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Exploring the Association Between Parental Ethnic–Racial Socialization and Parental Closeness on Black–White Biracial Adolescents’ Choice of Racial Identification Toward Blackness

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Objective: To explore the influences of Black–White biracial adolescents’ choice to racially identify with Blackness, parental ethnic–racial socialization (ERS) messages, parental race, and perceived parental closeness were examined. Specifically, this study investigated how messages that promote monoracial Black pride and messages that prepare youth for monoracial Black bias may be related to adolescents’ identification with Blackness, and whether parental race or parental closeness moderated these relationships.

Method: Three hundred thirty Black–White biracial adolescents ($M_{age} = 14.82$) were recruited across the United States via social media. Participants completed the Racial Socialization Questionnaire for Biracial Adolescents and a demographic questionnaire to indicate how close they felt to each parent. The analytic sample ($n = 280$) included respondents who racially identified as exclusively Black, blended Black, or exclusively biracial. **Results:** Multinomial logistic regression analyses revealed significant differences in the association between ERS messages and adolescent racial identification based on the race of the parent socializer. Further moderation analyses indicated that parental closeness, particularly regarding fathers, amplifies these findings. **Conclusion:** Maternal and paternal ERS messages are differentially associated with biracial adolescents’ choice of racial identification toward Blackness. Interestingly, ERS messages from White parents seem to significantly influence racial identification compared to Black parents. Parental closeness further elucidates these findings.

Public Significance Statement

Many Black–White biracial individuals struggle to choose how to racially identify in a way that is congruent with society, family, and their own feelings. This work extends our theoretical and practical understanding of the relationship between parental ethnic–racial socialization and biracial adolescents’ choice of racial identity toward Blackness. Our findings begin to illustrate how parents’ race, socialization, and perceived closeness contribute to the process of racial identification among Black–White biracial adolescents. This information may serve to aid both biracial individuals and their parents through the process of racial identity development.

Keywords: Black–White biracial adolescents, racial identification, ethnic–racial socialization, parental closeness multinomial logistic regression

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The 2020 U.S. Census documented a 276% increase in the *bi/multiracial population*, defined as persons who identify with two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). This increase was partially credited to the change in how people are perceived by others and their views around race and ethnicity, which can influence how people chose to identify racially (Chavez, 2021). For many monoracial individuals within the United States (e.g., Black, White, Asian), racial identification may be a relatively effortless process because they share the same physical characteristics as their parents and as a result, may racially identify similar to their parents. Uniquely, however, racial identification is more complex for biracial–Black youth as they must continuously discern which racial label or labels are most applicable to them (e.g., exclusively Black, multiracial/biracial, both, neither). This choice has important implications for

their psychosocial well-being, as scholars have linked identification with varying racial labels to different levels of depressive symptoms, problem behaviors, peer relationships, school performance, and self-esteem (Shih & Sanchez, 2005; Townsend et al., 2010).

There is a growing body of research indicating that biracial individuals with a Black ethnic-racial background are more inclined to identify as Black because their experiences, attitudes, and social interactions are more closely aligned with those within the Black community (Parker et al., 2015). Biracial-Black people also report being more likely to identify with a monoracial-Black label because there is a limited understanding and acceptance of multiraciality in the United States due to racial essentialism (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Biracial people who present more phenotypically as Black (e.g., kinky or curly textured hair, darker skin) may be particularly likely to identify with a Black racial label (Khanna, 2010). Nonetheless, biracial-Black individuals are socially positioned between their hierarchically organized ethnic-racial groups (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). This reality can make racial identification complex for Black-White biracial youth (e.g., those with one Black and one White parent), as the system of racial hierarchy requires them to confront their identity as a member of the most oppressed and the most privileged groups (Rollins & Hunter, 2013).

Parents likely play a meaningful role in helping Black-White biracial youth negotiate the complexities of their ethnic-racial group membership through ethnic-racial socialization (ERS; Atkin & Yoo, 2019; M. N. Stokes et al., 2021). This is especially true when biracial youth have a strong relationship with their parents (Stepney et al., 2015). However, additional research is needed to understand the impact that maternal and paternal ERS provided to Black-White biracial youth has on shaping their racial identification during adolescence. We contribute to this scholarship in the current article by examining the relationship between ERS and racial identification among Black-White biracial adolescents, examining if these relations vary as a function of the parent's race and the youth's perceived closeness to their parents.

Biracial Youths' Racial Identification as a Continuum

The investigation is rooted in the continuum of biracial identity (COBI) model, which is a multidimensional framework of identity development among mixed-race individuals. Grounded in empirical research that examined the perspectives of biracial individuals in the

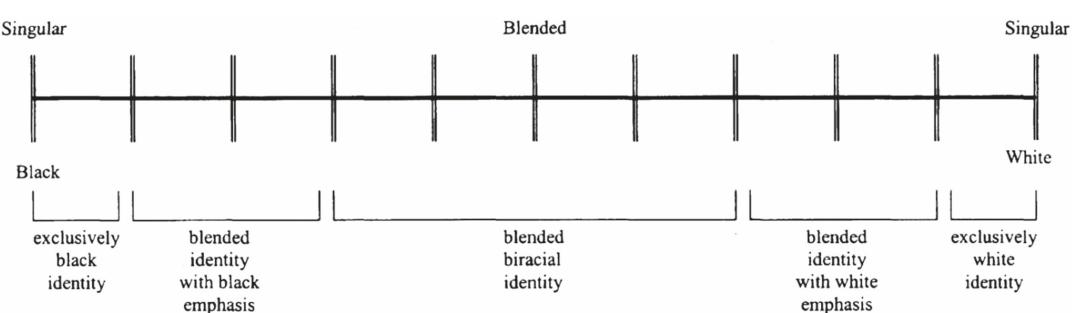
United States (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002), Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005) theorize that biracial identity exists along a continuum with an *exclusively Black* identity (e.g., identify exclusively as Black) and an *exclusively White* identity (e.g., identify exclusively as White) existing at opposite ends of the continuum (see Figure 1). The middle of the continuum "represents an equal blend of the two, not in biological terms, but in terms of identification," which is characterized by an exclusively *biracial* identity (e.g., identify as both Black and White). However, the COBI model also acknowledges that blending can occur along the continuum meaning some Black-White biracial people may perceive and understand themselves as biracial but be more connected to their Blackness or Whiteness (defined as a *blended identity with Black emphasis* and *blended identity with White emphasis*). Moreover, racial identification, for some, may evolve and change frequently across the continuum, which is indicative of a *protean* identity (e.g., a person chooses to identify as Black, White, or biracial based on social contexts, Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). Finally, some Biracial individuals may decide to reject racial labels altogether, representing a *transcendent* identity, which falls outside the bounds of the continuum. Several scholars have recently found evidence for the applicability of the COBI model and each of its identification categories among Black-White young people (see Clayton, 2020; Mawhinney & Petchauer, 2013).

The COBI model proposes that each of the labels on the continuum are "equally valid" and "healthy." However, we contend that an exclusive or blended Black identity could be valuable during adolescence as it could help Black-White biracial youth feel a sense of belonging to and shared destiny with their Black peers. This connection to a racial group can function as a cultural home or "protective social context of shared meanings, values, and comfort via emotional attachment to the group" (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011, p. 792). Black-White biracial youth who reject their Blackness or struggle to understand it in connection to their multiraciality, may be more vulnerable to cultural homelessness, which has been associated with loneliness (Franco & O'Brien, 2018) and decreased feelings of belonging and self-esteem (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011). Accordingly, it is important to examine the antecedents of racial identification among Black-White biracial adolescents.

Parental Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Youth Identity

Consistent with the COBI model, we consider ERS, or parent-child communication about race and ethnicity, as a meaningful

Figure 1
Continuum of Biracial Identity Model



Note. Adapted from Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005).

pathway that leads children to adopt a particular identification (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005). ERS is defined as

The process through which caregivers convey implicit and explicit messages about the significance and meaning of race and ethnicity, teach children about what it means to be a member of a racial and/or ethnic minority group, and help youth learn to cope with discrimination. (Neblett et al., 2012, p. 296)

These messages and teachings vary based on their substantive content or goals, making ERS a multidimensional practice. The most common dimensions include *cultural socialization* (e.g., pride promotion and education around a child's cultural, racial, and ethnic group(s)), *preparation for bias* (e.g., preparing children to cope with racial discrimination), *promotion of mistrust* (e.g., highlighting the need to distrust or be weary of interracial interactions), and *egalitarianism* (e.g., promoting ethnic-racial equality). The first two, cultural socialization and preparation for bias, are the focus of this article because they have been most strongly linked to ethnic-racial identity among youth from different ethnic-racial groups (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020).

There is a robust body of research that demonstrates that Black parents can help their children thrive by combining ERS messages that prepare youth for anti-Black racism with those that promote racial pride (Gibson et al., 2022; Huguley et al., 2019). However, non-Black parents of Black-White biracial youth also deliver messages regarding Black experiences that can impact the identification of their mixed-race children (M. N. Stokes et al., 2021). M. N. Stokes et al. (2021), for instance, reviewed the extant qualitative literature on ERS in multiracial-Black families and found that many Black and White parents believed that it was important to raise their children to be proud of their Black racial heritage and understand how to cope with anti-Black bias. Relatedly, ERS from Black and non-Black parents has been significantly associated with racial identity outcomes among Black-biracial individuals (Green et al., 2022).

Ultimately, the literature on ERS and racial identification in multiracial families is small, but it supports that parents of all races impart preferences and biases to their children that work to develop their ethnic and racial identification (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005). However, the race and subsequent racial experiences of a parent play a key role in how they approach the ERS of their biracial children. Most Black parents, for instance, have witnessed and experienced anti-Black racism in a personal way that leads them to want to prepare their own children for how to cope with it in a way in which White parents cannot directly relate (M. N. Stokes et al., 2021). Black-White Biracial youth may also be more accepting of ERS messages around Blackness if they come from a Black parent. Relatedly, some White parents have acknowledged that although they discussed Black experiences and barriers with their children, they felt that their White privilege may have inhibited their ability to do so effectively (Rauktis et al., 2016). Thus, it is important to explore how White and Black parents convey messages about Black pride and bias to their children and examine whether these messages differentially impact the racial identification of their children.

Parental Closeness

Within ERS research, it is also important to consider additional family characteristics like parent-child relationships. Mothers of monoracial Black children, for instance, have been found to deliver more frequent ERS than fathers (Brown et al., 2010). Moreover,

socialization happens within the context of the parent-child relationship, which means that the quality of the relationship between a parent and child can shape the frequency and efficacy of ERS (Green et al., 2021). For instance, one study found that Black young men who perceived their parental relationships as nurturing reported higher amounts of ERS, which was related to higher levels of racial identity exploration and feelings of belonging (Reynolds et al., 2017). Accordingly, we consider whether the relationship between ERS and racial identification among Black-White biracial adolescents varies based on parental closeness.

The Present Study

The present study explored the association between parental ERS messages—both those provided by mothers and fathers—and Black-White biracial adolescents' choice of racial identification. Currently, there are no published studies that quantitatively link ERS to Black-White biracial adolescents' choice of racial labels. This study aims to supplement the literary dearth by exploring two primary research aims: (a) examine how parental ERS messages, that centered on the Black experience (i.e., promotion of racial pride and preparation for bias), relate to Black-White biracial adolescents' choice to identify with their Blackness, relative to the race of the parent socializer; and (b) investigate whether parental closeness moderated the relationship between maternal and paternal provision of ERS and Black-White biracial adolescents' racial identification.

With regard to the first aim, we posited that more frequent Black promotion of pride messages provided by mothers and fathers would increase the likelihood that Black-White biracial adolescents identify more with their Black identity (e.g., *exclusively Black* or *blended Black*; Csizmadia et al., 2014; Stone & Dolbin-MacNab, 2017). Importantly, we did not anticipate that race would significantly moderate this relationship. Regarding the preparation for bias messages that centered on the Black experience, we anticipated that the impact of these messages on racial identification would vary by the race of the parent. Specifically, we anticipated that greater preparation for bias messages would be associated with Black-White biracial youth identifying relatively more with their Black identity. In contrast, given that Black-White biracial adolescents may choose to reject the potential of discrimination as described by the parent who shares that part of their child's racial status (Csizmadia et al., 2014), we hypothesized that greater preparation for bias messages provided by Black mothers and fathers would be associated with youth identifying as less singularly Black.

In considering Aim 2, given prior work by Reynolds et al. (2017) and Williams and Smalls-Glover (2014), highlighting the importance of parent-child dynamics in influencing the role of ERS, and findings by Bratter and Heard (2009) and Stone and Dolbin-MacNab's (2017) elucidating close parent-child relationships as essential to racial identification exploration, we posited that the association between promotion of pride and preparation for bias messages and adolescents' racial identification would be stronger when adolescents report greater closeness with their parents. Last, we were uncertain about whether this relationship would vary as a function of race of the parent.

Notably, these data were collected amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted Black communities (Gravlee, 2020), and a racial uprising due to the unjust murders of Black people in the United States, including but not limited to

AhmaudArbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Elijah McClain, Rayshard Brooks, Daniel Prude, and Tony McDade. In addition, data collection coincided with the 2020 U.S. presidential election where Kamala Harris, a biracial woman with Black and Indian ancestry, was running for vice president. These racialized sociopolitical events led to greater visibility of anti-Black racism and Blackness more broadly in the United States, which could have in turn, impacted the frequency and forms of ERS that the Black-White biracial adolescents in this study were receiving.

Method

Participants

This study utilizes secondary data from the biracial Adolescent Socialization Experiences Study (Project BASES; M. K. Stokes, 2021). The BASES participants were recruited through a purposive sampling technique (Charmaraman et al., 2014) via social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn from June 2020 to February 2021. The participants were 330 self-identified Black-White biracial adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 ($M = 14.82$, $SD = 1.51$) from the southeastern (40%), northeastern (12%), midwestern (17%), and western (31%) regions of the United States. Participants' gender identities were cisgender boys (67.3%), cisgender girls (32.4%), and one transgender boy (.3%). Over half of the participants ($N = 228$) had White mothers and Black fathers, which is reflective of the interracial marriage rate in the United States. (Livingston & Brown, 2020). When asked about their racial identification, most (59.7%) of the participants identified as *exclusively biracial*. Other participants identified with a *blended Black* (17%), *protean* (11%), *exclusively Black* (8%), *exclusively White* (1.5%), or *transcendent* identity (3.0%). Table 1 displays this distribution and depicts where each identification choice maps onto the COBI model.

Procedure

Following institutional review board approval, parents of Black-White biracial adolescents were targeted through social media advertisements and asked to follow a link to a 5-min eligibility questionnaire on Qualtrics. Youth were eligible to participate in the BASES study if they were (a) between the ages of 12 and 17, (b) had one biological monoracial Black and one biological monoracial White parent, and (c) lived with at least one of their biological parents in the United States. Participants who met the eligibility criterion were emailed an anonymous link (via their parents) to the

35-min survey via Qualtrics. Three attention checks were embedded to protect data quality. Participants who failed two or more attention checks were removed from data analysis (Curran, 2016). Participants were compensated with a \$10 gift card.

Measures

Racial Socialization

The Black Socialization scale from the Racial Socialization Questionnaire for Biracial Adolescents (RSQ-BA; M. K. Stokes, 2021) was used to capture Black forms of ERS. The Black Socialization scale is composed of eight items across two subscales. The first subscale captures racial socialization messages that promote Black racial pride (e.g., your mother/father says "you should be proud to be Black") and the second subscale captures messages that specifically prepare youth to experience anti-Black racism (e.g., your mother/father says "police might target you because you are Black"). Participants responded to all the items twice (once for their mothers and once for their fathers) using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *never* (1) to *often* (4). The Cronbach's α levels demonstrated sufficient internal consistency for the Black Pride Reinforcement ($\alpha = .90$) and Preparation for anti-Black Racism ($\alpha = .86$) subscales.

Parental Closeness

Maternal and paternal closeness, potential moderators, was determined by participant's response to a single item asking, "How close do you feel to your biological mother?" and "How close do you feel to your biological father?" Response options included: 1 = not close at all, 2 = not very close, 3 = somewhat close, 4 = pretty close, or 5 = extremely close.

Parental Education

Parental education, a potential covariate, was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status (Erola et al., 2016), and was determined by participant response to the questions, "What is the highest level of education your biological mother has obtained?" and "What is the highest level of education your biological father has obtained?" within the demographic survey of the BASES project. Response options included: 1 = less than a high school diploma or General Education Development Test (*passed GED*), 2 = high school diploma or GED, 3 = some college, 4 = associates (2 years) degree, 5 = bachelor's (4-year degree), 6 = graduate or professional degree, or 7 = unsure.

Table 1
Distribution of Racial Identification (N = 330)

Identification based on the COBI model	Selected response	% of sample
Exclusively Black	I consider myself exclusively Black (or African American)	8%
Protean	I sometimes consider myself Black, sometimes my other race, and sometimes biracial depending on the circumstances	11%
Blended Black	I consider myself biracial, but I experience the world as a Black person	17%
Exclusively biracial	I consider myself exclusively biracial	59.7%
Exclusively White	I consider myself exclusively White	1.5%
Transcendent	Race is meaningless, I do not believe in racial identities	3%

Note. COBI = continuum of biracial identity.

Analytic Strategy

Diagnostic Analyses

All analyses were conducted in SPSS Version 28. Prior to conducting formal analyses, diagnostics of the continuous variables (i.e., racial socialization messages, parental closeness, and parental education) and the categorical outcome (i.e., racial identification) were performed to identify outliers and other influential points. There were no identified univariate or multivariate outliers. Ratio of cases to variables met the minimum ratio of 10:1 (Petrucci, 2009). Assumptions of univariate normality were checked using a *z*-score cutoff of 3.29, multicollinearity between variables was $<.7$, skewness and kurtosis values were <1.5 , and the assumption for linearity in the logit was confirmed, as there was not a significant interaction term in Block 1.

Primary Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the differential associations of ERS messages on Black–White biracial adolescent’s choice of racial identification when delivered by their monoracial mothers and fathers and to see if the provision of these messages varied by race. There was additional interest to understand the potential amplification (i.e., increased) effect(s) of parental closeness (maternal or paternal) on the relationship between ERS messages around Blackness and biracial adolescent’s choice of racial identification, and to understand whether this effect also was impacted by parental race.

To appropriately answer the intended research questions, the maternal and paternal ERS of the biracial adolescents were examined. Notably, due to the small sample of individuals who identified as *exclusively White* ($n = 5$), or *transcendent* ($n = 10$), as well as the versatility of the *Protean* ($n = 36$), the responses from these adolescents were omitted, resulting in an analytic sample of $n = 280$. To test the research questions, four multinomial logistic regression analyses—maternal pride, maternal preparation for racism, paternal pride, paternal preparation for racism—were conducted in SPSS Version 28.

Results

Preliminary analyses focused on descriptive statistics (see Table 2) and bivariate correlations (see Table 3) among key study variables for adolescents. A post hoc power analysis, calculated with G*power software (Faul et al., 2009), using the smallest odds ratio of 2.61 showed adequate power (.8; Cohen, 1988).

Multinomial Logistic Regression Analyses

Four multinomial logistic regression analyses were conducted to identify significant predictors of racial identification selection among Black–White biracial adolescents. Due to the sample’s distribution of identification, the majority selection, *exclusively biracial*, was used as the reference group within the analyses. Separate analyses were conducted for maternal promotion of pride, maternal preparation for bias, paternal promotion of pride, and paternal preparation for bias. For each model, parental education was included as a covariate. Parental closeness, promotion of pride, and preparation for bias messages were mean centered. Analyses were tested by modeling the main effects and relevant interactions (creating interaction terms) simultaneously. To control for Type 1 error, a modified Bonferroni procedure (Holland & Copenhagen, 1988) was utilized. Given the four models examined, our modified cut α cutoff value was $.05/4 = .0125$. The maternal and paternal models are presented in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. Below, we present those findings that were significant after Bonferroni correction.

Maternal Promotion of Pride

The overall model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(14) = 39.13$, $p < .001$. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 suggested that the model accounted for approximately 16.8% of the total variance in racial identification selection. With regard to comparing *exclusively Black* and *exclusively biracial* identities, there were no significant main effects or interactions. In investigating the *blended Black* identity,

Table 2
Population Demographics and Key Study Variables (N = 330)

Variable	White mother/Black father (N = 228)	Black mother/White father (N = 102)
Maternal characteristics		
Maternal closeness <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	4.08 (.83)	4.22 (.85)
Maternal education <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	4.35 (.95)	4.08 (1.17)
Maternal racial socialization <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		
Promotion of pride	3.08 (.68)	2.71 (.69)
Preparation for bias	2.76 (.69)	2.62 (.75)
Paternal characteristics		
Paternal closeness <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	3.88 (.87)	3.90 (1.00)
Paternal education <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	4.25 (1.04)	4.14 (1.10)
Paternal racial socialization <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		
Promotion of pride	2.96 (.67)	2.38 (.78)
Preparation for bias	2.57 (.77)	2.31 (.78)
Racial identification <i>n</i> (%)		
Exclusively Black	15 (6.6)	12 (11.8)
Protean	21 (9.2)	14 (13.7)
Blended Black	36 (15.8)	20 (19.6)
Exclusively biracial	153 (67.1)	44 (43.1)
Exclusively White	1 (.4)	4 (3.9%)
Race is meaningless	2 (.9)	8 (7.8)

Table 3
Parental Bivariate Correlation of Key Study Variables for Biracial Adolescents (N = 280)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Parental education	—	.190**	.161**	.082	.042
2. Parental closeness	.079	—	.175**	.191**	.156**
3. Promotion of pride	.109	.076	—	.312**	.245**
4. Preparation for bias	.081	.067	.441**	—	-.014
5. Racial identification	.042	.145*	.164**	-.123*	—

Note. Mothers' scores below diagonal; fathers' scores above.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

there was a significant *Pride × Race* Interaction ($p = .005$; $OR = 0.17$; 95% CI [.05, .58]). Probing this interaction suggested that at high levels (+1SD) of maternal promotion of pride, biracial adolescents of White mothers were significantly more likely to identify as *blended Black* rather than *exclusively biracial* (See Figure 2).

Maternal Preparation for Bias

The overall model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(14) = 37.05$, $p < .001$. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 suggested that the model accounted for approximately 16.0% of the total variance in racial identification selection. There was a main effect for maternal closeness ($p = .003$; $OR = 0.49$; 95% CI [.31, .78]). When controlling for the other predictors, a 1-point increase in perceived maternal closeness was associated with 51% decrease in the odds of identifying as *exclusively Black* rather than identifying as *exclusively biracial*. There was also a main effect of maternal promotion of bias messages, such that a one-unit increase in mothers' messages around preparation for bias was associated with 5.43 times increased likelihood of identifying as *blended*

Black relative to *exclusively biracial* ($p = .008$; $OR = 5.43$; 95% CI [1.54, 19.12]).

Paternal Promotion of Pride

The overall model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(14) = 52.95$, $p < .001$. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 suggested that the model accounted for approximately 23.1% of the total variance in racial identification selection. When comparing *exclusively Black* to *exclusively biracial* identity, there was a significant *Promotion of Pride × Paternal Closeness* Interaction ($p = .006$; $OR = 4.91$; 95% CI [1.56, 15.44]). Probing this interaction revealed that at low levels of paternal promotion of pride, lower reported closeness with fathers was associated with a significantly higher likelihood of identifying as *exclusively Black* (see Figure 3). There was also a main effect of paternal promotion of pride with regard to identifying as *blended Black* ($p < .001$), but this was qualified by a *Promotion of Pride × Race* Interaction ($p = .013$). Again, probing this interaction suggested that for teens with White fathers, higher levels of promotion of pride were associated with a significantly *decreased* likelihood of identifying as *blended Black* compared to identifying as *exclusively biracial* (see Figure 4).

Paternal Preparation for Bias

The overall model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(14) = 35.14$, $p = .001$. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 suggested that the model accounted for approximately 16.0% of the total variance in racial identification selection. There was a significant, negative main effect of paternal closeness on identifying as *exclusively Black* ($p = .004$). This main effect was qualified by a *Preparation for Bias × Closeness* Interaction ($p = .002$; $OR = 4.05$, 95% CI [1.65, 9.97], see Figure 5). Similar to the findings for promotion of pride, at low levels of preparation for bias, low levels of teens' closeness with their fathers were related to a significantly greater likelihood of identifying as *exclusively Black*.

Table 4
Multinomial Logistic Regression of the Impact of Maternal Racial Socialization Messages and Parental Closeness on Racial Identification

Variable	Exclusively Black			Blended Black		
	b	OR	OR [95% CI]	b	OR	OR [95% CI]
Promotion of pride						
Promotion of pride	-.42	0.66	[.20, 2.11]	.77	2.17	[.75, 6.25]
Maternal closeness	-.10	0.91	[.50, 1.66]	.47	1.59	[1.01, 2.53]
Maternal education	.02	1.02	[.67, 1.57]	.16	1.17	[.85, 1.61]
Mother's race	-.94	0.39	[.14, 1.12]	-.69	0.50	[.25, 1.00]
Pride × Race	-.02	0.98	[.22, 4.29]	-1.75 ^a	0.17	[.05, .58]
Pride × Closeness	.67	1.94	[.52, 7.34]	-.21	0.81	[.21, 3.13]
Pride × Race × Closeness	.52	1.69	[.39, 7.31]	1.14	3.13	[.66, 14.75]
Preparation for bias						
Preparation for bias	1.55	4.70	[1.23, 17.88]	1.69 ^a	5.43	[1.54, 19.12]
Maternal closeness	-.72 ^a	0.49	[.31, .78]	.11	1.11	[.71, 1.75]
Maternal education	-.19	0.83	[.53, 1.30]	.11	1.12	[.80, 1.57]
Mother's race	-1.08	0.34	[.13, .91]	-.64	0.53	[.25, 1.12]
Prep × Race	-1.17	0.31	[.06, 1.53]	-1.02	0.36	[.09, 1.46]
Prep × Closeness	.47	1.60	[.57, 4.54]	-.10	0.91	[.23, 3.66]
Prep × Race × Closeness	.03	1.03	[.25, 4.20]	-.05	0.95	[.21, 4.41]

Note. Unstandardized logistic coefficients with OR . CI = confidence interval; OR = odds ratios.

^aAll p values (ranging from .003 to .008) were less than the α value of the Bonferroni correction (.013).

Table 5

Multinomial Logistic Regression of the Impact of Paternal Racial Socialization Messages and Parental Closeness on Racial Identification

Variable	Exclusively Black			Blended Black		
	<i>b</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>OR</i> [95% CI]	<i>b</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>OR</i> [95% CI]
Promotion of pride						
Promotion of pride	-.35	0.70	[.24, 2.10]	-1.34 ^a	0.26	[.14, .50]
Paternal closeness	-.20	0.82	[.43, 1.55]	.46	1.58	[.97, 2.59]
Paternal education	-.04	0.96	[.62, 1.48]	.02	1.02	[.73, 1.43]
Father's race	1.32	3.74	[1.21, 11.59]	.70	2.02	[.96, 4.23]
Pride × Race	.25	1.28	[.32, 5.09]	1.19 ^a	3.28	[1.29, 8.34]
Pride × Closeness	1.59 ^a	4.91	[1.56, 15.45]	.36	1.44	[.65, 3.17]
Pride × Race × Closeness	-1.07	0.34	[.09, 1.31]	.29	1.33	[.51, 3.51]
Preparation for bias						
Preparation for bias	.46	1.59	[.72, 3.51]	.19	1.21	[.71, 2.06]
Paternal closeness	-.79 ^a	0.46	[.27, .78]	.14	1.15	[.76, 1.75]
Paternal education	-.08	0.92	[.61, 1.39]	-.01	.99	[.72, 1.37]
Father's race	1.64 ^a	5.14	[1.79, 14.71]	.86	2.36	[1.17, 4.78]
Prep × Race	-.05	0.95	[.27, 3.37]	.37	1.45	[.58, 3.65]
Prep × Closeness	1.40 ^a	4.05	[1.65, 9.97]	-.13	0.88	[.44, 1.75]
Prep × Race × Closeness	-1.50	0.22	[.07, .76]	.38	1.46	[.53, 4.02]

Note. Unstandardized logistic coefficients with *OR*. CI = confidence interval; *OR* = odds ratios.

^a All *p* values (ranging from <.001 to .013) were less than the α value of the Bonferroni correction (.013).

Discussion

This study aimed to explore how maternal and paternal ERS (i.e., promotion of racial pride and preparation for bias) relate to Black–White biracial adolescents' choice to identify with their Blackness, and if parents' race was a salient mitigating factor. Further, we investigated whether parental closeness moderated the relationship between ERS and adolescents' racial identification. While it may be assumed that more socialization about being Black will be associated with greater Black identification, the findings of this study illustrate the nuance of racial identification among Black–White biracial adolescents despite socialization toward Blackness. Overall, the findings suggest that ERS messages from parents are key factors in being able to understand the likelihood of an adolescent identifying as *exclusively Black*, *blended Black*, or *exclusively biracial*.

Influence of Black-Centered ERS on Biracial Identification

Promotion of Pride

We anticipated that both maternal and paternal messages that promoted pride in being Black would be associated with a greater likelihood of Black–White biracial adolescents identifying relatively more strongly with their Blackness, but did not expect there to be an impact of parent's race. After correcting for multiple comparisons, our findings partially supported our hypotheses. Specifically, greater maternal promotion of pride in Blackness was significantly associated with biracial adolescents being more likely to identify as *blended Black* (compared to *exclusively biracial*), but particularly when these messages were provided by White mothers. Of note, though we anticipated a main effect of promotion of Black pride, this interaction effect suggests that there is something unique about White mothers providing such messages, at least as it pertains to youths' decision to identify as *blended Black*. Complicating matters further, we found a promotion of Black pride by race interaction in the opposite direction, impacting White fathers (i.e., higher promotion of Black pride by White fathers was associated with a decreased relative likelihood of identifying as *blended Black*). Thus, it appears that when Black–White biracial adolescents are provided with more frequent messages about Black pride from their White mothers, they report experiencing the world as Black; however, the opposite is true when these messages come from White fathers. Future research is needed to fully comprehend these divergent findings, but paternal closeness may play an important factor. For instance, we found that youth were most likely to identify with their Blackness when they reported low levels of paternal promotion of pride and low levels of paternal closeness. Building on this, we suspect that some participants may have been more inclined to identify as biracial because of their emotional and relational connection to their white fathers, despite hearing frequent messages

Figure 2

Simple Slope Analysis of the Interaction Between Maternal Promotion of Pride Socialization Messages and Race, Comparing Blended Black and Exclusively Biracial Identification

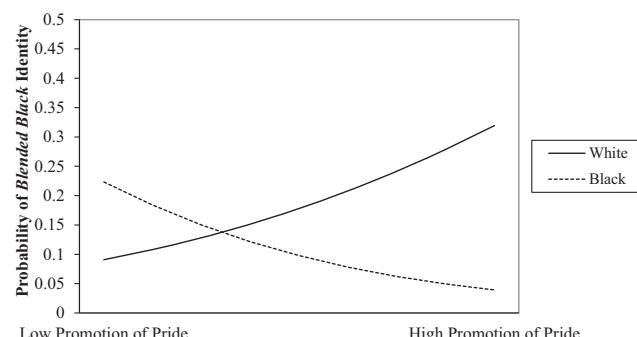
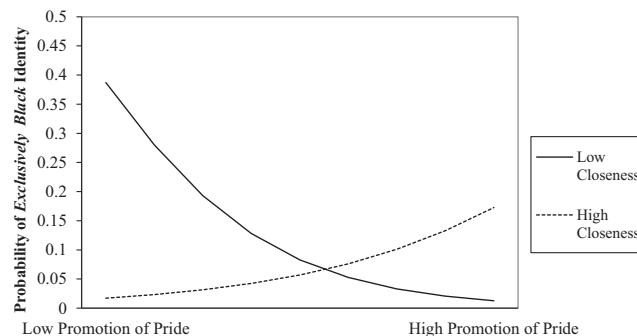


Figure 3

Simple Slope Analysis of the Interaction Between Paternal Promotion of Pride Socialization Messages and Paternal Closeness, Comparing Exclusively Black and Exclusively Biracial Identification



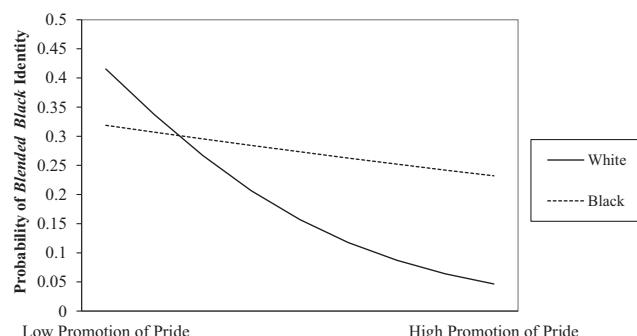
about Black pride from them. Nonetheless, these findings highlight the unique role of ERS from white mothers and fathers on biracial adolescents' racial identification. Importantly, neither maternal nor paternal promotion of Black pride was associated with an increased likelihood of identifying as *exclusively Black* as a main effect, though a promotion of Black pride by paternal closeness interaction did emerge, as discussed below.

Preparation for Bias

Regarding preparation for bias, we hypothesized that youth exposed to more preparation for bias messages from their White parents would be more likely to identify with their Blackness, and that youth exposed to more of these messages from their Black parents would be *less likely* to identify with their Blackness. Again, our hypotheses were partially supported. For mothers, there was a significant main effect of preparation for bias messages such that receiving more of these messages, regardless of the race of the mother, was associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing the world as Black versus as *exclusively biracial*. Thus, it seems that although the mechanisms of influence may be different (e.g., White mothers' as a representative of the potential experiences with other monoracial White people; O'Donoghue, 2004), mothers' sharing

Figure 4

Simple Slope Analysis of the Interaction Between Paternal Promotion of Pride Socialization Messages and Race, Comparing Blended Black and Exclusively Biracial Identification



the potential discrimination that Black people face led biracial youth to identify in a way that acknowledged the weightiness of this bias. Notably, fathers' preparation for bias messages had an influence of teens' identification as *exclusively Black*, but this was only seen in the context of paternal closeness.

The Role of Parental Closeness on the ERS–Biracial Identification Relationship

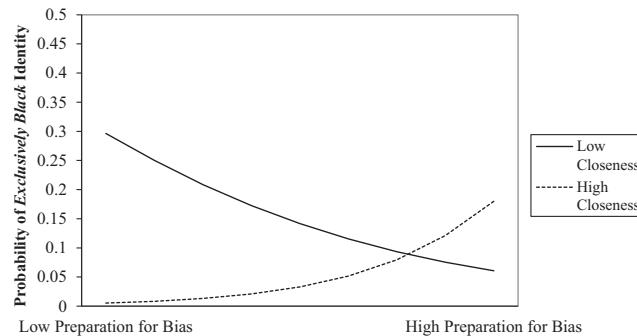
Finally, we had empirical reason to expect that parental closeness would accentuate the impact that Black-centered ERS had on Black–White biracial teens' identification processes. As alluded to in the prior section, paternal closeness had an impact on the role of both promotion of pride and preparation for bias messages, but in ways more nuanced than anticipated. With regard to promotion of Black pride *and* preparation for bias against Black people, results suggested that at low levels of Black-centered ERS, there is an inverse relationship between paternal closeness and identification as *exclusively Black*. This finding may be most helpful when interpreted as such: For fathers (regardless of race) who are close with their biracial teenagers, low provision of messages that demonstrate pride in the Black experience and low preparation for bias seem to influence these teens to identify as *exclusively biracial* rather than *exclusively Black*. In this way, if a teen feels close to their father, and their father deemphasizes Black ERS, they are more likely to endorse a less singularly Black identity. However, if teens do not feel particularly close to their fathers, and their fathers seem to refrain from providing a bevy of Black ERS, biracial teens are more likely to identify with their Blackness. The fact that these interaction effects are found only for fathers is of keen interest, as it suggests the particular importance that paternal closeness has on how ERS influences Black–White biracial teens' racial identification. In doing so, these findings underscore the pioneering work of Cooper and colleagues (Cooper et al., 2015) which has elevated the importance of father provided ERS.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

By being the first known study to explore the association of monoracial Black ERS messages (i.e., promotion of pride and preparation for bias) on Black–White biracial adolescents' choice of racial identification toward Blackness, relative to the race of the parent socializer, we begin to understand some of the influences of identification. Our study allows us to communicate the importance of ERS on biracial adolescents' choice of identification and highlight the nuance of parent–child relationships among Black–White biracial youth. Our findings also allow for the creation of interventions and education for both monoracial parents and their Black–White biracial children. Moreover, this study is more inclusive of the diversity of Black and White interracial families by including both types of parent pairs (i.e., White mothers and Black fathers and Black mothers and White fathers). Finally, the findings of this study support Rockquemore and Laszloffy's (2005) COBI model by demonstrating how parental ERS and parental closeness influence identity choices among Black–White biracial individuals during adolescence. Importantly, this work further extends our theoretical and practical understanding of racial socialization in multiracial families by illustrating how parents contribute to the process of racial identification among Black–White biracial adolescents.

Figure 5

Simple Slope Analysis of the Interaction Between Paternal Preparation for Bias Socialization Messages and Paternal Closeness, Comparing Exclusively Black and Exclusively Biracial Identification



These strengths, however, must be considered in light of the study's limitations which ultimately constrain the generality of the findings. First, recruitment was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the midst of a racial uprising that may have unforeseen implications on the results of the study (Liebman et al., 2020). For instance, parents may have been delivering a higher proportion of messages around anti-Black racism to their children during the period that data was collected to help them understand the protests that occurred in the summer of 2020.

The sample was also relatively small and unbalanced. While it met the minimum variable to cases ratio; more participants who identified as exclusively Black or biracial, with a Black emphasis, would have been preferable. Future research might consider replicating this study with a larger and more diverse sample of biracial adolescents. The unbalanced nature of the sample is also reflected in the gender makeup, which was predominantly Black–White biracial boys, and may have implications for the findings related to parental closeness. Our sample demographics could explain why perceived closeness with fathers had a greater association with racial identification than perceived closeness with mothers. Perhaps, adolescents feel greater connections with parents with whom they share gender congruence. Future studies might examine the influence of adolescent gender as it may have important implications for understanding how ERS messages influence adolescents based on their gender identity. Additionally, the distribution of the sample included more adolescents who had White mothers and Black fathers than those with Black mothers and White fathers. Future studies may strive for a more equal distribution of parent types. Other considerations include the fact that this was a highly educated sample, with the majority of parents having a 4-year degree. Future studies may wish to investigate the influence of a more educationally diverse sample. Moreover, future studies may wish to control for immigration status of the parent or family structure to get a better understanding of the sample's demographics; unfortunately, the population from this sample had little diversity in immigrant parent or household type.

Future research should also consider how the racial characteristics of Black–White biracial youth contribute to ERS and racial identification. Black–White biracial individuals who present more phenotypically as White, for instance, may not experience the same benefits and social acceptance that comes with a Black racial

identification as their biracial peers who have more Black racial features (Pilgrim, 2021). Parents of White-presenting biracial children may recognize this and approach ERS differently, so researchers should be careful to examine this nuance moving forward. For example, socialization toward Whiteness, rather than toward Blackness, may also have significant implications among Black–White biracial individuals as they choose how to identify. Future researchers should consider including various forms of ERS (e.g., White socialization messages, biracial socialization messages) as well as the exploration of phenotypic characteristics to gain a fuller picture of these influences.

Although there are general limitations that impact the distribution of racial identification among biracial adolescents, future studies may aim to get more representation from individuals who identify with an *exclusively White* or *transcendent* identity. When examining other racial identification choices among biracial adolescents, researchers may choose to include White socialization or biracial socialization measures to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances of ERS. Similarly, future studies should include a more robust measure of parental closeness, as this study used adolescent responses to a single item. Although, Hair et al. (2021) suggest that the moderator can be measured using a single item since it represents an unobservable trait, use of single items inherently have very low internal reliability that could be strengthened with a multi-item construct.

Additionally, with adolescents being the only source, we are only able to speak to how adolescents experienced their parent's racial socialization messages, not how parents experience transmitting messages to their children. However, scholars who have examined both parent and child reports of racial socialization find that the child reports are often the stronger predictors of child outcomes (Bañales et al., 2020; Williams & Smalls-Glover, 2014).

Finally, this study's design is cross-sectional, thus causal and directional conclusions cannot be drawn. Future studies should employ longitudinal design to discern the directions of the associations depicted within these findings. Future studies may also wish to conduct a qualitative analysis in lieu of or in conjunction with the RSQ-BA to further understand the implication of parental racial socialization messages and parental closeness.

Implications

The constant growth in the multiracial population and recent shift in choice of identification require researchers to gather and disseminate information to aid both parents and individuals through the process of racial identification, particularly in the United States, one of the most racially divisive countries in the world. It is our hope that the findings of this study will aid in the understanding of how ERS and parental closeness, based on parent race, influence a Black–White biracial adolescents' decision to racially identify. Clinicians may use these findings to help foster stronger relationships between parents and their Black–White biracial children. Further, the findings may aid in the development of interventions that aim to promote racial pride and reduce negative mental health implications of Black–White biracial individuals. Last, it is our intention to apply this study's findings to help Black–White biracial individuals to better navigate their unique identity development process, to assist parents of biracial individuals in the process of racially socializing their children, and to aid clinicians as they endeavor to engage in

therapy among biracial persons or multiracial families who seek understanding related to biracial identity.

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