

# From Protest to Child-Rearing: How Movement Politics Shape Socialization Priorities

ALLISON P. ANOLL *Vanderbilt University, United States*

ANDREW M. ENGELHARDT *Stony Brook University, United States*

MACKENZIE ISRAEL-TRUMMEL *William & Mary, United States*

**C**lassic political behavior studies assert that childhood socialization can contribute to later political orientations. But, as adults consider how to introduce children to politics, what shapes their decisions? We argue socialization is itself political with adults changing their socialization priorities in response to salient political events including social movements. Using Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and race socialization as a case, we show the summer 2020 information environment coupled movement-consistent concepts of race with child-rearing guidance. A survey of white parents after the summer activism suggests that many—but especially Democrats and those near peaceful protest epicenters—prioritized new forms of race socialization. Further, nearly 2 years after the protests' height, priming BLM changes support for race-related curricular materials among white Americans. Our work casts political socialization in a new light, reviving an old literature, and has implications for when today's children become tomorrow's voters.

**B**etween 2021 and 2023, state legislators introduced 309 bills designed to outlaw teaching critical race theory (CRT) and other “divisive concepts” in U.S. public schools (PEN America 2023). These bills trailed a summer of unprecedented protests led by Black Lives Matter (BLM) activists that targeted issues of racial injustice. Addressing these trends, *New York Times* columnist Charles Blow (2022) wrote on Twitter, “During the summer of protests after the murder of George Floyd, millions of [people]—including incredible numbers of white kids—marched in defense of black lives. ... All the CRT panic, book banning and anti-protest laws are a direct response to this.”

Blow's comment suggests that how children are introduced to the political world is contested. In the push-pull of movement and countermovement politics, attitudes toward what children learn about race may respond to political events. An extensive literature documents how parents and schools influence children's political behavior (Greenlee and Sharrow 2020; Nelsen 2023; Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Parsons 2013), but political science has paid scant attention to


how politics might influence adults' socialization priorities and practices.


We posit that child-rearing practices are themselves political, shaped by and shaping the political sphere. Parents of young children can pursue political goals by changing their actions with respect to their own children, and school curriculum offers a means for all adults to attempt to enact their politics by influencing how children learn about topics like race. Salient political events like social movements may push the socialization priorities of parents and the public in movement-consistent directions, giving social movements another means to achieve their aims.

We examine how widespread BLM protest activity in 2020 changed priorities for the race socialization of school-age children at that time and 2 years later. We focus on the attitudes and choices of white people: the outgroup and an intended audience for much of the BLM protest rhetoric (Anoll, Engelhardt, and Israel-Trummel 2022; Dunivin et al. 2022). While non-white families actively race-socialize their children (Christophe et al. 2022; Hughes et al. 2006), white Americans' position atop the U.S. racial hierarchy often allows them to remain race-mute (Abaied and Perry 2021; Hagerman 2018). Social movements, which disrupt agendas and challenge social norms, may be particularly important for changing white race socialization practices.

We argue BLM affected white Americans' race socialization priorities. This manifested in white parents' child-rearing practices at home and white public opinion generally toward curriculum. Using Facebook posts from public parenting pages, we establish that the information environment likely changed after George Floyd's death: movement demands were linked directly

Corresponding author: Allison P. Anoll , Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University, United States, [allison.p.anoll@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:allison.p.anoll@vanderbilt.edu).

Andrew M. Engelhardt , Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Stony Brook University, United States, [andrew.engelhardt@stonybrook.edu](mailto:andrew.engelhardt@stonybrook.edu).

Mackenzie Israel-Trummel , Assistant Professor, Department of Government, William & Mary, United States, [mit@wm.edu](mailto:mit@wm.edu).

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to child-rearing practices, and tools and tips for speaking to children about race increased. An original survey of white parents with school-age children suggests many prioritized racially progressive parenting during this period, especially Democrats and those close to peaceful protests. Nearly 2 years after the mass demonstrations, an experiment shows that priming BLM reactivates white Americans' race socialization priorities. Democrats exposed to BLM signs are more likely to select summer reading materials for middle schoolers that teach about racial discrimination, while Republicans are less likely to do so.

We embrace a mixed-method, multi-test approach. Social science data always have limitations, and ours are no exception: our Facebook data show only aggregate patterns; our survey data rely on parent recall; and our experiment captures immediate responses. Still, multiple methods can triangulate toward truth, identifying observable implications that support a theory across many data types (Campbell 1988). Considered together, our data suggest that BLM changed the information environment around child racial socialization and that the white public noticed.

In a 2011 review, Stoker and Bass (2011, 464) argue that political scientists have an "impoverished view of ... how what is happening within the family relates to what is happening outside of it." Although we cannot yet grapple with longer-term consequences of our findings on children themselves, changes in race socialization priorities in the short term illuminate that child-rearing is a political battleground. Our findings speak to the dynamics of movements and counter-movements (Parker and Barreto 2013; Wasow 2020), as we uncover progressive impulses immediately following the protests and potential backlash in the years after. How this push-pull will affect the next generation is for future study; clear now is that, rather than reserved to some private sphere (e.g., Locke [1689] 1988), socialization goals are *politicized*—shaped by movement forces.

## SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Political thinkers have long suggested that citizens can shape a nation's future by socializing its youngest members. Rousseau ([1762] 1979) insists that cultivation can mold children into perfect political adults, while Aristotle ([ca. 350 B.C.E.] 1998) dedicates three books in *Politics* to rearing youth for the maintenance of constitutional regimes. These thinkers, among others (Duff 2011; Merriam 1934), argue that successful governance starts with raising children to be the *right kind of citizens* with values and behaviors consistent with the nation's goals.

Parents have a special role given their access to children, but the public more broadly shares a duty and stake in childhood socialization (Merriam 1934). bell hooks (2014, 147) argues child-rearers include everyone in a society who collectively commits to a set of priorities that "ensure that all children will be raised in the best possible social frameworks." Hillary

Clinton (1996, 11–2) claims: "Each of us plays a part in every child's life: It takes a village to raise a child."<sup>1</sup> If children are a means to shape the nation's landscape, even those without young children have incentives to exert preferences over how children are raised (Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979).

Empirical studies dating back to the 1960s support the idea that socializing adults contribute to children's future attitudes. Parents, schools, and social environments influence the next generation's politics (e.g., Guhin, Calarco, and Miller-Idriss 2021; Jennings and Niemi 1974; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009; Niemi and Hepburn 1995). Parents can transmit central political orientations including political interest (Dinas 2014; Rapoport 1985), partisan identity (Iyengar, Konitzer, and Tedin 2018; Jennings and Niemi 1968; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009; Ojeda and Hatemi 2015; Tyler and Iyengar 2023), and intergroup attitudes (Tedin 1974). Schools and peer groups provide additional sources of socialization (Holbein 2017; Nelsen 2023; Settle, Bond, and Levitt 2011). While childhood attitudes can decay over time (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Niemi and Kent Jennings 1991), scholars generally agree that socializing agents at least "provide political information that children can use as a starting point when they formulate their own political identities" (Urbatsch 2014, 5).

Past research addresses if adults can influence children's future orientations—where the attitudes and practices of socializing agents (e.g., discussing politics at home or voting) are the independent variable. But what shapes the choices adults make about *how* to socialize children? Some have implied socializing choices are guided by nonpolitical factors like attitude salience and crystallization (e.g., Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009, 787–8), but the writings of Aristotle, hooks, and others suggest an alternative: socialization priorities may reflect ambitious political goals. Summarizing political socialization research, two prominent reviews have argued that empiricists should turn their attention to the *politics* in political socialization or the way that socialization priorities are shaped by political processes and contestation (Conover 1991; Stoker and Bass 2011). Still, decades after these reviews, the politics in introducing children to the political world remain unconsidered in American politics research (Greenlee and Sharrow 2020).

So, what are the politics in political socialization? All child-rearing happens within a specific political context—with some forces attempting to recreate and others challenging the existing social order (Parsons 2013). Within this context, adults must make choices about how they discuss political events with children (Orren and Peterson 1967) or even whether to introduce them to controversial issues, like race, at all (e.g., Anoll, Engelhardt, and Israel-Trummel 2022; Hagerman 2018; Sullivan, Eberhardt, and Roberts 2021). These choices take place within families but may also be legislated. Recent state laws limiting curricular topics

<sup>1</sup> Clinton attributed this phrase to an African proverb, but its provenance is unclear (Goldberg 2016).

on issues like race, gender, and sexuality provide an example.

Social movements are one force creating these political contexts. In challenging existing social orders, sustained movements place new topics on the agenda, introduce novel information and frames, and can even update social norms (e.g., Gillion 2013; Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1999; Mendelberg 2001; Wasow 2020). In doing so, movements may call attention to crises and events that need to be interpreted for children (King, Schneer, and White 2017; Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo 2002; Vu and Gehrau 2010), provide information for how to talk to kids about politics, or create new opportunities for children to engage (Anoll, Engelhardt, and Israel-Trummel 2022). Social movements, too, may introduce new social demands for raising “good” children that shape child-rearing priorities (McAdam 1986). Parents who are dispositionally inclined may update their in-home socialization practices in the face of movement activity, while the broader public funnels their new attitudes about what kids should learn into educational policy.

Changes to socialization priorities may reflect updated adult attitudes. After all, a growing body of work shows even adults’ most crystallized attitudes are malleable under the right circumstances (Engelhardt 2021a; Goldman and Hopkins 2019; Goldman and Mutz 2014; Haynes and Block 2019; Hopkins and Washington 2020; Nteta and Greenlee 2013). But alternatively, adults’ attitudes toward movement goals or target groups could remain stable, while the practices they use to transmit political values to their children, or their priorities in this process, evolve in response to the political environment.

Some have suggested adults’ responses to movement activity can be fleeting (Gillion 2020; Lee 2002; Reny and Newman 2021; Wasow 2020)—and changes to socializing activities may too be brief. Still, socializing practices and educational policy changes during this period could have enduring consequences given the stickiness of policy change and the ways symbolic attitudes develop early in life and persist (Goldman and Hopkins 2020; Sears and Valentino 1997; Valentino and Sears 1998). The politics in child-rearing—or, what we refer to as *politicized socialization*—is thus fertile ground to explore both how social movements influence policy and how adults themselves engage in politics by shaping what children learn.

## BLACK LIVES MATTER AS A CASE

We use BLM to examine if adults’ child-rearing priorities respond to salient social movements. BLM coalesced in 2013 to dismantle state violence against Black people (Garza 2014). In May 2020, protest activity reached unprecedented levels after footage showed George Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis police.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> George Floyd’s murder closely followed the killings of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor and galvanized protests against all three deaths.

Protests coincided with a pandemic that closed schools, shut down summer activities, and saw parents and children spending unusually large amounts of time together (Buchanan, Bui, and Patel 2020; Heggeness and Fields 2020). Local activism opposing K-12 school curricula on topics collectively (mis)identified as critical race theory soon followed (Beauchamp 2022). This resistance to teaching about racism echoed earlier “Blue Lives Matter” backlash, which itself received new interest in summer 2020 (Cureton 2020).

Others have shown that BLM activism has altered legislative behavior and white Americans’ perspectives on racism, mobilized Black political participation, and forged cross-racial political alliances (Bonilla and Tillery 2020; Corral 2020; Fenton and Stephens-Dougan 2022; Merseeth 2018; Tillery 2021). We consider whether BLM also changed the information environment around teaching children about race, and whether this fostered new socialization priorities.

We focus our examination on race socialization priorities among white Americans. Non-white families more often discuss race as they respond to discrimination and construct resistant, positive racial identities (Christophe et al. 2022; Hughes et al. 2006), but white Americans’ position as the dominant group in the American racial hierarchy affords them the privilege to be race-mute (Abaied and Perry 2021; Hagerman 2018; Zucker and Patterson 2018). Consequently, salient political events like social movements may be particularly important for changing how white people think about race socialization. In forcing issues onto the political agenda, creating new norms, and providing specific tips and tools, social movements may disrupt colorblind patterns and activate new practices among those otherwise most likely to avoid them.

Given this, we expect white parents of young children to respond to movement demands through changing socialization practices in their households. Parents whose kids are no longer living at home or people who are not parents can also develop attitudes on this issue. For these citizens without direct access to children, exerting control over socialization must take a more circuitous route through school curricula and policy change.

Not all parents and nonparents are expected to react similarly, though. Rather, personal circumstances and predispositions likely moderate uptake of new socialization practices. In the mass public, white partisans differ substantially in traits like authoritarianism and racial prejudice which, when coupled with divergent elite cues (Engelhardt 2021b), suggest differential receptiveness to BLM messaging (Engelhardt, Feldman, and Hetherington 2023; Jardina and Ollerenshaw 2022; Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck 2022), particularly around demands for anti-racism actions (Davis and Wilson 2022). In the case of BLM, we expect white Democrats to be more likely than white Republicans to update socialization priorities in movement-consistent directions both at home and in schools. Further, BLM protests in 2020 coincided with a global pandemic, which increased the amount of time many parents had with their children and reduced contact with other



socializing agents. While partisanship may provide motivations to accept or ignore BLM messages, the COVID-19 pandemic should provide some parents with greater opportunities to respond.

If social movements change the information environment around child socialization, this should manifest in multiple observable changes following the summer 2020 protests. First, we should observe increased attention to rhetoric on race and child-rearing. On social media sites, this may look like new frames, tools, and tips for action. Second, predisposed white Americans should respond by changing their priorities for child race socialization. White parents who are Democrats or spending unusual amounts of time with their underage children can respond by taking actions at home directly with their families. Among those who do not have young children, shaping children's race socialization may manifest through attitudes toward school curriculum.

## SETTING THE AGENDA FOR RACIAL CHILD-REARING

Did BLM protests change the information environment for child-rearing? Did social movement activity filter down to, set the agenda for, and provide resources about how to teach kids about race? We analyze posts from public parenting pages on Facebook, using CrowdTangle Team (2021). CrowdTangle tracks content on public Facebook pages. Public pages are those where administrators post content and members can comment in response. We use CrowdTangle's preconstructed list of 225 public parenting pages to identify posts from U.S.-based groups that included at least one of 25 terms focused on race and policing from the 3 months before and after George Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020.<sup>3</sup> This yields 8,712 posts, which were then coded to identify four movement themes: race, BLM, All Lives Matter, and police.<sup>4</sup> We use these topics to

test whether a salient political event changed movement-related discussions about race among parents.

Figure 1a shows that following Floyd's murder on May 25, posts on these topics increased dramatically. Not only is there a discontinuity consistent with an agenda-setting effect, but the magnitude of this change is meaningful: 16% of posts on public parenting pages in the month following Floyd's murder included some content linked to movement themes, up from just 2% in the month prior. For every 20 parenting posts scrolled through during this period, readers likely confronted three related to BLM. Importantly, this discontinuity is not driven by an overall increase in posting over time: in the month preceding Floyd's murder, the median number of daily posts on parenting pages was 743; in the month following, it decreased to 681.

Alongside the sharp increase, the gradual decline in posting about race over the summer strengthens our belief in an agenda-setting effect. Trends correspond with the explosive, yet fleeting, nature of media coverage (Boydston 2013), with summer 2020 protest coverage no different (Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck 2022). While brief, this attention could produce both short-term and long-term effects. In the short term, the discussion may have altered child-rearing behaviors and practices. In the long term, discussion and attention promotes storing concepts related to race socialization in long-term memory. These considerations may shape future behavior for some people persistently, and for others when reminded.

To understand the potential for these effects, we next consider the normative frames and concepts that parents experienced during this period. From the posts coded as about race—one of the topics included in Figure 1a—trained coders determined whether the post advanced a *progressive* or *conservative* theme.<sup>5</sup> Based on a careful reading of a sample of posts and extant scholarship (Abaied and Perry 2021; Engelhardt 2021b; Kilgo and Harlow 2019), we characterized posts as *progressive* if they advanced multicultural themes related to diversity and desegregation, discussed white privilege, or highlighted people of color's experiences with discrimination.<sup>6</sup> We characterize posts as *conservative* if they discuss anti-white discrimination, advocate for silence about race, support All Lives Matter or dismiss BLM, or suggest white people are superior and/or Black people are inferior.<sup>7</sup> We subtract the conservative count from the progressive count to calculate the *net progressivism* of these posts about race.

Figure 1b plots net progressivism and shows a similar discontinuity around May 25. Not only did these

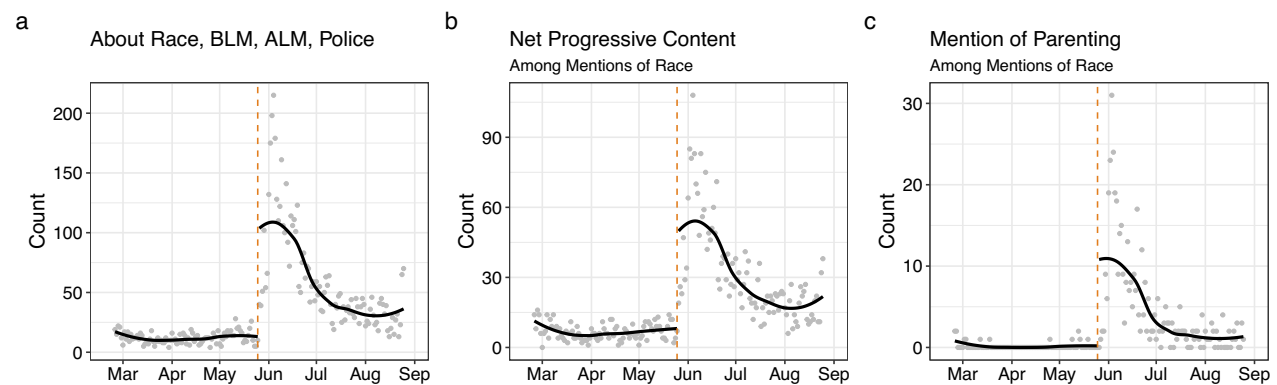
<sup>3</sup> Search terms were constructed by reading through a random sample of five hundred posts from the entire universe of 105,972 posts on these pages during this time period plus an additional one hundred posts from June 2020. Terms included: #blacklivesmatter, #blackmenmatter, #blackwomenmatter, "black lives matter," black, African American, racist, racial, race, racism, march, boycott, riot, protest, diversity, privilege, implicit bias, white, minority, discrimination, "of color," police, policing, "all lives matter," and justice.

<sup>4</sup> Race posts concern race in any sense: racial discrimination against any group including whites, the history of race in America, discussion of racialized experiences, ideas of multiculturalism/racial diversity, whether we should talk about race, and so forth. Police topics mention police, prisons, school-to-prison pipeline, jails, courts, traffic stops, arrests, and so forth. BLM topics directly mention the movement, including hashtags. This includes posts that mention the name of someone killed by the police or because of their race, including but not limited to Floyd, Taylor, and Arbery. All Lives Matter posts are those that mention All Lives Matter or Blue Lives Matter including as a hashtag or acronym or discuss the death of a police officer. We conducted interrater reliability checks for our four raters using 150 randomly selected posts. Fleiss' Kappas: 0.78 (race), 0.64 (police), and 0.72 (BLM). The training data included no ALM posts, preventing assessment. The dataset includes only a handful of these posts.

<sup>5</sup> 87% ( $n = 3,554$ ) of posts received codes. The remainder did not include content explicitly connected with progressive or conservative themes we considered ex ante.

<sup>6</sup> See the replication archive for more about this coding process. Fleiss' Kappas: 0.34 (multiculturalism), 0.65 (white), and 0.75 (non-white).

<sup>7</sup> Conservative content was again absent from the random sample used to assess interrater reliability. Few posts in the data received this mark.

**FIGURE 1. Posts on Public Facebook Parenting Pages by Topic and Nature of Content**

Note: Figures show posts about each topic on public Facebook parenting pages from March to September 2020, captured via CrowdTangle. Panel b and c consider only posts about race from panel a.

parenting pages feature more posts related to BLM themes after Floyd's murder, but this content was also disproportionately progressive in valence. Racially progressive content on public parenting pages spiked after George Floyd's murder and the resulting widespread protests, while backlash content in this period was limited. One might wonder whether these pages are simply political and progressive, but only 48 pages (35%) exhibited any clear political intention and only 5 pages (4%) had a clear progressive bent. In other words, these trends in content and valence are on overwhelmingly apolitical and nonprogressive parenting pages. These analyses provide evidence that movement activity pushed racial issues onto the child-rearing agenda and delivered progressive information about the issue of race. In the months immediately following the protests, rhetoric on these parenting pages was mostly in line with movement goals, advancing themes of diversity, white privilege, and empathy with non-white Americans.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, we examine whether the movement provided tips and tools to parents for how to engage in race socialization with their children. Coders recorded whether the posts about race from Figure 1a include some mention of parenting practices, tips, or tools, rather than simply discussing race themes more generally. This included articles, books, and podcasts with advice for talking with children about race and products for children that featured non-white characters or introduced concepts of racism. We note that all of these posts were on pages targeting parents, but here we highlight those posts specifically offering tips on *how* to parent around race. Figure 1c shows these mentions of parenting *practices* related to race over time. Posts about how to parent on issues of race were rare before

May 25 but increase immediately after Floyd's murder before declining through the summer. On average, 8%–10% of posts per day about race on these pages directly mentioned child-rearing practices. They provide tips about books to buy, television shows to watch, and ways to start and lead conversations with children to shape their racial attitudes.

We read each post coded as mentioning child-rearing practices to provide a qualitative analysis of their content. Posts feature several themes. First, many argue that talking about race with children is normatively good, necessary to foster progressive racial attitudes, and can enact change. These posts typically point out that children are not race-blind and that without explicit efforts to do otherwise, racist attitudes develop easily. An exemplar post from the page *MotherWoman* states:

We cannot ignore what is happening in the world around us and that our children are exposed to it. Talking to our children about racism and discrimination is necessary and can be uncomfortable for most parents. Necessary because racial bias in children starts as early as from the age of 3; uncomfortable because it means we have to address our own racial biases, too. #TeachLove.

A post from the page *Adoptive Families* similarly explains: "Racism exists, and it's our job as parents to talk about it with our kids. Start with this glossary of important terms."

Other posts center perspectives from parents of color. An essay by Kelly Yang shared by the page *Parents* describes a frightening experience at a park that forced her to discuss racism with her children. Other first-person experience posts by parents of color ask white parents to change their parenting practices. *TODAY Parents* shared a post by blogger Jehava Brown which asks white mothers to talk about racism with their children and to parent in a way that fosters inclusivity and positive images of Blackness.

Beyond demands to talk about race with kids, many posts included resources like videos, podcasts, articles,

<sup>8</sup> It is unlikely that our findings are Facebook-specific. Content analysis of Twitter posts and news coverage finds increases in movement-related terms, including a more progressive bent, during waves of BLM protest activity (Dunivin et al. 2022).

and book suggestions to aid parents in these conversations and to diversify children's media consumption. *TODAY Parents* told readers, "Books are a great way for kids an [sic] adolescents to learn about discrimination, oppression and diversity of experiences. Here are titles recommended by educators, librarians and civil-rights experts."

Collectively, the Facebook data suggest that the summer 2020 protest movement shifted the child-rearing agenda by providing tips and tools connecting the movement's race-progressive themes with child-rearing practices. Did this agenda and informational shift translate into observable differences in how socializing agents' engaged with children? We turn to this question next.

## NEW CHILD-REARING CHOICES AFTER MAY 2020

We investigate whether and how one socializing agent, white parents, responded to the short-term agenda-setting effect the Facebook data indicate. When protests erupted in summer 2020, most summer activities were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures continued into the fall. Cut off from schools and peers, parents became the primary, perhaps only, caretakers of their children (Heggeness and Fields 2020). As many parents sought at-home activities and entertainment to occupy their children, were their choices shaped by BLM rhetoric and goals?

We collected survey data on a nationally diverse sample of 1,083 non-Hispanic white parents with at least one only-white school-age child. Fielded online December 18–20, 2020 via Lucid Marketplace, we asked parents to self-report their engagement on a range of race-focused behaviors that reflect the tips, tools, and frames in the Facebook data and that are shown by others to matter for racial attitude development (Apfelbaum et al. 2010; Katz 2003; Smith and Ross 2006). We quota sampled on gender, age, and region to approximate the white parenting population based on the Current Population Survey. We refer to this survey as the Racial Parenting Survey (RPS).<sup>9</sup>

RPS respondents were asked to reflect on their actions since May 2020, an approximately 7-month period spanning the start of the summer protests to when the survey was fielded. Over three batteries, respondents reported on (1) their children's in-home entertainment and (2) whether they engaged their children in community-oriented activities with principles of diversity, racial discrimination, and white privilege in mind.<sup>10</sup> In total, respondents reported on 12 different types of activities listed in Table 1. If they reported engaging in any action, they were then asked

if they had ever completed this action prior to May 2020.<sup>11</sup>

Behavioral self-reports have well-known challenges, and it is important to be clear about what these data can and cannot tell us. These data represent a unique sample of parents targeting population benchmarks that go above-and-beyond previous works (Abaied and Perry 2021; Hagerman 2018; Sullivan, Eberhardt, and Roberts 2021), but respondents still come from an opt-in panel, which means our data may not represent the population at large. In an attempt to account for this, we subject our analyses to a variety of weighting schemes generated from reputable samples, which produce similar results.<sup>12</sup> Still, caution should be taken when abstracting to population estimates. Second, respondents can have difficulty recalling or accurately reporting their behaviors. Best practices suggest self-reports are most accurate when they are tied to a specific time bound or important events, and with response options simplified as "did / did not" (Krosnick and Presser 2010). Using this binary response type, we anchor our question wording to a specific date—"since May 2020"—which represents a critical event for American respondents given the widespread protests. We consider reports of behaviors done before this date as well, but in our analyses, run models comparing only behaviors reported in this briefer, and likely more precise, time window. Third, respondents may be motivated to report actions that they did not take, but which are consistent with broader societal expectations. One interpretation of these results, then, is they reflect not behavioral reports but instead what respondents *felt* was demanded of them during this period—a measure still of the ways politics informs socialization priorities. Finally, these data should be considered alongside other pieces of evidence that, collectively, suggest movement activity informs child-rearing preferences. While no single piece of evidence is decisive, these data provide insight into the specific actions and choices parents may have considered during this period.

We are interested in broad response patterns rather than item-specific changes and, therefore, create two distinct indicator variables. The first—*in-home*—captures private actions in the home that primarily involve consumption patterns around race-based books, toys, and media. For instance, parents were asked if they bought or borrowed a book that "discussed how people from other racial or ethnic groups are sometimes still discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity." The second indicator—*public-facing*—

<sup>9</sup> This study was deemed exempt by the Vanderbilt University IRB #202385.

<sup>10</sup> The question prompt read: "Now, some questions about things you may have done with or for your child[ren] recently. Since May 2020, did you...." The exact wordings of the mark-one-or-more response options are in Table 1.

<sup>11</sup> "Here are things you reported doing since May 2020. Please tell us whether you did these things for the first time since May 2020 or whether you had done them before in the lifetime of your child[ren]."

<sup>12</sup> Pairing opt-in samples with post-sample adjustments like weighting typically recovers national benchmarks (Caughey et al. 2020; Mercer et al. 2017). Given space constraints, we report in an additional file hosted with the replication archive how different weighting schemes produce substantive conclusions like those reported for both the descriptive and correlational analyses and how additional respondent checks (e.g., straightlining) point to fair quality.

**TABLE 1. Items in Parenting Practices Indicators**

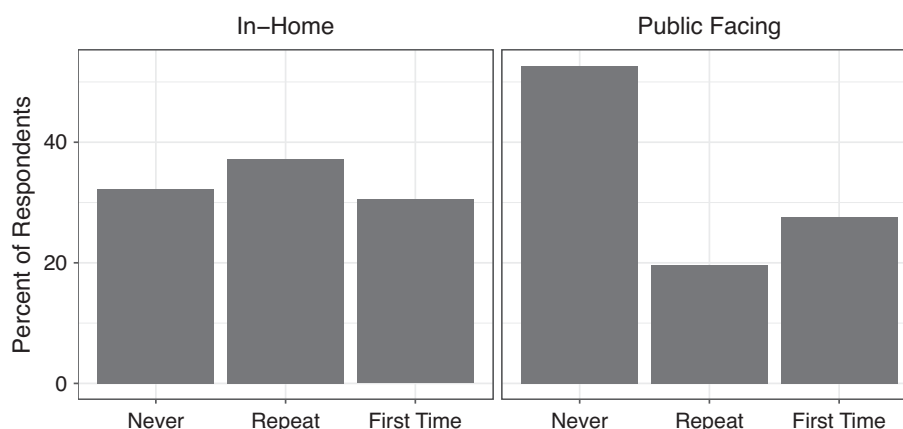
Items	
<b>In-home</b>	Buy or borrow a book because it had characters or people who are a different race than you
	Buy or borrow a book about important people in the history of other racial or ethnic groups
	Buy or borrow a book that discussed how people from other racial or ethnic groups are sometimes still discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity
	Buy or borrow a book that provided tips to you about discussing race and discrimination with your child(ren)
	Purchase new art, clothing, or toys for your child(ren) because it featured characters or people of a different race than you
	Watch a movie or TV show with your child(ren) because it featured characters or people a different race than you
<b>Public-facing</b>	Change a child's school, daycare provider, or place they usually play for one with more children of different races than you
	Attend a Black Lives Matter protest with your child(ren)
	Help your child(ren) make a yard sign or other art supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement
	Bring your child(ren) to a community meeting where issues related to race or the police were being discussed
	Attend an anti-racism workshop/webinar with your child(ren)
	Attend an anti-racism parenting workshop/webinar

captures community-oriented and collective action activities like taking a child to a protest or community meeting focused on issues of race. These actions are those that are publicly observable outside the home and most require resources or opportunities coordinated with others. Both indicators are coded as 1 if respondents did any of these actions, and 0 otherwise.

Using these indicators, we sort respondents into three categories. *First timers* reported engaging in any of the activities for the first time during this period; they had not completed these activities before May 2020. *Repeaters* completed at least one activity between May and December 2020 and also reported doing this activity some time before May 2020. Finally, *never doers* reported doing none of the activities between May and December 2020. We repeat this categorization process separately for the in-home and public-facing indicators: first timers for the in-home category could be never doers for public-facing activities, and vice versa.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of our sample across the categories for both indicators. Taking in-home activities first, roughly one-third of respondents fall into each category. Thirty-two percent are *never doers*—they engaged in none of the in-home consumption-oriented behaviors between May and December 2020. Another 37% are *repeaters*: they engaged in at least one of these behaviors during this period, but report also pursuing this activity prior to the protests. Most interestingly from the perspective of our research question, 31% of our sample are *first-timers*: they report engaging in one of these race-focused activities for the *first time* during this period.

Turning to public-facing actions, our white parent sample skews toward *never doers*. 53% of respondents reported doing none of the public-facing actions we measured in the approximately half year in question. Another 20% reported having done these actions during this period and also at some time in the past, a

**FIGURE 2. Distribution of Parents across Action Indicators**



marked 17 percentage point decrease from the in-home actions. But, again, over one-quarter of respondents (28%) were first-timers: they brought their child to a BLM protest, made a BLM sign with their child, sought out community meetings and anti-racism workshops, or even changed their school or daycare for one with more racial diversity in the 6 months immediately following George Floyd's murder. These are actions that others have shown can have a lasting effect on children's political orientations and racial attitudes (Katz 2003; Raychaudhuri 2018).

At least some respondents likely misreport their behavior in our study, either unintentionally or not, and yet alternative data sources corroborate our results. Consumer data on children's book purchases like those captured by our *in-home* variable show validated changes in purchasing behavior: *The Hate U Give*, a young adult book featuring discussions of discrimination and police violence, increased its average *New York Times* bestsellers ranking from 4.7 to 2.5 after George Floyd's death. *I Am Enough*, a book featuring themes of diversity, moved up in its ranking by four spots and remained a bestseller for 18 weeks.<sup>13</sup> Evidence of *public-facing* actions consistent with our estimates also appear in the 2020 ANES. Looking to reports of three participatory acts similar to those in our indicator (attending a protest, working with other people to deal with some issue facing their community, attending a meeting about an issue facing their local community or schools), we find 38% of white parents in the ANES report engagement compared to 47% of our sample who report one of the six items in our measure. This suggests that our sample does not necessarily overrepresent politically active individuals.

We next consider heterogeneity among our white parent respondents, focusing on how partisanship, COVID-19-induced time spent with children, and local protest activity predict race socialization choices consistent with movement messaging. We measure partisanship using the standard 7-point scale, rescaled 0 (strong Democrat) to 1 (strong Republican). We expect Democratic parents will be more likely to respond to movement demands in their parenting choices given partisan polarization and how partisanship increasingly incorporates other race-related predispositions (Engelhardt, Feldman, and Hetherington 2023; Jardina and Ollerenshaw 2022; Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck 2022). We also include a measure of whether respondents report reduced working hours or, alternatively, left the workforce, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic during this period. BLM might have provided parents with new concepts about race and connected them to child-rearing, but a reduction in parents' working hours and simultaneous increases in caregiving might have contributed to more race-related parenting choices. Respondents whose

employment situation was unaffected serve as the reference category.

Local protest activity may provide opportunities for parents to involve their children in public-facing actions or increase the salience of movement aims within a local community (e.g., Enos, Kaufman, and Sands 2019). We merge our survey data with information from ACLED on the location and nature of protest activity during this time (Raleigh et al. 2010). We focus on peaceful protests as they typically emphasize movement goals the most (Wasow 2020), and the chance a protest turns violent likely reduces parents' desire to attend with their children. For each respondent, we create a variable—proportion peaceful protest—indicating the share of BLM protest events defined as peaceful within 25 miles of their zip code between May 25, 2020, and our survey fielding.<sup>14</sup> In addition to these main independent variables, we include a variety of zip-code-level covariates (proportion Black, proportion with a college degree, median income, and Biden's two-party vote margin [Daily Kos 2022]) and individual-level covariates (how much respondents say they have heard about BLM, how much they say they understand BLM, respondent age, income, education, gender, and age of their oldest child).

We estimate two linear models for each indicator. In the first, we compare those who did not take any of these actions between May and December 2020 (0) to those who did (1)—that is, both first-timers and repeaters. In the second, we remove the repeaters to compare those who did not take these actions (0) to those who say they did for the first time after May 2020 (1). This allows an apples-to-apples comparison by taking out repeaters—those in our sample who might habitually take action when it comes to race and parenting—and also eliminates reports from a longer time period, which may be less accurate.

Table 2 presents the results.<sup>15</sup> We find clear partisan differences in parenting choices across models. Strong Republicans are 15 percentage points less likely to take in-home actions compared to strong Democrats in the first model ( $p < 0.001$ ) and 10 percentage points less likely to do so for the first time ( $p = 0.084$ ). For public-facing actions, strong Republicans are 13 percentage points less likely than strong Democrats to report engaging their children in coordinated, outward-facing collective action consistent with BLM principles ( $p < 0.001$ ), and 12 percentage points less likely when comparing first-timers to never-doers ( $p < 0.01$ ).<sup>16</sup> At least in our sample, many of those

<sup>13</sup> We are grateful to a reviewer who suggested we validate our findings with real-world behavioral data. The replication archive contains a supplement providing additional detail on these sales data.

<sup>14</sup> We thank a helpful reviewer for this suggestion. We chose 25 miles to capture readily accessible protests. Supplementary Table A.2 reports models considering protest intensity instead of share peaceful.

<sup>15</sup> Full results including all controls are in Supplementary Table A.1.

<sup>16</sup> One might expect partisanship to moderate our other independent variables: because partisanship bundles views of BLM in particular, Black people in general, and authoritarianism, white Democratic parents might be particularly responsive to local protest or race socialization opportunities from COVID-19-induced labor force participation changes. Additional analyses in Supplementary Tables A.3 and A.4 show no evidence partisanship consistently moderates the link between our other constructs and behavior reports.



**TABLE 2. Correlates of Parenting Actions Compared to Never-Doers**

	In-home actions		Public-facing actions	
	Any	First time	Any	First time
Partisanship (Republican)	−0.146* (0.039)	−0.091 (0.053)	−0.128* (0.038)	−0.119* (0.044)
<i>COVID-19 employment changes (Ref. cat = No change)</i>				
Left workforce	0.050 (0.060)	0.042 (0.063)	0.040 (0.049)	0.050 (0.051)
Reduced hours	0.121* (0.034)	0.229* (0.045)	0.184* (0.033)	0.160* (0.036)
Prop. peaceful protests	−0.022 (0.154)	0.042 (0.183)	0.148 (0.138)	0.286* (0.140)
Constant	0.674* (0.164)	0.519* (0.197)	0.204 (0.143)	−0.051 (0.145)
Individual covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zip covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓
No. of obs.	803	501	803	663
R <sup>2</sup>	0.191	0.366	0.377	0.339
Residual std. error	0.430	0.403	0.395	0.383

Note: OLS regressions; robust standard errors in parentheses. Measures scaled 0–1. Covariates included but not presented (Supplementary Table A.1 has full models). Models labeled “Any” compare those who report actions after May 2020 (1) to those who do not report taking action (0). Models labeled “First time” restrict the sample to never-doers (0) and first timers (1), thus providing a more restrictive test by comparing parents who do not habitually take these actions. \* $p < 0.05$ .

white parents reporting new progressive parenting actions during this period were Democrats, evidence consistent with our theory that predispositions moderate responsiveness to movement goals within child-rearing practices.

Regarding COVID-19-related employment changes, we find no differences between respondents who left the workforce compared to those with no employment changes, but a clear difference emerges for those whose working hours diminished. In the first model, parents who reported reduced working hours have a 0.12 higher probability of taking in-home actions with their children compared to those who had no change in employment. When we restrict the model to first timers and never-doers, the coefficient nearly doubles to 0.23 and remains significant. The public-facing results are similar. Those who report a reduction in workforce hours have a 0.18 and 0.16 higher probability of taking public-facing action across the two specifications. In our sample, then, parents whose workforce hours decreased during the pandemic—and presumably, whose caregiving hours increased—were more likely to engage in progressive race-related parenting than those with consistent employment. Without the pandemic, BLM’s potential relevance for progressive race parenting likely would have been smaller.

Finally, we turn to local protest activity. The proportion of peaceful protests has no relationship to in-home activities—but it is positively associated with engaging in public-facing actions, a relationship that is only significant for first-timers compared to never-doers ( $p = 0.041$ ). Respondents living near only-peaceful protests were 29 percentage points more likely to engage their children in public-facing race politics for the first

time in the months after Floyd’s murder compared to those near few peaceful protests; this is true even when controlling for many contextual and individual-level covariates potentially related to political activity, partisanship, and race attitudes. Peaceful protests may have opened opportunities for our white parent sample to include their children in movement politics and increased the likelihood they would do so for the first time.

## PRIMING BLM CHANGES SOCIALIZATION PRIORITIES

White parents reported changes to their race socialization practices in the months after the 2020 protests, but people without young children may also seek to channel their political preferences into children’s socialization. School curriculum offers a mechanism to do so. As schools reopened in 2021–22, how did white Americans think about exposing kids to progressive race concepts related to the police, discrimination, and white privilege in public schools?

We fielded a survey experiment to 1,800 respondents via Lucid Theorem in March 2022 to examine whether BLM messaging causes changes to whites’ prioritization of race-related curriculum.<sup>17</sup> Our study’s timing—

<sup>17</sup> This study was deemed expedited and approved by the William & Mary IRB #PHSC-2021-04-13-14937-mlisraeltrumme. We preregistered the experiment on AsPredicted with analyses constrained only to white respondents. But we agree with a thoughtful reviewer that readers might be interested in the results among respondents of color. We provide this in Supplementary Table A.16, where we do not

nearly 2 years after the height of BLM protests—allows us to test for long-term impacts of movement politics on socialization priorities. Agenda setting from the 2020 summer protests should provide individuals with concepts for thinking about race socialization—even at this much later point. For some, movement and backlash concepts will be chronically relevant and consistently connected to behavior. For others, these concepts will lie dormant in long-term memory, available to influence decisions when activated.

Our survey experiment assesses this activation process. Respondents evaluated the visual appeal and readability of three signs with the phrase, “Sale: Everything Must Go.” This task was practice for our experiment: after evaluating this first set of signs, respondents were randomized to one of three conditions and asked to complete this task again with a new set of three signs. The *control* condition said “Big Summer Parade.” The *political* condition said “Vote for Campbell.” And, the *BLM* condition said “Black Lives Matter.” Inspired by Margolis (2018), signs shared colors, fonts, and layouts across conditions; only the phrase changed.

These phrases resemble each other in length but alter specific theoretical components. “Black Lives Matter” captures both the movement’s name and political message. The phrase bundles together multiple concepts connected to movement politics: it may bring to mind the actual activists who chant this phrase; the protests that hold this title; a set of organizing principles; or simply, the sentiment of progressive race concepts pushed for by the movement (e.g., Enos, Kaufman, and Sands 2019). We expect that simply reading “Black Lives Matter” primes this movement-related information stored in long-term memory—both positive and negative—which could then influence subsequent decisions, especially when criteria to make the decision are ambiguous (Fiske and Taylor 2021).

We compare this treatment to the control, “Big Summer Parade.” This placebo is conceptually similar to the nonpolitical aspects of protests: parades are large gatherings with a special, collective purpose. Like protests, they disrupt traffic, can be loud, and may leave behind litter. We selected “summer” because the 2020 BLM protest wave began at the end of May and continued through June and July. Finally, “Vote for Campbell” is designed to prime politics (Kam and Zechmeister 2013).<sup>18</sup> Given the inseparability of race and partisanship in the United States (Westwood and

Peterson 2022; Zhirkov and Valentino 2022), we want to ensure patterns associated with the BLM prime are due to the movement specifically, not politics generally.

After the evaluation task, respondents chose a summer reading book for local 8th grade students.<sup>19</sup> Respondents viewed four books from summer reading lists (Books-A-Million N.d.; Tolkien 2021), each described with a cover image, brief summary, and current Amazon review score (Figure 3). The books were: *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Nimona*, *The Call of the Wild*, and *The Hate U Give*. *The Hate U Give* is the only choice with Black characters on the cover and dealing with issues of police violence. We test whether exposure to a mere mention of BLM increases selection of *The Hate U Give* (1) relative to the other three books (0).

Our book selection dependent variable has many strengths. First, our survey indicated parents frequently responded to movement activism by increasing their child’s exposure to racial diversity and racial politics through books. Book lists featuring Black characters and issues of racism were also common in the Facebook data. Second, using book selection increases our experiment’s realism by asking about an actual curricular choice. Political fights in states and school districts over books like *The Hate U Give* increase our study’s ecological validity. However, curricular attitudes around actual books may also be crystallized: if respondents already have strong opinions on our book of interest, we might not find treatment effects. Using an actual book that spiked in purchasing 2 years earlier in response to BLM protest makes, if anything, our treatment a harder test of the hypotheses than using a hypothetical book.

Our hypotheses suggest that reactions to this movement-connected prime will depend on predispositions captured via partisan identity. We interact our treatments with a categorical variable indicating party identification: Independents ( $N = 131$ ), Democrats ( $N = 532$ ), and Republicans ( $N = 569$ ).<sup>20</sup> We expect that compared to the control, priming BLM should matter only among Democrats.

Table 3 confirms this hypothesis. In the pooled sample (Model 1), we observe no main treatment effects, but partisan identity creates significant and heterogeneous outcomes (Model 2). The results show insignificant differences between Democrats and Republicans compared to Independents (the suppressed category) in the control condition. But Democrats exposed to the BLM prime are significantly more likely than those in the control condition, and compared to other partisan groups in the BLM treatment, to choose *The Hate U*


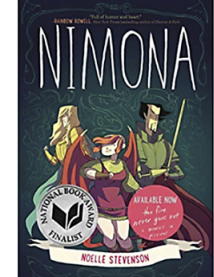
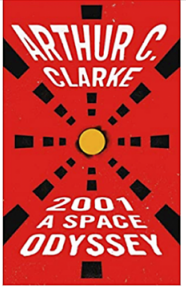

identify treatment effects. While our study is not designed to test for effects among non-white Americans and, as a result, the subset of respondents of color is quite small, this is an area ripe for further inquiry. We also preregistered dropping inattentive respondents but concerns about bias motivated our choice to analyze the full sample in the article. Supplementary Figures A.2 and A.3 restrict to those who passed attention checks with similar results. Appendix 4 of the Supplementary Material discusses informative differences on additional outcomes, included after our focal dependent variable. We find priming effects on another behavioral self-report (volunteering at a hypothetical MLK Day event at a local school) but not on preferences over what specific ideas children should learn about race.

<sup>18</sup> Campbell is a racially ambiguous name (U.S. Census Bureau 2021).

<sup>19</sup> The question read: “Many communities have summer reading programs that require students to read an assigned book, write a response paper, and discuss the book in school. If your local school board was considering options for their 8th grade summer reading program, which of the four options below would you encourage them to select?”

<sup>20</sup> Partisanship is coded into three categories using the standard 7-point scale with leaners coded as partisans (see the questionnaire in the replication archive; Anoll, Engelhardt, and Israel-Trummel 2024).

**FIGURE 3. Outcome Measure: 8th Grade Summer Reading Options as Displayed to Respondents**

<p><b>The Hate You Give</b> By: Angie Thomas</p> <p>A multi-award-winning novel about Starr Carter, a teenager who has one foot in the exclusive preppy world of her school and the other foot in the deprived neighborhood of her home. When her best friend is shot by a police officer, she is the only person who knows what really happened.</p> <p>Amazon rating: 4.8/5</p>		<p><b>Nimona</b> By: Noelle Stevenson</p> <p>This is no ordinary story about dragons and heroes. Nimona is a classic graphic novel in the making – peppered with ironic observations and quick, pointed humor that will appeal to 8<sup>th</sup> grade readers. Stunningly illustrated.</p> <p>Amazon rating: 4.7/5</p>	
<p><b>2001 A Space Odyssey</b> By: Arthur C. Clarke</p> <p>When a scientist discovers a mysterious object on the Moon, mankind embarks on an expedition to the furthest reaches of space in search of an alien civilization. However, the voyage is a slowly building battle between man and computer, heading toward an inevitable catastrophe.</p> <p>Amazon rating: 4.7/5</p>		<p><b>The Call of the Wild</b> By: Jack London</p> <p>Life is good for Buck in Santa Clara Valley, where he spends his days eating and sleeping in the golden sunshine. But one day an act of betrayal leads to his kidnap, and he is forced into a life of toil and danger. Dragged away to be a sledge dog in the harsh and freezing cold Yukon, Buck must fight for his survival. Can he rise above his enemies and become the master of his realm once again?</p> <p>Amazon rating: 4.7/5</p>	

**TABLE 3. Effect of Treatments on Selecting Diverse Book**

	Model 1	Model 2
(Intercept)	0.26 (0.02)*	0.26 (0.06)*
BLM treatment	0.03 (0.03)	-0.08 (0.09)
Political treatment	0.00 (0.03)	0.01 (0.09)
Democrat		0.10 (0.07)
Republican		-0.08 (0.07)
BLM × Democrat		0.21 (0.10)*
Political × Democrat		0.00 (0.10)
BLM × Republican		0.01 (0.10)
Political × Republican		-0.03 (0.10)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.09
No. of obs.	1,233	1,232

Note: Party coded as 3 category variable with Independents as the reference category. \* $p < 0.05$ .

*Give* for summer reading. This is the only subgroup for which we observe a significant treatment effect.

To clarify the interpretation of our interaction model, we plot in Figure 4 the average effect of exposure to the political and BLM treatments compared to the control for Democrats and Republicans with 95% confidence intervals. In the control condition, 35.2% of Democratic respondents selected the book featuring a Black character on the cover and that focused on police violence. In the BLM condition, 48.6% did so—a 38% increase in probability; Democrats who viewed the slogan and name of the movement, “Black Lives

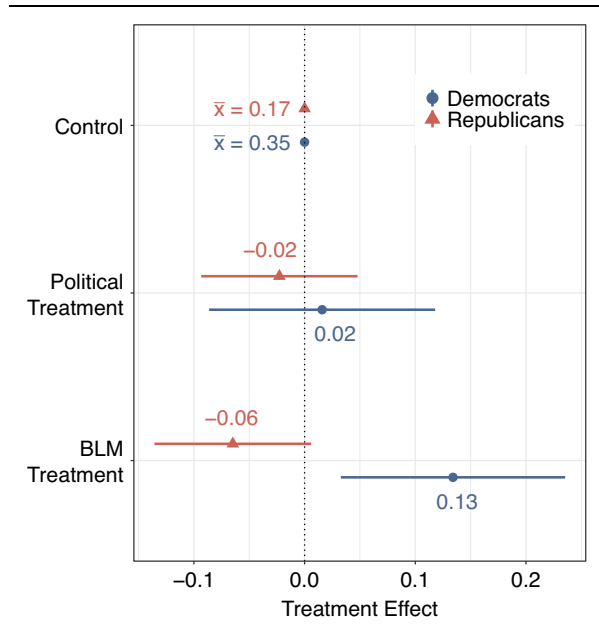
Matter,” were significantly more likely to choose *The Hate U Give* as the summer reading book ( $t = 2.59$ ,  $p = 0.01$  compared to the control).<sup>21</sup> The political treatment, however, has no effect on book choice compared to the control. This suggests the observed shift is activated by the reminder of the social movement specifically and not by politics generally.

We observe an opposite-signed effect among Republicans, though it misses traditional levels of significance. Republicans who were asked to rate the attractiveness and readability of three signs with the words “Black Lives Matter” were less likely to choose *The Hate U Give* compared to the control condition ( $t = 1.83$ ,  $p = 0.07$  in a two-tailed  $t$ -test). The smaller magnitude of this result and its statistical insignificance may reflect a floor effect: in the control condition, only 17.4% of Republicans selected *The Hate U Give*, about half the number for Democrats assigned to the same condition ( $t = 3.98$ ,  $p = 0.00$  in a two-tailed  $t$ -test). It is also possible that because we fielded this survey when anti-CRT activism was high, Republicans were crystallized in opposition to curricular materials dealing with issues of race and policing. As with Democrats, the political condition elicits no treatment effect among Republicans compared to the control.

Our expectations focus on partisans, but we can also explore the small subsample of independents—the reference category in Model 2 of Table 3. The model and

<sup>21</sup> This effect is robust to Bonferroni correction ( $p = 0.029$ ) and to modeling using planned contrasts (Supplementary Tables A.13 and A.14).



**FIGURE 4. Treatment Effect on Selecting Book about Race by Party**

Note: The mean value in the control condition is shown on the plot for both Democratic and Republican subsamples to aid in interpreting treatment effects. The plot shows the effect of the treatments on selecting *The Hate U Give* for the summer reading program compared to the control condition and 95% confidence intervals for the difference in means. Means reported in Supplementary Table A.13.

Supplementary Figure A.1 show independents more closely mirror Republicans in their response to the treatments: the political treatment produces a small, nonsignificant effect for this group (0.01), while the BLM treatment elicits a negative effect (−0.08). While these estimates are imprecise due to small sample size, it appears Democrats are moved to support curricular materials focused on issues of racism and discrimination when primed with BLM, while Republicans and independents are not.

If Americans in general see socialization as a way to control the political future of the nation, we would expect people with and without young children to respond similarly to the BLM prime by updating their socialization preferences. We test if treatment effects vary by whether respondents have young children (Supplementary Table A.15). Interaction models show insignificant differences in response to the treatments by status as a parent of young children. White Americans who do not have children under 18 appear to show an equally strong interest in formal policies contributing to race socialization—a finding that has emerged in studies of school-related race policies during earlier periods (Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979). Our findings suggest that the American electorate agrees with Aristotle, Rousseau, and hooks—the public, and not just parents, has a stake in crafting the nation's future through the socialization of children.

## A RESEARCH AGENDA ON POLITICS AND CHILD SOCIALIZATION

How political socialization at home and in school promotes the continuation of political regimes is an important contribution of behavior scholarship over the last century (Jennings and Niemi 1974; Merriam 1934). Yet, we know little about the politics in political socialization or how what happens within families connects to what is happening outside of them (Conover 1991; Stoker and Bass 2011). Using 2020 BLM protest activity as a case study, we find salient political events such as social movements may change practices and preferences for how children learn about race. Many in our white parent sample, but especially Democrats and those spending increased time with their children, enacted new socialization choices in response to a changing information environment connected to race-progressive movement activism. Peaceful local protests, too, gave respondents the opportunity to draw their children into race politics and collective action for the first time.

Our findings are not confined only to in-home socializing choices or to the protests' aftermath. Nearly 2 years after Floyd's murder—when millions of Americans took to the streets in summer 2020—reminding white Americans of the BLM movement changes their socialization preferences for school curricula. Our results suggest both that movement concepts are stored in long-term memory and that the politics of socializing children is a topic even those without young children care about.

We have focused our attention on the white public because they are a group less likely to respond positively to political demands for action on racial justice (Davis and Wilson 2022), but movement politics may also shape non-white groups' socialization choices. Non-Black minoritized Americans, including Latinos and Asian Americans, can express anti-Black racism (e.g., Pérez, Robertson, and Vicuña 2023; Tokeshi 2023), and parents in these groups may respond to movement activism by changing parenting practices as well. Parents of color, too, vary in how they race socialize their children and how comfortable they feel doing so (Christophe et al. 2022). BLM could have shifted these characteristics, altering either the messages non-white parents bring into their home or community priorities for curricular material (Sullivan, Eberhardt, and Roberts 2021). Future work should more directly assess such connections to understand politicized socialization across and within the U.S. racial hierarchy.

We note that our findings contrast with Sullivan, Eberhardt, and Roberts (2021), who discover no changes in white parents' conversations about race in the immediate aftermath of the protests. Our exploration departs from this research in a handful of important ways that may explain this discrepancy. First, our measures capture the half-year period following the height of the BLM protests compared to a month from the day of Floyd's murder. It is possible white parents—those most hesitant and uncomfortable bringing explicit race discussions into their home—needed time to learn from social movement frames and absorb new



norms (and pressures) before they engaged their children on these topics. Second, Sullivan, Eberhardt, and Roberts (2021) examine the frequency and type of discussions within a household. Our measures in contrast capture behaviors: consumption patterns and collective action choices that we corroborate with other types of data. Past research suggests that discussion has important long-term effects on children, but so, too, do the types of media parents bring into their home, the racial environment to which they expose their children, and the patterns they build with respect to political participation (Katz 2003; Plutzer 2002; Raychaudhuri 2018; Sears and Valentino 1997).

Our discipline has made substantial contributions to the study of social movements by exploring how the public forms support for or opposition to movement demands, how legislators respond to activism, and how policy changes follow (Enos, Kaufman, and Sands 2019; Gause 2022; Gillion 2013; 2020; Lee 2002; Reny and Newman 2021). We point to a subtler movement effect. By changing norms and affecting how people think about teaching children, social movements may yield long-term attitudinal changes in the future public. However, our survey sample suggests reception to social movement rhetoric around child socialization priorities is constrained. Political dispositions—especially party—moderate its uptake as do contextual factors outside movement control. The COVID-19 pandemic likely complemented movement efforts by providing white parents with additional opportunities to engage in race socialization.

All movements face counter-movements, and one racial project is almost immediately met with the next (King and Smith 2005; Omi and Winant 1994; Parker 2021; Weaver 2007). Whether the progressive race messages from 2020, and the accompanying actions of socializing agents, will have long-term consequences on American racial ideology remains unclear. Continued scholarship should consider how backlash messages gain traction and the effects on parenting behavior or priorities in school curriculum (e.g., Chudy and Jefferson 2021).

In his famous essay, “From Protest to Politics,” Bayard Rustin (1965) wrote of the Civil Rights Movement,

Neither that movement nor the country’s twenty million black people can win political power alone. We need allies. The future of the Negro struggle depends on whether the contradictions of this society can be resolved by a coalition of progressive forces which becomes the effective political majority in the United States.

Is targeting child-rearing a pathway for creating such a coalition? Only time will tell how the next generation of Americans manifests their racial attitudes. In the meantime, one thing is clear: political socialization is also *politicized*.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424000273>.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the American Political Science Review Dataverse: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/WYUGQ9>. Limitations on data availability are discussed in the Supplementary Material.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

## ETHICAL STANDARDS

The authors declare the human subjects research in this article was reviewed and approved by IRBs at Vanderbilt University and William & Mary and certificate numbers are provided in the text. The authors affirm that this article adheres to the principles concerning research with human participants laid out in APSA’s Principles and Guidance on Human Subject Research (2020).

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