevertheless worth noting that if these patterns by theme are reflective of the content offered, these offerings do not necessarily match what Black parents reported desiring in Study 1a. I found that parents' most desired form of self-consistency representation for their child was the portrayal of everyday

Black life. The general ingroup representation may have offerings that portray everyday Black life, but my analyses suggest that only about 60% of the offerings coded as general ingroup representation offerings were exclusively coded as general ingroup representation. The other -40% were cross-listed on either Black history and/or racism/social justice sub-lists. This suggests that everyday contemporary depictions may be somewhat limited.

Study 1a did find evidence to suggest that Black history portrayals were desired frequently by the sample of Black parents, and that portrayals of contemporary racism were desired frequently as well. However, in Study1a I also found that Black parents reported preferring high frequencies of contemporary racism depictions to historical racism depictions. As such, an emphasis on historical racism depictions would not be expected to be as desired as an emphasis on contemporary racism depictions. Therefore, the proportion of offerings that were cross-listed on both racism/social justice and Black history sub-lists raises the possibility that when racism is depicted, a lot of the content may present it as set in the past. Future work will need to analyze in more detail the shows and films of these themes to probe more about their portrayals, including their time period setting and an analysis of what kind of "everyday" contemporary portrayals are available on these Common Sense Media curated lists. However, at present these findings suggest that in an already limited total amount of recommended Black identity-related content, the potential limitations of everyday representation and contemporary racism may be a reason for concern.

In addition, the available Black-identity content curated by Common Sense Media overall catered to older child audiences, and particularly adolescents, leaving families with younger children with much more limited selections than families with older children. The audience age differences were most pronounced in the racism and social justice theme offerings, but even in

the theming category with the highest number of unique offerings, as well as the highest number of mutually exclusive offerings (general ingroup representation), the total number of offerings available for preschoolers was in the single digits.

The disproportionately small amount of content for the youngest viewers raises important questions that need to be further examined, given the findings of Study 1a and McClain and Mares (2022). As has been discussed, Black parents in Study 1a reported desiring high frequencies of various forms of ingroup depictions for their children, including everyday Black life depictions, Black history, pride, and culture, and depictions of contemporary racism. Child age did not predict differences in preferences, indicating that Black parents of all ages of children all wanted the same kinds of content at high frequencies. As such, given the present findings, which suggest much more limited availability of content for younger (as opposed to older) children, Black parents of young children may not be able to find much content that matches their reported representation desires observed in Study 1a.

In addition, McClain and Mares (2022) found that overall, Black parents of children ages 3 to 17 were engaging in ethnic-racial socialization strategies using media, at rates above the midpoint. Parents of children of all ages were using media to socialize their children around race. As such, with limited quality recommendations from sources like Common Sense Media, parents of the youngest children may be hard-pressed to find sufficient resources to socialize their children. Although McClain and Mares (2022) found that media-based preparation for bias was more common among parents of older children, the average rate of this strategy among parents of preschoolers was well above 0 (never). Given that the sharpest contrast in available content by age was within the racism and social justice theme, this means that the parents of young children

who engage in media-based preparation for bias will be most hard-pressed to find high-quality content for helping their children understand and cope with racism.

Since, at the very least, Common Sense Media's recommended offerings are a sampling of high-quality easy-to-access Black identity-related content available for youth, it may be the case that the media industry may be missing opportunities to create socialization resources for Black families, especially as it would serve the youngest viewers. Future work will need to explore whether Black parents feel strained to find adequate representation for their children, as well as what potential effects such perceptions could have on socialization strategies and outcomes.

To probe the availability of Black identity-related content in today's media landscape further, there are several future studies that should ideally be conducted. First, future work should conduct a systematic content analysis analyzing the individual media offerings of these 14 Black identity-related sub-lists in more detail, by viewing individual offerings and coding for the particular ways in which the themes are presented. One approach might be to analyze in detail the individual offerings through the lens of the SESAM identity-consistent, identity-enhancing, and identity-improving themes suggested by Study 1a. Given that audience perceptions of content are also critical elements of analysis, this work could also be complemented with a study examining parents' and children's perspectives of these shows and films in terms of themes, as well as their perceptions of how the offerings' usefulness to achieve identity-consistency, identity-enhancement, and identity-improving effects among youth. This analysis could also be coupled with measurements that capture parental and youth media landscape perceptions of how overall sufficient and accessible content is that matches their family's viewing preferences and needs.

Given that McClain and Mares (2022) found that in 2018, Black parents reported perceiving a mix of racial bias and utility in their children's media landscapes, future work should measure parental perceptions of how biased and useful parents perceive today's media offerings to be, especially following the U.S. Black Lives Matter Movement of summer 2020. In addition, given that analyses from McClain and Mares's (2020) industry report that analyzed Study 1a data found that Black parents reported wanting children's media organizations to hire Black creatives and publicly support racial justice, it would be worthwhile for researchers to probe whether perceptions of media racial bias and utility are related to parents' perceptions of who (in terms of people and companies) – created and/or funded particular content.

Importantly, the present study cannot speak to how well the entire universe of U.S. children's media is matching up to the desire for high-quality ingroup representations for Black families, or to whether or not overall, the industry is relying too heavily on historical and painful narratives. Common Sense Media's sub-lists are not exhaustive; they are curated by a team of experts, and their recommendations are likely sought out by families and educators who are trying to be thoughtful about their children's media consumption. While Common Sense Media's recommendations are likely perceived as useful and appealing to families, it is also important for researchers to attempt to draw from a representative sample of the entirety of available television, streaming, social media (e.g., YouTube), and film content available for U.S. children today in order to make generalizations about the kind of available explicit Black identity-related content. Since the issue of racial representation has been revisited for decades, it might be particularly useful to consider a longitudinal study that tracks both changes in Black identity-related content offerings in families' broad media landscapes alongside parental and child perceptions of the content.

All of this being said, the present findings highlight the need to continue to probe the issue of representation for Black families, as they suggest that there may be limited options – in finite number and perhaps in theme – among the recommended curated content from a leader in the field. These findings are a call for future research and a potential warning sign to the children's media industry that the amount of high-quality content for Black families may be limited, especially for very young children, even in 2022. The importance of continuing this line of inquiry is further underscored by McClain and Mares's (2022) findings about Black parents' perceptions of the media landscape. They found that parental perceptions of the media landscape – specifically how racially biased they perceived it to be, as well as how available useful content was for teaching their child about pride and racism – predicted parents' reported rates of using media to promote racial pride and using media to prepare their children for bias. If Black parents do not perceive enough useful available content for teaching their children about race, they may not tap into media resources for ethnic-racial socialization as frequently, missing potential opportunities to foster race-based media literacy in their children through a medium that children clearly enjoy.

Far from being an admonishment of Common Sense Media's curation efforts, however, this study's results underscore the likely importance of efforts like theirs to make more accessible the content that *is* available and that may have the potential to be seen as useful to Black families. The findings also importantly suggest positive leadership from the children's media industry, in particular from Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit behind the young children's program, *Sesame Street*. Sesame Workshop stood out on the Black identity-related sub-lists in the preschool category in that it produced three of the total 14 available program offerings for preschoolers. Two of these programs, "Sesame/CNN: Standing Up to Racism" and "The Power

of We: A Sesame Street Special" both address contemporary racism, an element that would be expected to be received favorably by Black parents based on the findings of Study 1a. Such efforts from what is known as an exemplar, trusted media organization are encouraging signs that the media industry has the potential to meet U.S. Black families' needs and desires for their children's media content. More research remains in this domain, and for now in this next chapter, I turn to the question of what kind of media content might be useful to Black parents in the moment when their child experiences racism.

# Chapter 4

## Study 2 – Using Media to Cope with Racism? Black Parents' Media Choices and Encouragement for Their Children

As has been discussed in previous chapters, Black parents have been found to use media to socialize their children around race (McClain and Mares, 2022), and they have been found to report clear preferences for the types of depictions that they want their children to see more or less frequently (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, my analysis of the thematic summary of Common Sense Media's early 2022 curated Black identity-related media offerings suggest that Black parents, especially those with young children, may have limited options available to them, both in terms of theme and in quantity. The central question of Study 2 concerns how Black parents might cope with a racism experience for their child using media, and what might drive particular coping strategies.

Negative racial attitudes peak in early childhood between the ages of 5 and 7 (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011), and recent work suggests that U.S. Black adolescents experience an average of five instances of racial bias each day (English et al., 2020). Black youth have reported racism experiences from peers and adults in their communities, schools, and in a variety of explicit and implicit forms (e.g., Pachter et al., 2010). Additionally, in Seaton and Douglass's (2014) qualitative diary study of Black teens, they found that only 3% had not reported having at least one racism experience over the course of 14 days. In 2019, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement calling attention to the serious negative effects of racism on the health of children and adolescents. A large body of scholarship has found that Black individuals find instances of racism to be stressful and negative experiences for themselves and for their children (e.g., Chae et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2020; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Importantly, recent work

has established that even vicarious racism (e.g., hearing about racism), can be linked to higher stress levels and adverse outcomes (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). As Chae et al. (2021) describe, building on others' work:

> Vicarious racism is experienced indirectly, by hearing about or seeing racism acts committed against other members of one's racial group, such as those of friends or family members, and witnessing acts of racism, either personally or on the news. Vicarious racism also includes hearing about or seeing racism that is not necessarily directed toward an individual but, rather, the entire racial group, such as racist rhetoric from public figures or racial posts on social media. (p. 509)

Chae et al. (2021) argue that vicarious racism experiences may make individuals feel threatened on a personal level from the perspective of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1989), which proposes that threats to the broader group can affect how individuals see themselves.

Importantly, vicarious racism experiences are not uncommon among Black and other minoritized individuals. Chae et al. (2021) measured Black and Asian American adults' vicarious racism experiences, which included an item asking about the frequency with which they reported "hearing about experiences of racism from friends and family members" throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Among Black subjects, 98.1% of participants reported having experienced vicarious racism during this time period; among Asian American participants, 91.9% of subjects reported having experienced racism in this way. Black participants averaged about 2.8 on a 5-point frequency scale, translating to perceptions of experiencing an average vicarious racism between "a few times a month" and "once a week" (Chae et al., 2021, p. 512). Chae et al. (2021) also found that 91.2% of Black participants reported experiencing at least some feelings of

distress over vicarious racism experiences, and 85.1% reported being at least "somewhat" concerned about these experiences (Chae eta al., 2021, p. 512). Chae et al. (2021) also found that after controlling for a series of demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, and education status), higher rates of perceptions of vicarious racism significantly and positively predicted both Black and Asian American participants' rates of reported symptoms of anxiety and depression. These findings have implications for vicarious racism experiences among Black parents, such as when a parent is told that their child has experienced racism, and then the parent must assess and cope with the situation. Such experiences may be common for Black parents, provoking feelings of threat and serving as a potential tie to negative outcomes for both children and parents alike.

The central focus of this study is on Black parents' choice of, and reported likelihood of encouraging, media content for their child when they learn (via experimental manipulation) that their child has just experienced peer racism or has just had an okay (ordinary) day. The present study also examines whether a peer racism experience predicts parents' reported intentions to use media to socialize their child around race via media-based ethnic-racial socialization (see McClain & Mares, 2022). Below, I highlight relevant empirical literature in the domain of ethnic-racial socialization among Black families and call attention to the role of cognitive appraisals in stressful situations, such as when a parent is dealing with hearing about their child's racism experience. I then consider potential implications for media selection processes when parents have opportunities to select or encourage content for their child, rather than for themselves.

**Ethnic-Racial Socialization in Response to Child Racism Experiences**

Importantly, as prevalent as U.S. Black youth racism experiences are, so too are parental ethnic-racial socialization strategies aimed at helping minoritized children thrive (see Hughes et

al., 2006, and Priest et al., 2014, for reviews). Although parents, on average, report engaging in preparation for bias socialization less often than cultural socialization (see Hughes et al., 2006), data have indicated a positive relationship between Black parents' perception of their child having experienced racism (from adults) and the frequency with which parents reported preparation for bias socialization; parents' reported perceptions of their child having experienced racism from a peer did not predict this form of socialization (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). In other words, there is evidence that parents who reported having perceived one type of identity threat to their child reported more socialization to prepare their child to understand and cope with racism. In Hughes and Johnson's 2001 study, perceptions of racism did not predict rates of cultural socialization. I argue, however, that the distinction between preparation for bias and cultural socialization should be re-examined among today's U.S. Black families, to gauge whether these constructs are truly different constructs. When it comes to preparing a child to deal with a racially unjust society such as the U.S., it would strike me that efforts to prepare the child to be both racially prideful *and* adept at coping with racism are components of a larger, central goal of working to help a child thrive in a discriminatory society.

Regardless of the extent of overlap that may or may not exist between specific ethnic-racial socialization strategies, it is important to note that ethnic-racial socialization practices as a whole have been conceptualized as adaptive and "culturally relevant" parental coping responses to the presence of racism in marginalized children's lives (Smalls-Glover et al., 2013, p. 49). In line with this proposition, in their Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST) model, Anderson and Stevenson (2019) argue that ethnic-racial socialization practices are "critical factors in how individuals reduce the stress associated with DREs [discriminatory racial encounters]" (p. 66). To probe details about parental ethnic-racial

socialization coping responses to racism, Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) asked 73 parents (most of whom were Black parents) to describe their conversations with their child about race, asking them to specifically focus on times in which the parent had perceived that their child had experienced racism. Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) analyzed the findings with an eye for two common coping strategies that can be tied back to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) work on appraisal theory about how individuals deal with stress: approach coping (i.e., problem-focused coping) and avoidance coping (i.e., emotion-focused coping). As Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) describe, drawing from the work of Causey and Dubow (1992), Roth and Cohen (1986), and Scott (2003): "approach coping includes problem-solving, taking direct action, or attempting to change the stressor" (p. 51). In contrast, "avoidant coping is characterized by efforts (mental or behavioral) to deny, ignore, or minimize a stressful situation" (Smalls-Glover et al., 2013, p. 51).

In Smalls-Glover et al.'s (2013) study, parents reported sometimes using avoidant coping responses, avoiding addressing the problem of their child having experienced racism. However, far more common was an approach coping response among parents, with parents actually leaning *into* the topic of race following a child racism experience. In reported approach responses, parents reported working to help their child attribute an experience to racism, develop an awareness of the existence of racism, or learn how to cope with racism for the future. Many parents specifically reported providing instructions to their child for how they could cope with racism in the future, for example by insisting that their child "seek social support" or "work harder [at school] because 'as a Black child, you have to do better'" (Smalls-Glover et al., 2013, p. 60). In other words, when the parents in Smalls-Glover et al.'s (2013) study reported having appraised their child's situation as one that involved racism, they tended to address the threat to

their child's identity directly, and to often give them specific recommendations that they could employ.

It is worth noting that approach coping responses to racism have been found to have positive outcomes for Black adults (Utsey et al., 2000) and are expected to have adaptive outcomes among Black youth (Anderson & Stevenson., 2019; Anderson et al., 2018). In addition, evidence suggests that ethnic-racial socialization practices may serve protective functions in terms of mitigating the effects of racism on youth (Neblett et al., 2008). This literature which suggests the benefits of approach coping in the face of racism among Black individuals is consistent with arguments from other literature that explores implications for critically examining issues of racism, as opposing to ignoring them. For example, Cheng et al. (2021) argued that a phenomenon called critical consciousness enables individuals to "attribute their racist encounters to group-based discrimination, rather than blame themselves" (p. 633). Cheng et al. (2021) argue that education around racism and around individuals' shared racial challenges may serve ego-protective functions. In fact, attribution to racism may be protective of self-esteem among preadolescent Black youth (Thijs & Piscoi, 2016). As such, there is reason to suspect that a parent taking an approach coping response to deal with their child's racism experience may not only help their child cope with the incident at hand but may also possibly prepare them to be more resilient to other racism incidents in the future. These approaches may offer ego-protective strategies for reinterpreting negative experiences as part of broader systemic patterns.

In addition, there is a small set of work which suggests that Black parents' coping practices for racism may involve media. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, seminal work in ethnic-racial socialization among Black families suggested that some Black parents reported

using media to teach their child about the existence of racism and how to prepare for it. Hughes and Chen's (1997) study found that 20% of Black parents in their sample had "often" or "very often" in the past year "explained to [their] child something [their] child saw on TV that showed poor treatment of Blacks." Expanding on this finding, McClain and Mares (2022) measured how often Black parents of children ages 3 to 17 reported using media to help their child prepare for racial bias and injustice. Measures included items such as asking parents to rate how often they encouraged their child to "see/hear media with examples of racial bias" and how often they "pointed out moments in media content when individuals deal positively with racial bias." Overall, parents reported rates of media-based preparation for bias at an average of 5.5 on a 7-point scale, indicating that parents in the sample were frequently engaging in this type of socialization. Although the rate of using media as preparation for bias socialization were significantly lower for parents of preschoolers, it was still well above 0 (never). Similarly, in Study 1a of this dissertation, Black parents with children ages 3 to 17 reported wanting their child to occasionally see racism depicted in their child's media content, and most wanted depictions of contemporary racism, and racism shown as resolved or affirmed as wrong.

Taken together, this set of empirical literature offers a few building blocks relevant for examining the core questions of the present study. First, it suggests that Black individuals (including parents) find racism experiences stressful (e.g., Chae et al., 2021; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Second, it indicates that Black parents may sometimes lean into discussions of race and racism with their child after their child has experienced racism (Smalls-Glover et al., 2013). And third, it suggests that Black parents sometimes use media to socialize their children around race and racism. However, what are the processes that may drive Black parents' coping responses to child racism experiences to begin with? In order to shed light on the cognitive

processes involved in their possible coping responses, I turn to appraisal theory (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Smith, 1991).

**Applying Appraisal Theory to Racism Experiences**

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) appraisal theory was originally designed to explain how individuals cope with stress. Smith (1991) built on this model to apply appraisal theory to think about coping in response to a broader range of emotions, as opposed to only stress. The basic principle of appraisal theory is that individuals engage in primary and secondary cognitive appraisal of their situations, though their cognitions need not be conscious. Primary appraisal involves assessing whether the situation is threatening (or not) to the individual (Smith, 1991). For example, Smith (1991) proposes that during primary appraisal processes, a person grapples with questions such as: Does this situation matter to me? How congruent is this situation (e.g., how much do I want this kind of situation to have happened)? Secondary appraisal involves assessments of how to react, in part based on what resources are available to them and which ones they think will work (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lopez Kinney, 2001). As such, the kinds of cognitive thought processes relevant to secondary appraisal are questions such as: What resources do I have? How can I cope? Who is responsible for what happened? Is there hope in this situation? Both primary and secondary evaluations are theorized to vary by "intra-individual factors," such as an individuals' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, goals, and past experiences (Smith, 1991, p. 118).

The "answers" to these primary and secondary appraisals lead to "emotional responses," which include affect, "action tendencies" (such as running away when struck with anxiety or fighting when one is angered), and physiological responses (Smith, 1991, pp. 119 - 130). These emotional responses can in turn affect an individual's coping response, which as noted above,

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest could be categorized as either "problem-focused" coping (i.e., approach coping) or "emotion-focused" coping (i.e., avoidance coping). Importantly, appraisal theory does not offer specific predictions about which emotions would lead to emotion-focused (avoidance) versus problem-focused (approach) coping. Instead, both the seminal work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and the more recent theorizing of Smith (1991) suggests that many factors can affect their "action tendencies" and that those action tendencies can be overridden. As Smith (1991) recognizes, except in situations of "extreme" emotional states, individuals have numerous coping response choices available to them (p. 130).

Appraisal theory has been applied to Black individuals' reactions to, and subsequent coping with, racism (e.g., Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). In fact, Anderson and Stevenson (2019) label their RECAST model of Black parents' socialization strategies for helping their children cope with racism as the "racially specific complement to Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping" (p. 66). Anderson and Stevenson (2019) propose that the appraisal processes for a racism experience operate in the same ways that they do in the general appraisal model. That is, they argue primary appraisal involves assessing whether a discriminatory racial experience "is a threat," and secondary appraisal involves assessing whether the individual's available resources for coping or self-efficacy can "match the demands of the stressor" (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019, p. 67). In a situation in which a Black parent learns about a child racism experience, a parent's subsequent emotional responses (e.g., affect, physiological responses, and motivations) is then expected to be a driving factor in the parent's assessment of their child's emotional state and decisions regarding how to cope and how to help their child cope.

Although Anderson and Stevenson (2019) lay out these processes, the focus of their RECAST model is on the impact of parents' choices of approach or avoidant coping responses to racism and the child's subsequent well-being. One of their arguments is that the more skilled and competent a family is in terms of ethnic-racial socialization and coping, ultimately, the better the outcomes for the child. Although this line of work is critical for understanding the ways in which the negative effects of racism experiences can be mitigated, it remains unclear what predicts particular parental coping responses in the moment following a discriminatory racial experience. Indeed, as Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) note: "we know little about the context surrounding a parents' response to racism that may prompt them to encourage an avoidance or approach strategy" (p. 47). Additionally, scholarship has yet to explore how parents might employ race-related media resources in these situations and what might mediate the relationship between a DRE and a coping response, particularly if the coping resource includes media use.

In sum, appraisal theory offers key theoretical infrastructure for understanding the cognitive processes that are expected to be involved in a Black parents' learning about their child having experienced racism and helps ground our understanding of the categories of coping that may be available them. However, appraisal theory needs to be connected to selective exposure theorizing in order to make predictions about what might happen in terms of parental media selection and encouragement for coping. Appraisal theory informs us that we should expect a Black parent to automatically engage in cognitive assessments of what happened to their child when a child comes home and tells the parent that they have experienced racism. It also highlights how we should anticipate that a parent's assessment of their child's affect, their own affect, their goals and hopes, as well as their appraisal of the overall circumstances and available resources may all affect how a parent ends up coping with the situation. From the work that has

applied appraisal theory to DREs (e.g., Anderson & Stevenson, 2019), work examining the nature of vicarious racism (e.g., Chae et al., 2021), and research on ethnic-racial socialization around events perceived as racist (e.g., Thomas & Blackmon, 2015), we can also expect that a parent might feel disturbed, frightened, and concerned about what happened to their child and that they would appraise their child as experiencing negative affect as well. The work of Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) also suggests that we can expect Black parents to perceive a need to socialize their child after a racism experience and specifically to lean into conversations about race using approach coping.

In order to make specific predictions about the factors that might predict parental choice or encouragement of media content when a child has experienced racism, I turn to two bodies of theorizing from the domain of selective exposure: Zillmann's (1988) Mood Management Theory (MMT) and Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) Selective-Exposure Self-and Affect-Management Model.

## Theorizing Parental Choices After Children's Experiences of Identity Threats

### *Mood Management Theory (MMT)*

Mood Management Theory (MMT) (Zillmann, 1988) proposes that individuals selectively expose themselves to particular media content so that they can improve or regulate their current moods. MMT rests on the idea that individuals want to regulate their emotions in order to maximize, prolong, or create good feelings and to achieve what Zillmann (1988) proposes as an ideal mood state: "excitation homeostasis" (i.e., not being too over stimulated with stress or anxiety but not bored; feeling good but not too excited/aroused) (p. 332). Zillmann argues that individuals do not want to stay in negative moods; they prefer to minimize those bad

feelings or remove them altogether. In addition, he argues that when individuals are too excited or stressed, they generally want to be less excited and stressed (Zillmann, 1988).

Within this theory, we can examine various types of media content and differentiate it according to Zillmann's (1998) theorizing around its potential to impact mood. Zillmann (1988) proposed that media could be categorized with key "mood-impacting characteristics" (p. 331). There is the "excitatory potential" (how exciting and stimulating content is), "absorption potential" (how immersed people are likely to be in the content), "semantic affinity" (similarity between the user's mood and the mood of the content), and "hedonic valence" (how positive or negative the content's message is) (pp. 331-332). MMT expects that individuals' mood states dictate their selection of content, specifically based on these media characteristics. For example, individuals who are upset about a romantic break-up would be expected to want to rid themselves of their negative feelings (in others, engage in avoidance coping) by distracting themselves from why they are upset. As such, MMT expects them to select content that is positive and that has low semantic affinity to romantic relationships and break-ups, thereby helping regulate mood and avoiding reminders of what put them in their current negative mood. Zillmann (1988) argued that the contexts where we are most likely to see mood management driven by hedonic principles are when (1) people cannot change or fix the real-life circumstances related to their negative moods (via behavior, for example), and (2) there are a lot of media stimuli choices available to them.

One of the most relevant tests of this theorizing comes from the work of Kim and Oliver (2011) with college students. They found that students who were induced to feel sad about their romantic situation (e.g., imagining a break-up) were more likely than those who were induced to feel happy or neutral about their romantic situation to avoid *happy, romance-related* content. Out

of choices for *happy, romance-related* content, *happy romance-unrelated* content, *sad romance-related* content, and *sad romance-unrelated* content, students in the sad romantic condition most preferred *happy romance-unrelated* content. They were more likely to avoid *sad romance-related* content and *sad romance-unrelated* content than *happy romance-unrelated* content. Thus, these findings were primarily consistent with MMT's proposition that individuals experiencing negative affect will avoid content with semantic affinity to the source of their negative affect, as well as content with negative valence. In the context of parental coping with media after a child racism incident, the MMT tradition might expect that Black parents choosing content after their child has experienced racism would avoid selecting or encouraging depictions related to race or with negative affect, ideally choosing and preferring positive, distracting content. However, theorizing from Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) Selective-Exposure Self-and Affect-Media Model (SESAM), as well as the literature about ethnic-racial socialization, suggest other possibilities about how additional factors beyond affect alone can drive media selection.

### *Selective-Exposure Self-and Affect-Media Model (SESAM)*

In SESAM, Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) acknowledges the role that affect can play in media selection, and in fact incorporates MMT into her model as well as thinking about selective exposure paradigms more generally (Knobloch-Westerwick, 2020). However, as has been discussed now at length, SESAM theorizing builds on this to also explain how people use media to "maintain" and "activate" self-concepts, which include social identity self-concepts like one's racial identity. SESAM proposes that people can be motivated to activate and maintain a particular self-concept to fulfill various social identity needs that arise from their appraisals of different experiences, circumstances, and social environments.

It is also important to highlight that SESAM proposes that individuals have a "dynamic self-concept" (see Markus & Wurf, 1987) and that this contributes to media selections. As Markus and Wurf (1987) describe, the self-concept is "active, forceful, and capable of change. It interprets and organizes self-relevant actions and experiences; it has motivational consequences, providing the incentives, standards, plans, rules, and scripts for behavior; and it adjusts in response to challenges from the social environment" (pp. 299 – 300). Markus and Wurf (1987) argue that the dynamic self-concept is not only "multifaceted" and "multidimensional" but "is systematically implicated in all aspects of social information processing" (p. 301). Since the dynamic self-concept consists of so many types of representations of the self, the "working self" (i.e., an individual's activated subgroup of self-representations) can vary depending on the situation. As Markus and Wurf (1987) describe, some of our self-representations are positive, while others are negative; some are less important than others; some are fixed on future or past moments while others are focused on the current moment; some even relate to the self-concepts we have about what we could, should, want to, or are scared of becoming. According to Markus and Wurf (1987), when the self-representations that we have are conscious cognitions, those are what constitute our self-concepts, highlighting how the very construct of identity in SESAM is rooted in cognition. These findings lay the groundwork for understanding how an explicit threat to identity may trigger particular kinds of motivations around maintaining identity, feeling better about one's identity, or improving oneself in regard to an identity.

Importantly, Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM recognizes that there is a dynamic relationship between affect and identity. For example, SESAM suggests that someone who is overweight could feel sad if they notice that they are not as thin as a group of peers who are judgmental about body weight. SESAM acknowledges that the interplay between affect and

identity can result in three kinds of identity-related motivations as it relates to media selection: identity consistency, identity enhancement, and identity improvement. As discussed in Chapter 2, identity consistency is the expected default motivation and is expected when an individual does not feel threatened or compelled by an identity need and instead, is solely looking to maintain their identity self-concept. The identity-enhancement motivation is expected to arise when an individual feels an identity threat and is subsequently seeking to feel better about their identity. Identity-improvement is expected to arise when an individual feels an identity-related need and is looking to change, adapt, or improve themselves to meet that need. It is specifically the identity improvement motivation that Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) proposes could lead an individual to select content that is not driven by hedonism, whereby an individual selects discordant material but a type that may offer them a chance at improving themselves in some capacity. As will be discussed next, each of these motivations has applicable parallels in the domain of parental mediation around identity.

**Identity Consistency: Looking for Authentic Representation.** When driven by the identity consistency motivation, SESAM expects individuals to seek content that offers messages that are consistent with their salient social identity self-concept. In other words, they look for content that allows them to feel "seen" and represented as who they are. As such, familiar, realistic representations would be expected to be sought, in order to help maintain one's self-concept and avoid creating dissonance that might challenge that self-concept.

A Black parent whose child tells them that they have had an okay day – compared to a Black parent who learns their child has experienced racism – is not expected to perceive a heightened sense of identity threat or an identity-related need for their child. As such, parents in this "okay day" circumstance might be somewhat drawn to media content for their child that

features identity consistent content for their child (e.g., positive and mixed-valence ingroup depictions), but they might not have as strong preferences for these types of content as parents who determine that their child has experienced an identity threat and/or has an identity-related need related to a racism experience. A parent whose child has experienced racism is expected to appraise that situation as threatening and/or as in need of a socialization response (e.g., a response that might help their child feel better about, or grow, in relation to their racial identity). Parents, then, in this circumstance might be more likely to select media that they perceive could help their child maintain a positive identity, feel better about themselves, or work to make themselves better able to deal with unfair circumstances in the future.

**Identity Enhancement: Looking for Content to Feel Better.** As noted above, SESAM expands on Zillmann's (1988) MMT account by adding a focus on identity and the social comparison elements that can be relevant to social identities. Therefore, when a Black parent is in the circumstance of learning that the child has experienced peer racism, consistent with MMT, SESAM would suggest that one route to self-enhancement (or, in the case of parents, helping their child to feel better) would be to seek out fun, engaging, unrelated positive content that would distract the child from the experience of race and racism (as well as peer relational aggression). However, in contrast with MMT, however, SESAM might also propose that identity enhancement could be achieved by showing the child engaging, positive content that *is* related to race. That is, children may benefit from ego-enhancing, restorative depictions of the success of their ingroup. Thus far, then, SESAM suggests two types of content that parents might choose to help their child feel better after a racist encounter: happy race-unrelated content (MMT, SESAM) and happy racial content (SESAM).

**Identity Improvement: Looking for Content to Build Skills.** As noted earlier, SESAM's theorizing recognizes that individuals can also be motivated to seek out content that might not (seem to) be ego-enhancing or ego-protective. Given self-improvement motivations, individuals are expected to seek messages that might help the person grow or develop – by offering discordant self-concept messages or upward social comparison opportunities that can motivate the person to change themselves. The self-improvement motivation explains preferences for media content that can show or teach individuals how they can improve themselves related to their identity, thereby offering a pathway for selecting content that may not appear to affirm the viewer's identity and might even induce or maintain negative or mixed affect. What might that look like in the context of Black parents making media choices for their child after a racism experience?

As noted earlier, research on ethnic-racial socialization among U.S. Black families indicates that Black parents have been found to both proactively and reactively socializing their children around identity, aiming to help their children develop positive self-concepts and resilience in a biased society, including after racism experiences (Hughes et al., 2016, Smalls-Glover et al., 2013). Given that Black parents have reported using media to prepare their children for bias (McClain & Mares, 2022), there is reason to believe that when a Black parent hears that their child has experienced racism, they may respond by using media that they perceive could help their child navigate their identity and identity-related issues. Thus, they may respond by exposing their child to media content with a vicarious Black peer racism experience, even if that content is not entirely positive in affective tone.

**Enhancement and Improvement.** Thus far, the SESAM argument would be that a Black parent whose child has experienced racism would seek out happy race-unrelated content (to

improve affect), happy racial content (to enhance positive feelings about the child's identity) and mixed-valence depictions of racism (to "improve" the child by offering important lessons, potential coping strategies, etc.). However, I would argue that parents' motivations (their racial goals for socializing their child) and perceptions of probable media gratifications (i.e., the perceived effects of the content) are much more likely to be intertwined than this model suggests.

First, I would suggest that parents might choose to show their child mixed-valence content featuring vicarious racism both to teach important race and racism-related lessons *and* to make the child feel better about their identity. That is, depictions of vicarious racism can potentially help a child (or any minoritized person) know that they are not alone and that others have gone through similar experiences. The work on critical consciousness referenced earlier suggests that awareness of others' experiences can build feelings of solidarity, reduce feelings of isolation, and protect self-esteem. Thus, feeling less alone after watching a program that features another child (or children) experiencing racism may reduce how negatively a child feels, in terms of general affect and about their identity, and also offer important modeling of coping skills such as reappraisal. This may be especially true if the depicted individuals are also shown as overcoming racism, either with composure or resilience or a demonstration of racial pride or excellence. As such, content with vicarious racism could be both "enhancing" and "improving," especially if such content was mixed valence and not exclusively negative.

Second, content that is suggestive of racial pride may simultaneously include both "enhancing" elements (via positive portrayals, uplifting messages, helping youth feel less alone) and also "improving" elements (via showing how minoritized people have overcome challenges, how they succeed despite challenges, how systemic racism – not the child in question – is responsible for the racism they experienced). Broadly, the interconnectedness of the constructs of

racial pride and racism is underscored by the commonplace cultural knowledge among marginalized communities that one of the reasons why it is acceptable at all to be outwardly prideful of a marginalized identity is precisely because that pride coexists with, and is necessary because of, bias against that identity, whether historically, contemporarily, and/or via continued structural inequity.

Finally, before introducing the present study, it is critical to highlight that SESAM allows for the role of cognition in selective exposure, given that a Black parent who hears about their child experiencing racism is expected to cognitively process that information, and – especially in the context of the present experimental design – engage in deliberative cognition around what happened. Based on MMT theorizing, Knobloch-Westerwick (2020) proposes that most media selections that individuals make happen without their awareness. She argues that this is because media selections tend to be inconsequential, small decisions that do not have major effects or meaning on individuals' lives; the TV programs that people switch on when they're tired or relaxing usually are not expected to be make-or-break consequential decisions. This is likely not the reality that a Black parent would experience when their child comes home upset from a peer racism experience and – as in the present experiment – tells them they do not want to talk about what happened, only want to watch a television program, and then the parent is asked what they would choose and prefer for their child. There is reason to believe that such decisions would invoke high levels of deliberative thought by parents and be seen as decisions that could affect important well-being outcomes for their child (such as their views of themselves), if only in the short-term.

Knobloch-Westerwick (2020) notably leaves space for these subsets of situations, acknowledging that sometimes media selection can be deliberative and conscious. It is within

this subset of selective exposure processes that the present study focuses. Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) explicitly incorporates theorizing from Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and others about how affect is derived from cognition, including cognition around one's self-concepts, and how identity and affect can be affected by the circumstances that one finds oneself in. As such, SESAM is applicable to situations in which parents may have to make deliberative selective exposure decisions that feel important in the scheme of raising their children. At the same time, although Zillmann (1988) does not spell out the role of cognition in affect, the propositions of MMT are nevertheless useful reference points to test the kinds of coping Black parents might lean towards in a situation in which their child – and they themselves – are likely experiencing negative affect from racism.

**The Current Study**

To build on these various bodies of work, I conducted an online experiment with U.S. Black parents of children among three child age groups: 3- to 5-year-olds, 9- to 11-year-olds, and 15- to 17-year-olds. Parents read a vignette imagining a scenario in which their child either experienced peer racism or had an ordinary "okay" day with peers, rated their perceptions of their child's likely affect response and their own likely affective response, then rated how likely they would be to encourage their child to watch four different types of "shows" as well as which show they would pick if they could only select one. Four types of age appropriate trailers were offered as choices, to test the hypotheses afforded by MMT versus SESAM and identity considerations. The four types of shows were:

1. Happy race-unrelated content (i.e., positive entertainment content with no Black representation or explicit mention of race)
2. Happy race-related content (i.e., positive, explicit racial pride content)

3. Mixed valence, race-related content (i.e., racism against a Black youth with message affirming that racism is wrong)

*4.* Mixed-valence, race-unrelated content (i.e., climate change problems, with no Black representation or explicit mention of race)

Parents rated the degree to which they wanted to use media to help their child with various race-related goals (e.g., help their child feel better) and rated their intentions to engage in media-based ethnic-racial socialization in the coming days.

## Hypotheses

### *H1 Effects of condition on affect and goals*

Based on theorizing from appraisal theory and work that has applied appraisal theory to racism situations (e.g., Anderson & Stevenson, 2019) the prediction was that a parent in the racism condition would rate their child as having a higher negative affect. It is also reasonable to presume that the parent themselves would rate their own negative affect higher, out of worry or concern (see Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). In addition, the ethnic-racial socialization literature raises the possibility that Black parents may have heightened racial socialization goals (i.e., socialization goals around helping their child think about and navigate their identity) following a child racism experience (e.g., Smalls-Glover et al., 2013; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Such goals might include wanting their child to feel good about who they are, or to learn more about ways of coping with racism, or to learn that they are not alone in their experience of racism. I expected there to be an effect of condition on parents' reports that they would be motivated to use media for racial goals, as depicted in Figure 1a.

H1: Parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition will give higher ratings of their child's negative affect, their own negative affect, and their racial goals.

To measure effects of condition on parental choices and preferences, I chose to create two dependent variables: one forced-choice selection (pick one) where parents selected one of the four shows whose trailers they had seen following the vignette, and four (repeated measures) ratings of how likely parents would be to encourage their child to watch each of the four shows. The forced-choice measure was designed to be a proxy for a behavioral measure of a parent choosing something for their child in the moment. The repeated measures encouragement ratings allow for the possibility that parents could potentially find more than one, or all, of the shows appealing, or that they would give low ratings to all four shows, even though they had been forced to select one.

First, I present hypotheses about the forced choice measure, and then I present hypotheses about the repeated measures encouragement ratings. Both are intended to measure different elements of how Black parents imagine leveraging media in response to their child having had a racism experience or an okay day.

***H2 Effects of Condition on Parents' Forced-Choice Selection of Content for their Child***

For the second hypothesis, I expected that condition (racism vs. okay day) would predict a Black parent's choice of media content for their child. However, there were two competing hypotheses to test, one from MMT and one from SESAM.

From the MMT perspective, one would assume that the media choice of a parent for their (likely upset racism condition) child would be driven by a desire to rid their child (and possibly themselves) of negative affect and to distract their child from reminders of what had happened.

In other words, MMT would expect that Black parents would engage in a form of avoidance coping.

Somewhat different predictions are afforded by SESAM. SESAM does not discount the possibility of a parent wanting to help emotionally regulate their child, to make them feel better by a form of avoidance coping (i.e., distraction). As such, from the SESAM perspective, and in line with MMT, one can expect that parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would be more likely to select the happy race-unrelated (entertainment) content than the mixed valence race-unrelated (climate change) content. However, SESAM's theorizing also supports the possibility that a parent might actually want to sometimes seek out semantically related (identity) content in order to help foster their child's identity enhancement and/or identity improvement. In other words, SESAM raises the possibility that parents might engage in a form of approach coping. As such, it is possible that parents in the child racism condition would be *more* likely than parents in the okay day condition to select the happy racial (racial pride) content and the mixed-valence racial (racism) content. It also suggests the possibility that parents in the child racism condition would be roughly equally likely to select the entertainment content. The competing hypotheses for effect of condition on selections are:

H2a (MMT): Parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would be more likely to pick entertainment content and less likely to pick the other three types of content.

H2b (SESAM): Parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would be more likely to pick racial pride content and racism content, equally likely to choose entertainment content, and less likely to pick climate change content.

***H3 Moderating Effects of Perceived Identity Strength***

For the third hypothesis, I expected that parents' perceptions of the strength of their child's ethnic-racial identity would moderate the relationship between experimental condition on parents' content choices. Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) specifically notes that identity-related content preferences "should apply in particular to minorities to whom group membership is more salient" (p. 971). As such, parents who perceive their child as having stronger (as opposed to weaker) ethnic-racial identity strength, should be more likely to seek out identity-related content for their child, particularly when they perceive an identity-related threat or need for their child. This fits with theorizing by Hughes et al. (2016) which suggests that issues of youth bias, identity, and parental socialization are fundamentally interconnected phenomena. It also fits with prior findings that Black parents adapt the particular themes of their socialization conversations to match their perceptions of their child's ability and preparedness to receive those messages based on age and ethnic-racial identity development (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2016; Huguley et al. (2019). Relatedly, McClain and Mares (2022) found that perceptions of child identity strength positively predicted parental reports of media-based ethnic-racial socialization rates. The prediction is that, even controlling for the child's age, condition and perceived identity strength would interact:

> H3: The effects of condition on choice of racial pride content and racial bias content (higher in child racism condition than okay day condition) will be stronger for parents who perceive their child to have a stronger (vs. weaker) ethnic-racial identity.

***Proposed Mediators of the Effects of Condition on Media Forced-Choice Selection***

Then, guided by appraisal theory, SESAM, and arguments about the nature of ethnic-racial socialization, I posed a question of whether the pathway between condition and content choice would be mediated by negative child affect, negative parent affect, and/or racial goals.

From the original MMT tradition, one might expect that perceptions of negative child affect would mediate the relationship: those who read about their child experiencing racism would perceive their child to have higher negative affect and this negative affect would be associated with increased odds of selecting the happy race-unrelated (entertainment) content and decreased odds of selecting the other types of content, as a form of mood repair.

MMT typically looks at effects of an individual's own affect; however, when applying MMT to the parental mediation context of selecting media for child, it is reasonable to suspect that parents' perceptions of the child's affect might be relevant given that parents are making choices for the child, not themselves. As such, parents' rating of their own affective response to the vignette might also shape their sense of the need for emotional regulation. Indeed, from appraisal theory and SESAM, one might expect additional mediators: that in addition to child negative affect, effects of condition would also be mediated by the parent's ratings of their own negative affect. In addition, appraisal theory (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM also raise the possibility that selective exposure and encouragement ratings by Black parents may not only be driven by emotions but also by cognitions and goals related to perceived threat and needs. Specifically, parents might have goals of making strategic use of media to address perceived racial needs of the child, given the racism experience.

Especially in light of the findings of Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) regarding Black parents' approach coping after a child experiences racism, I argue that despite likely reporting that they and their child would feel higher negative affect (compared to parents in the okay day condition), parents in the racism condition would nevertheless be more likely to select race-related media content for their child, possibly because of their having increased socialization goals around what

they may perceive as a teachable moment around race. I suspected that because Black parents in Smalls-Glover et al.'s (2013) were instructing their children how to cope with racism, that they would even select content that featured vicarious racism – even if that content was mixed-valence – because it would show how others have responded to racism. I suspected that parents in the child racism condition would choose racial pride *and* racism content at higher frequencies than parents in the okay day condition because they have a heightened desire/impetus around racial goals for their child. As such, this study's research question asks:

> RQ1: Will the effects of condition on media selection be mediated by parents' rating of their child's likely negative affect, their own likely negative affect, and/or their reported racial goals?

### *H4 Condition and Parents' Ratings of Encouraging Their Child to Watch*

Finally, what about parents' continuous ratings of how likely they would be to encourage each of the four types of content after viewing the trailers? How might that vary by condition? The same hypotheses were made as for the forced-choice selections.

> H4a (MMT): Parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would give higher ratings of encouragement for the entertainment content and lower ratings of encouragement for the other three types of content.
>
> H4b (SESAM): Parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would give higher ratings of encouragement for the racial pride content and racism content, equivalent ratings for the entertainment content, and lower ratings for the climate change content.

### *Effects of Condition on Intentions for Future Media-Based Socialization*

Given that Hughes and Johnson (2001) found that parental perceptions of their child having experienced racism led to higher reported rates of preparation for bias socialization, it is plausible that a child racism experience could lead a parent to have greater intentions to socialize their child using media-based ethnic-racial socialization (MBERS) strategies following the racism experience for their child. As discussed in Chapter 2, Hughes et al. (2016) theorize that discrimination and identity are intertwined with socialization practices. Therefore, a child racism experience might make a parent generally more concerned about issues of representation, including within media. As such, a child racism experience would presumably not only make the parent more likely to want to prepare their child for bias, but also to explicitly socialize their child around positive media representation, as well as negative media representation (via critiquing and avoiding negative Black stereotypes in their child's media). As such, I propose:

> H5: Parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition will be more likely to indicate higher rates of intentions to engage MBERS socialization around useful content and MBERS socialization around negative content.

Finally, given Hughes et al.'s (2016) theorizing about the interconnectedness of socialization, discrimination, and identity – as well as the empirical work showing positive relationships between the strength of the child's ethnic-racial identity and rates of ethnic-racial socialization (Huguley et al., 2019), there is also reason to suspect that the (perceived) strength of the child's ethnic-racial identity will also moderate the relationship between condition (child

racism vs. okay day) and MBERS intentions. Further support for this hypothesis comes from McClain and Mares (2022), who found that the perceived strength of the child's ethnic-racial identity predicted all four types of MBERS strategies. Therefore, I expect MBERS intentions to be higher for parents in the racism condition (vs. the okay day condition) who perceive their child to have higher levels of ethnic-racial identity.

H6: The effects of condition on encouragement on MBERS intentions will be stronger for parents who perceive their child's ethnic-racial identity to be stronger (rather than weaker).

## Methods

### Generating and Pretesting (Pilot Testing) Materials for Study 2

#### *Creation of Vignettes*

The vignettes were modeled after the vignettes in Scott et al. (2020); see Appendix A, Table A1 for the vignettes. They were designed with the goal of facilitating a parent's immersion into the experience of being told that their child had just experienced racism (or had an okay day) and to highlight the affect of the child.

#### *Creation of Video Trailers*

To test hypotheses about parents' media selections, four types of video content were needed. There were two videos for each content category, intended to represent four themes of shows, for parents of each child age group: (1) positive race-unrelated ("entertainment"), (2) positive race-related ("racial pride"), (3) mixed-valence race-related ("racism"), and (4) mixed-valence race-unrelated ("climate change problems"). To identify content, I started by browsing Common Sense Media's 2021 "Best of" lists of shows and films to identify highly rated content that could also fit the theme criteria. For the race-related content, I specifically searched the

Black identity-related sub-lists (as defined in Study 1b, Chapter 3). Based on Study 1a results, I wanted the "racism" themed content to affirm racism as wrong and to depict it as contemporary. Based on SESAM theorizing, as well as research on critical consciousness and ethnic-racial socialization, and cultural knowledge, I also sought out content that had the potential to be seen by parents as helping their child not feel alone in their experiences of racism. As such, I focused on finding racism theme footage that featured real, contemporary vicarious peer experiences with racism. Ethically and practically, I intentionally avoided creating completely negative racism stimuli. Once potential content was identified, trailers and clips of the shows were watched.

For the "racial pride" theme content, I searched for content with explicit positive messages, and ones that also did not explicitly mention or depict racism. Racial pride content without any racism references was scant on the available Black identity content lists. As such, I expanded my content to YouTube and searched with phrases about Black pride (e.g., "Black is beautiful" and "Black girl magic"). The results of these searches led to the identification of small clips of content, including user-generated content, that I could edit together into single videos. In the user-generated content that appeared to feature a minor, I contacted the adult account holder and was granted explicit permission to use the footage in this study.

I created roughly 30-second "trailers" designed to resemble Netflix previews of offerings, resulting in 2 x 4 types x 3 age groups of content. For listings of the video stimuli used, see Appendix A, Table A2. These trailers were assembled into two sets of stimuli (Set A and Set B) for each age group.

**Pretesting (Pilot Testing) the Vignettes and Videos for Use in Study 2**

**Pretest Sample.** With approval from the UW-Madison IRB (Study ID #2021-0635), an online pretest was conducted in September 2021 with an online sample of 141 U.S. African

American parents of children aged 3 to 5, 9 to 11, and 15 to 17, recruited by the polling company Qualtrics. Quota sampling ensured an equal distribution of parents in each age group.

With regards to gender, 53.5% (76) answered about girls, 41.8% (59) about boys, 2.1% (3) about non-binary children, and 1.4% (2) about a gender fluid child. Overall, 94.3% (134) parents indicated reporting on a cisgender child, 4.2% (6) indicated reporting on a transgender or gender expansive child, and 1.4% (2) indicated reporting on a child whose gender was defined as "other."

In terms of annual household income, roughly a third reported incomes of $30,000 or less, a third reported $31,000 - $60,000, and a third higher than $60,000. Approximately a third had a high school diploma or less, slightly less than a third had some college or an associate's degree, and 38% had a bachelor's degree and/or advanced degrees.

**Rating the Vignettes.** Within each age range of child, a third of parents were assigned to read and rate the child racism vignette created for their child's age group. After reading the vignette, parents rated "how realistic is the scenario described above for a child of your child's age?" (1 not at all, 7 very) and "how often, if ever, has your child experienced something like the scenario described above?" (1 never, 5 very often). They also rated their child's likely affective response and their own likely affective response.

As shown in Appendix A, Table A3, parents in each child age group gave scores above the midpoint for plausibility and indicated that the frequency with which they perceived their child having experienced something similar to the vignette scenario was above 1 (never). Parents rated their child likely to be above the midpoint on higher negative affect (e.g., sadness, frightened) and for themselves to be above the midpoint on negative affect (e.g., frightened, disturbed). Parents also rated their child as likely to be below the midpoint for child positive

affect variables (happy, cheerful). Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds overall suggested they would be less likely to perceive that their child would be frightened.

**Rating the Videos.** All video ratings can be found in Appendix A, Tables A4a – A4f. Parents were randomized to watch either Stimuli Set A or Set B containing four videos, one of each type, designed for their child's age. After viewing each clip, parents rated their perceptions of age-appropriateness, how engaging/interesting the show was. Scores were consistently above the midpoint.

To test the manipulation of "valence," parents rated how much each video was: "happy," "fun," "sad," and "upsetting." The racial pride and entertainment videos were consistently rated as having a higher valence and a lower negative valence than the racism and climate videos.

To test the manipulation of "semantic affinity" (whether the racial pride and racial bias videos were seen as race-related), parents rated whether each video contained Black representation and what the focus was (racial pride, racism). For all age groups, videos that were intended as race-related were rated above the midpoint on ingroup representation. Videos that were intended as race-unrelated were rated around or below the midpoint for all age groups. Compared to the happy-unrelated (entertainment) and mixed-valence-unrelated content (climate), racial pride and racism stimuli were also given higher ratings of ingroup representation.

In terms of focus, the racial pride stimuli were rated high on racial pride themes and lower (but above the midpoint) on themes about racism. In terms of racism focus, racism videos were rated high on racism themes but also above the midpoint on racial pride focus. Overall, across all child age groups, racial pride and racism videos were rated roughly the same on racial pride, but racism focus was overall rated somewhat higher for the racism stimuli.

To examine whether the race-related videos (vs. entertainment and climate change videos) would be rated higher in terms of meeting parents' racial socialization goals for their child, parents rated the extent to which each video would make the child feel good about being Black, less alone/isolated, and better able to cope with racism). As shown in Appendix A (Tables A4a – A4f), ratings for the racial pride videos on the ability to make their child feel good were consistently higher than nonracial videos, but more mixed for racism videos. For the ability to help the child feel less alone/isolated, the race-related videos were rated consistently higher than the nonracial videos. For the ability to help the child better cope with racism, the race-related videos were rated higher than the nonracial videos.

To examine the manipulation of perceived value, parents rated their agreement that the show "seems to have a message I want my child to know" (1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree). All videos were rated above the midpoint on perceived value.

In sum, racial pride and racism stimuli videos were roughly rated equivalently in terms of the focus (racial pride, racism) and many of the perceived gratifications. Racial pride content, however, tended to be rated as completely happy (high on happiness valence composite, low on sadness valence composite), whereas racism content tended to be rated low on the positive valence composite and around the midpoint on the negative composite. As such, all of the videos worked more or less as expected and no adjustments were made.

## Study 2 Methods

### *Sample*

An online sample of 498 U.S. Black parents of Black children aged 3 to 5, 9 to 11, and 15 to 17 were recruited by a polling company (Qualtrics) in February 2022. All parents reported currently living in the U.S. Quota sampling ensured an equal distribution of parents in each age

group. Participants were compensated by Qualtrics in accordance with the organization's standard practices. All participants completed online consent in accordance with the UW-Madison IRB (Study ID #2021-1030).

For child gender, 54.4% (271) of parents reported on boys, 44.6% (222) on girls, 0.6% (3) of the sample reported on nonbinary children, and 0.4% (2) reported on gender fluid children. Most parents (93% n = 465) indicated that their child was cisgender, 4% (20) reported that their child was transgender or gender expansive, 2.4% (12) indicated that they were unsure, and 0.2% (1) preferred not to specify.

For parent gender, 63% (n = 314) identified as women, 37%, (n = 183) as men. Most (93%, n = 461) indicated that they were cisgender, roughly 7% (35) indicated that they were transgender or gender expansive, and 2 parents indicated that they were unsure.

For annual household income, 44.2% (220) of parents reported having annual household income of $30,000 or below, 30.3% (151) reported income between $31,000 and $60,000, 13.1% (65) reported income between $61,000 to $90,000, 6.4% (32) reported income between $91,000 to $120,000, and 5.8% (29) reported income over $121,000.

For highest level of parental education, 0.6% (3) parents reported having less than 9$^{th}$ grade levels of education, 6.2% (31) reported less than a high school, 38.2% (190) reported having earned a high school diploma, 33.3% (166) reported having earned some college or associate's degree, 12.9% (64) reported having earned a bachelor's degree, and 8.8% (44) reported earning an advanced degree (e.g., master's doctorate).

***Procedure***

As approved by the UW-Madison IRB, parents indicated their consent and filled out screening/quota questions about their race, their child's race, and the age of child. Within each

age range of child, parents were randomly assigned to either read a vignette in which they imagine that their child told them about (a) a peer racism experience they had that day or (b) having an ordinary day with peers. Parents rated their child's likely affect and their own likely affect. Parents then rated their worry about future racial bias experiences for their child and indicated how often their child had been teased for being Black.

Parents were then presented with four trailers in randomized order and after each one they rated how likely they would be to encourage their child to watch it that day. After seeing all four, they indicated which one they would pick (forced-choice selection), answered an open-ended question about the desired effects of the show, and rated agreement with a series of racial goals for the show. They then rated their perceptions of each show (e.g., appropriateness, how engaging, valence, focus) as a set of manipulation checks. Finally, they indicated how likely they would be to use media over the next few days to teach and talk to their child more about race (media-based ethnic-racial socialization).

### *Materials*

**Vignette.** Parents were randomly assigned to read a short vignette, edited slightly from the pre-test, which asked them to imagine that their child came home after experiencing peer racism that day, or that their child came home and had an okay day with nothing unusual to report. In both versions, the child said they did not want to talk about their day, they only wanted to watch a TV show. All vignettes for Study 2 are available in Appendix B, Table B1.

**Manipulation Checks of the Video Stimuli.** All manipulation checks for the video stimuli can be found in Tables 6 and 7. Across the stimuli for all child ages, race-related themes (racial pride, and racism) were rated as higher in the race-related stimuli than the race-unrelated stimuli. The racial pride stimuli were rated as higher on racial pride them than the race-unrelated

videos; differences by child age were minimal. However, there was an unsuccessful manipulation of racial pride theme between the two types of race-related videos. Racial pride and racism videos were indistinguishable in terms of racial pride theme. The racism theme was successfully manipulated. Parents rated the racism stimuli as higher than the racial pride stimuli; differences by child age were minimal.

Entertainment stimuli were seen as more positive than the climate videos and than the racism videos with one exception; parents in the teenage group perceived the racism stimuli as having equal positive valence to the entertainment video. Differences by child age were minimal. Entertainment stimuli were seen as similarly positively valenced as racial pride videos. Overall, all videos were rated as age appropriate and also had engagement ratings over the midpoint. Differences between stimuli set (Set A versus Set B) were minimal.

### *Measures*

#### Responses to the Vignette.

***Child Negative Affect.*** Six items assessed child negative affect. After reading the vignette, parents read, "Thinking about this situation, how much would your child feel… gloomy, sad, frightened, disturbed, worried, concerned" (1 not at all, 7 very). Items were taken from Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2012) and Cantor and Nathanson's (1996) and Wilson et al.'s (2005) work on fright responses. Principle component analyses indicated one component, and items were averaged ($\alpha = .88$; among each age range, $\alpha \geq 89$). See Table 8 for descriptive statistics.

***Parent Negative Affect.*** Three items assessed parent negative affect. Parents were asked "just after talking to your child in that [vignette] situation, how much would you feel… frightened, disturbed, concerned" (1 not at all, 7 very). Principle component analyses indicated

one component, and items were averaged (α = .84; among each age range, α ≥ .82). See Table 8 for descriptive statistics.

***Racial Goals.*** Parents' race-related goals for their child were measured using eight items. Parents responded to the following prompt: "Think about the show you picked above. How much do you agree with the following? I picked this show because I would want my child to…" and then rated their agreement (1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree) with eight items (e.g., "feel good about who they are," "learn how to cope with racism." Based on principle component analyses, which indicated one component, and the reliability results (α = .92; among each age group α ≥ .91), I created a composite of the eight items. See Table 8 for descriptive statistics, and Appendix B, Table B2 for a complete list of closed-ended racial goals measures.

***Open-ended Goals.*** Immediately following parents' forced choice of video, parents were asked to write their goals for having selected that particular video. Parents were prompted: "What do you hope would happen by having your child watch this show?"

***Bias-related Worry for Child.*** Parents were asked to rate their bias-related worries for their child with two items, based on the parental worry measure from Sullivan et al. (2021). Parents were prompted: "just after talking to your child in that situation, how much would you" and then rated (1 not at all, 7 a lot) the following two items: "worry that your child may be a target of racial bias in the future" and "worry that your child may experience racism from peers in the future." Based on principle component analyses, which indicated one component, and the reliability results (r =.79; among each age range, $r$ = .78), I created a composite of the 2 items *(M* = 4.8, *SD* = 1.9).

**Media Encouragement and Selection Variables.**

***Parents' Encouragement of Child Viewing.*** Parents watched one trailer at a time, presented in random order, and then rated their likelihood of encouraging their child to watch the content with the following question (1 not at all, 7 very): "Given the day your child had in the situation you read, how likely would you be to encourage your child to watch this show?"

***Parents' Forced Choice Selection of Content.*** Parents saw a screen with an image from each of the four videos they had watched and were asked: "Given the day your child had in the situation you read, which one would you have your child watch?" They then clicked on the image of the video they were choosing.

***Media-Based Ethnic-Racial Socialization (MBERS).*** Based on the work of McClain and Mares (2022), parents answered eight items indicating how likely they would be to use media over the next several days for various purposes (1 not at all, 7 very likely). Principle component analyses indicated two components. Four items loaded on *MBERS around useful content* (e.g., "encourage your child to see/hear content with positive portrayals of Black people") ($\alpha = .88$; each age group $\alpha \geq .87$). The mean for *MBERS around useful content* was 5.7 (*SD* = 1.4). The other four loaded on *MBERS around negative content* (e.g., "Critique depictions of negative Black stereotypes," $\alpha = .76$; each age group $\alpha \geq .73$). The mean for *MBERS around negative content* was 5.0 (*SD* = 1.5). Despite slight cross-loading for two items, the two 4-item variables were retained because reliability was highest for those configurations. The two types of MBERS were significantly, positively correlated ($r = .53$). See Appendix B, Table B4 for a complete list of items.

**Proposed Moderator: Perceived Child Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength.** Parents indicated their agreement (1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree) with three slightly modified items from Phinney and Ong's (2007) Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure-R (MEIM-R) scale.

The sentence stems were adapted to reference the child as opposed to the parent (e.g., "your child has a strong sense of being a member of their racial group(s)"). A complete list of items can be found in Appendix B, Table B3. Items were averaged ($\alpha = .88$; among each age range $\alpha \geq .86$). The mean for *child ethnic-racial identity strength* was 5.7 (*SD* = 1.4).

**Covariate for Forced Choice Analyses: Age of Child.** Parents were prompted with the question: "What age is the child you will answer the questions about?" and then were asked to choose only one child whose birthday month was the closest to their birthday month. Response options included: 3 to 5 years old (*n* = 167), 9 to 11 years old (*n* = 164), and 15 to 17 years old (*n* = 167).

**Background Variables.**

***Frequency of Child Racism Experiences***. Parents were asked "how often, if ever, has your child experienced peer teasing because your child is Black?" (0 never, 4 four times or more). Response options included: 0 (has not happened), 1 (has happened once), 2 (has happened twice), 3 (has happened three times), and 4 (has happened four or more times). See Table 8 for descriptive statistics.

***Parental Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength.*** Parents indicated their agreement (1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree) with 3 items from Phinney and Ong's (2007) MEIM-R scale. These items paralleled the three items from the child ethnic-racial identity strength scale, including slight modifications to allow for Black multiracial/ethnic identities (e.g., "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group" changed to "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own racial/ethnic group(s)"). The mean for *parental ethnic-racial identity strength* was 6.0 (*SD* = 1.3). See Appendix B, Table B3, for a complete list of items.

***General Approach Coping Frequency.*** Two items from Abaied and Rudolph's (2010) larger parental engagement coping style scale were used to measure parents' general approach coping frequency (not in reference to racism specifically). Parents were prompted: "When your child has a problem or is upset, how much do you do each of the following?" and then rated (1 not at all, 7 very much) the following two items: "encourage them to do something to try to fix the problem or take action to change things" and "encourage them to think about things they are learning from the situation." Principle component analysis indicated one component, and the reliability results overall were acceptable ($r$ = .67, among each age range, $r \geq .51$); as such, I created a composite of the 2 items. See Table 8 for descriptive statistics.

***Daily Child Media Use: School Days***. Parents were asked to think "about your child and the TV and streaming (e.g., Netflix) shows they watch in their free time (i.e., NOT for school or work)" and asked to list the number of hours and minutes their child spends watching TV on a school or childcare day during the following times of day: "between waking up and 9am," "9am to 4pm," and "between 4pm and bedtime." The number of hours for each time period was converted into minutes and added to the number of minutes for each time period; the total number of minutes parents reported across each time period was then summed into one child media use school day composite variable.

***Daily Child Media Use: Weekend Days*.** Parents were asked to list the number of hours and minutes their child watches TV on a weekend or no school/childcare day during the following times: "between waking up and 9am," "9am to 4pm," and "between 4pm and bedtime." The number of hours for each time period was converted into minutes and added to the number of minutes for each time period; the total number of minutes parents reported across each time period was then summed into one child media use weekend day composite variable.

### Power

An a priori power analysis for the interaction between condition and age on selections for the repeated measures indicated that I needed 432 participants, to have power of .80 to detect an *f* effect size = .15 (a moderate effect size). The Study 2 sample included 498 participants, with 167 parents of children ages 3 to 5, 164 parents of children ages 9 to 11, and 167 parents of children ages 15 to 17.

### Randomization

I checked key variables for differences by condition, to ensure that the randomization by groups worked as expected. Quotas created equivalent gender distribution in each age group. There were no significant differences by perceived child ethnic-racial identity strength or by self-reported parental ethnic-racial identity strength. There were also no significant differences by parents' reported frequency of racism for their child, by the amount of total daily screen time for children (for school days, or for weekend days), or by parents' reported frequency of their engaging in general avoidance versus approach coping.

## Results

### H1 Effects of Condition on Affect and Goals

In line with appraisal theory and as depicted in Figure 3a, H1 predicted that parents who read about their child experiencing racism (vs. their child having an okay day) would give higher ratings to their child's negative affect (H1a), their own negative affect (H1b), and their racial goals (H1c). As shown in Table 8, the results of three t-tests indicated that all three predictions were supported.

### H2 Effects of Condition on Parents' Forced-Choice Media Selections

As depicted in the conceptual model of Figure 3b, H2 predicted an effect of condition on parents' forced choice of one of the four video options, with contrasting predictions afforded by Mood Management Theory (MMT) and Selective Exposure Self-and Affect-Management (SESAM) theory. The MMT prediction was that parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would be more likely to choose entertainment content and would be less likely to choose the three other options. The SESAM prediction was that parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would be more likely to select racial pride and racial bias content, as likely to choose entertainment content, and less likely to choose climate change content.

A series of chi-square analyses were run to test for significant associations between condition and choices. An initial chi-square analysis examining differences by condition for each of the four choice options (racism, racial pride, climate change, and entertainment) indicated a significant association between condition and choices ($\chi^2$ (3) = 8.68, $p$ = .034). As shown in Table 9, pair-wise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments indicated that the only significant difference was that those in the racism (vs. okay day) condition were less likely to choose climate change content. Parents in the racism and okay day conditions were equally likely to select the entertainment content. Thus, this initial chi-square analysis offered partial support for H2a and H2b. In line with H2a and H2b, parents in the racism condition were less likely to select the climate change content. However, contrary to H2a's prediction, they were not less likely to select the racial pride or racism content, and they were not *more* likely to select the entertainment content.

Given that there were two types of semantically related (racial) content and two types of semantically unrelated (nonracial) content, I ran two additional post hoc chi-square analyses: one examining differences by condition on the selection of the racial pride video compared to the

selection of the combined nonracial (entertainment and climate change) videos, and one examining the selection of the racism video compared to the combined nonracial (entertainment and climate change) videos. As shown in Table 10, results of those analyses offer more support for H2b (SESAM) than to H2a (MMT). Parents in the racism condition (vs. okay day condition) were more likely to select the racial pride content, and they were also less likely than parents in the okay day condition to select the combined nonracial videos. The likelihood of selecting the racism video over the combined nonracial videos showed a similar pattern. Parents in the racism condition were more likely to select the racism video than parents in the okay day condition, and they were also less likely than parents in the okay day condition to select the combined nonracial content than parents in the racism condition.

**H3 Effects of Condition Moderated by Perceptions of Child Identity Strength**

H3 predicted that controlling for child age, the effects of condition (racism vs. okay day) on forced-choice selection of racial pride content or vicarious racism content would be stronger for parents who perceived their child to have stronger (vs. weaker) racial identities, as the conceptual diagrams of Figure 3e and 3f depict. Since Mplus does not allow for multinomial analyses for mediation, I analyzed a series of logistic regression path analyses (with bootstrapping for indirect effects), testing for direct effects and moderation for H3. I tested for direct effect of condition and moderation in two separate sets of analyses: one with a binary variable of selecting the racial pride video (vs. selecting the combined nonracial videos: entertainment and climate change) and one with a binary variable of selecting racism videos (vs. the combined nonracial videos: entertainment and climate change). To test H3, I compared the fit of multiple models.

***Moderation of Racial Pride Selection***

First, I built a model (see Table 11, Model 1) testing for direct effects of condition on forced-choice selection of the racial pride video, as depicted conceptually in Figure 3c. In this model, there was a significant direct effect of condition, as shown in Table 12.

Next, I built a model (Table 11, Model 2) with three predictors: condition, (perceived) child ethnic-racial identity strength, and the interaction term. In addition, child age range dummy variables were included as covariates, comparing parents of tweens (9- to 11-year-olds) and parents of teens (15- to 17-year-olds) to parents of preschoolers (3- to 5-year-olds); see Figure 3e for a conceptual diagram.

As shown Table 12, in Model 2, parents' perceptions of their child ethnic-racial identity strength did not interact significantly with condition to predict the odds of parents selecting the racial pride content over the combined nonracial (i.e., entertainment and climate content) videos. That is, the effects of condition on choice of racial pride content versus the combined nonracial videos did not vary by parents' perceptions of their child's identity strength. Thus, there was no support for H3 in terms of selection of the racial pride content.

What Model 2 suggested, however, was that child identity strength, regardless of condition, predicted greater odds of selecting racial pride content over the combined nonracial videos. There was also a significant effect of child age range, specifically for the dummy variable for parents of 15- to 17-year-olds (vs. parents of 3- to 5-year-olds as the referent group). As Table 12 shows, parents of 15- to 17-year-olds had greater odds of selecting the racial pride video (over the combined nonracial videos) than did parents of 3- to 5-year-olds.

Because the condition by child racial identity strength interaction had nonsignificant effects on parental choice of media content, I examined the model's information criteria without this interaction term. As shown in Table 11 (see Model 3), the BIC indicates this model (without

the condition x identity strength variables) had slightly better model fit. This model was then used to describe the effects of condition, child age range of 9- to 11-year-olds and 15- to 17-year-olds (vs. 3- to 5-year-olds), and parents' perceptions of their child's racial identity strength and their choices. The coefficients for the racial pride Model 3 relationships are shown in Table 12.

In Model 3, for every 1-point increase in perceived child racial identity strength, there was a 1.4x increase in odds of parents selecting racial pride content over the combined nonracial videos. In addition, with child ethnic-racial identity strength and child age range (as dummies) in the model, there was a significant effect of condition on the odds of parents selecting the racial pride video over the combined nonracial videos. Specifically, the odds of parents in the racism condition selecting the racial pride content were 1.7x higher than those of parents in the okay day condition.

In addition, parents of 15- to 17-year-olds (compared to parents of 3- to 5-year-olds) had greater odds of selecting the racial pride video over the combined nonracial videos.

***Moderation of Racism Selection***

To test for effects of moderation on racism selection (vs. the combined nonracial videos of entertainment and climate), I first built a model testing for direct effects of condition on racism (Table 13, Model 1; also depicted conceptually in Figure 3e). As shown in Table 14, in Model 1, there was a significant direct effect of condition on the odds of parents selecting the racism video over the combined nonracial videos.

Next, I built Model 2 (see Table 13) with three predictors: condition, (perceived) child ethnic-racial identity strength, and the interaction term. In addition, child age range was included as a covariate using two dummy variables, comparing parents of tweens (9- to 11-year-olds) and

parents of teens (15- to 17-year-olds) to parents of preschoolers; see Figure 3f for a conceptual diagram. As shown in Table 13, the BIC did not change substantially compared to Model 1.

As can be seen in Table 14, in Model 2, parents' perceptions of their child's ethnic-racial identity strength did not interact significantly with condition to predict the odds of parents selecting the racism content over the combined nonracial videos. Therefore, there was no support for H3 in terms of racism content selection (vs. the combined nonracial videos), paralleling the lack of support for H3 in terms of racial pride content selection (vs. the combined nonracial videos).

However, Model 2 suggested that regardless of condition, parents who perceived their child as having a stronger racial identity had greater odds of selecting racism content over the combined nonracial videos. As Table 14 shows, there was also a significant effect of child age, with parents of children aged 9 to 11 having significantly greater odds of selecting the racism content (over the combined nonracial videos) compared to parents of children aged 3 to 5. However, it is important to note that the lower 2.5% boundary of the confidence interval for the beta coefficient for this variable was a hundredth of a point away from 0, suggesting that this significant finding might be different in a different sample. There was no direct effect of condition in this model.

Since the condition by child identity strength interaction had non-significant effects on selection of racism content, I examined the information criteria for a more parsimonious model without this interaction term (Table 13, Model 3). As shown in Table 13, Model 3 had the lowest BIC. Model 3 is used to describe the relationships.

As shown in Table 14, in Model 3, condition had a significant direct effect on the odds of parents selecting the racism content over the combined nonracial videos. Specifically, the odds

of parents in the racism condition selecting the racism video (vs. the combined nonracial videos) were 2x greater than the odds of parents in the okay day condition.

Additionally, parents of children aged 9 to 11 had higher odds of selecting the racism video over the combined nonracial videos than parents of children aged 3 to 5. There were no differences in the odds of racism selection over the combined nonracial videos for parents of children aged 15 to 17 compared to parents of children aged 3 to 5.

Finally, regardless of condition, and controlling for child age, parents with children whom they rated as having stronger (as opposed to weaker) racial identity strength had greater odds of selecting the racism content over the combined nonracial videos. For every one-point increase in perceived child identity strength, parents were 1.3x more likely to select the racism content over the combined nonracial videos.

**RQ1 Examining Mediators of the Effects of Condition on Forced-Choice Selection of Content**

RQ1 asked whether parents' racial goals and their perceptions of their child's and their own negative affect would mediate the effects of condition on selections of racial content. As reported in tests of H1, condition had significantly affected parents' perceptions of their child's likely negative affect, their own likely negative affect, and their reports of their racial goals (i.e., parents desire to help their child feel better, learn, or cope with their identity).

I tested various mediation pathways, in separate sets of path analyses for each binary outcome, building the best fitting model (Table 11, Model 3; Table 13, Model 3) for each outcome. I used Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation with bootstrapping to calculate the indirect effects. Because the racial goals variable was negatively skewed (skew = -1.51), I used maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (MLR) estimation to examine the direct effects.

Given that there was no clear theoretical reason to prioritize one mediator over the other, for both the racial pride selection mediation models and the racism selection mediation models, I began with the most complex model that included all three mediators, then systematically removed mediators to examine which model fit best. Figures 3g and 3h show the conceptual models with all three potential indirect pathways for the models examining racial pride selection and racism selection, respectively. The model fit statistics for each iteration of the racial pride mediation models are included in Table 11, and those for each iteration of the racism model are given in Table 13.

### *Racial Pride Choice Mediation Models*

**Racial Pride Choice: All Three Intermediate Variables**. Given that the H3 racial pride selection model analyses suggested that perceptions of child identity strength and child age range significantly predicted choice of racial pride content over the combined nonracial videos, I included child identity strength and the two child age range dummy variables (for parents of 9- to 11-year-olds vs. 3- to 5-year-olds, and parents of 15- to 17-year-olds vs. 3- to 5-year-olds) as predictors. I added all three potential mediators simultaneously: child negative affect, parent negative affect, and racial goals.

As shown in Table 11, the fit statistics indicated that adding all three mediators substantially worsened the model fit versus the more parsimonious Model 3. Moreover, parent's ratings of their child's negative affect and their own negative affect were highly correlated ($r$ = .74, $p$ <.001), suggesting that they should not be in the same model. Given comparative model fit, I summarize the results of the three-mediator model only briefly (complete details given in Appendix C, Table C1). There was a significant indirect effect via racial goals, but not via child negative affect or parent negative affect. Parents in the racism (vs. okay day) condition reported

greater endorsement of racial goals, and these goals were associated with greater odds of selecting the racial pride content. There was no significant direct effect of condition in this model.

**Racial Pride Choice: Negative Child Affect and Racial Goals.** Next, I tested Model 5 (see Table 11) with child negative affect and race-related goals as mediators. As shown in Table 11, the model fit statistics for Model 5 (with the two mediators of negative child affect and racial goals) were better than those for Model 4 (with all three mediators). Again, since this model ultimately did not prove to be the best fitting model, I summarize the findings only briefly (complete details with all coefficients are given in Appendix C, Table C2). There was an overall significant, positive indirect effect via racial goals, but not via child negative affect. The direct effect of condition was not significant.

**Racial Pride Choice: Parent Negative Affect and Racial Goals.** Next, I examined a model where I removed child negative affect and tested parent negative affect and racial goals as intermediate variables. As shown in Table 11, the BIC for this model (Model 6) was worse than in Model 5 (with racial goals and child negative affect as mediators), so I summarize the results again only briefly (see Appendix C, Table C3, for full details). As in the previous racial pride selection mediation models, only the indirect path for the racial goals was significant, and there was no direct effect of condition.

**Racial Pride Choice: Racial Goals**. Finally, I tested Model 7 with racial goals as the only mediator, and with child age range and identity strength as predictors. As shown in Table 11, the model fit statistics suggested that this was an improvement from Models 4 – 6 but had worse fit than the more parsimonious model with no mediators (Model 3). As in Models 4 – 6,

there was a significant indirect effect of condition via racial goals and no direct effect of condition (see Appendix C for full details, Table C4).

**Summary for Forced-Choice Selection of Racial Pride Video.** Altogether, these results indicate a significant direct effect of condition on parents' selection of the racial pride video over the combined videos not explicitly about race (entertainment, climate change). Although the mediation models consistently indicated a significant indirect path via parents' racial goals, ultimately the best fitting model contained no indirect paths. There was no support for child negative affect or parent negative affect mediating the relationship. Additionally, child age range (having a teen versus having a preschooler) and parents' perceptions of the child's identity strength predicted choice of racial pride videos.

### *Racism Choice Mediation Models*

**Racism Choice: All Three Intermediate Variables.** As in the mediation models predicting racial pride video selection, I included child identity strength and child age range (as two dummy variables) as predictors. In the first mediation model predicting racism video selection, I added all three potential intermediate variables simultaneously: child negative affect, parent negative affect, and racial goals. As shown in Table 13, the fit of this three-mediator model (Model 4) substantially worsened the BIC. Given the comparatively poorer model fit, I summarize the results only briefly (complete details given in Appendix C, Table C5). As can be seen in Table 13, model fit is worse for each mediation model, compared to Model 3.

There were no significant indirect effects in Model 4, and there was no direct effect of condition on parents' odds of selecting the racism content over the combined nonracial videos.

**Racism Choice: Child Negative Affect and Racial Goals.** Next, I tested a model with child negative affect and racial goals as mediators. As shown in Table 13, the model fit statistics

for this model were substantially better than for Model 4 with three mediators, though ultimately Model 5 did not prove to be the best fitting model. I briefly summarize the findings (complete details with all coefficients are given in Appendix C, Table C6).

In this model, there were no significant indirect effects of child negative affect or racial goals. There were also no significant direct effects of condition or of perceptions of child identity strength on parents' odds of selecting the racism content over the combined nonracial videos.

**Racism Choice: Parent Negative Affect and Racial Goals.** Next, I examined a model where I removed child negative affect and examined parent negative affect and racial goals as intermediate variables. As shown in Table 13, the BIC for this model (Model 6) was worse than for Models 1 – 5, so I summarize the results only briefly (see Appendix C, Table C7, for full details). In this model, neither indirect path was significant, nor was there a significant direct effect of condition.

**Racism Choice: Racial Goals.** I tested Model 7 with racial goals as the only mediator, and with perceptions of child's identity strength and the two child age range dummies included. As shown in Table 13, the model fit of this model was also worse than that of Model 3. The indirect effect was nonsignificant, and the direct effect of condition was significant. See Appendix C, Table C8, for full details.

**Summary for Forced-Choice Selection of Racism Video.** Taken together, these results suggest that models with the best fit did not contain mediation pathways. In Model 3 examining a direct effect of condition with child age range and perceptions of child identity strength as predictors, a direct effect of condition was found. The indirect paths were consistently nonsignificant. Additionally, child age range (parents of 9- to 11-year-olds versus parents of 3- to

5-year-olds) and parents' perceptions of the child's identity strength predicted choice of racism videos.

### *Post Hoc Analysis Effects of Condition on Forced Choice*

**Racial Pride vs. Racism Choice.** In addition, I ran a post hoc logistic regression path analysis to test whether there were different predictors of the odds of parents' selecting the racial pride video versus the racism video. I included child ethnic-racial identity strength in the model and the two dummy variables for child age range.

As Table 15 shows, there were no significant direct effects in this model, suggesting that parents of both conditions had equal odds of selecting racial pride versus racism content. Child identity strength did not predict the odds of selecting racial pride versus racism content. The child age range dummy variables were not significant, suggesting that there were not significant differences in the odds of parents of either older age group (vs. the youngest age group) selecting the racial pride versus racism content.

**Open-Ended Goals for Selection of Racial Content.** As a reminder, in addition to the forced choice question asking parents to rate how much they had picked their forced choice selection videos for a series of racial goals, parents were also asked to explain why they had picked their forced choice selection in their own words. I examined parents' stated reasons for selecting the racial pride and racism videos specifically and selected illustrative quotes (available in Tables 16 and 17) that suggest the presence of some parents' racial goals, which received only limited support in the mediation analyses. Although a formal content analysis of the quotes was not under-taken given time constraints, these illustrative quotes suggest that racial considerations may have motivated at least some parents' forced choice selection of the racial pride and racial bias videos.

As can be seen in Table 16, among parents who chose the racial pride video in the forced choice measure, parents with children of all the age groups, and in both conditions, reported selection rationales that were suggestive of motivations to foster their child's feelings of racial pride ("my child will feel proud to be Black"), expose their child to ingroup representation ("by watching this show, she gets that there are other kids who look just like her"), and build resilience (e.g., "how to look over ignorant people"). In addition, some parents in the racism condition reported selecting the racial pride video for reasons suggestive of helping mend their child's negative affect (e.g., wanting their child to "feel relaxed").

These themes were also suggested in parents' open-ended goal responses for racism content, as shown in Table 17. As with the open-ended goals for racial pride selection, the open-ended data for racism choice included responses that may be reflective of parents' motivations to foster feelings of racial pride in their children (e.g., "I would hope that my child would learn to be proud to be African American"), to expose their child to ingroup representation (e.g., "to see positive results from Blacks that have pulled through racism"), and to build resilience (e.g., "to help him the next time this situation occurred"). Parents in the racism condition who selected the racism video also reported reasons suggestive of helping mend negative affect (e.g., "I think they would feel better about [the] situation that he had expressed"). In addition, some parents in the racism condition reported goals about helping their child know that others experience racism, too, and that their child is not alone in those experiences.

Parents' open-ended responses seem to also reflect parents' perceptions of their perceived effectiveness of the show. Some parents explicitly used phrases that reflected what they expected would happen with the show they chose, not necessarily *why* they chose that show. For example, one parent said: "The show would encourage my child to feel good about who he is and

encourage him to strive to his fullest potential," while another said: "My child will feel proud to be Black and very encouraged to stand up for themselves." Others expressed hopes and noted how the show would help them make those hopes a reality for their children. For example, one parent said: "I want my child to feel proud of who she is and so by watching this show she gets that there are other kids who look just like her." Similarly, another parent noted: "As sad as it is, he would see that he isn't the only one that has had to navigate such behaviors. So he would realize he is not alone when facing bigotry and hate."

**H4 Effects of Condition on Parents' Encouragement of Each Content Type**

In addition to making a forced-choice selection, parents rated how much they would encourage their child to watch each of the four types of content. This measure allowed for the possibility that parents would be highly interested in having their child watch several types of content.

I again tested two competing hypotheses. In H4a (MMT), I predicted that parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would give higher encouragement ratings for entertainment and lower ratings for racial pride, racism, and climate change content. To test this hypothesis, I created a binary variable for the repeated measures index that treated the entertainment ratings as the reference category (2) versus all other content ratings (1). I examined a series of mixed models each with a random intercept for subjects, using the "step up" model approach, adding fixed effects one at a time, starting with a fixed intercept, which represents the mean of the outcome. With each addition of a fixed effect (i.e., the repeated measures index, condition, repeated measures index x condition interaction term), I examined model fit. The mixed model approach was used instead of repeated measures analysis of variance because mixed models do not rely on sphericity; as such, they do not underestimate the standard errors.

Table 18 shows the fixed effects included in each of the models for which I compared model fit. As shown in Table 18, there was not a statistical difference in fit for Models 1 – 3. Given that H4a predicted effects of an interaction of condition with the repeated measures index, I ran a generalized linear mixed model, calculating robust standard errors, on Model 3 (see Table 18), a model that included the fixed effects of the repeated measures index, condition, and the interaction term. I report the estimates for this Model 3 in Table 19.

As Table 19 shows, neither condition nor the condition by repeated measures index interaction term were significant predictors. Thus, there was no support for H4b. Condition did not affect parents' ratings of entertainment content versus the other three types of content. There was a significant main effect of repeated measures index. Compared to the entertainment content ($M$ = 5.1, $SE$ = .09), non-entertainment content ($M$ = 5.6, $SE$ = .05) was given higher encouragement ratings.

In H4b SESAM, I predicted that those in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would give higher ratings of encouragement for the racial pride content and racism content, equivalent ratings for the entertainment content, and lower ratings for the climate change content. To test this hypothesis, I created a repeated measures index with four categories, treating the entertainment ratings as the reference category (4).

I examined another series of mixed models with a random intercept for subjects, using the "step up" model approach, adding fixed effects one at a time, starting with a fixed intercept, which again represents the mean of the outcome. With each addition of a fixed effect, I examined model fit. Table 20 lists the fixed effects included in each of the models for which I compared model fit.

As shown in Table 20, there was not a statistical difference in fit between Models 1 – 3. Given that H4b predicted effects of an interaction of condition and repeated measures index on encouragement ratings, I ran a generalized linear mixed model, calculating robust standard errors, on Model 3 which included fixed effects of condition and the interaction term. As Table 21 shows in this model, neither condition nor condition by repeated measures index were significant predictors. Thus, there was no support for H4b. Condition did not affect parents' ratings of what they would encourage.

However, as shown in Table 21, there was a significant main effect of repeated measures index. Compared to the entertainment content ($M$ = 5.1, $SE$ = 0.1), parents gave significantly higher encouragement ratings to the racial pride content ($M$ = 6.2, $SE$ = 0.1) and to the racism content ($M$ = 5.9, $SE$ = 0.1; $p < .001$). Compared to the entertainment content, they gave significantly lower encouragement ratings of the climate change content ($M$ = 4.7, $SE$ = .10; $p < .001$).

***Post Hoc Mixed Model Analysis: Examining the Role of Child Identity Strength***

Given the role of perceived child identity strength in parents' forced-choice selections, I conducted a post hoc analysis examining the possible role of child identity strength in parents' encouragement ratings. I examined the fit of a series of mixed models adding in child identity strength as a fixed effect predictor (while retaining the repeated measures index; BIC = 7696), then adding in an interaction between repeated measures index and child identity strength. The best fitting model was a model with fixed effects of the repeated measures index, child racial identity strength, and the interaction term (BIC = 7681).

With this model that included those three fixed effects (repeated measures index, child identity strength, and the interaction term), I ran another general linearized mixed model,

calculating robust standard errors. There was a significant main effect of repeated measures index ($F$ = 4.18 (3, 1984), $p$ <.01), child racial identity strength ($F$ = 29.6 (1, 1984), $p$ <.001), and a significant interaction ($F$ = 7.93 (3, 1984, $p$ < .001). As depicted in Figure 5, the relationship between parents' perceptions of their child's identity strength and their encouragement ratings are different for the racial pride content, racism content, and climate change content (vs. the entertainment content). At high levels of perceived child racial identity strength, the relationship between identity strength and encouragement of the entertainment video appears stable; however, at higher (vs. lower) ratings of child identity strength, parents are more likely to indicate that they would encourage the racial pride, racism, and climate content (vs. entertainment content).

***Post Hoc Mixed Model Analysis: Examining Racial Pride vs. Racism Video Encouragement***

I examined the fit of a final set of mixed models using a step-up approach, with a binary variable for the repeated measures index that treated racial pride as the reference category (2) versus racism (1). The best fitting model was a model with three fixed effects: the repeated measures index, condition, and the condition by repeated measures index. There was a significant main effect of repeated measures index ($F$ = 18.74 (1, 992), $p$ <.001), and no significant main effect of condition ($F$ = 3.75 (1, 992), $p$ = .053) or of the interaction term ($F$ =.73 (1, 992), $p$ = .393). Results indicate that parents reported higher encouragement of the racial pride video ($M$ = 6.2, $SE$ = .06) versus the racism video ($M$ = 5.9, $SE$ = .07), although both means were high.

**H5 and H6 Effects of Condition and Identity Strength on Intentions for MBERS**

Finally, I tested whether condition would predict the future media-based ethnic-racial socialization intentions of parents (i.e., what they would do over the next few days following the

scenario in the vignette). MBERS around useful content meant encouraging the child to see positive depictions or content about dealing with racial bias. MBERS around negative content meant the parent would restrict or critique negative, stereotypical depictions. The correlation between the two types of MBERS was high ($r$ = .53, $p$ <.001).

In H5, I predicted that parents in the child racism (vs. okay day) condition would report greater intentions to engage in both types of MBERS. In H6, I predicted that effects of condition on encouragement for these two types of MBERS would be stronger for parents who perceived their child's ethnic-racial identity to be stronger (rather than weaker). To test these two hypotheses, I tested three path models using MLR. The interaction term was not significant and the best fitting model contained only direct effects of condition and child identity strength on the outcomes. (Details of coefficients for alternative models are given in Appendix C, Table C9).

As can be seen in Table 22 (as well as in the path diagram of Figure 6), there was a significant direct effect of condition on MBERS around useful content. On average, parents in the racism condition rated their intentions to encourage their child's exposure to useful content .10 points higher than parents in the okay day condition. There was no significant direct effect of condition on MBERS around negative content. Thus, there was partial support for H5 (direct effect of condition, for MBERS around useful content only), but no support for H6 (the interaction of condition with identity strength).

However, there was also a significant direct effect of perceived child racial identity strength on both MBERS of useful content and MBERS of negative content. For every one unit increase in parents' rated perception of their child's identity strength, their intentions to engage in MBERS of useful content rose .50 points, and their intentions to engage in MBERS of negative content rose .30 points.

## Discussion

Building on prior findings that Black parents reported using media to socialize their children about race (McClain and Mares, 2022) and Study 1a's findings about Black parents' preferences for various ingroup depictions, the central question of Study 2 concerned how Black parents might use media to try to help their child cope with a peer racism experience, and what might help explain their coping choices and preferences for media content. Study 2 examined three outcomes: parents' forced-choice selection of one of four types of videos (racial pride, racism, entertainment, and climate change), parents' ratings of their likelihood to encourage their child to watch each "show," and parents' reported intentions to engage in media-based ethnic-racial socialization strategies in the coming days following the racism incident. This study also examined whether there was any evidence of perceptions of child identity strength moderating the relationships, as well as any evidence of three variables (child negative affect, parent negative affect, and racial goals) mediating the relationships between condition and forced choice selections.

One of the main questions that I sought to answer with this study was whether there were signs that parents were less likely (as suggested by MMT, Zillmann, 1988) or more likely (as suggested by SESAM, Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015) to select race-related (i.e., racial pride or racism content) after their child had experienced racism. Overall, the findings lend the most support to the proposition that Black parents seek out racial over nonracial content following a child racism exposure, in line with Smalls-Glover et al.'s (2013) study which found that a sample comprised of 98% Black parents tended to report engaging more in approach coping than avoidance coping following a racism experience for their child.

The initial chi-square analysis for H2 examining differences by condition in the likelihood of selecting each type of content indicated that parents whose child experienced racism were no more likely to select the racial pride or racism videos than parents whose child had an okay day. This suggested a lack of support for the H2b prediction derived by SESAM and research on ethnic-racial socialization, which had predicted that parents in the racism condition would be more likely to select the racial pride and racism content. However, parents were also no *less* likely to select either racial pride or racial bias content, contrary to the H2a prediction derived from MMT. That is, parents were not avoiding semantically related content following their child's experiences of racism, even if that content was mixed-valence and very similar to their child's experience. Also contrary to Mood Management's principles of hedonistic inclinations toward distracting, engaging content, parents in the racism condition (vs. parents in the okay day condition) were no more likely to select entertainment. Instead, in support for H2b (SESAM), parents' likelihoods of selecting the entertainment content were equal across conditions. The one area of support for MMT was that parents in the racism condition were less likely than parents in the okay day condition to select the climate change video. Parents in the racism condition, who had rated themselves as likely to be higher in negative affect (for themselves and their child) than parents in the okay day condition, tended to select the mixed-valence climate change video less than parents in the okay day condition. In other words, parents who reported that they and their child would be upset (because of a child racism experience) were less likely to select the mixed-valence video that was unrelated to the topic of race. As such, they demonstrated an avoidance of content that was not completely positive in nature.

However, there was a significant effect of condition on likelihood of choice when I compared the selection of each racial video (either racial pride or racism) versus the selection of

the combined nonracial (entertainment and climate) videos. The two post hoc chi-square analyses examining parents' selections of each racial video versus the combined nonracial (entertainment and climate) videos offered support for identity-theorizing that can be derived from SESAM and the ethnic-racial socialization literature, raising the possibility of a boundary condition for MMT. MMT would suggest that parents in the racism condition would be less (not more) likely to select the racial pride video, as well as the racism video, due to the expectation that parents would want their child to avoid semantically related (in this case, racial) content, as well as mixed-valence content (in the case of the racism video).

However, the chi-square analysis findings comparing racial pride to nonracial videos revealed that the opposite happened. Parents in the racism condition were more likely to select the racial pride video than parents in the okay day condition. They were also more likely to select the racism video than parents in the okay day condition. Parents in the racism (vs. okay day) condition were also less likely to select the combined nonracial videos, suggesting that parents more frequently wanted semantically related content, even when it was mixed valence, following a child racism experience.

The results from the path analyses examining these forced choice variable comparisons as outcomes (i.e., either racial pride or racism selection versus combined nonracial selections) also yielded support for the proposition that MMT may have a boundary condition. The path analyses examined the effects of condition on selection of each type of racial video relative to combined nonracial videos (entertainment and climate change) while controlling for child age and perceived child identity strength. These analyses yielded more support for the SESAM H2b proposition that parents would lean into racial identity-related content following a racism experience. In the best-fitting models, parents in the racism condition (versus parents in the okay

day condition) had *greater* odds of selecting the racial pride video over the combined nonracial videos, and the racial bias video over the combined nonracial videos. In other words, the odds of parents picking semantically related content – even mixed-valence content that explicitly addressed a Black youth racism experience – were greater if they were told that their child had experienced racism than if they were told that their child had an okay day. The finding about racial pride selection contrast with Kim and Oliver's (2011) finding that, in support of MMT's theorizing, adults who were experimentally manipulated into a negative romantic "situation" were more likely to avoid content with semantic affinity and positive valence.

Taken together, the chi-square and path analytic findings about the significant effect of condition when comparing each racial video selection to the combined nonracial videos suggest that there may be a boundary condition for MMT's propositions as they relate to Black parental identity socialization in the wake of an appraised identity threat or identity-related need for their children. Importantly, Zillmann (1988) proposed that we should expect media selections to be more driven by hedonic principles in situations that are difficult to change or rectify in real-life. In the current study, however, the evidence about the direct effects of condition on the selection of race-related videos (vs. combined nonracial videos) underscores the possibility that *because* the reality of racism, and experiences of racism, are hard to change, parents may actually focus their media coping efforts on preparing their child for navigating identity experiences – via knowledge about racism, how they're not alone, how to cope, and via bolstering the child's identity.

Overall, the forced choice racial vs. combined nonracial video outcome findings align with SESAM's propositions that when identity salience is heightened, for example from a perceived threat or need, individuals might want to focus on content that is related to identity, in

order to foster identity improvement (e.g., growth, resilience), identity enhancement (e.g., to feel better about identity), or identity consistency (e.g., maintain their identity). These findings suggest that it may be the case that these same motivations are activated when a parent perceives an identity threat or need for their child. These findings about the direct effect of condition align with SESAM's propositions about how identity issues – not just affect – play a role in media selection. For parents engaging in parental mediation, or at least thinking about those opportunities, identity issues for their child may be what really drive their choices. Importantly, these findings are consistent with those of Smalls-Glover et al. (2013) who found that Black parents tended to lean into socialization around race after a child racism experience.

Over and above the effect of condition, parents' perceptions of their child identity strength played a significant role in predicting parents' odds of selecting the racial pride content over the combined nonracial content, and racism content over the combined nonracial content. These findings are also aligned with SESAM's arguments that the salience of one's identity affect media selection. The results suggest that regardless of the condition (child experienced racism versus had an okay day) that a Black parent finds themselves in, if they perceive their child to have a stronger identity, they are more likely to select racial pride (vs. nonracial) content and racism (vs. nonracial) content. These findings reflect theorizing about both ethnic-racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2016) and parental mediation (Beyens et al., 2018), regarding how parents adapt their delivery of particular socialization messages, as well as the strategies they use to regulate and guide their children's media use, based on perceptions of their child's development and needs. The findings parallel McClain and Mares's (2022) findings about perceived child identity strength predicting parent-reported frequencies of MBERS strategies.

However, contrary to hypothesis H3, there was no evidence that (perceived) child identity strength moderated the relationship between condition and parents' selection of racial (vs. nonracial content). For example, parents in the racism condition with children who they rated as having stronger (vs. weaker) identities were not especially likely to prefer racial content over nonracial content. One possible explanation for the lack of a significant interaction effect is that the measure used to capture identity strength (MEIM-R, Phinney & Ong, 2007) may reflect enduring "trait-like" characteristics rather than situation-dependent salience. Some work with Black adults suggests that certain elements of their racial identity are stable (i.e., regard), whereas racial centrality is a form of situation-dependent salience (Shelton & Sellers, 2000). As such, future work could probe if interaction effects might be found between condition and measures of children's racial centrality, ideally captured from both child informants and parent informants.

Although I found direct effects of condition and of child identity strength on the forced choices of racial (vs. nonracial content), the present study is limited in being able to speak to what might be happening inside the "black box" of a racism experience and parents' forced choice selections. That is, the mediation analyses revealed little to no indication that the relationships between condition and selection of racial pride (vs. combined nonracial videos), or racism (vs. combined nonracial videos) were mediated by parents' measured racial goals for selecting the media content, their own likely negative affect, or their child's likely negative affect.

Importantly, all three of these variables were successfully manipulated. Parents who read about the child racism experience rated both themselves and their child as likely having higher negative affect. They also gave higher ratings of the extent to which their choice was driven by

racial goals as they related to media (i.e., “I picked this show because I wanted my child to feel good about who they are”). In other words, parents reacted as appraisal theory (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Smith, 1991) would expect: (1) Parents assessed their child to have a higher negative affect; (2) parents reported more disturbed feelings, more fright, and more concern regarding their own affect; and (3) they indicated more desire to help their child cope with the situation.

Yet, despite the fact that parents in the racism condition reported higher likely negative affect for their child and for themselves, these affect variables did not predict the odds of selecting the racial pride content (versus the combined nonracial videos of entertainment and climate), or of selecting the racism content (versus the combined nonracial videos of entertainment and climate). I suspect that one reason is that the affect variables reflect only the emotional *states* of the parent and the child, as opposed to what the parent wants to do about those emotional states. Importantly, it does not appear that negative affect (of the child or of the parent) is a deterrent from “approach coping” use of media among Black parents.

What is somewhat more puzzling is that there was only limited support for the explanatory path via parents’ racial goals for their child. After making their choice of video, parents rated the extent to which they agreed that they chose the show *because* they would want their child to feel good about who they are, being Black, learn how to cope with racism, learn about racism, feel less alone, feel less isolated, etc. As H1 analyses demonstrated, these racial goals were manipulated by the vignettes. The indirect pathway for racial goals was significant in the racial pride selection mediation models, but those models consistently had weaker fit than the simpler, direct-effects-only model. In addition, there was no evidence of mediation via racial goals for the racism selection models.

One possible explanation for why racial goals did not mediate the relationship between condition and forced choice, despite being manipulated by the vignette, may be that the measure of racial goals needed to be better developed. Parents' open-ended responses about their reasons for selecting the show they did for the forced choice outcome clearly include multiple responses that are about race-related goals for their child. Refining the measures based in part on parents' open-ended responses would be a promising next step to try to better capture parents' motivations for selecting race-related material. Relatedly, it is possible that parental perceptions of how *effective* the show would be at helping their child achieve the goals could also (or instead) mediate the relationships. Overall, these null mediation findings warrant probing.

In the present study, I also analyzed parents' ratings of how likely they would be to encourage their child to watch each of the four types of videos, with the knowledge that it was possible for parents to rate all videos as highly appealing or all unappealing, despite having been forced to make a selection. Overall, these findings ultimately suggest that parents were favoring explicitly racial content for their children, but not based on condition (there was no main effect of condition on encouragement ratings); instead, preferences were based at least in part on their perceptions of their child's identity strength.

Regardless of condition, parents gave higher ratings of their likely encouragement for their child to watch both race-related videos (racial pride, racism) than they did for the entertainment video. In addition, there was a significant main effect of child racial identity strength on content and also a significant interaction of video type and child racial identity strength. The relationship between identity strength and encouragement ratings was different for entertainment versus the other three types of content. At higher rates of perceived child identity strength, racial pride and racism are most encouraged; at higher rates of perceived child identity

strength, climate change content becomes increasingly encouraged. This finding about the relationship between child identity strength and the encouragement of climate content (vs. entertainment content) is unanticipated and striking, because overall, parents gave lower ratings of their encouragement of the climate video than the entertainment video. This observed interaction effect may simply reflect an overall social justice orientation of the parent, and/or it could reflect the fact that climate change can exacerbate racial and other inequities (see Salm et al., 2021). Even though the stimuli ratings did not find any patterns of parents picking up on racial pride or racism themes in the climate video, future work should try to follow up on this finding to probe if stronger perceptions of child identity predict exposure to content about environmental justice or educational material versus other kinds of content.

Additionally, there was some evidence of child age playing a role. The odds of parents selecting the racial pride versus the racism video did not differ by child age. However, compared to parents of 3- to 5-year-olds, parents of 15- to 17-year-olds (but not parents of 9- to 11-year-olds) had greater odds of selecting the racial pride (vs. nonracial content). Perhaps the motivation for racial pride content increases only meaningfully when comparing parents of preschoolers to parents of adolescents. In addition, parents of 9- to 11-year-olds had greater odds of selecting the racism (vs. nonracial content) than parents of 3- to 5-year-olds. The latter age difference in particular warrants replication because of the miniscule difference of the lower-bound end of the confidence interval and 0. Future work will need to probe these differences further, as they may reflect important differences in parents' desired content for their children based on developmental patterns.

Another finding of the current study is that parents generally held favorable views of the both the racial pride and racism videos. The direct effect of condition was not significant in the

path analysis examining the odds of parents selecting the racial pride video over the racism video. Parents in both conditions had the same odds of selecting the racial pride content or racism content. This adds to the evidence that both types of content may be seen as desirable, and potentially useful, regardless of whether a Black parent finds themselves (currently) dealing with a child racism situation. In addition, in this path analysis, there was no effect of perceived child identity strength on odds of selection (or by child age, or by condition). Parents had equal odds of selecting these two types of explicitly racial content, no matter whether their child had experienced racism or not, or whether their child was a tween (vs. a preschooler), or teen (vs. a preschooler), or what their perception was of their child's identity strength. Although parents' ratings of *encouragement* did vary by whether the video was racial pride or racial bias, both were rated high on average and had a mean difference of a few tenths of a point.

Importantly, the present study's stimuli manipulation of racial theme (racism vs. racial pride) was not as strong as intended. Although the racial pride video was generally seen as highly positive (i.e., high ratings of the show seeming "happy" and "fun," and more positive than the racism videos), parents rated both types of videos as high on racial pride. Racism videos were rated as significantly higher than racial pride videos on the theme of racism focus, but parents still perceived racism themes above the midpoint in the racial pride videos. As such, the conclusions about preferences for racial pride versus racial bias videos need to be treated with caution, especially given the differing findings by dependent variable.

Nevertheless, I argue that the question of whether racial pride and racism theming in children's content can – and should – be distinguished is a question for future research. It may be the case that, in order to draw true daylight between these themes, that racism content needs to be much more negatively valenced than the videos I included in this experiment. For racism

themes to be truly distinguishable from racial pride themes, perhaps the target racism content needs to include upsetting news or self-recorded footage of real racism events, which is an approach that I strategically avoided out of concern about causing pain to participants and adding to the circulation of footage of others' pain. Even if it is possible to draw more daylight between the themes of racial pride and racism, either in terms of negative valence, or in terms of realism, the question remains of whether we, as researchers, *should* ethically expose participants to such material, and whether or not the media industry *should* create children's content that could be exclusively seen as having a "racism" theme. As I have highlighted, part of the reason why identity pride for marginalized groups can – and must – exist is because of the presence of bias, past and/or present. As such, I suspect that media depictions of racial pride and racism may be fairly indistinguishable and could quite possibly represent different elements of the same overarching construct. In future work, research must try to probe if there are differences that can and should be depicted, as the answer to this question could help guide the creation of content that could be seen as useful and valuable to U.S. Black parents today.

In sum, when reflecting on parents' immediate media-related responses to when their child told them that they experienced racism, a few major points should be underscored. There is clearly a need for future work, including to probe why there might have been a difference by condition on the forced-choice selection but not on parents' ratings of how likely they would be to encourage their child to watch each show. Still, most of the data point away from avoidance coping being the go-to response for Black parents and as such, the data suggest the possibility of boundary conditions for MMT. Overall, the data underscore the likelihood of approach-focused socialization; however, with some outcomes (such as the selection of each racial video versus the combined nonracial videos), this type of "lean in" coping was in response to the experimental

manipulation of the child's experience of racism, but in others (i.e., encouragement ratings) it was not. The data also suggest that Black parents favorably viewed both racial and racism content, with minimal indication that one type of content was preferred over the other.

H5 had hypothesized there would be an effect of condition on parents' intentions to engage in media-based ethnic-racial socialization (MBERS) in the coming days. In support of H5, parents in the racism condition were more likely to engage in MBERS around useful content (e.g., using media that featured positive portrayals or that illustrated or discussed ways to cope with racism). However, in contrast to H5, parents in the racism condition were not more likely to report higher intentions to engage in MBERS around negative content (e.g., critiquing and restricting access to negative Black stereotypes in media content). However, these findings can be seen as aligning with SESAM's propositions: A child racism exposure triggered parents to report higher intention to engage in approach coping using media over the next few days via the form of MBERS that involves seeking out media content to lean into the topic of race. From this perspective, the fact that condition did not predict MBERS around negative content is less surprising, as that type of MBERS might not be seen as a unique coping strategy for racism and instead may have rates that are more stable, regardless of circumstance. Importantly, the means of both MBERS around useful content and MBERS around negative content were high, but MBERS useful content is the strategy that was affected by the experimental manipulation. Future work should investigate further the role of child racism experiences on longer-term coping strategies via MBERS strategies.

H6 had predicted that perceptions of child identity strength would moderate these relationships. There was no evidence of such moderation for either form of MBERS; however, significant direct effects of (perceived) child identity strength were found. Parents who perceived

their child's identity to be stronger (rather than weaker) reported higher rates of both forms of MBERS in the coming days. This finding is consistent with McClain and Mares's (2022) findings about child identity strength predicting parents' reported frequencies of MBERS strategies.

There are a number of limitations to the current study. First, this study was an online experiment, and as such, there are limits to its external validity. For example, the measures of parent and child negative affect were only reports of hypothetical *likely* emotions, and ones that were very likely primed (in ways that are likely unrealistic in most real-life settings) by my asking parents to rate their, and their child's, negative affect. It is possible that in real-life situations, when a parent learns that their child has experienced racism, that the parent's actual affect, and/or their perceptions of their child's actual affect, may well mediate the relationship between a racism exposure and parents' coping responses in ways that were not observed in the present data. Actual emotions are more visceral, can sometimes be less conscious, and might feel more important to be dealt with. While it would not be ethical to experimentally manipulate a child's actual experiences of racism, this experimental work could usefully be supplemented by additional survey research, asking parents to recall how they coped with an actual incident. Additionally, the present study also only examines responses to one particular scenario: a parent hearing from their child about the child's experience of racism. It leaves open the question of what media-based coping strategies might look like if the vignette were about the parent seeing or hearing their child experience racism firsthand.

Another limitation is that the present data also only speak to coping strategies involving media. In the vignette, I created an (arguably unrealistic) parameter around resources, in that parents only had the option of using *media* to help their child cope, as the vignettes stated that

the child did not want to talk about what happened, and only wanted to watch TV. Although parents with children of all the age ranges in the pre-test reported that this vignette situation would be plausible, it is worth noting that parents have more than only television-based strategies available to them, and that in the real world some parents may ignore their child's request to watch television instead of discussing what happened. Future work should be conducted to understand how race-related TV content for parents fits into the grander scheme of parents' resource "toolboxes" for helping their child navigate experiences with bias. Indeed, the present findings may be more or less important given the overall frequency with which Black parents generally report using television for these purposes, as compared to using other resources (e.g., interpersonal conversations, meditation, church attendance, community activities, books) for these purposes.

Looking ahead, this line of work has the potential to connect with the work of Anderson and Stevenson (2019) to identify ways in which parents' competency around ethnic-racial socialization may be affected by perceptions of their children's media landscape. Further studies could manipulate perceptions of the racial media landscape (e.g., quality, availability, theme) to examine whether these perceptions affect parents' self-efficacy around engaging in approach coping strategies after a racism experience for their child. Given that the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Smith (1991) indicate that many factors might affect an individual's coping strategy in a given situation, this area of research has many potential avenues for further study.

It is also critical to note that the present study's parents consisted mostly of female, cisgender parents. Patterns may be different for Black parents of other genders, especially among those who are marginalized. There may be multiple considerations at play as parents navigate multiple aspects of salient identities for themselves and for their children. As such, future work

will need to continue building on this line of work, making extra efforts in sampling to include more diversity in gender representation to examine how these relationships may differ according to parents' intersectional identities.

The larger charge of this line of work is to continue to probe the possibility that marginalized parents raising marginalized children may find themselves in situations that they appraise as threatening to their child's identity, and nevertheless are motivated to use media to help their child directly cope with, and navigate, their marginalized identity and negative experiences. The present findings ultimately are aligned with SESAM's propositions about the role of identity in media selection and highlight the potential value in applying Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) framework to the examination of identity-focused parental mediation practices, especially among minoritized families. Although there is much that remains to be examined in terms of what mechanisms might be involved in parents' selection of media content for their child after a racism experience, the present findings underscore the possibility that Black – and other marginalized – parents may see value, and even necessity, in using media as a resource to help their child navigate an unfair world.

# Chapter 5

## General Discussion

Socialization is a core aspect of parenting – parents engage in socialization efforts consciously and unconsciously, proactively and reactively, and in all sorts of domains, including around ethnic-racial identity (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006). Black (and other marginalized) families must socialize their children in ways that develop, bolster, and protect their child's self-concept amidst identity threats which include firsthand and vicarious racism, as well as institutional racism. Previous work has found that U.S. Black parents with children ages 3 to 17 reported fairly high frequencies of media-based ethnic-racial socialization strategies (MBERS) (McClain & Mares, 2022). Over the years, there have been empirical signs that ingroup representation is desired by minoritized parents and children alike (e.g., Children Now, 1998; Ellithorpe & Bleakley, 2016; Mares et al., 2015) and that Black youth use media at increasingly high rates (Rideout & Robb, 2019; Rideout et al., 2020; Rideout et al., 2021). Yet, research about Black parents' preferred ingroup representation for their children's media content, the predictors of those preferences, and what kind of content might be recommended and visible to them has remained scant. There has also been a need for theory-driven experimental work that examines which media are actually selected and encouraged by Black parents for their children, and the predictors and explanatory mechanisms for their choices.

Throughout this dissertation, I have aimed to build a set of studies that can begin to address these gaps, drawing from a set of theoretical frameworks and empirical fields of study that, to the best of my knowledge, have rarely been simultaneously considered. In Study 1a, I applied theorizing from Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM, ethnic-racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2016), and parental mediation (Beyens et al., 2019) to examine Black parents'

preferences around various types of ingroup representation for their children's media. With correlational data from a sample of U.S. Black parents, I explored whether particular kinds of representation were preferred to others, and whether child age, perceptions of child identity strength, and parents' own identity strength predicted media preferences. In Study 1b, I conducted an initial thematic summary of recommended Black identity-related content curated by Common Sense Media and visible on their website in early 2022. I examined theme and age patterns in these offerings.

In Study 2, I drew from several bodies of literature including appraisal theory (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Smith, 1991), ethnic-racial socialization (e.g., Hughes et al., 2016), Mood Management Theory (Zillmann, 1998), and SESAM (Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015). I ran an online experiment where I manipulated a parent's experience of an identity threat for their child and asked them to make a forced-choice video selection and to rate how likely they would be to encourage each of the four video types in order to examine the relationship between a child racism experience and parents' coping strategies (avoidance versus approach coping). Specifically, I tested whether parents tended to engage in avoidance coping (via selecting or more highly indicating encouragement of distracting content for their children) or approach coping (selecting and encouraging racial content) following a child racism experience. I examined three possible mediators (child negative affect, parent negative affect, and racial goals) and the moderating role of child identity strength and child age on various relationships. Finally, I assessed whether exposure to a child racism experience would predict parents' reported intentions to engage in MBERS strategies in the coming days. Together, the findings suggest that media resources are sought by Black parents to help their children navigate their ethnic-racial identity, and that they perceive value in ingroup representation in their children's media. In

Study 1a, I found that parents of all ages of children reported wanting high rates of multiple kinds of ingroup representation for their child, including everyday experiences, explicit discussion of Black pride, culture, and history, and even contemporary racism. There were no differences by child age, even for contemporary racism depictions, suggesting that Black families may perceive value or necessity with this kind of content for their child, regardless of their child's age.

Future work should examine how and why parents might perceive utility or value in ingroup depictions, including examples of top-rated content from Study 1a. One place to start is to conduct focus groups with Black parents, in order to allow for the bottom-up analysis of ingroup depiction descriptions, and exemplars of content, that Black parents organically identify for themselves as useful and/or valuable to their children of various ages for identity-related purposes. This work should also probe parents' explanations for the depictions and exemplar content that they discuss. Based on the current work, the background expectation is that their descriptions, exemplars, and motivations would map onto the three SESAM motivations of identity consistency (e.g., content that would be seen as likely to help their child feel seen and affirmed), identity enhancement (e.g., content that would be seen as likely to help their child feel better), and identity improvement for their children (e.g., content that would be seen as likely to help their child become more resilient). However, it would also be important to leave the space for other types of options to emerge and to recognize that SESAM's theorized motivation constructs might be somewhat overlapping among Black parents, especially perhaps as it relates to *self-consistency*-aligned and *self-enhancement*-aligned depictions.

A follow-up survey should build on the focus group findings and incorporate findings about the motivations that emerge to measure parents' ratings of exemplars in terms of, for

example, how much parents perceive them to be identity consistent for their child, identity enhancing for their child, and/or identity improving for their child. For example, perhaps contemporary racism content that is seen as high on all three types of child identity motivations is indistinguishable from exemplars of everyday depictions, but contemporary racism depictions that are only seen as identity improving would be rated (and potentially used) differently than everyday content. Building on this, research should also explore whether parents' perceptions of the same content vary by experiences of child racism, by perceptions of their child's identity strength, or the strength of their own identity. For example, are Black parents more likely to rate any ingroup representation as more identity consistent, identity enhancing, and identity improving after a racism exposure?

It would also be informative to examine children's perceptions of content based on the parental motivations that emerge – in terms of how, for example, identity consistent, identity enhancing, and identity improving they perceive various depictions and content to be. Future work should explore whether perceptions of parent-child dyads align. If there are misalignments, future work could examine how aligned vs. unaligned content is used in parental selective exposure practices. It is possible, for example, that parents use different kinds of content for socializing in different ways when they are aligned with their child's perceptions of the content, versus when they see it differently. Differences in practices have the potential to affect outcomes in children.

Indeed, it is important that future research examine the actual effects of content exposure, and socialization of that exposure, on parents and children. Does a child exposure to content that is rated highly (by parents, by the child, or both) on only one kind of identity motivation have different effects than content that is rated highly on more than one identity motivation? Perhaps

content that only has one or two salient motivations, for example only identity consistency and identity enhancement, might have different (lesser) potential to contribute to outcomes of resilience and identity growth. In addition, does content rated highly on child identity motivation categories affect parents' competence and execution of in-the-moment socialization? Their future intentions to use media to socialize their children? Future work will need to explore these issues.

Although the results suggest value in ingroup representation for Black families, more work remains, given that I found differences in the *types* of ingroup representation that parents reported wanting for their children in Study 1a, but not in Study 2. In Study 1a, for example, I found that Black parents reported wanting to see higher rates of everyday representation than historical racism; they also preferred contemporary racism depictions to historical racism depictions. In Study 2, however, there was minimal indication of a meaningful difference between parents' preferences in encouraging racial pride versus racism content for their children, and there were no differences at all in parents' selection of racial pride content over racism content. It is possible that parents' preferences for content, when measured only in survey items without exposure to actual viewing material, do not map onto parents' preferences (or selection) of content when they are actually viewing real footage.

Study 2 also suggests the possibility of a boundary condition for MMT (Zillmann, 1988), and aligns with others' findings that Black parents reported approach coping tendencies after child racism experiences (Smalls-Glover et al., 2013), as well as with Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM theorizing about the role of perceived identity threats and needs in selective exposure practices. The Study 2 findings about forced choice consistently point in the direction of Black parents engaging in a form of approach coping following a racism experience. Parents in the racism experience condition had greater likelihoods than parents in the okay day condition

of selecting the racial content (versus nonracial content) in forced choice scenarios. In contrast to what MMT would propose about Black parents' potentially wanting to rid their child, and themselves, of negative affect, parents in Study 2 leaned into race-related content – including mixed-valence content about a vicarious child racism experience – after a child racism experience. These findings support SESAM's propositions about the role of identity threat and need in media selection, highlighting the theory's promise for examining parental mediation issues around identity socialization. These findings also complement Hughes and Johnson's (2001) and Smalls-Glover et al.'s (2013) findings about how parents have reported engaging in conversations about racism with their children after they perceive their child to have experienced racism.

At the same time, Study 2's findings also raise questions about what might be happening inside the black box between a Black parent's experience of hearing their child having experienced racism and their choice and preferences for content. The evidence for racial goals (around media content) serving as a mediator was limited. Although the indirect path was significant in the models predicting selection of racial pride content (vs. the combined nonracial videos), those models had weaker fit indices than simpler models with no mediation. There was no indication of an indirect path in the models predicting selection of racism (vs. the combined nonracial videos) content. Moreover, the results of the mediation models suggest that negative affect – of the parent, and of the child – were not key elements in the relationship between condition and forced choice selections of racial vs. combined nonracial content. As readers will recall, the manipulation of child negative affect and of parent negative affect worked; parents in the racism condition imagined themselves and their child to have higher negative affect compared to parents in the okay day condition. Yet, these ratings of imagined negative affect did

not deter them from indicating that they would engage in approach coping. There were no relationships between these variables and the selection outcomes, and the indirect paths for both variables were insignificant. This finding warrants future probing, and future work should also include measures of stress, including physiological markers of stress, from the appraisal literature to explore whether parents' stress levels play a significant mediating role in these processes. Future work should continue to identify viable intermediate variables from appraisal theory, and then work to experimentally test for viable mediation candidates.

In Study 2, parents' forced choice selection of and encouragement of racial media content (vs. the combined nonracial videos) content for their children – as well as their planned intentions for engaging in media-based ethnic-racial socialization (MBERS) in the coming days – were all predicted by their perceptions of their child's identity strength. This aligns with Hughes et al.'s (2016) theorizing about how minoritized parents adapt their ethnic-racial socialization tendencies to match their perceptions of their child's needs and "readiness" for handling racial topics (p. 11). These findings also align with Beyens et al.'s (2019) theorizing about how parental mediation practices are adaptive to perceptions of the child's development. Finally, they align with the work of McClain and Mares (2022) which found that parents who rated their child's identity as stronger (as opposed to weaker) were more likely to report using higher rates of MBERS strategies. They complement McClain and Mares's (2022) findings in that they highlight *when* parents might be particularly inclined to use positive *and* mixed-valence racial depictions. Future work should consider whether various kinds of vicarious child racism experiences, or experiences of racism that happen to the parent, predict varying rates of MBERS strategies.

The question of whether there are differences in child age for parents' actual selections of media content warrants further attention in future research. Study 2's findings suggest that there may be some differences by child age in parents' selection of racial pride (vs. nonracial) content and racism (vs. nonracial) content, but Study 1a found that child age was not related to parental preferences for the top-rated identity depictions, which even included contemporary racism. Hughes et al. (2016) theorize that parents' engagement in preparation for bias socialization reflects their perceptions of their child's ability and preparedness to handle identity messages that can be serious, abstract, and negative. Earlier work by Hughes et al. (2006) also suggested that preparation for bias socialization may increase with age. In line with Hughes et al. (2006), McClain and Mares (2022) found that parents of older children reported higher rates of using media to show and discuss racism with their child. Given the inconsistent age difference findings, it is possible that parents' indicated preferences for the frequency of content (via survey measures), and their selection and preferences when viewing actual content, represent different phenomena. Importantly, in Study 1a, I asked parents the frequencies that they *wanted* to see various depictions in their children's media, and in Study 2, I worked to find (and create) content that was age appropriate. Study 2's findings show some alignment with McClain and Mares (2022), in that age differences were observed, though the patterns were not very intuitive. Perhaps the lack of age differences in Study 1a indicate that parents of all ages of children do want more content to be available for them, but when it comes to selecting content, parents of older children may prefer various kinds of race-related content more. It is also possible that age trends would be different had all ages of children been included in Study 2 (as opposed to only children within particular age ranges). As such, future work will need to examine whether the age patterns observed in Study 2 can be replicated.

In addition to Study 1b's findings suggesting that the amount of recommended and visible content for Black families may be limited even in 2022, when taken as a whole, the findings of this dissertation point to a need for our field and for the media industry to consider the amount and type of Black identity-related content that is available for U.S. Black families today. In Study 1a, parents reported wanting to see easily identifiable Black characters at significantly higher rates than metaphorical and ambiguous depictions of race – but anthropomorphism is widely used in preschool programming (Hamlen & Imbesi, 2019). They also reported wanting to see high rates of contemporary racism, but that content – especially for the youngest of viewers – seems to be limited, or at least extremely difficult to find. In Study 1b, I found that the total amount of content for very young children was only a tiny fraction of what was offered for teenagers. This means that even though the parents of 3- to 5-year-olds in Study 2 reported that their young children experienced racism too, families like theirs would likely be hard-pressed to find race-related content, especially content with contemporary racism.

In addition to my stance that there is an ethical issue in ignoring what marginalized communities are asking for, there is also risk in not offering parents content that is aligned with what they want, or what they think their children might need. Appraisal theory (e.g., Smith, 1991) suggests that part of what leads to a coping response is an assessment of how an individual's resources stack up to meet the challenges at hand. What if, in everyday settings, parental perceptions of limited visibility or accessibility to useful race-related content for their children affect their sense of competency for tackling these issues with their children? Theorizing by Anderson and Stevenson (2019) suggests that parents' ethnic-racial socialization habits – and their competency and confidence around those habits – are likely to mitigate the negative effects of racism on youth. By not having ample, age appropriate race-related material

for children of all ages, the media industry may not only be limiting opportunities for children and families to see themselves, but they may also be indirectly negatively affecting youth adaptive outcomes by limiting Black families' perceptions of how helpful and resourceful they can be in an already biased society. McClain and Mares (2022) found that Black parents' perceptions of the availability of useful racial content were positively associated with self-reported frequencies of various forms of cultural socialization and preparation for bias. This underscores the importance of efforts to make Black identity-related content more visible, such as via Common Sense Media's "Best of" lists and Netflix's "Black Lives Matter Collection."

Moving forward in this work, it is also worth noting that there is work to be done with more factors involving parents themselves, as research on vicarious racism indicates that hearing or seeing others' racism experiences can also affect the person listening or watching (Chae et al., 2021). As such, parents may have their own feelings of threats for themselves (as individuals) to deal with in situations when their child's identity has been threatened. It is possible that such a vicarious experience could predict parents' selection and preferences of their content for *themselves* as well. It may be that certain kinds of adult media content are preferred, or seen as helpful, by adults in this situation; parents might lean into race-related content, or distracting content; they may also seek out content that they perceive as useful in terms of modeling for how to parent in these situations. Future work should explore these possibilities.

The present project has contributed to the theoretical literature, by not only connecting the fields of parental mediation and ethnic-racial socialization with selective exposure theories, but by also proposing potential boundaries around Mood Management Theory (Zillmann, 1988). Together the findings suggest the value of applying Knobloch-Westerwick's (2015) SESAM to contexts of parental mediation around identity socialization. Specifically, the findings

demonstrate that Black parents reported particular preferences for ingroup depictions for their children that show some alignment with SESAM's identity motivations, and by providing evidence that under an experience of threat for their child, Black parents tended to engage in approach coping, including around what can be conceptualized as mixed-valence identity-improving content (i.e., videos with vicarious racism experience). In addition, the findings underscore the likely perceived value of race-related content for Black families and suggest the role of identity strength in parents' preferences for, and selections of, media content for their children. The findings also suggest that the children's media industry should not rely solely on metaphorical, ambiguous, and anthropomorphized depictions of race if they hope their content will be highly appealing to Black families, as Black parents indicated a preference for easily identifiable Black depictions over metaphorical and ambiguous ones. The findings of Study 1b suggest that the kinds of content available to Black families are limited, especially for parents of the youngest children. The findings of Study 2 suggest why this may matter in terms of socialization practices.

Overall, the findings of this dissertation suggest that a universe of untapped research awaits on the study of the uses and effects of parental mediation around marginalized identities, including consideration for how children themselves perceive, participate in, and are affected by the media content their parents select, encourage, or use to socialize them, as well as by the content children select for themselves. Although the present set of studies has focused exclusively on U.S. Black parents, it is possible that these patterns of preferences and effects can be applied to parental mediation identity practices among families of other ethnic-racial backgrounds, as well as families with intersectionally-marginalized identities, and families that are not ethnic-racially marginalized but experience marginalization in other forms (e.g., via

belonging to the LGBTQ+ community). It is imperative that future work continue to examine these issues, as our field has an obligation to continue to examine how and in what ways media might be used and designed to better promote positive outcomes for marginalized children and their families.

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# Tables and Figures

## Figure 1

*Study 1a: Illustration of Calls for Everyday Representation*


## Table 1

*Study 1a: Parents' Preferences for Their Child's Exposure to Different Types of Fictional Content by Theorized SESAM Motivation*

| Frequency Desired (1-7) | M | SD | SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Self-Consistency** | | | |
| Everyday Black Life[B] | 6.1 | 1.1 | .06 |
| Clear Black Phenotypes and Similar to Child[C] | 5.8 | 1.1 | .07 |
| Metaphorical/Ambiguous Depictions[EF] | 4.8 | 1.5 | .09 |
| **Self-Enhancement** | | | |
| Black discussion of Black pride, culture, history[A] | 6.4 | 1.1 | .06 |
| Black characters' success, culture, history[B] | 6.1 | 1.0 | .06 |
| Non-Black discussion of Black pride, culture, history[DE] | 5.4 | 1.7 | 1.0 |
| **Self-Improvement** | | | |
| Contemporary racism[CD] | 5.6 | 1.7 | .10 |
| Politically correct anti-racism[DE] | 5.3 | 2.0 | .11 |
| Slavery[E] | 5.1 | 1.6 | .09 |
| Historical Racism [F] | 4.7 | 2.0 | .11 |
| Called-out and punished racism[EF] | 4.7 | 2.0 | .10 |
| Racism depiction[G] | 3.5 | 2.0 | .11 |

*Note.* All comparisons are derived from one repeated measures ANOVA, with 12 variables in the model. Means with no letter in common are significantly different with a minimum of $p < .05$.
Main effect of depiction type: $F(11, 299) = 67.35$, $p < .001$, Wilks' $\lambda = .29$, $\eta_p^2 = .7$

**Table 2**

*Study 1a: Correlations Between Content Types Theorized to Be Most Desired*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Everyday Black Life | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2 Clear Black Phenotypes & Similar to Child | .65*** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3 Metaphorical &Ambiguous Depictions | .21*** | .27** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 Black characters discuss Black pride, culture, history | .60*** | .47*** | .12* | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 5 Black characters' success, culture, history | .62*** | .51*** | .14* | .65*** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 6 Non-Black characters discuss Black pride, culture, history | .28*** | .26*** | .21** | .43*** | .38*** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 7 Contemporary Racism | .46*** | .38*** | .24*** | .40*** | .46*** | .28*** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 8 Slavery | .28*** | .26*** | .16** | .28*** | .46*** | .18** | .44*** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 9 Politically correct anti-racism | .18*** | .07 | .15* | .31*** | .25*** | .36*** | .11 | .13* | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 10 Historical Racism | .32*** | .27*** | .17** | .31*** | .40*** | .31*** | .57*** | .53*** | .11 | | | |
| 11 Called-out and punished racism | .29*** | .39*** | .23*** | .25*** | .33*** | .15** | .52*** | .31*** | .10 | .48** | -- | -- |
| 12 Racism depiction | .15** | .13* | .15* | .08 | .18*** | .17** | .43*** | .34*** | .08 | .47** | .38** | -- |

**Table 3**

*Study 1a: Regressions Predicting Desired Frequencies of Highly Rated Content*

| | Everyday Black Life Experiences† (Self-Consistency) β | Black Discussion of Pride, History, & Culture† (Self-Enhancement) β | Contemporary Racism† (Self-Enhancement) β |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age | .05 | .02 | .07 |
| Perceived Child Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength | .17** | .09 | .17** |
| Parental Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength | .45*** | .51*** | .23*** |
| Parental Education | -.03 | -.02 | .06 |
| Annual Household Income | .02 | -.02 | -.06 |
| Perceived Neighborhood Integration | -.02 | -.03 | -.03 |
| ***$R^2$*** | ***.302**** | ***.315**** | ***.133**** |
| **Adj. *$R^2$* Total** | **.288*** | ***.301**** | ***.116**** |

*Note.* The transformed version of this variable was used (see Results), but for ease of interpretation, the direction of associations is shown as for the non-reflected/transformed version. Coefficients are standardized. Titles in parentheses refer to the SESAM motivation theorized to underlie desires for this type of content.

**Table 4**

*Study 1b: Coding the 14 Common Sense Media Black-Identity Related Sub-lists*

| Title of Sub-List (N Media Offerings) | Themes Coded for Each Sub-List Title | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Black History | Racism and Social Justice | General Ingroup Representation |
| Black History on the Screen: Activism, Civics, & Social Justice (N = 97) | X | X | |
| Black History on the Screen: Arts, Business, & Culture (N = 64) | X | | |
| Black History on the Screen: Dance, Games, & Sports (N = 54) | X | | |
| Black History on the Screen: Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (N = 10) | X | | |
| Black History Movies That Tackle Racism (N = 14) | X | X | |
| Documentaries About Black History (N = 90) | X | | |
| Black Lives Matter Movies and TV Shows on Netflix (N = 36) | | X | |
| TV About Racism and Social Justice (N = 34) | | X | |
| 2022 NAACP Image Award-Nominated TV Shows (N = 20) | | | |
| 2022 NAACP Image Award-Nominated Films (N = 20) | | | |
| 2021 NAACP Image Award-Nominated Films (N = 36) | | | X |
| 2021 NAACP Image Award Nominated TV Shows (N = 65) | | | X |
| Black TV Classics to Watch as a Family (N = 28) | | | X |
| Great Movies with Black Characters (N = 118) | | | X |
| Movies with Inspiring Black Girls and Women (N = 43) | | | X |
| TV Shows with Black Leads (N = 87) | | | X |
| Total Offerings, N = 816 | **Media Offerings Per Theme** | | |
| | With Duplicates N= 329 | With Duplicates N = 181 | With Duplicates N = 377 |
| | Unique N = 239 | Unique N = 151 | Unique N =338 |
| | Exclusive N = 78 | Exclusive N =28 | Exclusive N = 199 |

**Table 5**

*Study 1a: Exemplar Titles of Black Identity-Related Offerings by Theme*

| Black History | Racism and Social Justice | General Ingroup Representation |
|---|---|---|
| *March on! The Day My Brother Martin Changed the World* (2 to 4) | *Sesame/CNN: Standing Up to Racism* (2 to 4) | *Bookmarks: Celebrating Black Voices* (2 to 4) |
| *Garrett's Gift* (5 to 7) | *The Journey of Henry Box Brown* (5 to 7) | *Karma's World* (5 to 7) |
| *We Are the Dream: The Kids of the Oakland MLK Oratorical Fest* (8 to 9) | *We Are the Radical Monarchs* (8 to 9) | *A Ballerina's Tale* (8 to 9) |
| *Betty & Coretta* (10 to 12) | (10 to 12) | *Good Times* (10 to 12) |
| *They've Gotta Have Us* (13+) | *Rest in Power: The Trayvon Martin Story* (13+) | *This Is Us* (13+) |

**Figure 2**

*Study 1b: Unique Offerings by Theme by Age Group*

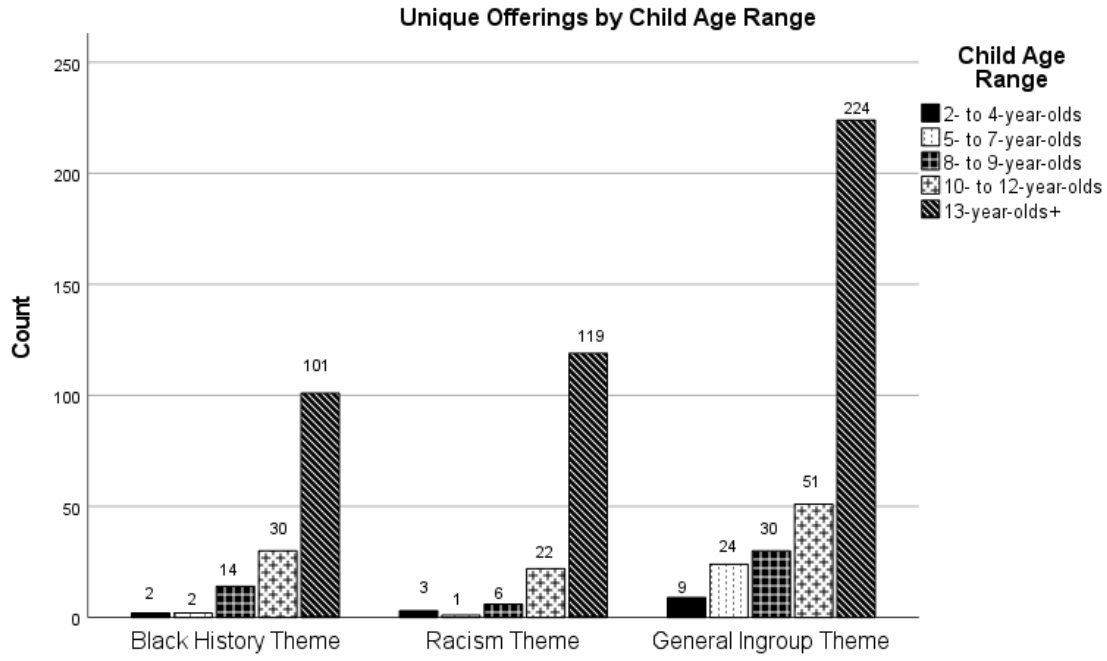


**Table 6**

*Study 2: Parents' Ratings of Theme and Valence of Video Content Types*

| | Preschool Content | Tween Content | Teen Content |
|---|---|---|---|
| Racial Pride Theme | M (SE) | M (SE) | M (SE) |
| Racial pride video | 5.8 (.13) Ca | 6.1 (.10) Bb | 6.2 (.12) Bb |
| Racism video | 5.3 (.14) Ba | 5.9 (.11) Bb | 5.8 (.13) Bb |
| Entertainment video | 3.4 (.17) Aa | 3.4 (.18) Aa | 2.9 (.18) Aa |
| Climate video | 3.1 (.17) Aa | 3.0 (.18) Aa | 2.7 (.17) Aa |
| Racism Theme | | | |
| Racial pride video | 5.5 (.14) Ba | 5.6 (.13) Ba | 5.8 (.14) Ba |
| Racism video | 5.9 (.11) Ca | 6.4 (.08) Cb | 6.2 (1.0) Cb |
| Entertainment video | 3.4 (.18) Ab | 3.4 (.18) Aab | 2.9 (.18) Aa |
| Climate video | 3.2 (.11) Aa | 3.0 (.19) Aa | 2.7 (.17) Aa |
| Positive Valence | | | |
| Racial pride video | 5.9 (.11) Ba | 5.8 (.10) Ca | 5.7 (.12) Ca |
| Racism video | 4.4 (.16) Aa | 4.7 (.14) Ba | 4.8 (.14) Ba |
| Entertainment video | 5.8 (.11) Bb | 5.9 (.11) Cb | 5.2 (.14) Ba |
| Climate video | 4.7 (1.6) Aa | 3.9 (.17) Ab | 4.0 (.16) Ab |
| Negative Valence | | | |
| Racial pride video | 2.4 (.14) Aa | 2.5 (.15) Aa | 2.5 (.14) Aa |
| Racism video | 4.4 (.16) Cb | 3.8 (.16) Ba | 4.0 (.16) Bab |
| Entertainment video | 2.5 (.14) Aa | 2.3 (.15) Aa | 2.2 (.12) Aa |
| Climate video | 3.4 (.15) Ba | 3.8 (.17) Ba | 3.6 (.17) Ba |

*Note.* Capital letters indicate differences between the four video options for each rating (e.g., amount of racial pride theme) and should be read down each column for each rating. Lower-case letters indicate differences between age-groups in ratings of each theme for each video and should be read across a row. Where there are no lower-case letters in a row, there are no age differences. For each type of comparison, means that don't share a subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ using Sidak post hoc comparisons.

**Table 7**

*Study 2: Parents' Ratings of Age Appropriateness, Engagement, and Previous Exposure for Each Video*

| | Preschool Content | Tween Content | Teen Content |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age Appropriateness | M (SE) | M (SE) | M (SE) |
| Racial pride video | 5.6 (.11) BCa | 6.1 (.12) Bb | 6.3 (.11) Cb |
| Racism video | 5.9 (.11) Ca | 6.0 (.11) Ba | 6.3 (.11) Cb |
| Entertainment video | 5.9 (.15) Cc | 5.4 (.15) Ab | 4.9 (.15) Aa |
| Climate video | 5.6 (.13) ABab | 5.3 (.13) Aa | 5.7 (.13) Bb |
| Engagement Potential | | | |
| Racial pride video | 5.7 (.12) Ba | 6.0 (.12) Cb | 6.0 (.12) Cb |
| Racism video | 5.7 (.12) Ba | 5.8 (.12) Cab | 6.1 (.12) Cb |
| Entertainment video | 5.6 (.15) Bc | 5.1 (.15) Bb | 4.2 (.15) Aa |
| Climate video | 5.0 (.16) Ab | 4.4 (.16) Aa | 4.9 (.16) Bb |
| Seen Before | | | |
| Racial pride video | .17 (.03) Aa | .18 (.03) Aa | .14 (.03) Aa |
| Racism video | .17 (.03) Aa | .15 (.03) Aa | .15 (.03) Aa |
| Entertainment video | .50 (.04) Ba | .40 (.04) Ba | .56 (.04) Cb |
| Climate video | .17 (.03) Aa | .18 (.03) Aa | .28 (.03) Bb |

*Note.* Capital letters indicate differences between the four video options for each rating (e.g., amount of racial pride theme) and should be read down each column for each rating. Lower-case letters indicate differences between age-groups in ratings of each theme for each video and should be read across a row. Where there are no lower-case letters in a row, there are no age differences. For each type of comparison, means that don't share a subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ using Sidak post hoc comparisons.

**Figure 3**

*Visualizations of Analyses in Study 2*

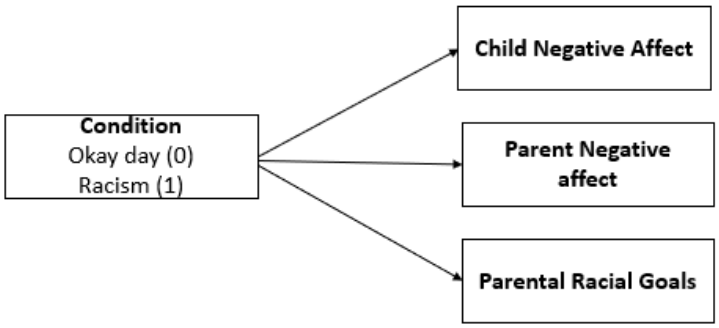



**Figure 3a.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Effects of Condition on Affect and Goals (H1)*

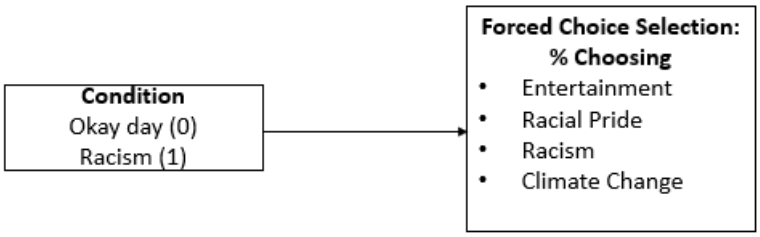



**Figure 3b.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection as Percentages (H2)*

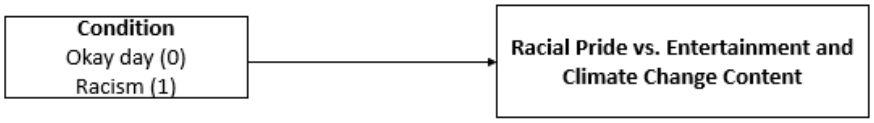



**Figure 3c**. *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection: Odds of Racial Pride (vs. Entertainment and Climate)*

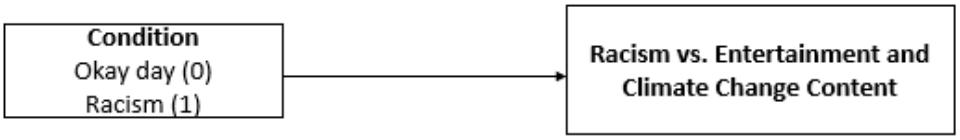



**Figure 3d.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection: Odds of Racism (vs. Entertainment and Climate)*

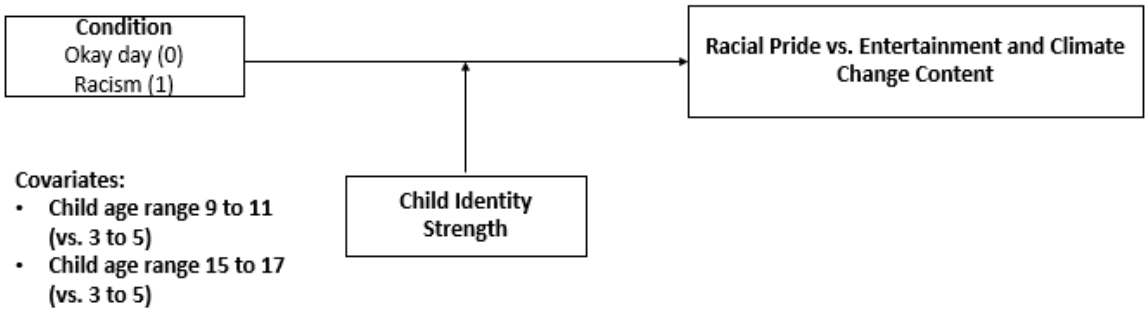



**Figure 3e.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Moderation and Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection by Child Identity Strength (H3)*

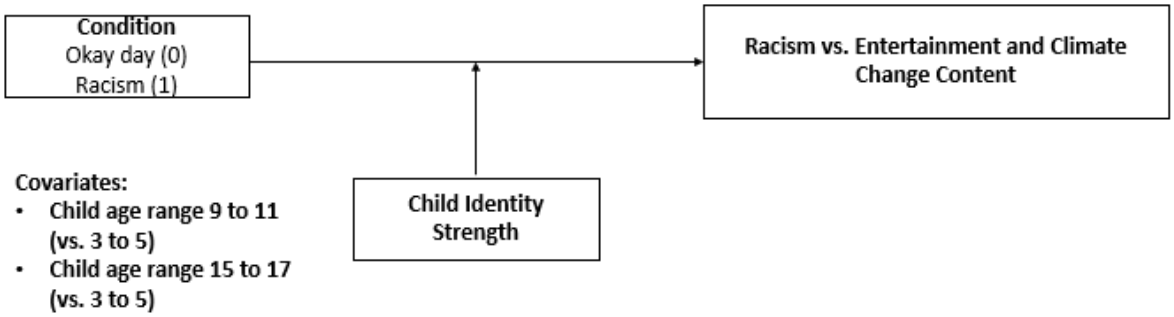



**Figure 3f.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Moderation of Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection by Child Identity Strength (H3)*

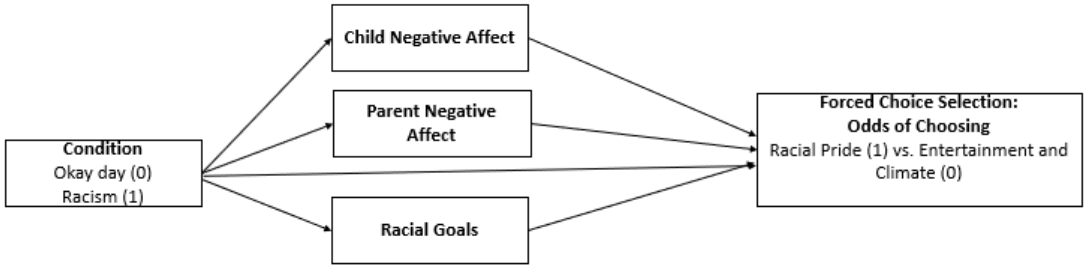



**Figure 3g.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Indirect Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection of Racial Pride (vs. Entertainment and Climate) (RQ1)*

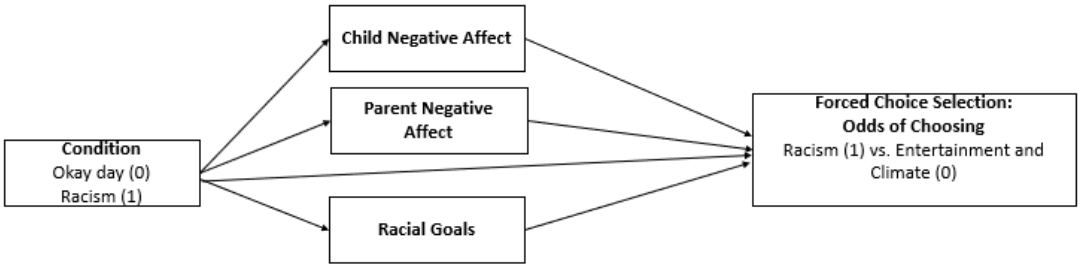



**Figure 3h.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Indirect Effects of Condition on Forced Choice Selection of Racism (vs. Entertainment and Climate) (RQ1)*

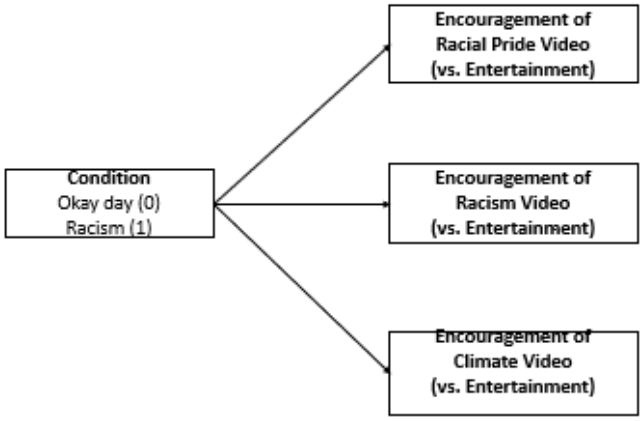



**Figure 3i** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Effects of Condition on Parents' Encouragement of Each Content Type (H4)*

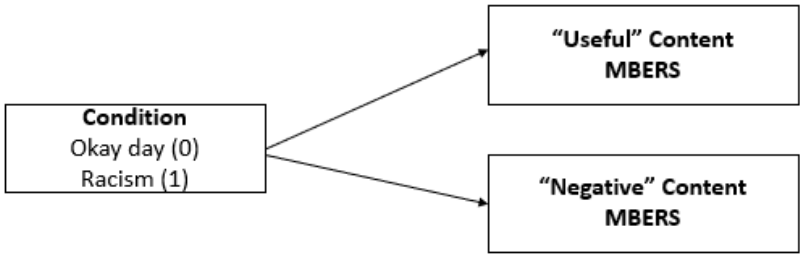



**Figure 3j.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Effects of Condition on MBERS Intentions*

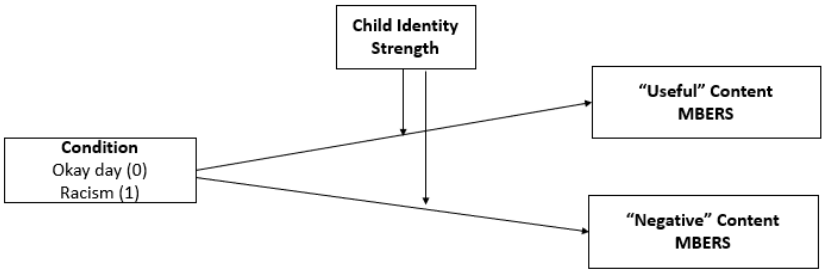



**Figure 3k.** *Study 2 Conceptual Model of Moderation of Effects of Condition on MBERS Intentions by Child Identity Strength*

**Table 8**

*Study 2: Descriptive Statistics and Differences by Condition*

| | | *Experimental Condition* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Overall* | *Okay Day* | *Child Racism Experience* | *Condition Effect* |
| **Ratings of Responses to Vignette (1-7)** | *M (SD)* | *M (SD)* | *M (SD)* | *t (496)* |
| Racial goals (H1) | 6.0 (1.2) | 5.8 (1.3) | 6.1 (1.0) | -2.78** |
| Child Negative Affect (H1) | 3.6 (1.8) | 3.0 (1.6) | 4.3 (1.8) | -8.55*** |
| Parent Negative Affect (H1) | 3.9 (1.9) | 3.4 (1.9) | 4.5 (1.9) | -6.60*** |
| Bias-Related Worry | 4.8 (1.9) | 4.3 (1.9) | 5.4 (1.8) | -6.21*** |
| **Background Variables** | | | | |
| Frequency of Racism Experiences | 1.1 (1.3) | 1.15 (1.4) | 1.03 (1.3) | 1.05 |
| General Approach Coping | 5.8 (1.2) | 5.8 (1.2) | 5.9 (1.3) | -.95 |

**Table 9**

*Study 2: Parents' Forced Choice Selection Comparisons by Condition (H2)*

| | Video Content Types | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Entertainment | Racial Pride | Racism | Climate Change |
| Percent of Parents Selecting Each Type | % | % | % | % |
| Okay Day Condition | 19.8 [A] (n = 50) | 36.5 [A] (n = 92) | 32.9 [A] (n = 83) | 10.7 [B] (n = 27) |
| Child Racism Condition | 15.4 [A] (n = 38) | 40.2 [A] (n = 99) | 39.4 [A] (n = 97) | 4.9 [A] (n=12) |
| **Overall** | **17.7 (n = 88)** | **38.4 (n = 191)** | **36.1 (n = 180)** | **7.8% (n = 39)** |

*Note.* Capital letters should be read down the columns; different capital letters indicate a significant difference by condition from pair-wise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments; $\chi^2$ (3) = 8.68, $p$ = .034.

**Table 10**

*Study 2: Parents' Forced Choice Racial (Racial Pride or Racism) Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection (H2)*

| | Video Content Types | |
|---|---|---|
| | Racial Pride | Nonracial (Entertainment & Climate) |
| Percent of Parents Selecting Racial Pride vs. Nonracial | % | % |
| Okay Day Condition | 54.4[A] (n = 92) | 45.6[B] (n = 77) |
| Child Racism Condition | 66.4[A] (n = 99) | 33.6[A] (n = 50) |
| **Overall** | **60.1 (n = 191)** | **36.1 (n = 127)** |
| | Video Content Types | |
| | Racism | Nonracial (Entertainment & Climate) |
| Percent of Parents Selecting Racism vs. Nonracial | % | % |
| Okay Day Condition | 51.9[A] (n = 83) | 48.1[B] (n = 77) |
| Child Racism Condition | 66.0[B] (n = 97) | 34.0[A] (n = 50) |
| **Overall** | **58.6 (n = 180)** | **41.4 (n = 127)** |

*Note.* Capital letters should be read down the columns; different capital letters indicate a significant difference by condition from pair-wise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments; $\chi^2$ (1) = 6.29, $p$ = .012.

**Table 11**

*Study 2: Fit indices for Models Examining Effects on Racial Pride Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection (H3)*

| | Log Likelihood | BIC |
|---|---|---|
| Model 1: Direct effects of Condition Model<br>Condition → Racial Pride (vs. *Nonracial*) | -211.6 | 435 |
| Model 2: Moderation with Child Age as Covariate<br>Child Age Group 9 to 11 (vs. 3 to 5)→ Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Child Age Group 15 to 17 (vs. 3 to 5) → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Condition → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Child Identity strength → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Condition x Child Identity Strength → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial) | -197 | 428 |
| Model 3: Child Age and Child ID as Covariates (No Interaction Term)<br>Child Age Group 9 to 11 (vs. 3 to 5) → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Child Age Group 15 to 17(vs. 3 to 5) → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Condition → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial)<br>Child identity strength → Racial Pride (vs. Nonracial) | -197 | 422 |
| Model 4: Three Mediators (Child Negative, Parent Negative Affect, Racial Goals | -1977 | 4051 |
| Model 5: Two Mediators (Child Negative Affect & Racial Goals) | -1326 | 2685 |
| Model 6: Two Mediators (Parent Negative Affect & Racial Goals) | -1359 | 2793 |
| Model 7: One Mediator (Racial Goals) | -709 | 1470 |

*Note*. *N* = 318 for all models. Model 1 and 3 nested in Model 2; Models 4, 5, 6, and 7 nested in Model 3, allowing various fit comparisons via log likelihood. Every model had the same outcome variable (racial pride selection vs. entertainment and climate) and number of observations, allowing fit comparisons by BIC. Nonracial selection is a variable combining the selection of entertainment and climate videos.

**Table 12**

*Study 2: Examining Effects on Racial Pride Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection (H3)*

| **Direct Effects on Selection**<br>**Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratio** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Model 1: Direct Effect of Condition<br>(0 okay day, 1 child racism experience) | .51* | 1.7 | [1.05, 2.61] |
| Model 2: Condition x Child Identity Strength<br>Child Age Group as Covariate | | | |
| Child Age Group (3-5 vs. 9-11) | .48 | 1.6 | [0.89, 2.95] |
| Child Age Group (3-5 vs. 15-17) | .72* | 2.1 | [1.16, 3.66] |
| Condition | .17 | 1.2 | [0.15, 9.16] |
| Child Identity Strength | .31* | 1.4 | [1.08, 1.73] |
| Condition x Child Identity Strength | .07 | 1.1 | [0.75, 1.53] |
| Model 3: Direct Effects of Condition and Identity Strength (No Moderation)<br>Child Age Group as Covariate | | | |
| Child age (3-5 vs. 9-11) | .49 | 1.6 | [0.91, 2.97] |
| Child age (3-5 vs. 15-17) | .73* | 2.1 | [0.61, 3.69] |
| Condition | .55* | 1.7 | [1.08, 2.79] |
| Child Identity Strength | .34*** | 1.4 | [1.18, 1.68] |

*Note*. *N* = 318 for all models. Nonracial selection is a variable combining the selection of entertainment and climate videos.

**Figure 4**

*Study 2: Path Models for Selection of Race-Related Videos vs. Nonracial Videos (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos)*

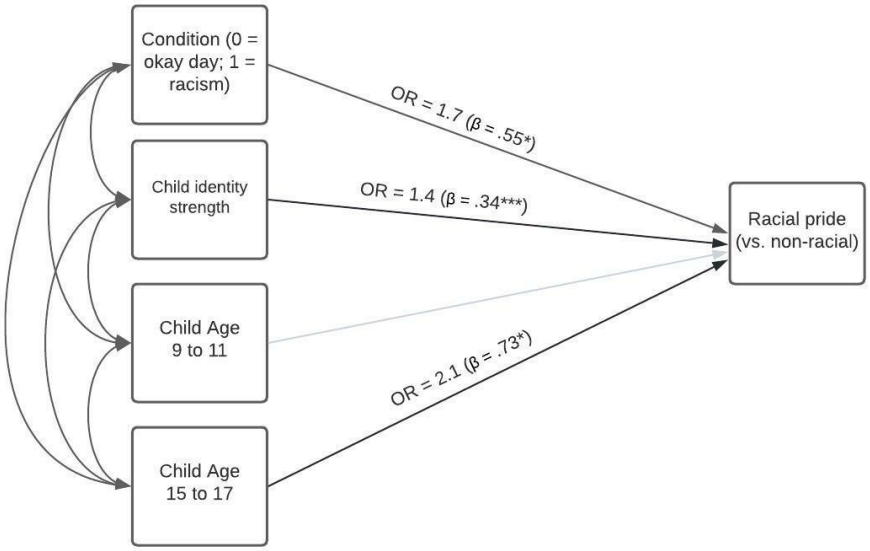



**Figure 4a.** *Selection of Racial Pride Video*

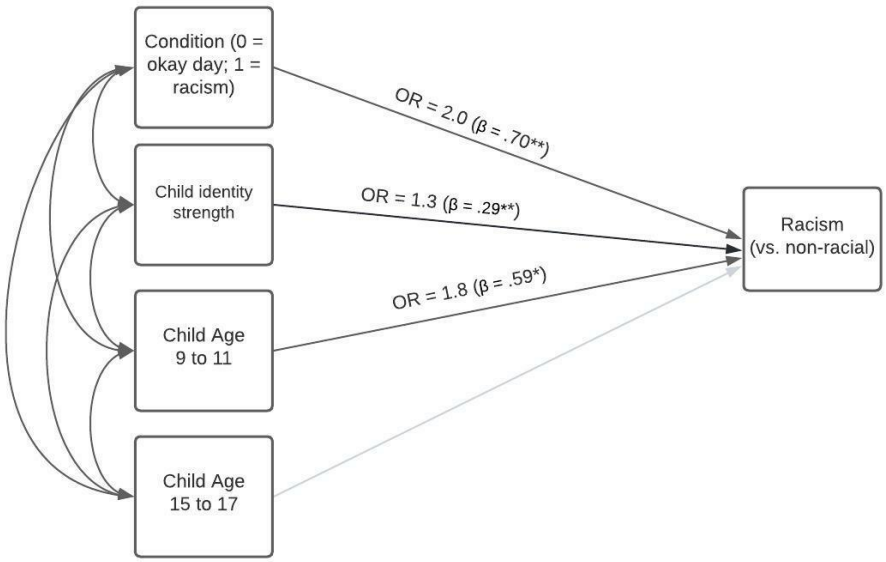



**Figure 4b.** *Selection of Racial Bias Video*

**Table 13**

*Study 2: Fit indices for Models Examining Effects on Racism Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection (H3)*

| | Log Likelihood | BIC |
|---|---|---|
| Model 1: Direct effect of Condition Model<br>Condition → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*) | -205 | 422 |
| Model 2: Moderation with Child Age as Covariate<br>Condition → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Child Age Group 9 to 11 (vs. 3 to 5) → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Child Age 15 to 17 (vs. 3 to 5) → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Child Identity Strength → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Condition x Child Identity Strength → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*) | -195 | 424 |
| Model 3: Child Age and Child ID as Covariates<br>Condition → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Child Identity Strength → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Child Age Group 9 to 11 (vs. 3 to 5) → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*)<br>Child Age Group 15 to 17 (vs. 3 to 5) → Racism (vs. *Nonracial*) | -195 | 419 |
| Model 4: Three Mediations (Child Negative Affect, Parent Negative Affect, & Racial Goals) | -1893 | 3884 |
| Model 5: Two Mediators (Child Negative Affect & Racial Goals) | -1274 | 2622 |
| Model 6: Two Mediators (Parent Negative Affect & Racial Goals) | -1303 | 2680 |
| Model 7: One Mediator (Racial Goals) | -683 | 1418 |

*Note*. *N* = 307 for all models. Model 1 and 3 nested in Model 2; Models 4, 5, 6, and 7 nested in Model 3, allowing various fit comparisons via log likelihood. Every model had the same outcome variable (racial pride selection vs. entertainment and climate) and number of observations, allowing fit comparisons by BIC. Nonracial selection is a variable combining the selection of entertainment and climate videos.

**Table 14**

*Study 2: Direct Effects for Racism Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection (H3)*

| **Direct Effects on Selection**<br>**Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratio** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Model 1: Direct effects of Condition<br>(0 okay day, 1 child racism experience) | 0.59* | 1.8 | [1.13, 2.85] |
| Model 2: Condition x Child Identity Strength<br>Child Age Group as Covariate | | | |
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | 0.59* | 1.8 | [1.01, 3.22] |
| Child Age Group (15-17 vs. 3-5) | 0.49 | 1.6 | [0.91, 2.93] |
| Condition | 1.7 | 5.6 | [0.84, 36.89] |
| Child Identity Strength | 0.39** | 1.5 | [1.17, 1.86] |
| Condition x Child Identity Strength | -0.19 | 0.8 | [0.60, 1.16] |
| Model 3: Direct Effects of Condition and Identity Strength (No Moderation)<br>Child Age Group as Covariate | | | |
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .59* | 1.8 | [1.01, 3.21] |
| Child Age Group (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .46 | 1.6 | [0.89, 2.81] |
| Condition | .70** | 2.0 | [1.25, 3.26] |
| Child Identity Strength | .29** | 1.3 | [1.13, 1.59] |

*Note*. *N* = 307 for all models. Nonracial selection is a variable combining the selection of entertainment and climate videos.

**Table 15**

*Study 2: Direct Effects for Racial Pride Selection vs. Racism Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection**<br>**Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Racism Video (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratio** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | -.00 | 1.0 | [0.59, 1.68] |
| Child Age Group (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .21 | 1.2 | [0.72, 2.13] |
| Condition | -.07 | 0.9 | [0.62, 1.41] |
| Child Identity Strength | .09 | 1.1 | [0.92, 1.29] |

*Note*. *N* = 371.

**Table 16**

*Study 2: Examples of Parents' Open-Ended Goals for Racial Pride Forced Choice Selection*

| Okay Day Condition | Racism Condition |
|---|---|
| ***Parents of 3- to 5- year-olds*** | ***Parents of 3- to 5-year-olds*** |
| "The show would encourage my child to feel good about who he is and encourage him to strive to his fullest potential." | "I want my child to feel proud of who she is and so by watching this show she gets that there are other kids who look just like her." |
| "I would hope that my child understand that people tend to be racist and you can't change that but instead you have to stand up for yourself." | "Lift their spirits but teach them the pride and joy of their own skin." |
| "I would hope that he would not feel isolated but would rather feel empowered and happy about who he is." | "That my child would embrace being Black and cheer up and realize it's nothing wrong with brown skin." |
| ***Parents of 9- to 11-year-olds*** | ***Parents of 9- to 11-year-olds*** |
| "Help her learn to be happy with being Black." | "Aware of racism of the world and not be too affected by it when they fall in a racist situation." |
| "That she is empowered to love herself and everyone else no matter her skin color." | "That my child will understand that his Black his beautiful and don't let no one's evil words bring you down." |
| "I would hope she would be happy and proud to know she isn't alone… she'd feel proud to be Black and happy to hear our young Black kids' experiences." | "To make my child feel relaxed and to see her worth." |
| ***Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds*** | ***Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds*** |
| "They will learn how beautiful and important they are and being Black is great." | "My child will feel proud to be Black and very encouraged to stand up for themselves." |
| "Help him to understand how important he is to his race, and help him to see how much he shines as a young Black man." | "I'm all about showcasing Black excellence and talent. My child and I could probably need some encourage words to remind us both of our greatness as a people or just being one's self." |
| "That my child would be encouraged knowing that others have struggles with being Black and they too can overcome issues such as this. Words can heal and to see other Black people pain those pictures can be affirming to hear and experience." | "He will see that other people have experienced this and how to look over ignorant people." |

**Table 17**

*Study 2: Examples of Parents' Open-Ended Goals for Racism Forced Choice Selection*

| Okay Day Condition | Racism Condition |
|---|---|
| ***Parents of 3- to 5- year-olds*** | ***Parents of 3- to 5- year-olds*** |
| "Would teach my child to be proud of who she is" | "Hopefully it would make them feel better." |
| "Show my child that color don't mean nothing." | "I would hope my child woulnd't be afraid to be her natural self and be proud of her skin" |
| "That they'll be more aware of racism and what's going on around them in the world." | "Learn to accept themselves for who they are and not what other people think." |
| ***Parents of 9- to 11-year-olds*** | ***Parents of 9- to 11-year-olds*** |
| "I would hope that my child will learn to be proud to be African American." | "I think they would feel better about [the] situation that he had expressed." |
| "To see positive results from Blacks that have pulled through racism." | "That she would watch it in part to affirm and reinforce her identity which should help her build enough self-esteem and self-love that she won't be bothered by racism." |
| "That they would be informed that they are not alone, and that others are experiencing these things and how to handle these situations that are still very real, and plague society today." | "He would get the chance to hear others' stories and experiences that are similar to his own. I would hope that he understands that this happens to others and find ways to deal with the situation." |
| ***Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds*** | ***Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds*** |
| "They learn about race and loving themselves." | "As sad as it is, he would see that he isn't the only one that has had to navigate such behaviors. So he would realize he is not alone when facing bigotry and hate." |
| "They get inspired to follow their dreams." | "Because this is the situation my child had to deal with and I would like her to see how other people just like her had to deal with it." |
| "I think my child would learn something positive and learn how to react to the situation." | "That he would have heard something positive about being Black, to help him the next time this situation occurred." |

**Table 18**

*Study 2: Generalized Linear Mixed Model Fit Indices for Models Examining Encouragement Ratings of Non-Entertainment Content (vs. Entertainment) (H4a)*

| Model | Log Likelihood | BIC | Residual Variance | Subject Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model 0<br>"Empty" (No Fixed Effect Predictors; Only Intercept) | 7978 | 7993 | 2.76 | .56 |
| Model 1<br>1 Fixed Effect Predictor:<br><br>Repeated Measures Index of Content Type (1 = non-entertainment, 2 = entertainment) | 7956 | 7971 | 2.72 | .57 |
| Model 2<br>2 Fixed Effects Predictors:<br><br>Repeated Measures of Content Type (1 = non-entertainment, 2 = entertainment)<br><br>Condition | 7958 | 7973 | 2.72 | .57 |
| Model 3<br>3 Fixed Effects Predictors:<br><br>Repeated Measures of Content Type (1 = non-entertainment, 2 = entertainment)<br><br>Condition<br><br>RM Measure x Condition | 7958 | 7973 | 2.72 | .57 |

*Note.* Models 0 – 2 are nested in Model 3. The non-entertainment variable is a combined variable of ratings of the racial pride, racism, and climate videos.

**Table 19**

*Study 2: Generalized Linear Mixed Model Fixed Effects Estimates of Encouragement Ratings of Non-Entertainment Content (vs. Entertainment) (H4a)*

| | β | SE | *t* | *P* | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Model Term** | | | | | |
| Intercept | 5.11 | .13 | 40.47 | <.001 | [4.86, 5.35] |
| Non-Entertainment Videos | .53 | .12 | 4.28 | <.001 | [0.29, 0.77] |
| Entertainment Videos | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Okay day condition | .07 | .17 | .381 | .703 | [-.27, .40] |
| Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Non-Entertainment*Okay day condition | -.20 | .17 | -1.14 | .253 | [-.53, .14] |
| Non-Entertainment*Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Entertainment*Okay day condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Entertainment*Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

*Note*. *N* = 1992. Comparisons by video type are to the reference category of entertainment. Dashed line represents reference category.
Main effect of repeated measures index (i.e., 1 to 2 for category of video; 2 = entertainment reference category): $F$ (1, 1988) = 9.50, $p$ = <.001.
Main effect of condition: $F$ (1, 1988) = 0.08, $p$ = .772
Main effect of repeated measures index by condition: $F$ (1, 1988) = 1.31, $p$ = .253.

**Table 20**

*Study 2: Generalized Linear Mixed Model Fit Indices for Models Examining Encouragement Ratings of Racial Pride, Racism, and Climate Content (vs. Entertainment) (H4b)*

| Model | Log Likelihood | BIC | Residual Variance | Subject Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model 0<br>"Empty" (No Fixed Effects Predictors; Only Intercept) | 7978 | 7993 | 2.76 | .56 |
| Model 1<br>1 Fixed Effect Predictor:<br><br>Repeated Measures of Content Type (1 = climate, 2 = racism, 3 = racial pride, 4 = entertainment) | 7718 | 7733 | 2.31 | .68 |
| Model 2<br>2 Fixed Effects Predictors:<br><br>Repeated Measures of Content Type (1 = climate, 2 = racism, 3 = racial pride, 4 = entertainment)<br><br>Condition | 7667 | 7735 | 2.31 | .68 |
| Model 3<br>3 Fixed Effects Predictors:<br><br>Repeated Measures of Content Type (1 = climate, 2 = racism, 3 = racial pride, 4 = entertainment)<br><br>Condition<br><br>RM Measure x Condition | 7675 | 7735 | 2.31 | .68 |

*Note.* Models 0 – 2 are nested in Model 3.

**Table 21**

*Study 2: Generalized Linear Mixed Model Fixed Effects Estimates of Encouragement Ratings of Racial Pride, Racism, and Climate Change (vs. Entertainment) (H4b)*

| | **β** | **SE** | ***t*** | ***P*** | ***95% CI*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Model Term** | | | | | |
| Intercept | 5.11 | .13 | 40.47 | <.001 | [4.86, 5.35] |
| Climate Video | -.45 | .14 | -3.23 | .001 | [-.73, -.18] |
| Racism Video | .85 | .16 | 5.34 | <.001 | [.54, 1.17] |
| Racial pride video | 1.19 | .14 | 8.6 | <.001 | [.92, 1.46] |
| Entertainment video | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Okay day condition | .07 | .17 | .38 | .70 | [-.27, .40] |
| Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Climate*Okay day condition | -.01 | .20 | -.07 | .95 | [-.41, .38] |
| Climate*Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Racism*Okay day condition | -.23 | .21 | -1.09 | .28 | [-.65, .19] |
| Racism*Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Racial Pride*Okay day condition | -.34 | .19 | -1.82 | .07 | [-.71, .03] |
| Racial Pride*Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Entertainment*Okay day condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Entertainment*Racism condition | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

*Note*. *N* = 1992. Comparisons by video type are to the reference category of entertainment. Dashed line represents reference category.
Main effect of repeated measures index (i.e., 1 to 4 for category of video; 4 = entertainment reference category): $F$ (7, 1984) = 83.36, $p$ = <.001.
Main effect of condition: $F$ (1, 1984) = 0.66, $p$ = .416.
Main effect of repeated measures index by condition: $F$ (3, 1984) = 1.49, $p$ = .216.

**Figure 5**

*Study 2: Encouragement Ratings by Perceived Child Identity Strength*

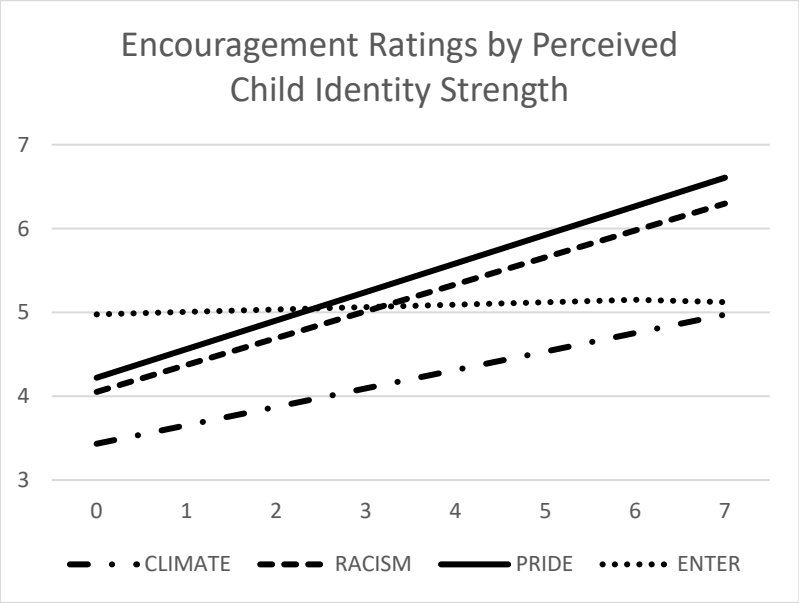


**Table 22**

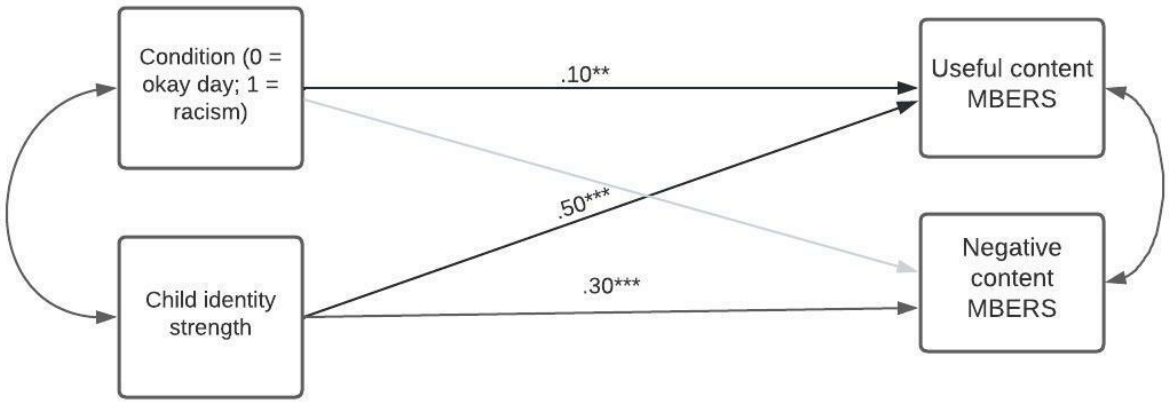
*Study 2: Fit Indices and Direct Effects for Models Examining MBERS Intentions (H5 and H6)*

| | Log Likelihood | BIC | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Model 1: Direct Effect of Condition** | -1695 | 3433 | |
| Condition →MBERS Useful content | | | |
| Condition →MBERS Negative Content | | | |
| **Model 2: Condition x Child Identity Strength** | -1620 | 3309 | |
| Condition →MBERS Useful Content | | | |
| Condition →MBERS Negative Content | | | |
| Child Identity Strength →MBERS Useful | | | |
| Content | | | |
| Child Identity Strength →MBERS Negative | | | |
| Content | | | |
| Condition x Child Identity Strength →MBERS | | | |
| Useful Content | | | |
| Condition x Child Identity Strength →MBERS | | | |
| Negative Content | | | |
| **Model 3: Direct Effects of Condition and Identity Strength (No Moderation)** | -1623 | 3301 | |
| Condition →MBERS Useful Content | | | |
| Condition →MBERS Negative Content | | | |
| Child Identity Strength → MBERS Useful | | | |
| Content | | | |
| Child Identity Strength → Negative Content | | | |
| **Path Estimates** | β | ***P*** | **95% CI** |
| Model 3: Direct Effects of Condition and Identity Strength (No Moderation) | | | |
| Condition →MBERS Useful Content | .10 | <.01 | [.08, .50] |
| Child Identity Strength → MBERS Useful Content | .50 | <.001 | [.39, .61] |
| Condition →MBERS Negative Content | .01 | .784 | [-.21, .28] |
| Child Identity Strength → MBERS Negative | .30 | <.001 | [.22, .42] |

*Note*. *N* = 498.

**Figure 6**

*Study 2: Path Diagram of MBERS Model 3*



# Appendix A

Study 2 Pre-Test (Pilot Test) Measures and Findings

**Table A1**

*Pre-Test Vignettes by Child Age*

| **Younger Child Vignette - Racism (Parents of 3- to 5 and 9- to 11-year-olds)** | **Younger Child Vignette – Okay Day (Parents of 3- to 5 and 9- to 11-year-olds)** |
|---|---|
| "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your kid how their day was, and they start tearing up. You ask what's wrong, and your kid says: 'Alex and the other kids were playing. Alex was making fun of me because my skin is brown. Your kid clearly feels upset.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your kid says: 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" | Imagine your old kid just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your kid how their day was, and they smile. It seems like it was a normal day. Your kid says, 'Alex and the other kids were playing. Alex asked me to join and played with me.' Your kid clearly feels content.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your kid says: 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" |
| **Older Child Vignette - Racism (Parents of 9- to 11 and 15- to 17-year-olds)** | **Older Child Vignette – Okay Day (Parents of 9- to 11 and 15- to 17-year-olds)** |
| "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your kid how their day was, and they wipe away a tear. You ask what's wrong, and your kid says: 'Alex and the others were texting. I saw that Alex was making fun of me because I'm Black.' Your kid clearly feels upset.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your kid says: 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" | "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your kid how their day was, and they smile. It seems like it was a normal day. Your kid says: 'Alex and the others were texting. Alex asked me to join the group text and added me.' Your kid clearly feels content.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your kid says: 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" |

**Table A2**

*Pre-test and Study 1a Video Stimuli*

| | Type of Content | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Happy Race-Related (Racial Pride) | Mixed-Valence Race-Related (Racism) | Happy -Unrelated (Entertainment) | Mixed Valence-Unrelated (Climate Problems) |
| Age of Child | | | | |
| 3 to 5 | *We Are the Dream: The Kids of the Oakland MLK Oratorical Fest* (available on HBO) Edited trailer | *Bookmarks: Celebrating Black Voices* (available on Netflix) Edited episode | *Peppa Pig* (available on Nick Jr.) Edited episode | *Save the Arctic by Bethany Stahl (Children's Animated Audiobook)* (available on YouTube) |
| | *Bookmarks: Celebrating Black Voices* (available on Netflix) Edited trailer | *Power of We: A Sesame Street Special* (available on Sesame Workshop) Edited clip | *Bluey* (available on Disney+ and Disney Jr+) Edited trailer | *National Geographic Kids* (available on YouTube) Edited episode |
| 9 to 11 | We Are the Dream: The Kids of the Oakland MLK Oratorical Fest (available on HBO) Edited trailer | *Kids, Race and Unity: A Nick News Special* (available on Nickelodeon) Edited clip of tween racism recount | *The Amazing World of Gumball* (available on Cartoon Network) Edited trailer | *Planet Earth Cut 1* (available on YouTube) Edited episode |
| | *Combined YouTube Clips Cut 2 labeled "Voices of Fire"* (clips available on YouTube) Edited clips | *Kids, Race and Unity: A Nick News Special* (available on Nickelodeon) Edited clip of teen racism recount | *Cupcake and Dino* (available on Netflix) Edited trailer | *Planet Earth C*ut 2 (available on YouTube) Edited episode |
| 15 to 17 | *Combined YouTube Clips Cut 1 labeled "Voices of Fire"* (clips available on YouTube) Edited clips | *Kids, Race and Unity: A Nick News Special* (available on Nickelodeon) Edited clip of tween racism recount | *Adventure Time* (available on Cartoon Network) Edited trailer | *Planet Earth Cut 1* (available on YouTube) Edited episode |
| | *Combined YouTube Clips Cut 2 labeled "Voices of Fire"* (clips available on YouTube) | *Kids, Race and Unity: A Nick News Special* (Nickelodeon) Edited clip of teen racism recount | *Bob's Burgers* (available on Fox) Edited trailer | *Planet Earth C*ut 2 (available on YouTube) Edited episode |

**Table A3**

*Pre-Test Ratings of Vignette, Child Affective Response, and Parent Affective Response*

| | 3-5 Playing Vignette | 9-11 Playing Vignette | 9-11 Texting Vignette | 15-17 Texting Vignette |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Ratings of perceptions* | | | | |
| Plausibility | 5.4 (1.5) | 5.6 (1.3) | 5.8 (1.8) | 6.2 (1.1) |
| Frequency of happening to own child | 1.7 (1.1) | 2.5 (1.2) | 2.5 (1.8) | 2.7 (0.9) |
| *Ratings of likely child affective responses* | | | | |
| Happy | 2.2 (2.1) | 1.8 (1.5) | 2.5 (2.1) | 2.1 (1.8) |
| Cheerful | 2.5 (2.5) | 1.8 (1.5) | 2.1 (2.1) | 1.8 (1.8) |
| Sadness | 5.5 (2.2) | 6.3 (1.4) | 5.1 (2.6) | 5.2 (1.5) |
| Gloominess | 4.6 (2.5) | 5.6 (2.1) | 4.5 (2.7) | 4.8 (1.8) |
| Fright | 4.2 (2.3) | 4.8 (2.2) | 3.8 (2.5) | 3.8 (1.7) |
| Disturbed | 5.2 (1.9) | 6.0 (1.7) | 6.0 (1.6) | 4.8 (1.8) |
| Worried | 5.3 (1.9) | 4.8 (2.1) | 4.8 (2.6) | 4.3 (1.8) |
| Concerned | 5.9 (1.1) | 5.5 (1.8) | 5.9 (2.0) | 4.8 (1.7) |
| *Ratings of likely parent affective responses* | | | | |
| Frightened | 4.3 (2.3) | 4.8 (2.1) | 2.8 (2.2) | 2.9 (2.2) |
| Disturbed | 5.6 (2.0) | 6.4 (1.8) | 5.8 (2.2) | 5.5 (1.9) |
| Worried | 5.8 (2.0) | 6.4 (0.7) | 4.7 (2.6) | 4.9 (2.2) |
| Concerned | 6.2 (1.3) | 7.0 (0.0) | 6.6 (1.1) | 5.7 (2.1) |

**Table A4a**

*Ratings of 3- to 5-Year-Old Trailers, Set A*

| **Semantic Affinity** | **Yes (Racial Pride)** | **Yes (Racism)** | **No (Entertainment)** | **No (Climate)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valence** | **Happy** | **Mixed** | **Happy** | **Mixed** |
| *Overall* | | | | |
| Age appropriateness | 5.6 (1.9) | 6.1 (1.3) | 6.6 (0.7) | 6.0 (1.7) |
| Engaging/Interesting | 5.8 (1.6) | 5.7 (1.8) | 6.3 (1.2) | 5.8 (1.8) |
| Ingroup representation | 6.3 (1.3) | 6.5 (1.0) | 2.1 (2.1) | 2.8 (2.7) |
| *Valence perceptions* | | | | |
| Happy composite | 6.5 (.9) | 4.7 (1.9) | 6.2 (1.3) | 4.7 (2.0) |
| Sad composite | 1.4 (1.0) | 4.8 (1.8) | 1.4 (.82) | 3.5 (2.4) |
| *Focus* | | | | |
| Racial pride composite | 6.4 (1.1) | 5.8 (1.4) | 1.7 (1.3) | 2.4 (2.1) |
| Feeling good about being Black | 6.62 (.8) | 5.5 (2.2) | 1.8 (1.8) | 2.4 (2.1) |
| Explicit racial pride messages | 6.1 (1.7) | 6.2 (1.4) | 1.6 (1.3) | 2.4 (2.2) |
| Racism composite | 5.4 (2.0) | 5.8 (1.4) | 1.8 (1.4) | 2.1 (2.0) |
| Youth racism experiences | 5.0 (2.4) | 6.4 (1.3) | 1.9 (1.8) | 2.12 (2.1) |
| Explicit discussion of racism | 5.8 (1.8) | 5.25 (2.1) | 1.6 (1.4) | 2.1 (2.0) |
| *Gratifications* | | | | |
| Happy | 6.1 (1.5) | 4.8 (1.9) | 6.2 (1.4) | 4.3 (2.4) |
| Engaged | 6.0 (1.5) | 5.5 (1.6) | 6.2 (1.1) | 5.3 (2.1) |
| Self-pride | 6.5 (1.2) | 5.9 (1.2) | 3.3 (1.9) | 3.4 (2.2) |
| Less alone | 6.5 (1.3) | 6.1 (1.1) | 3.3 (2.6) | 3.6 (2.7) |
| Cope | 5.8 (1.8) | 5.4 (2.1) | 2.63 (2.2) | 3.2 (2.5) |
| Message want kid to know | 6.31 (1.1) | 6.31 (1.2) | 4.94 (2.1) | 4.81 (2.0) |

**Table A4b**

*Ratings of 3- to 5-Year-Old Trailers, Set A*

| **Semantic Affinity** | **Yes (Racial Pride)** | **Yes (Racism)** | **No (Entertainment)** | **No (Climate)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valence** | **Happy** | **Mixed** | **Happy** | **Mixed** |
| *Overall* | | | | |
| Age appropriateness | 5.6 (1.9) | 6.1 (1.3) | 6.6 (0.7) | 6.0 (1.7) |
| Engaging/Interesting | 5.8 (1.6) | 5.7 (1.8) | 6.3 (1.2) | 5.8 (1.8) |
| Ingroup representation | 6.3 (1.3) | 6.5 (1.0) | 2.1 (2.1) | 2.8 (2.7) |
| *Valence perceptions* | | | | |
| Happy composite | 6.5 (.9) | 4.7 (1.9) | 6.2 (1.3) | 4.7 (2.0) |
| Sad composite | 1.4 (1.0) | 4.8 (1.8) | 1.4 (.82) | 3.5 (2.4) |
| *Focus* | | | | |
| Racial pride composite | 6.4 (1.1) | 5.8 (1.4) | 1.7 (1.3) | 2.4 (2.1) |
| Feeling good about being Black | 6.62 (.8) | 5.5 (2.2) | 1.8 (1.8) | 2.4 (2.1) |
| Explicit racial pride messages | 6.1 (1.7) | 6.2 (1.4) | 1.6 (1.3) | 2.4 (2.2) |
| Racism composite | 5.4 (2.0) | 5.8 (1.4) | 1.8 (1.4) | 2.1 (2.0) |
| Youth racism experiences | 5.0 (2.4) | 6.4 (1.3) | 1.9 (1.8) | 2.12 (2.1) |
| Explicit discussion of racism | 5.8 (1.8) | 5.25 (2.1) | 1.6 (1.4) | 2.1 (2.0) |
| *Gratifications* | | | | |
| Happy | 6.06 (1.5) | 4.8 (1.9) | 6.19 (1.4) | 4.25 (2.4) |
| Engaged | 6.0 (1.5) | 5.5 (1.6) | 6.19 (1.1) | 5.31 (2.1) |
| Self-pride | 6.5 (1.2) | 5.9 (1.2) | 3.3 (1.9) | 3.4 (2.2) |
| Less alone | 6.5 (1.3) | 6.1 (1.1) | 3.3 (2.6) | 3.6 (2.7) |
| Cope | 5.8 (1.8) | 5.4 (2.1) | 2.63 (2.2) | 3.2 (2.5) |
| Message want kid to know | 6.31 (1.1) | 6.31 (1.2) | 4.94 (2.1) | 4.81 (2.0) |

**Table A4c**

*Ratings of 3- to 5-Year-Old Trailers, Set B*

| **Semantic Affinity** | **Yes (Racial Pride)** | **Yes (Racism)** | **No (Entertainment)** | **No (Climate)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valence** | **Happy** | **Mixed** | **Happy** | **Mixed** |
| *Overall* | | | | |
| Age appropriateness | 5.9 (1.7) | 5.6 (1.3) | 6.6 (0.6) | 5.8 (1.4) |
| Engaging/Interesting | 5.8 (1.7) | 5.0 (1.8) | 6.1 (1.2) | 5.0 (1.9) |
| Ingroup rep. | 6.3 (1.1) | 5.7 (1.4) | 3.1 (2.3) | 2.8 (2.0) |
| *Valence perceptions* | | | | |
| Happy composite | 5.1 (1.4) | 3.5 (2.1) | 6.5 (0.8) | 4.0 (1.8) |
| Sad composite | 2.3 (2.0) | 4.5 (2.3) | 1.8 (1.4) | 3.6 (2.1) |
| *Focus* | | | | |
| Racial pride composite | 6.0 (1.8) | 3.3 (1.8) | 2.6 (2.5) | 2.3 (2.1) |
| Feeling good about being Black | 6.0 (1.8) | 3.2 (2.1) | 2.6 (2.5) | 2.5 (2.3) |
| Explicit racial pride messages | 5.9 (1.9) | 3.4 (2.1) | 2.6 (2.4) | 2.2 (1.9) |
| Racism composite | 4.3 (2.4) | 5.4 (1.6) | 2.3 (2.2) | 2.0 (1.8) |
| Youth racism experiences | 4.4 (2.5) | 6.1 (1.4) | 2.4 (1.4) | 2.0 (1.8) |
| Explicit discussion of racism | 4.3 (2.4) | 4.8 (2.4) | 2.3 (2.1) | 2.0 (1.9) |
| *Gratifications* | | | | |
| Happy | 5.4 (1.8) | 2.9 (2.0) | 6.3 (2.4) | 3.5 (2.2) |
| Engaged | 5.1 (1.7) | 4.1 (1.7) | 6.4 (2.3) | 4.7 (1.9) |
| Self-pride | 5.7 (1.5) | 3.8 (2.0) | 3.8 (2.5) | 3.1 (2.1) |
| Less alone | 5.1 (2.4) | 4.8 (2.0) | 2.8 (2.7) | 3.0 (2.5) |
| Cope | 5.2 (1.9) | 4.0 (2.2) | 2.9 (2.8) | 2.1 (2.0) |
| Message want kid to know | 6.0 (1.5) | 4.8 (2.1) | 4.6 (2.1) | 4.2 (1.8) |

**Table A4d**

*Ratings of 9- to 11-Year-Old Trailers, Set A*

| **Semantic Affinity** | **Yes (Racial Pride)** | **Yes (Racism)** | **No (Entertainment)** | **No (Climate)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valence** | **Happy** | **Mixed** | **Happy** | **Mixed** |
| *Overall* | | | | |
| Age appropriateness | 6.4 (1.1) | 6.6 (0.7) | 6.5 (0.9) | 6.1 (1.2) |
| Engaging/Interesting | 6.6 (0.6) | 6.5 (0.9) | 6.1 (1.6) | 6.1 (1.5) |
| Ingroup representation | 6.7 (0.6) | 6.6 (0.8) | 3.4 (2.7) | 4.1 (2.6) |
| *Valence perceptions* | | | | |
| Happy composite | 6.6 (0.7) | 4.7 (2.0) | 6.6 (0.7) | 4.5 (2.4) |
| Sad composite | 1.5 (1.1) | 4.4 (2.2) | 1.7 (1.8) | 4.0 (2.7) |
| *Focus* | | | | |
| Racial pride composite | 6.4 (1.0) | 5.9 (1.3) | 3.2 (2.6) | 3.4 (2.7) |
| Feeling good about being Black | 6.3 (1.2) | 6.0 (1.5) | 3.5 (2.8) | 3.5 (2.8) |
| Explicit racial pride messages | 6.5 (0.9) | 5.8 (1.5) | 2.9 (2.5) | 3.3 (2.7) |
| Racism composite | 4.4 (2.5) | 6.3 (1.3) | 2.7 (2.5) | 3.4 (2.8) |
| Youth racism experiences | 4.3 (2.6) | 6.6 (1.1) | 2.5 (2.5) | 3.4 (2.9) |
| Explicit discussion of racism | 4.5 (2.8) | 5.9 (1.8) | 2.9 (2.7) | 3.3 (2.8) |
| *Gratifications* | | | | |
| Happy | 6.6 (1.1) | 5.6 (1.2) | 6.2 (1.5) | 4.9 (2.3) |
| Engaged | 6.4 (1.1) | 6.0 (1.2) | 5.9 (1.7) | 6.3 (1.2) |
| Self-pride | 6.4 (1.2) | 6.3 (1.0) | 4.5 (2.4) | 3.8 (2.5) |
| Less alone | 6.0 (2.1) | 5.9 (1.4) | 3.1 (2.5) | 3.4 (2.8) |
| Cope | 6.4 (1.5) | 6.4 (.8) | 3.0 (2.6) | 3.4 (2.6) |
| Message want kid to know | 6.3 (1.1) | 6.5 (1.1) | 5.3 (2.0) | 5.7 (1.5) |

**Table A4e**

*Ratings of 15- to 17-Year-Old Trailers, Set A*

| **Semantic Affinity** | **Yes (Racial Pride)** | **Yes (Racism)** | **No (distracting)** | **No (climate)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valence** | **Happy** | **Mixed** | **Happy** | **Mixed** |
| *Overall* | | | | |
| Age appropriateness | 6.8 (0.6) | 6.4 (1.5) | 5.6 (2.4) | 6.6 (0.6) |
| Engaging/Interesting | 6.5 (0.9) | 6.3 (1.5) | 5.3 (2.6) | 6.4 (1.3) |
| Ingroup representation | 6.6 (1.0) | 6.9 (0.3) | 2.6 (2.3) | 2.9 (2.2) |
| *Valence perceptions* | | | | |
| Happy composite | 6.3 (1.0) | 3.9 (2.3) | 6.6 (0.7) | 3.4 (2.2) |
| Sad composite | 2.1 (1.9) | 5.1 (2.1) | 1.8 (1.7) | 5.3 (2.3) |
| *Focus* | | | | |
| Racial pride composite | 6.3 (1.3) | 5.2 (2.1) | 2.6 (2.3) | 2.7 (2.3) |
| Feeling good about being Black | 6.3 (1.4) | 5.1 (2.3) | 2.7 (2.4) | 3.1 (2.8) |
| Explicit racial pride messages | 6.3 (1.4) | 5.4 (2.1) | 2.3 (2.2) | 2.3 (2.1) |
| Racism composite | 4.2 (2.0) | 6.0 (1.3) | 2.1 (2.1) | 2.3 (2.2) |
| Youth racism experiences | 4.4 (2.4) | 6.6 (0.6) | 2.2 (2.3) | 2.3 (2.3) |
| Explicit discussion of racism | 4.1 (2.4) | 5.4 (2.1) | 4.1 (2.4) | 2.3 (2.2) |
| *Gratifications* | | | | |
| Happy | 6.6 (0.9) | 4.4 (2.3) | 5.6 (2.0) | 3.5 (2.5) |
| Engaged | 6.4 (1.5) | 5.8 (1.4) | 5.3 (2.3) | 5.5 (2.1) |
| Self-pride | 6.5 (1.4) | 5.3 (2.0) | 4.4 (2.3) | 3.9 (2.0) |
| Less alone | 6.3 (1.2) | 6.7 (0.5) | 3.4 (2.6) | 2.9 (2.3) |
| Cope | 5.8 (2.1) | 6.5 (1.7) | 3.3 (2.7) | 2.9 (2.6) |
| Message want kid to know | 6.6 (1.0) | 6.4 (1.6) | 4.7 (2.4) | 6.1 (1.6) |

**Table A4f**

*Ratings of 15- to 17-Year-Old Trailers, Set B*

| **Semantic Affinity** | **Yes (Racial Pride)** | **Yes (Racism)** | **No (distracting)** | **No** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valence** | **Happy** | **Mixed** | **Happy** | **Mixed** |
| *Overall* | | | | |
| Age appropriateness | 6.4 (0.8) | 6.4 (0.7) | 5.9 (1.1) | 6.25 (0.9) |
| Engaging/Interesting | 6.3 (0.8) | 5.7 (0.9) | 5.4 (1.8) | 5.1 (1.6) |
| Ingroup representation | 6.6 (0.7) | 6.6 (0.6) | 4.4 (2.3) | 3.6 (2.4) |
| *Valence* | | | | |
| Happy composite | 6.4 (0.7) | 4.2 (2.3) | 5.9 (1.3) | 4.3 (2.3) |
| Sad composite | 2.0 (1.8) | 3.4 (2.0) | 2.2 (1.8) | 3.8 (2.4) |
| *Focus* | | | | |
| Racial pride composite | 6.4 (0.7) | 5.4 (1.4) | 3.7 (2.6) | 3.5 (2.7) |
| Feeling good about being Black | 6.5 (0.6) | 5.6 (1.5) | 4.0 (2.8) | 3.4 (2.6) |
| Explicit racial pride messages | 6.3 (0.9) | 5.2 (1.9) | 3.4 (2.6) | 3.5 (2.7) |
| Racism composite | 4.8 (2.2) | 6.2 (0.8) | 3.0 (2.4) | 3.4 (2.5) |
| Youth racism experiences | 4.6 (2.6) | 6.4 (0.8) | 2.9 (2.4) | 3.5 (2.6) |
| Explicit discussion of racism | 5.0 (2.2) | 6.1 (0.9) | 3.1 (2.4) | 3.1 (2.4) |
| *Gratifications* | | | | |
| Happy | 6.1 (1.1) | 4.7 (2.2) | 5.6 (1.1) | 5.6 (1.1) |
| Engaged | 6.1 (1.0) | 5.3 (1.7) | 5.6 (1.5) | 4.3 (2.3) |
| Self-pride | 6.5 (0.7) | 5.3 (1.3) | 4.5 (2.3) | 3.8 (2.7) |
| Less alone | 6.4 (0.7) | 5.9 (1.1) | 3.7 (2.5) | 3.6 (2.5) |
| Cope | 5.8 (1.8) | 5.8 (1.0) | 3.3 (2.8) | 3.4 (2.4) |
| Message want kid to know | 6.8 (0.5) | 6.4 (1.0) | 5.3 (1.5) | 5.0 (2.3) |

# Appendix B

Study 2 Measures

**Table B1**

*Study 2 Vignettes*

| **Younger Child Vignette - Racism (Parents of 3- to 5 and 9- to 11-year-olds)** | **Younger Child Vignette – Okay Day (Parents of 3- to 5 and 9- to 11-year-olds)** |
|---|---|
| "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your child how their day was, and they start getting teary-eyed. You ask what's wrong, and your child says, Alex and the other kids were playing. Alex was making fun of me because my skin is brown.<br><br>Your child clearly feels upset.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your child says: 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" | "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your child how their day was, and they smile. It seems like it was a normal day. Your child says, Alex and the other kids were playing. Alex asked me to join and played with me.<br><br>Your kid clearly feels content.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your kid says: Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" |
| **Older Child Vignette - Racism (Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds)** | **Older Child Vignette – Okay Day (Parents of 15- to 17-year-olds)** |
| "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your kid how their day was, and they start getting teary-eyed. You ask what's wrong, and your child says, 'Alex and the others were texting. I saw that Alex was making fun of me because I'm Black.'<br><br>Your kid clearly feels upset.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your child says, 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" | "Imagine your child just got home for the day.<br><br>You ask your child how their day was, and they smile. It seems like it was a normal day. Your child says, 'Alex and the others were texting. Alex asked me to join the group text and added me.'<br><br>Your kid clearly feels content.<br><br>When you ask more about their day, your kid says: 'Can we talk about this later? I just want to watch a show.'" |

**Table B2**

*Racial Goals Measure*

| Variables |
| --- |
| *Think about the [forced choice] show you picked above. How much do you agree with the following? I picked this show because I would want my child to…* |
| Feel good about who they are |
| Feel good about being Black |
| Learn how to cope with racism |
| Learn about racism |
| Learn something important |
| Learn something interesting |
| Feel less alone because of their racial identity or racial experiences |
| Feel less isolated because of their racial identity or experiences |

**Table B3**

*Perceived Child and Parental Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength Scale (Modified from Phinney and Ong, 2007, MEIM-R)*

| Variables |
|---|
| ***Perceived Child Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength*** |
| *What's your best sense of your child's racial/ethnic identity? How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child?*<br>*Your child…* |
| Has a strong sense of being a member of their racial group(s) |
| Understands pretty well what being Black means to them |
| Feels a strong attachment towards their racial/ethnic group(s) |
| ***Parental Ethnic-Racial Identity Strength*** |
| *Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.* |
| I have a strong sense of belonging to my own racial/ethnic group(s) |
| I understand pretty well what my racial/ethnic group membership(s) means to me |
| I feel a strong attachment towards my own racial/ethnic group(s) |

*Note*. Items modified from Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *54*(3), 271-281. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.271

**Table B4**

*MBERS Around Useful Content and MBERS Around Negative Content Measures*

| Variables |
|---|
| ***MBERS Around Negative Content*** |
| *Over the next several days, how likely would you be to use media to:* |
| *(1 not at all, 7 very)* |
| Encourage your child to see/hear media with positive portrayals of African Americans |
| Discuss inspiring African American characters/people in media content with your child |
| Encourage your child to see/hear content that shows ways of dealing with racial bias |
| Discuss ways your child should handle types of racial bias |
| ***MBERS Around Negative Content*** |
| *Over the next several days, how likely would you be to use media to:* |
| *(1 not at all, 7 very)* |
| Point out when there are negative Black stereotypes |
| Critique depictions of negative Black stereotypes |
| Discourage my child from consuming content with negative Black stereotypes |
| Discourage my child from consuming content with no Black characters/people |

# Appendix C

Additional Analyses of Model Fit and Results

**Table C1**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for Three-Mediator (Child Negative Affect, Parent Negative Affect, and Racial Goals) Model for Racial Pride Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .69* | 2.00 | [1.05, 3.79] |
| Child Age Group (15 to 17 vs. 3-5) | .96** | 2.61 | [1.36, 5.02] |
| Condition | .21 | 1.05 | [0.85, 1.30] |
| Child Identity Strength | .05 | 1.05 | [0.85, 1.30] |
| Child Negative Affect | -.00 | 1.00 | [0.79, 1.25] |
| Parent Negative Affect | .13 | 1.15 | [0.94, 1.41] |
| Racial Goals | .49*** | 2.25 | [1.66, 3.05] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | SE | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Racial goals | .33* | .13 | [.10, 2.10] |
| Indirect Effect via Child Negative Affect | -.00 | .17 | [-.36, .31] |
| Indirect Effect via Parent Negative Affect | .15 | .13 | [-.06, .44] |
| **Total Effect** | .68* | .31 | [.07, 1.27] |

*Note*. *N* = 318 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C2**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for Two-Mediator (Child Negative Affect and Racial Goals) Model for Racial Pride Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .70 | 2.02 | [1.03, 3.99] |
| Child Age Group (15 to 17 vs. 3-5) | .97 | 2.64 | [1.32, 5.23] |
| Condition | .22 | 1.23 | [.82, 1.29] |
| Child Identity Strength | .02 | 1.03 | [0.82, 1.29] |
| Child Negative Affect | .09 | 1.11 | [.94, 1.30] |
| Racial Goals | .50 | 2.29 | [1.69, 3.14] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .33* | .14 | [0.10, 0.63] |
| Indirect Effect via Child Negative Affect | .14 | .11 | [-.08, 0.375] |
| **Total Effect** | .69* | .31 | [.09, 1.28] |

*Note*. *N* = 318 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C3**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for Two-Mediator (Parent Negative Affect and Racial Goals) Model for Racial Pride Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .69 | 2.00 | [1.05, 3.79] |
| Child Age Group (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .96 | 2.61 | [1.36, 5.02] |
| Condition | .21 | 1.23 | [.73, 2.10] |
| Child Identity Strength | .03 | 1.05 | [0.85, 1.29] |
| Parent Negative Affect | .13 | 1.15 | [1.00, 1.32] |
| Racial Goals | .49 | 2.25 | [1.66, 3.05] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Parent Negative Affect | .14 | .09 | [.00, .35] |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .33* | 1.33 | [.10, .62] |
| **Total Effect** | .68 | .31 | [.07, 1.27] |

*Note*. *N* = 318 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C4**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for One-Mediator (Racial Goals) Model for Racial Pride Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .73 | 2.07 | [1.09, 3.92] |
| Child Age (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .99 | 2.70 | [1.40, 5.20] |
| Condition | .34 | 1.40 | [.84, 1.29] |
| Child Identity Strength | .03 | 1.04 | [.84, 1.29] |
| Racial goals | .50*** | 2.30 | [1.70, 3.10] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .33* | .13 | [.10, .63] |
| **Total Effect** | .67* | .30 | [.08, 1.25] |

*Note*. *N* = 318 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C5**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for Three-Mediator (Child Negative Affect, Parent Negative Affect, and Racial Goals) Model for Racism Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .17* | 2.24 | [1.18, 4.26] |
| Child Age (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .13* | 1.91 | [1.0, 3.66] |
| Condition | .50 | 1.64 | [.93, 2.9] |
| Child Identity Strength | -.00 | 0.99 | [.81, 1.23] |
| Child Negative Affect | -.08 | 0.90 | [.70, 1.16] |
| Parent Negative Affect | .18 | 1.23 | [.98, 1.53] |
| Racial Goals | .51*** | 2.41 | [1.80, 3.23] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Child Negative Affect | -.13 | 0.17 | [-.49, .19] |
| Indirect Effect via Parent Negative Affect | .23 | 0.15 | [-.02, .56] |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .19 | 0.14 | [-.07, .49] |
| **Total Effect** | .79* | 0.32 | [.14, 1.41] |

*Note*. *N* = 307 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C6**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for Two-Mediator (Child Negative Affect and Racial Goals) Model for Racism Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Identity Strength | -0.01 | .99 | [.80, 1.22] |
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .79* | 2.19 | [1.16, 4.16] |
| Child Age Group (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .68* | 1.97 | [1.03, 3.79] |
| Condition | .53 | 1.70 | [.97, 3.0] |
| Child Negative Affect | .04 | 1.06 | [.90, 1.24] |
| Racial Goals | .52*** | 2.42 | [1.80, 3.27] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Child Negative Affect | .07 | .11 | [-.15, .30] |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .19 | .14 | [-.07, .50] |
| **Total Effect** | .73* | .34 | [.06, 1.37] |

*Note*. *N* = 307 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C7**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for Two-Mediator (Parent Negative Affect and Racial Goals) Model for Racism Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .79* | 2.19 | [1.15, 4.18] |
| Child Age (15-17 vs. 3-5) | .66* | 1.93 | [1.01, 3.70] |
| Condition | .45 | 1.56 | [.89, 2.72] |
| Child Identity Strength | -.01 | .99 | [.80, 1.22] |
| Parent Negative Affect | .12 | 1.15 | [.99, 1.34] |
| Racial Goals | .51*** | 2.38 | [1.77, 3.2] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Parent Negative Affect | .16 | .10 | [-.00, .38] |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .19 | .14 | [-.07, .49] |
| **Total Effect** | .64 | .33 | [-.02, 1.28] |

*Note*. *N* = 307 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C8**

*Study 2: Path Estimates for One-Mediator (Racial Goals) Model for Racism Selection vs. Nonracial (Combined Entertainment and Climate Videos) Selection*

| **Direct Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **Odds Ratios** | **95% CI** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Age Group (9-11 vs. 3-5) | .80* | 2.22 | [1.17, 4.21] |
| Child Age Group (15 to 17 vs. 3-5) | .67* | 1.95 | [1.02, 3.78] |
| Condition | .59* | 1.81 | [1.07, 3.07] |
| Child Identity Strength | -.01 | .99 | [.80, 1.22] |
| Racial Goals | .53*** | 2.45 | [1.82, 3.29] |
| **Indirect Effects on Selection Racial Pride Video (1) vs. Nonracial Videos (0)** | **β** | **SE** | **95% CI** |
| Indirect Effect via Racial Goals | .20 | .14 | [-.07, .50] |
| **Total Effect** | .79* | .32 | [.17, .14] |

*Note*. *N* = 307 for all models. Results for direct effects were calculated with MLR estimation; results for indirect effects were calculated with ML estimation.

**Table C9**

*Study 2: Mode Fit Statistics and Path Estimates for Alternative Models for MBERS Intentions*

| | β | SE | *P* | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Model 1 (BIC = 3432)** | | | | |
| Direct Effect of Condition on Useful MBERS | .09 | .04 | .055 | [-.01 .49] |
| Direct Effect of Condition on Negative MBERS | .00 | .02 | .983 | [-.26, .26] |
| **Model 2 (BIC = 3309)** | | | | |
| Direct Effect of Condition on Useful MBERS | 1.27 | .65 | .051 | [-.00, 2.54] |
| Direct Effect of Condition on Negative MBERS | .73 | .61 | .229 | [-.46, 1.92] |
| Direct Effect of Child Identity Strength on Useful MBERS | .59 | .07 | <.001 | [.45, .73] |
| Direct Effect of Child Identity Strength on Negative MBERS | .37 | .08 | <.001 | [.21, .52] |
| Direct Effect of Child Identity Strength by Condition on Useful MBERS | -.37 | .23 | .106 | [-.81, .08] |
| Direct Effect of Child Identity Strength x Condition on Negative MBERS | -.25 | .21 | .244 | [-.66, .17] |

*Note*. *N* = 498.