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"WHO ASKED FOR THIS?": AUTHENTICITY AND RACE-CENTERED CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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“WHO ASKED FOR THIS?”:
AUTHENTICITY AND RACE-CENTERED CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
GAYLORD COLLEGE OF
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BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Preface

In January 2021, I was invited to accompany a class trip to Tulsa, Oklahoma with Drs. Meta Carstarphen and Karlos Hill to tour Greenwood, the site of one of the worse race massacres in America. As efforts were being made to prepare for the Tulsa Race Massacre centennial, which would occur May 31-June 2. 2021, the Tulsa Race Massacre Commision – a group of politicians and community leaders, was on a full out public relations and fundraising mission to increase visibility and raise funds for a slate of projects planned throughout the year. During the class trip, we were treated to a lunch where a panel of commission members shared with us that they had secured partnership with the Professional Golf Association (PGA), Ironman Triathalon, and Nationwide Bank. PGA would be hosting a tournament in Tulsa during the centennial events and decided to use their platform to bring awareness to the events that took place in 1921. Ironman Triathalon, which is televised globally, would create a course that would run through Greenwood to raise visibility. Nationwide Bank would be hosting an Economic Empowerment day during the centennial events to honor the legacy of Black Wall Street.

When I got home, I told a friend of mine, a political scientist, about the corporate involvement in the centennial. His response was "that's stupid." As we went back and forth, it occurred to me that there is a tension that exists between increasing visibility and resources for racial issues and honoring and preserving the sacredness of Black history and Black life. In Tulsa, in particular, it was an event that required honoring the Black lives lost, the Black lives that survived, and the land regarded as sacred. This got me to thinking about how we go about resolving this tension, via the thoughts and opinions of the Black folks whose history and lives were being engaged. That's the genesis for this dissertation – thinking about how we ask Black people to tell us what they need to feel like they are being respected and not being exploited.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize and operationalize *race-centered CSR,* a combination of corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy concerned with repairing racial relationships and inequities, and test perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSA. Authenticity in CSR and CSA has assumed a universal consumer, however authenticity, as a cultural construct, suggests that social identity can motivate how groups of people come to understand it. As corporate social responsibility efforts increasingly center race, race itself becomes a new measure by which to understand how those efforts are seen as authentic. The study surveyed 586 Blacks and non-Blacks using a modified version of Alhouti, Johonson, and Holloway's (2016) consumer perceptions of CSR authenticity scale, Sellers et al.'s (1997) Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) scale, and adapted measures using the concepts of reconciliation and cultural commodification to conceptualize race-centered CSR and perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR. Two new scales were developed to measure perceptions of commodification and reconciliatory discourse as antecedents for race-centered CSR activities. Findings of this study suggests that there are universal understandings of authenticity in race-centered ***and*** of what commodification of Black culture is in the context of race-centered CSR. More importantly, the recognition of commodification of Black culture is related to perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR. In addition, there are subtle differences in demographic drivers for Blacks and non-blacks, particularly political ideology (conservative Blacks vs. liberal whites) and education, age, and marital status of Black respondents in perceptions of authencitiy of race-centered CSR. This study contributes to The study contributes to the body of literature on critical approaches to corporate social responsibility.

Key words: *race-centered CSR, corporate social responsibility, race, authenticity, social identity, corporate social advocacy*.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Contextual Background: Black Lives Matter, CSR, and CSA

The contentious summer of 2020 operationalized and contextualized the U.S.'s race problem. Following the killing of George Floyd, Ahmed Aubrey, and Breonna Taylor, the polarized U.S. presidential election between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, and the COVID-19 pandemic which sparked an increase in Asian hate, the United States was faced with racial realities and tensions in a post-Obama, color-blind society (Carstarphen & Welch, 2017). As publics continue to lose trust in government systems, there is a greater expectation of businesses to lead in addressing societal problems (Edelman, 2022). Samson (2022) notes that businesses are the "world's most trusted of the four collective instutitons of government, business, NGOs and the media" (para. 2). As such, stakeholders want businesses to engage in finding solutions to social issues (Samson, 2022). Zheng (2020) points out that the events in 2020 have shifted consumer demand desire for corporations to be engaged in social good.

In response to demands that corporations reflect on and reckon with their own historical connections to racial injustice and discriminatory practices, numerous companies have shifted messaging and made significant financial commitments to amplify the fight for racial equality and demonstrate allyship for Black people and other communities of color (Jan, McGregor & Hoyer, 2021). For example, Nike created the "For Once, Don't Do It" campaign that pledged $40 million over four years to social justice organizations (Grundy, 2018). Ben & Jerry's created a new ice cream flavor "The Change is Brewing" to promote the People's Response Act, legislation proposed by Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., that seeks to curb the disproportionate share of police violence against people with mental illnesses and other health complications (Kurtz,

2021). Netflix's showcased its "Black Lives Matter" collection, which featured over 45 titles about racial injustice and the experience of Black Americans (Spangler, 2020). In a tweet, the company stated, "When we say 'Black Lives Matter,' we also mean 'Black storytelling matters.' With an understanding that our commitment to true, systemic change will take time – we're starting by highlighting powerful and complex narratives about the Black experience" (Netflix, 2020). In 2020, Ralph Lauren committed to take on racial equity and "reexamine how the company portrays the American dream" (Ralph Lauren Corporation, 2022). The company pledged $2 million to support scholarships for students at Morehouse and Spellman Collges and 10 additional HBCUs and collaborated with Morehouse and Spelman Colleges to create a limited-edition collection that celebrates the rich heritage and esteemed traditions of HBCUs (Ralph Lauren Corporation, 2022). In order "to tackle racial diversity within its highest ranks and to include more items from Black-owened brands," Macy's collaborated with the four Historically Black Sororities – Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta, and Sigma Gamma Rho – to create appropriate dress attire for chapter events and conferences (Jordan, 2022, para. 3).

Generally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is concerned with a company's perceived ethical and social responsibilities to its employees, society, and the environment. Coombs and Holladay (2012) define CSR as "the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole" (p. 8). As a similar concept, corporate social advocacy (CSA) occurs when corporations or corporate leaders take public positions on polarizing social-political issues which have the potential to isolate organizational stakeholders while simultaneously attracting activist groups (Dodd & Supa,

2014). Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) acknowledge that diversity initiatives and community support (including programs and projects for the economically disadvantaged) fall squarely into CSR as well. CSR generally takes the form of social issues or cause related marketing, philanthropic efforts, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, and diversity and inclusion work (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Zheng, 2020).

Conceptually, CSR and CSA exist separate from one another. I argue, however, that when race is introduced, there is some overlap between the concepts. Because efforts to bring awareness to and increase racial equity are met with increasing polarization, corporations choosing to include any element of race in their CSR activities are making a socio-political declaration. The polarization is, in part, being driven by colorblind ideology, or a belief that racial group membership should not be taken into account, or even noticed (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012; Shams, 2021). Therefore, corporations that specifically use race as a centering point for traditional CSR activities such as cause-related marketing, philanthropic donations, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, and diversity and inclusion work are, essentially, taking a position.

Much of the literature on consumer perceptions of CSR and CSA has focused on authenticity—a subjective assessment on the part of consumers that the corporation is engaging in the activity for the right reason. Authenticity, as a concept in CSR literature, is a multi-dimensional concept with several dimensions (Song & Dong, 2022), presenting itself at the intersection of management ethics and practice (Liedtka, 2008). Wicki and Van Der Kaaij (2007) suggest that authenticity is the internalized and credible value system of a corporation, reflected through efforts that build trust consistently over time. Authentic CSR is the resolve between the CSR image being pursued and the actual identity of that brand as a corporate citizen (Wicki &

Van Der Kaaij, 2007). Alhouti, Johnson, and Holloway (2016) suggested that CSR actions perceived as genuine, stakeholder-oriented, less commercial, and beyond legal requirements are authentic. In their study, they found that consumer perceptions of CSR authenticity are influenced by the consumer's perception of (1) congruity between a company's identity and the cause (fit); (2) the CSR activity's meaningfulness and the company's relative ability to resolve the social issue at hand (impact), and; (3) how the company handles a past wrong through the CSR activity (reparations).

Trust, credibility, and other dimensions of consumer perceptions of CSR and CSA authenticity have focused on a general or universalized consumer. It must be noted that authenticity is a subjective assessment; a cultural construct (Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017). It is a "composite rather than causal formative construct" Nunes, Ordanini, & Giambastiani, 2021, p. 2). As such, authenticity as a composite construct, is entirely defined by its "components instead of existing on its own as a latent" – groups jointly determine its meaning (Nunes, Ordanini, & Giambastiani, 2021, p. 2). Authenticity as a cultural construct is taken from the subject's perspective (Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017). Culture regulates and defines social identity and social identification (Brewer & Yuki , 2007), and culture can be the prism through which authenticity is determined. The socially constructed meaning of "authenticity" becomes a measure to understand how it informs perceptions. Cashmore (1997) suggests that Black culture embodies the values, ambitions, and orientations unique to Black people, whether in the States, Britain or elsewhere in the diaspora. Within diasporic Black culture and identity, Black people have cultural dimensions and practices that are largely born out of the history of having been brought to the West (in this case, the United States) as slaves. Central to U.S. Black culture are concepts of collectivism, religion, family, shared culture, resistance to oppression,

and egalitarianism (Shelby, 2002; McPhearson & Shelby, 2004; Sellers et al., 1997; Cross, 1985; Beckett & Smith, 1981; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997; Willie & Reddick, 2010; Staples, 1985; Chaney & Fairfax, 1995).

Commodifying Blackness involves transforming the representations of Black people or other symbolic and material artifacts of Black cultural life (e.g. speech and phonetic conventions, folklore, style, fashion, music, usage of the body, and the physical form itself) into commodities to be bought and sold (hooks, 1992; Collins, 2006; Imara, 2020; Leonard; 2009; Wallace, 2020). Commodified Blackness also involves divorcing the cultural meanings embedded in those representations and artifacts, namely the struggle, pain, racism, and discrimination mentioned by Cashmore (1997), to make them more palatable to the dominant culture. This process obscures the structural contexts of the cultural production and conceals the effects of structural racism, ultimately maintaining the status quo.

Purpose/Problem and Significance

As noted before, several scholars have called for corporations to be engaged in the fight for racial and social justice. Robinson's (2002) corporate reparation's paradigm, Logan's (2021) corporate responsibility to race theory, and Janssen's (2013) corporate historical responsibility all suggest that, since corporation's have historically benefited from oppressive and racist conditions, they have a responsibility to atone for their actions. As corporations have responded to the racial and social shifts that have taken place in the U.S. via public relations, CSR, CSA and philanthropic campaigns, many have received criticism for commodifying, commercializing and sloganizing racial equity campaigns (Bonaparte, 2020; Menon & Kiesler 2020). Activists, scholars, and journalists have called out the performative nature of companies like Apple, Walmart, and Nike for this support, noting it as reactionary and inauthentic (Jan, McGregor,

Mere, & Tiku, 2020). Financial commitments pledged to support racial and social justice have been tremendous, however Jan, McGregor, and Hoyer (2021) found that 90 percent of the $49 billion pledged since George Floyd's murder in May 2020—roughly $45.2 billion–was allocated as loans or investments that corporations could stand to profit from and more than half were in the form of mortgages. Austin, Gaither, and Gaither (2019) contend that recent CSA has been criticized as "woke washing" or attempts by companies to appear socially conscious to make profits. Imara (2020) points out the commodification inherent in public displays of allyship via public relations campaigns that see Black Lives Matter as an opportunity to maintain Black consumership. Corporate support for racial justice indeed amplifies and makes visible the fight. However, what is clear from both a financial and public relations perspective is that race-centered corporate social responsibility efforts are profitable. Dodd and Supa (2014) note the longstanding relationship existing between CSR and profit maximization. Because so much of Black identity and culture is born of struggle, the use of it in CSR can be exploitative, tying Black suffering and pain into structures of profitability (Imara, 2020).

CSR and CSA both have assumed a generalized consumer and generalized audience. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) note that CSR, as a concept, does include diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, but does not specifically assume race as a target area. As the visibility of these race-centered efforts increase, two things are important. First, there is a need to conceptualize the phenomenon as one that is distinct from traditional CSR efforts. In doing so the study acknowledges racialized CSR efforts, publics and communication. Second, in conceptualizing race-centered CSR, race itself becomes a new measure by which to understand how those efforts are seen as authentic or inauthentic. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conceptualize and operationalize race-centered CSR and understand perceptions of authenticity of race-centered

CSR. The study borrows from Coombs and Holladay's (2012) definition of CSR, Dodd and Supa's (2014) definition of CSA, and incorporates Robinson (2002), Jannsen (2013) and Logan's (2020) critical perspective of CSR. Race-centered CSR is defined as an organization's voluntary contribution to repair racial inequities via 1) traditional CSR activities (i.e., social issue or cause related marketing, philanthropic efforts, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, diversity and inclusion), and 2) taking a stance on a controversial issue, 3) that has racial implications and; 4) can contribute to or affect a company's bottom line (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Dodd and Supa, 2014; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Zheng, 2020).

This definition reflects a critical approach that suggests that, because corporations have historically benefited from the forced labor of Black people and racial oppression, they have a responsibility toward improving race relations, which includes reparations, and reconciliatory discourse. Because concepts of collectivism, religion, family, shared culture, resistance to oppression and egalitarianism are central to Black culture, this study proposes that perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR is influenced by 1) how corporations have historically treated and centered these ideas; 2) whether corporations have ever profited from the use of these ideas, and 3) how corporations have attempted to reconcile oppressive or racist conditions, particularly for the Black community.

Thus, based on this premise, this study will examine the influence of racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks), identification with Black identity, perceptions of cultural commodification, reconciliatory discourse, and traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, issue involvement) on perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR. This study borrows Belgrave et al.'s (2000) definition of racial identity, which is described as feelings of attachment to and affiliation toward one's racial group. This is a self-identificiation

and not imposed by the researcher. The study employed a pilot study and a main study. The pilot study was conducted to determine 15 corporations and their corresponding CSR activities, and included a pre-test of two scales of the survey instrument for face validity. Those corporations and activities as well as the tested scales were then used for the main study. The sample for the main survey was recruited from Dynata, a sampling company. A total of *n*=586 was recruited. The research sample used a non-probability quota sampling method, in order for there to be two binary groups—Blacks and non-Blacks. The target was a 50% Black sample and a 50% non-Black sample. The most recent Pew Research Center data on population mediums guided how the Black sample was selected.

This study is important because it offers four things: First, it challenges the idea of a universal public in CSR and and a universal perception of authenticity in CSR literature. As race is increasingly the focus of corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy efforts, race should be considered in perceptions of whether those efforts are perceived as legitimate. Confirming race dismantles the white normativity of an assumed universal consumer, and centers marginalized racial groups in public relations and communication scholarship. From a critical public relations perspective, centering race deconstructs organizational biases including Othering, racism, including and excluding, normalization and its social construction. Second, in acknowledging and centering race, particularly Blackness, this research elevates the voices of Black people, and cements their thoughts and opinions on how they perceive corporate engagement in the body of literature. As Edwards (2012) points out, a critical PR perspective demands consideration of how the profession makes groups of people visible or invisible. Third, much of the literature on critical perspectives of CSR and CSA is theoretical and conceptual. This research is important because it operationalizes these critical concepts and tests publics

responses. Lastly, this research provides context for corporations intending to engage with racial identity groups. It examines how corporate messaging aligns with the Black community's values, authenticity, and sense of agency. Findings will add to the body of knowledge on CSR authenticity and cultural commodification. For practitioners, the study hopes to inform on how to strategically engage and communicate with historically marginalized publics.

To better understand how race-centered corporate social responsibility is conceptualized, the study begins with a review of relevant literature on normative and critical perspectives of corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy. This section includes an exploration of consumer responses and perceptions of CSR and CSA, with a specific focus on authenticity as a philosophical concept, and its application in organizational and CSR literature. Next, social identity and self-categorization theory are reviewed as a primer to understanding how groups of people, particularly Black people, begin to identity and categorize themselves as members of groups and how those groups manage negative and positive characteristics of the group. Following this section, is an exploration of key aspects of Black identity and culture, providing a foundational understanding of how both could be used in CSR or CSA. This section leads to the next section where how culture is commodified is discussed. Based on the review of literature on CSR and CSA, authenticity, Black identity and culture, and commodification, the last and final section is a conceptualization of race-centered corporate social responsibility and perceptions of authenticity of those efforts.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a widely defined term concerned with a company's perceived ethical and social responsibilities to its employees, society, and the environment. CSR has been long cemented in the literature, with Dodd (1932) as one of the earliest scholars to introduce the topic using legal and business ethics scholarship. He contended that managers of corporations had a responsibility not just to a company's shareholders, but also to the public, as a whole. He cites *Munn v. Illinois* as the foundation of the discussion on the "public duty of one who has devoted his property to public use" (p. 1149). He suggested that, though businesses are free to do what they would like, the law has permitted and encouraged its existence "because it is of service to the community rather than because it is a source of profit to its owners" (p. 1149). Although Dodd's reasoning became the theoretical and conceptual basis for the argument that firms have a corporate social responsibility (Cochran, 2007), Friedman's (1970) shareholder theory and Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory are the theoretical roots from which contemporary CSR logics evolve (Mosca and Civera, 2017).

Modern-day CSR's earliest iteration was corporate philanthropy, which began in the early 1950s (Cochran, 2007). Though philanthropy has existed for millennia, its evolution to CSR was a result of a changing business landscape during the birth of the modern activist movements of the 1950s and 1960s (Cochran, 2007). As civil and human rights, environmental, consumer, and anti-Vietnam War activists brought increasing attention to businesses and business practices, those businesses began to respond pragmatically with operational changes—including changing products and policies (Cochrah, 2007). CSR's shift from then to now has been "from returning profits to society to creating shared value with stakeholders in order to

improve the environmental and social corporate sustainability" (Bosch-Badia, Montllor-Serrats & Tarrazon, 2013, p. 14). A CSR orientation challenges the idea that the sole focus of business should be profit, and shifts toward a consideration of the entire range of stakeholders connected to their operations (Coombs & Holladay, 2012). It has moved from image and reputation improvement to being a core business strategy that supports obtaining competitive advantages, efficiency, and promoting innovative policies (Rodriguez-Gomez, Arco-Castro, Lopez-Perez, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2020) through activities including philanthropy, cause promotion, cause marketing, social marketing, and volunteering (Coombs & Holladay, 2012).

Definitions of CSR

Definitions of CSR vary and reflect the social demands of particular points in time (Rahman, 2011). Pava and Krausz (1995) defined it as "incurring responsibilities to society beyond profit maximization" (p. 1). The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2000) defines CSR as "the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large" (p. 11). According to McWilliams and Siegel (2001) CSR are "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law" (p.117). Coombs and Holladay (2012) define CSR as "the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole" (p. 8). Based on the multitude of definitions, Dahlsrud's (2006) explicated five dimensions of CSR: environmental (the natural environment), social (the relationship between business and society), economic (socio-economic or financial aspects,

including describing CSR in terms of a business operation), stakeholder (stakeholders or stakeholder groups), and voluntariness (actions not prescribed by law). Rahman (2011) explicated 10 dimensions of CSR since the 1950s: obligation to society, stakeholders' involvement, improving the quality of life, economic development, ethical business practice, law abiding, voluntariness, human rights, protection of environment, and transparency & accountability. This is captured most eloquently in Elkington's (1998) triple-bottom line concept, which has evolved to be understood as a business focus on the "three Ps": profit, people, and the planet (Miller, 2020).

In practice, CSR is concerned with environmental management, eco-efficiency, responsible sourcing, stakeholder engagement, labor standards and working conditions, employee and community relations, social equity, gender balance, human rights, good governance, and anti-corruption (UNIDO, 2022). Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) acknowledge that diversity initiatives (e.g., gender, race, family, sexual orientation, and disability) and community support, to include programs and projects for the economically disadvantaged, are CSR initiatives. These efforts are ushered via social issue or cause related marketing, philanthropic efforts, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, and diversity and inclusion work (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Zheng, 2020).

Although CSR is concerned with efforts beyond that of profit maximization, Dodd and Supa (2014) acknowledge the longstanding relationship between an organization's socially responsible practices and its effects on financial performance. As more and more people choose to support companies that share the same values as them, CSR provides a unique driver for what Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) call "consumer-corporate identification", or the relationship that consumers have with corporations. Identification with an organization prompts a number of

prosocial consumer behavior, particularly purchase decision and intention (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Guen, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Cornwell & Coote, 2003). As such, "CSR is not only an ethical/ideological imperative, but also an economic one" (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004, p. 9). The relationship between CSR and financial performance can be seen through consumer responses and perceptions of CSR—that is, how a customer perceives an organization, and their CSR activities can impact their decision to support the organization. More on consumer responses and perceptions will follow.

Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA)

As calls for responsible corporate behavior grew, so did the need for corporations to anticipate and respond quickly to important issues that might affect them (Ansoff, 1980). This response, conceptualized in the 1970s as strategic issues management, is the systematic process by which companies identify and respond quickly to important internal and external trends and events (Ansoff, 1980). As a "systematic procedure" strategic issues management is central to an organization's functioning. Heath and Palenchar (2009) suggested that strategic issues management blends strategic business planning, issue monitoring, best-practice standards of corporate responsibility, and dialogic communication to foster a supportive climate between the organization, its stakeholders, its shareholders, and its publics. Once organizations are aware of internal or external trends that may affect them, they must decide on a response. In their explication of the four functions required for issues management, Heath and Cousino (1990) suggested that companies should consider what needs to be said to whom, with what intended effect to exert influence, and what is required to achieve corporate social responsibility. As Dodd and Supa (2014) point out, corporate social advocacy, or a corporation taking a stand on a controversial issue, fits squarely within a strategic issues management approach.

Dodd and Supa's (2014) corporate social advocacy (CSA) builds on the concept of corporate advocacy, or the management of issues on behalf of corporate, educational, special-interest, governmental, and nonprofit institutions (Heath, 1980). Dodd and Supa argue that CSA spans the boundaries between corporate social responsibility and strategic issues management, in that it impacts perceptions of social responsibility. The authors argue that, when corporations or corporate leaders take public positions on polarizing social-political issues, such as same-sex marriage or abortion, it is seen as a form of advocacy and, as such, aimed at public policy change and bettering society. In addition, similar to CSR's concern with corporate financial performance, Dodd and Supa found that taking a position on a controversial issue has an impact on financial objectives for an organization. In an experimental design using Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, Walmart, Whole Foods, Hobby Lobby, and Nike, they found that participants demonstrated a significantly greater purchase intention when exposed to corporate social advocacy messages that were congruent with their own attitudes toward the issue.

CSA materializes in three primary ways: 1) the social-political issues addressed by the company are divorced from issues of particular relevance to the organization; 2) engagement in the social-political issues is controversial and serves to potentially isolate organizational stakeholders while simultaneously attracting activist groups; and 3) as a result, there is a particularly necessary emphasis on financial outcomes for the organization (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Examples of CSA would be corporate responses to the U.S. abortion debates. Following the 2021 Texas's abortion law that allowed private citizens to sue anyone who helped someone obtain an abortion, including providing a ride to the clinic, the ride sharing services Lyft and Uber vowed to provide legal support for drivers if they face lawsuits (Bond, 2021). Following the leaked draft Supreme Court opinion in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health

Organization—the decision that would eventually overturn *Roe v. Wade*—in April 2022, Amazon and Starbucks' publicly announced its expansion of health benefits to pay for travel fees incurred by workers seeking an abortion if the procedure is unavailable to them (Zahn, 2021). Consistent with the definition of CSA, abortion is not an issue particularly relevant to the organization. Starbucks engages in the production, marketing, and retailing of specialty coffee (Reuters, 2022). Lyft provides online ridesharing services – ride booking, payment processing, and car transportation (Bloomberg, 2022). Abortion, as a socio-political issue, is divorced from their relevant business interests. Both examples potentially isolate stakeholders who are pro-life and support an end to abortion, and profits from the organizations are routed in support of advocacy on the issue. The financial impact has the potential to be either positive or negative on a company's financial objectives, depending on the stakeholder group (Dodd & Supa, 2014).

CSA has evolved to include tangentially related concepts. Corporate political advocacy is an emerging body of CSA scholarship (Browning, Lee, Park, Kim, & Collins, 2020) that is concerned with "voicing or showing explicit and public support for certain individuals, groups, or ideals and values with the aim of convincing and persuading others to do the same" (Wettstein & Baur, 2016, p. 200). Corporate political advocacy is different from lobbying, in that lobbying is generally for self-serving purposes and corporate political advocacy is involvement beyond the company's immediate economic interests and for the good of all (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). Browning, Lee, Park, Kim, and Collins (2020) conceptualized organizational advocacy as a relational communication strategy in which organizations take stances on controversial, sociopolitical issues to signal shared commitment with key publics. Central to the framework is Kelleher's (2009) communicated commitment (CC), or "a type of content of communication in which members of an organization work to express their commitment to building and

maintaining a relationship" (p. 176). Browning et al. suggest that organizational advocacy is different from corporate social responsibility, corporate social advocacy and corporate political advocacy in that it is focused on the shared values between the organization and stakeholders, not organizational motives. In testing the framework, they found that such prosocial advocacy ultimately enhances positive consumer behaviors toward an organization.

Corporate social advocacy and its tangentially related concepts involve corporations or their leaders taking public positions on controversial issues, of which have financial implications for the company. As Wettstein and Baur (2016) point out, the right to advocate can only be earned through integrity and trust in corporate intent and faith in corporate promises.

Critical perspectives of CSR and CSA

Increasingly, scholars have been calling for CSR to be reconceptualized or reframed to focus on issues of justice, which requires a more critical perspective. In public relations, critical theory is used to investigate and critique the roles large organizations play in the quality of discourse of society, and in the quality of society itself (Coombs & Holladay, 2012). A critical perspective challenges us to recognize the values and biases that work to favor the powerful and calls for the deconstruction of organizational biases (Dozier & Lauzen, 2000). It takes an ideological orientation to the interests of activists rather than corporations and seeks to include multiple voices and suppressed publics (Dozier & Lauzen, 2000). Its theoretical foundations originate in Horkheimer's (1972) critical theory, which seeks to liberate human beings from institutional systems of oppression through social inquiry and critique (Kellner, 1993). It calls for an examination of the differences and similarities of ideologies and values, and how they are translated and universalized (Kellner, 1993). For example, Boyd (2012) challenges the inherent

altruism embedded in CSR, and argues that it is "rarely altruistic, despite the fears of stockholder advocates. The middle-class nature of CSR generally keeps its purposes reliably self-interested" (p. 53). He compares CSR activities to middle class sensibilities and suggests that much of it is performative; that is, corporations, like people, engage in CSR to appear good and impress others.

Corporate Historical Responsibility (CHR)

Jannsen (2013) introduced a theory of Corporate Historical Responsibility (CHR), which argues that organizations have responsibilities toward victims of past corporate practices and toward present reconciliatory discourse. The theory takes a rhetorical approach toward reconciliation that emphasizes the importance of corporations creating historical accountability, taking responsibility, making public acknowledgements, and remembering its past. The author explores this concept using the rhetorical response issued by Volkswagen following the revelation of its connections to forced labor camps in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. Janssen (2012) used the theory to explore Aetna Inc.'s rhetorical response to its historical connection to the forced labor of slaves through the issuance of slave insurance policies. Waymer and Logan (2021) use corporate historical responsibility in their exploration of Nike's corrective action—particularly accepting responsibility, developing commitments and standards for just labor practices, and data auditing-- to address its controversial human rights records.

Corporate Social Justice

Zheng (2020) recently coined the term "corporate social justice" to reframe CSR to center groups harmed and disadvantaged by society in any initiative or programs. She suggests that the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis and the subsequent

protests that occurred has created a shift in consumers' desire for corporations that see "social good as a necessity, not just a marketing strategy" (para. 5). She argues that, because CSR has no legal or social requirement to actually create a positive impact for the groups they claim to help, the focus should be on creating a framework whereby the trust between a corporation, its community, shareholders, and stakeholders drives the goal of explicitly doing good by all involved. Corporate social justice "imagines a healthier and mutually beneficial relationship between companies and the communities they interact with" (para. 14). Zheng (2020) argues that this framework requires a deeper level of integration of all aspects of the way a company functions.

Corporate Reparations Paradigm/Theory of Corporate Responsibility to Race

Robinson (2002) was among the early scholars to articulate the relationship between race and CSR - arguing that because corporations have historically benefited from the forced labor of Black people, they have a responsibility toward a "corporate reparations paradigm." Logan (2021) introduced a theory of corporate responsibility to race which argues that, because corporations have historically perpetuated and profited from racial oppression, they have a responsibility to improve race relations. The theory primarily uses critical race theory (CRT) as a framework for acknowledging that the modern corporation has racialized roots, particularly the "hyper-exploitation" and profit of free Black labor" during slavery, the co-optation of the Fourteenth Amendment for corporate personhood, and the racialized exclusion of Black people from the labor market. Because corporations have benefitted and profited from these racialized practices, they have a responsibility to draw attention to the systematic and structural systems in place that shape race relations in the U.S. Logan uses Starbucks, AT&T and Ben & Jerry's as

case studies to examine how corporations can advocate for racial justice, attempt to improve race relations, and support achieving a more equitable and harmonious society. She argues that when corporations mobilize their organizational resources to address race relations, and enlist corporate leaders to speak out on issues of race, they are, in fact, articulating a corporate responsibility to race. She asserts that the "[t]heir high profile status lends legitimacy to racial discourse, elevates the significance of racial issues in the public sphere, and can positively influence other corporate leaders, employees, customers, and community members to take meaningful steps toward healing race relations through supporting racial justice" (p. 984).

In summary, CSR and CSA is seen as an organization's voluntary contribution to its stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole (Coombs and Holladay, 2012). CSR contributes via voluntary actions that include labor standards and working conditions, employee and community relations, social equity, gender balance, human rights, good governance, and anti-corruption, diversity initiatives, and community support, to include programs and projects for the economically disadvantaged (UNIDO, 2022; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). Corporations use social issue or cause related marketing, philanthropic efforts, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, and diversity and inclusion work to accomplish these CSR efforts (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Zheng, 2020). CSA contributes through stance-taking on controversial issues, which ultimately affect an organization's bottom line. A critical perspective of each would require corporations to include reconciliation discourse or elements of reparations to make right a corporation's historical wrongs.

Both normative and critical perspectives of CSR and CSA prompt questions of how publics perceive these types of activities. Much of the literature on perception has focused on

authenticity—that is, the perceptions of consumers as engaging in the activity for authentic reasons (motives). The next section focuses on the concept of authenticity, how it is applied in CSR and CSA literature and consumer responses.

CSR/CSA and Authenticity: Consumer Responses and Perceptions

A significant portion of the literature on CSR consumer perception has focused on authenticity—that is, the perceptions by consumers that the organization is engaging in the activity for authentic reasons (motives). Authenticity, as a concept, should be understood in relation to existentialism, a philosophical movement that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. Brought to prominence by Sartre (1956), in his seminal work "Being and Nothingness", existentialism holds that there is no God or any other transcendent force, thus human beings have the capacity to create their own existence and purpose in life. Sartre's proposition that "existence precedes essence" is the central concept of existentialism, the belief that human beings are not born with inherent purpose, but rather they create value and determine meaning for their lives. Human beings, thus, choose what they want to be and have the freedom to create a range of possibilities of new existences and new meanings. In a world of nothingness and boundless meaning (i.e., no meaning or endless meanings), however, human beings contend with the anxieties of the "taken-for-granted" sense of things--the things that typically fall into our everyday ways of being (Sherman, 2009). Existentialists argue that the challenge for human beings is to live in a way that sees the world for its absurdity, seeing and understanding it outside of characteristic reality as "a fallen and bedraggled place" (Jones, 2001, p. 368) fraught with nothingness. Authentic functioning thus becomes a way to reclaim oneself from our lostness (Sherman, 2009). It is a shift in attention and engagement toward clear and focused listening to

and heeding of one's unique capabilities and potential (Sherman, 2009). Khawaja (2016) suggests that the idea of personal authenticity is at the center of existential thought.

Heidegger's (1962) concept of authenticity, which he articulated in his seminal work, *Being and Time*, requires people resolutely choosing to commit themselves to enact those projects that give shape to their existence (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). It allows a reclaiming of the self through the way in which we approach the world in our daily activities (Sherman, 2009). Heidegger emphasizes involvement in the world as constitutive of the self (Guignon, 1984). This is different than sincerity or being "true to oneself" as Trilling (1972) notes, but rather a framework by which to "restore a sense of the gravity and responsibility of existence by recovering a more profound grasp of what it is to be" (Guignon, 1984, p. 322; Handler, 1986). Using Aristotle's ''pursuit of the highest good,'' Heidegger's notion of ''project,'' Kierkegaard's essential knowledge and subjective truth, Husserl's intentionality, and Hume and Nietzche's conceptions of actions and values, Kernis and Goldman (2006) suggest that authentic functioning is characterized in terms of people's (1) self-understanding, (2) openness to objectively recognizing their ontological realities (e.g., evaluating their desirable and undesirable self-aspects), (3) actions, and (4) orientation towards interpersonal relationships.

Authenticity, as applied in organizations and, as such, corporate social responsibility, presents itself at the intersection of management ethics and practice (Liedtka, 2008). It is concerned with concepts like ethical decision making and leadership, emphasizes the "real" in organizational roles, and balances that with the desirable (Liedtka, 2008). Liedtka (2008) suggests that Hamel and Prahalad's (1989) concept of "strategic intent" yields a sense of authenticity because it emphasizes an organization's sense of "discovery, direction, and destiny [and] …lays out a set of aspirations intended to focus organizational activities on a new future

(p. 241). CSR becomes a vehicle through which organizations can demonstrate responsible and ethical decision making, and leadership and, thus, be seen as authentic. But what constitutes authentic CSR?

Authenticity, as a concept in CSR literature, is a multi-dimensional concept with several dimensions (Song & Dong, 2022). Wicki and Van Der Kaaij (2007) suggest that it is the internalized and credible value system of a corporation, reflected through efforts that build trust, consistently over time. Authentic CSR is the resolve between the CSR image being pursued and the actual identity of that brand as a corporate citizen (Wicki & Van Der Kaaij, 2007). In a quantitative content analysis that analyzed 52 peer-reviewed articles on CSR authenticity, Dong and Song (2022) found that honesty, truthfulness, integrity, sincerity, consistency and community engagement are repeatedly identified as important characteristics of authentic CSR. Mazutis and Slawinksi (2014) identified distinctiveness and social connectedness as two core dimensions of authenticity that impact perceptions of CSR. Distinctiveness, they suggest, is the "extent to which a firm's CSR activities are aligned with their core mission, vision and values while social connectedness refers to the degree to which an organization's CSR efforts are embedded in a larger social context" (p. 137). Alhouti, Johnson and Holloway (2016) suggested that CSR actions perceived as genuine, stakeholder-oriented, less commercial and beyond legal requirements are authentic. In their study, they found that consumer perceptions of CSR authenticity are influenced by the consumer's perception of: (1) congruity between a company's identity and the cause (fit); (2) the CSR activity's meaningfulness and the company's relative ability to resolve the social issue at hand (impact), and; (3) how the company handles a past wrong through the CSR activity (reparations). Positive fit emerges when the CSR action aligns with the firm's offering, brand concept, or target market needs (Alhouti, Johnson & Holloway,

2016). Their concept of fit is not dissimilar to Mazutis and Slawinski's (2014) distinctiveness, which is concerned with the extent to which a firm's CSR activities are aligned with their core mission, vision and values. Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill (2006) found that low-fit CSR initiatives had a negative influence on consumers' beliefs and attitudes. Zasuwa (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of 51 experimental studies and found that company-cause fit influences consumer responses to CSR initiatives most positively when a company with a positive reputation is highly involved in a cause.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) suggest that consumers are able to distinguish between companies that adopt a proactive CSR stance and those that adopt CSR efforts from a reactive, defensive or competitive position, and tend to view proactive companies more favorably. Alhouti, Johnson and Holloway (2016) suggest that reparative CSR, or actions that serve as reparation for some wrongdoing or negative event, are seen as authentic when consumers believe the act to come from a genuine place of remorse and the company takes preemptive steps to prevent further wrongdoing. Conversely, consumers see the activity as inauthentic when, consistent with Bhattacharya and Sen's argument, they are perceived as being done out of necessity or to save face. Jose, Nilesh, and Buchanan (2018) found that a macro-level focus on human betterment, trust in sales and advertising, and active involvement in solving social problems were found to be influential in perceptions of authenticity of CSR activities.

Authentic CSR activities have implications for reputation management because it contributes to positive and negative consumer perceptions and behavior, which some scholars have explained using Ashforth and Mael's (1989) Organizational Identification (OI). OI extends social (group) identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to organizations, and sees organizations as a place by which individuals can perceive a sense of oneness and belonging to the extent that it

becomes self-referent. Research on organizational identification suggests that strong identification can influence and result in a number of positive behaviors and attitudes including product utilization, word-of-mouth, purchase decision, and purchase intention (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Cornwell & Coote, 2003), and internalization of, and adherence to, group values, and norms and homogeneity in attitudes and behavior (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). OI has been extended into marketing and communication literature to explain the role of corporate social responsibility in developing relationships with consumers. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) have studied CSR extensively and contend that corporate social responsibility efforts can drive consumer-corporate identification (C-C Identification) with a corporation, contributing to the well-being of consumers and creating attachment, loyalty and support reputation management efforts. This identification extends beyond the organization itself to boundary-spanning agents (i.e., sales representatives, customer service, etc.). Cornwell and Coote (2005) draw on social identity theory to examine the relationship between consumer willingness to purchase a sponsoring firm's products and consumers' identification with a nonprofit organization. They found a positive relationship between purchase intention and identification – that is, individuals were more likely to purchase from a company if they identify with the nonprofit organization that the company is sponsoring.

In addition to consumer identification, the industry and types of CSR activities have implications for consumer perception and purchase intent. Mohr and Webb (2005) studied the influence of corporate social responsibility across two domains (environmental and philanthropic) and price on consumer responses. The researchers found that both domains had a positive impact on evaluation of the company and purchase intent, but that the environmental domain affected purchase intent more strongly than price did. Kim (2011) found that when a

company is well-known to consumers, a CSR strategy is more effective in influencing its CSR associations (i.e., the status of a company as a good member of society with regard to social, environmental, and/or political issues) and in turn, company/product evaluations. This, however, may be moderated by the industry in which the company functions, as Kim conversely found that a company that produces high risk involved products—like that sold by IT companies—might not experience as strong CSR associations' effects on consumer responses as a company in other industry types.

Authenticity in CSA literature is similar to applications in CSR, however its goal is to communicate clear corporate moral values and meet public value expectations (Yim, 2021). As indicated by Parcha and Westerman (2020), corporate communication on controversial social issues, particularly if a corporation is the first or one of only a few taking a stand on the issue, signals innovation in its social responsibility and a desire to be authentic.

Though there are differences by demographics (i.e., political viewpoints, age, income, education, and gender), there appears to be overall public support for corporations working to better society and advocating for social issues (Austin, Gaither, & Gaither, 2019). CSA is found to have implications for attitude change toward the controversial issue (Parcha & Westerman, 2020), consumer purchase intention (Dodd & Supa, 2014), public-company identification (Park & Jiang, 2020), and value signaling (Afego & Alagidede, 2021). Hydock, Paharia, and Blair (2020) suggest that, similar to consumer responses to CSR, identification plays an important role in consumer responses to CPA and CSA. In their study on individual- and market-level effects of CPA, they found that consumers are more likely to choose a brand that engages in CPA when its position is aligned with their own and that this effect is driven by identification with the brand. This is consistent with Zhang and Borden's (2022) findings that the more consumers identified

with an issue, the more likely they were to perceive the CSA activity as legitimate. Legitimacy, a closely related concept of authenticity, is concerned with the social acceptance of organizations and/or their actions. Similar to Alhouti, Johnson & Holloway's (2016) concept of fit in CSR, legitimacy in CSA is "fully realized when there is a good fit with public expectations of the corporation itself and corporate standards of behavior" (Yim, 2021, p. 62).

CSA has also been found to contribute to the public's information environment, potentially impacting voting behavior (Heffron & Dodd, 2021). Kim, Overton, Bhalla, and Li (2020) used Nike's Just Do It campaign with Colin Kaepernick to examine how a corporation's perceived CSA motives (i.e., values-driven, egoistic-driven, strategic-driven, and stakeholder-driven) impacts attitudes, positive word-of-mouth (PWOM) and negative word of mouth (NWOM). The authors found that perceived values-driven motives for engagement in socio-political issues increased favorable attitudes and PWOM intention and perceived ego-driven motives increased less favorable attitudes toward the company and stronger NWOM intentions. Additionally, when stakeholder-driven motives were more likely to produce NWOM, and strategic-driven motives were negatively associated with NWOM, but not associated with attitudes toward the company and PWOM. The authors argue that these findings demonstrate that consumer perceptions of CSA rely much more on why a company is engaging, and less on just what a company is doing.

In summary, publics' view CSR as authentic when the activities are consistent, meaningful, and less commercial, when they believe the company's identity fits with the social issue and is stakeholder oriented, and when there is a perception of honesty, truthfulness, integrity, sincerity, and community engagement. Publics' perception of authenticity is, in turn,

related to brand loyalty, boycott behavior, purchase intention, and positive and negative word-of-mouth.

Social identity theory and self-categorization theory

The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR efforts, specifically CSR efforts that focus on Black people. Though much of the literature on authenticity in CSR has focused on a general or universalized consumer, authenticity, as a cultural construct, assumes a subjectivity, taken from the subject's perspective (Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017). It is related to an individuals' "true self," and can be thought of in terms of "the quality of perceived identity with oneself that is experienced as subjective consistency" (Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017, p. 326). As a construct of cultural identity, authenticity can, thus, be influenced by cultural identity. Stated differently, different cultural groups can understand and experience authenticity differently.

Brewer and Yuki (2007) suggest that culture and social identity are related, in that culture regulates and defines social identity and social identification. Stated differently, all cultures rely on social identification, and cultural effects determine the role social identification plays in interpersonal and intergroup behavior. This point is salient in the discussion on the cultural dimensions that drive identification with the Black collective, and, in turn, the positive and negative characteristics of the group. Thus, a discussion on Black identity and Black culture must first begin with a discussion and understanding of how individuals begin to identify and categorize themselves as members of groups in the first place. Tajfel's (1974) social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1986) theory of intergroup conflict and Turner's (1985) self-categorization theory provide the framework for the discussion. Following this is a discussion on the characteristics of Black people, particularly collective identity development and culture.

Tajfel's (1974) social identity theory (SIT) is concerned with an individual's awareness of belonging to a social category or group. It was initially developed to explain intergroup conflict–its central argument was that, in order for groups to hate or discriminate against other groups, they first had to know they were a part of a group that hated or discriminated against another group. In a series of studies known as the Minimal Group studies, Tajfel found that merely belonging to a group was enough to create conflict. Using Festinger's (1954) social comparison, he conceptualized four areas of social identity: social categorization, social identity, social comparison and positive distinctiveness. Social categorization is the way in which human beings organize their external environment. This is the first part of "grouping" that takes place. From these categorizations, human beings identify with groups based on shared characteristics and attributes (social identity). Because human beings innately come to understand who they are in relation to other human beings, they engage in group comparison (social comparison) based on a negative or positive value judgment. Human beings have an inherent desire to want to be a part of a more positive group identification and judge other groups based on that distinction (positive distinctiveness). SIT posits, then, that the self and the self-concept can be seen as those characteristics and attributes (i.e., aesthetics, attitudes, personality, etc.) belonging to both the individual but also to a social category. Tajfel developed a continuum that theorizes that human beings can be both individuals and members of a group.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) later developed a theory of intergroup conflict that explains how group conflict happens. The two challenged Sheriff et al. (1961) and Campbell's (1965) realistic conflict theory (RCT) that suggests that group conflict happens when there is a real conflict over resources (i.e., wealth, power, etc.). Sheriff et al. argued that it is the legitimized and institutionalized systems of inequality by the state that create conflict. Tajfel and Turner argue

that it is not simply the institutionalization and legitimization of resource inequality that creates conflicts between groups, but rather the institutionalization causes low self-esteem because it maintains the status quo. This institutionalization creates in-groups and outgroups—dominant and marginalized. Antagonism occurs between dominant and subordinate groups (in-group/out-group), and as subordinate groups accept or reject their self-image (self-esteem), intergroup discrimination occurs. Tajfel and Turner argued that individuals will engage in three main strategies to change negative self-images: 1) comparing the in-group to the out-group on some new dimension; 2) changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons which were previously negative are not perceived as positive, and; 3) changing the outgroup (or selecting the out-group) with which the in-group is compared – in particular, ceasing or avoiding to use the high status out-group as a comparative frame of reference.

Turner (1985) went on to define and predict *when* people would define themselves in terms of social or personal identity. He introduced a self-categorization theory of group behavior, which is concerned with the antecedents, nature, and consequences of psychological group formation: *how* does some collection of individuals come to define and feel themselves as a social group and how does shared group membership influence their behavior? Underlying the theory are empirical features of psychological group formation – identity (collective awareness of a distinct social unit); interdependence (cohesion, mutual satisfaction, cooperation, mutual interpersonal influence), and; structure (stabilized relations between members; role and status differentiations, shared social norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and conduct). The theory is primarily concerned with the interdependence feature, which the author defines as the psychological glue that makes people 'stick together' in a group, or the degree of attraction to the group or between group members. This has largely been conceptualized at originating at the

interpersonal level, however Turner uses the minimal group and social dilemmas (prison dilemma) studies to challenge this assertion. The author argues that the variables that should be considered are the ones that precede interdependence, as those are the ones that contribute to developing cooperative activity.

Self-categorization theory is concerned with the structure and functioning of the social self-concept and takes the forms of a series of assumptions that leads to hypotheses about the basic process underlying psychological group formation. SCT proposes that there is a continual competition between self-categorization at the personal and group level and that self-perception varies along a continuum defined by the conflict between the two and their shifting relative strengths. The authors argue that variation in how people categorize themselves is the rule rather than the exception, and that the collective self arises as part of this normal variation. Oakes and Turner (1990) used Bruner's "Relative Access x Fit" formula to understand the saliency of self-categorization – that is, when a person would access what identity and when. The formula suggests that individuals must be ready to access a social category and the social category must fit the context. The context activates and cues the relative identity.

In summary, social identity and social categorization theories describe how groups of people come to define themselves as members of groups, and how they distinguish their group from others. Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, and Demo (2015) point that social identity promotes "positive self-esteem and, by extension, mastery and positive psychological well-being" (p. 30) however, when those identifications are negative, groups pursue strategies to create positive identifications. Those strategies, as outlined by Tajfel and Turner include social comparison using some new dimension, changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, such that what was once negative, is now seen as positive, and changing the social group to which it is

being compared. Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, and Demo suggest that, because the group boundaries of African Americans are relatively impermeable (e.g., disaffiliation is impossible), they are most likely to create positive identifications by claiming positive characteristics for their group or disavowing negative ones (Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015).

As stated before, culture and social identity are related, in that culture regulates and defines social identity and social identification. Black culture, as a primer for the socially constructed meaning of "authenticity," thus, should be explored to understand how it informs perceptions. The following section is a discussion on racial identity development and Black culture.

Racial Identity Development: Black Identity and Culture

Social identity theory helps us understand how groups of people come to define themselves as members of groups and how they distinguish their group from others. Racial identity theories help us understand how the life experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors inform one's own and other racial–cultural groups (Wang, 2015). Racial identity refers broadly to how individuals define themselves with respect to race (Neblett et al., 2016). Arroyo and Zigler (1995) defined racial identity as "attempts to balance racial group membership needs and personal desires for positive relations with the larger society" (p. 903). Belgrave et al. (2000) defines racial identity as feelings of attachment to and affiliation toward one's racial group. Racial identity is situational, based on acculturation and socialization (Smith, 1989), but it is also, as Root (1998) suggests, a response to the wounds of racism—that is, as groups of people seek to heal from the psychological violence of oppression, they construct a sese of self that affirms the possibility of a positive racial identity. This is similar to the positive distinctiveness in social identity theory.

Defining race

Race is a relatively new concept developed between the 16th and 18th centuries that emerged out of a European need to structure society in a way that had never existed before in human history (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). As leaders of the American colonies had deliberately selected Africans to be permanent slaves, race was used to organize a social hierarchy, with whites at the top and Africans at the bottom (Lopez, 1994; Smedley, 1998; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Phenotypes (i.e., physical characteristics) and genetics have been used for centuries to justify a racial conception and hierarchy–classifying and stereotyping groups of people based on ability (Waymer, 2012). Smith (1989) defines race as "differential concentrations of gene frequencies responsible for traits that are usually confined to physical manifiestations, such as skin color or hair form" (p. 277). Mills (1997) contends that race can be seen as an ideology or worldview, organized around white normativity – or a white standard of evaluation by which every other "race" is judged against (O'Connell, 2014; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Though biological justifications of race have been debunked, and it has been determined a social construct, it continues to order and structure our society in very real ways with whiteness as a universal racial standard. This study uses Belgrave et al.'s (2000) definition of racial identity as feelings of attachment to and affiliation toward one's racial group. This is a subjective assessment, based on how individuals define themselves with respect to race, not the way in which the researcher defines them.

Black Racial Identity and Culture

How does one begin to identify with being Black, and how do some Black people come to define themselves more explicitly in terms of their Blackness over others? Sellers et al. (1998) suggests that early research focused on two approaches to understanding these questions:

mainstream and underground. The first focused on the universal properties associated with ethnic and racial identities, with an emphasis on Black people's stigmatized status in American society with little regard for the role of culture (Sellers et al.,1998). This perspective was referred to as the mainstream approach (Gaines & Reed, 1994) and was concerned how universal cognitive and affective processes (errors and biases) may contribute to or explain Black people's self-esteem and self-concept (Sellers et al.,1998). An early example of a mainstream approach is Allport's (1954) assertion that living in a racist environment must have negative consequences for the Black psyche, and as such, Black people were forced to either devalue aspects of themselves that reminded them of the stigma or being Black or devalue the broader society for its prejudice against them, in order to function. Sellers et al. (1998) argued that much of the early research from the mainstream perspective focused on the Black self-hatred, however, as it matured, shifted to a universal social identity focus while ignoring the unique experiences of each group. For example, Phinney's (1990, 1992) measure of ethnic identity de-emphasized the unique history and experiences associated with each ethnic group. Overall, mainstream approaches to Black identity development provided a view of of Black racial identity that emphasized self-hatred and negative self-conceptions because of the stigma attached to the identity rather than the experiential properties associated with the unique historical and cultural influences associated with the Black experience (Sellers et al.,1998).

Conversely, the underground approach to Black racial identity development is concerned with the uniqueness of Black oppression, but also the cultural experiences that contributed to positive self-conceptions (Sellers et al.,1998). This approach looks beyond Black pathology and focuses on the adaptive strength of Black people (Cross, 1991). Dubois (1903) was among the first to understand the cultural influences that contributed to the healthy and strong self-concept

even with the stigma of being devalued by the larger society. As such, underground approaches include not just the experiences of racism, but also exceptionally strong identification with all things Black (Cross, 1991) and an incorporation of cultural experiences from African Americans' historical and contemporary experiences in America and Africa (Sellers et al.,1998).

Cross's (1971) model of Nigrescence

Cross's (1971) model of Nigrescence is an example of an underground approach. The model describes five stages of racial identity development that Blacks experience as they develop a psychologically healthy Black identity: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Cross, 1971). The pre-encounter stage describes the point in which individuals do not believe that race is an important component of their identity. This could be because of Euro-American determinants or because other identities (gender, class, religion, etc.) could be more salient or important. The encounter stage occurs following an event that challenges their worldview and allows for a new interpretation of his Black identity. The third stage, immersion-emersion, is characterized as near radicalized Blackness—that is, an obsession with identification of Black culture and an anti-white stance, however not making a full commitment to accepting all the values and traditions of associated with being Black. In the fourth stage, internalization, individuals experience internal security and satisfaction with being Black, and less extreme and rigid perceptions of race. In the final stage, internalization-commitment, individuals are attempting to translate the new identity into meaningful action for the group (Cross, 1971; Sellers et al.,1998).

In Cross's (1991) revised model of Nigrescence, four stages, instead of five, were represented: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. The changes in

the model were made in the pre-encounter and immersion-emersion stages. The pre-encounter stage was conceptualized as consisting of two identities: assimilation and anti-Black. A person with an assimilation identity has no racial salience and values the beliefs and views of White culture. A person with an Anti-Black identity is characterized by self-hatred and miseducation of Black identity while internalizing negative stereotypes about being Black (e.g.., being lazy or criminal) (Johnson, 2013). The immersion-emersion stage was also conceptualized as two separate identities—Intense Black Involvement and Anti-White –rather than a single identity with two components, as outlined in the original model. The Intense Black Involvement identity is heavily involved in the Black experience and has a positive view of everything Afrocentric. The Anti-White identity renounces everything White and views White culture as evil (Johnson, 2013).

Racial Identity Attitude (RIAS)

As scholars have sought to operationalize Cross's model, it has been the foundation for several Black identity scales, including Parham and Helms's (1981) Racial Identity Attitude scale (RIAS). RIAS is a 30-item instrument that measures the attitudes individuals are likely to hold toward the self, Blacks, and whites as they move through the five stages. The RIAS scale has received some criticism for its reliability and validity, particularly with the inability to discern the encounter stage and the ability of an attitude scale to fully capture the complexity of Black racial identity (Cokley, 2007; Ponterotto & Wise, 1987; Sellers et al., 1998). In addition, Johnson (2013) cites Sellers, Chavous, and Cooke's (1998) argument that the subscales of the RIAS are skewed towards a particular racial philosophy where a strong racial identification is ideal without taking into consideration that race may not be a significant identity to a person's self-concept.

Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS).

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) was another measurement scale developed to operationalize the Nigrescence model. CRIS is a 40-item scale used to assess attitudes that correspond to the revised model. Vandiver et al. (2002) tested and validated the CRIS but suggested that its limitation was that its validation was based entirely on college samples of Black students attending predominantly White institutions in the northeast U.S. Cokley (2007) concurred and added that it has only been used in the psychology discipline.

Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI)

To reconcile the inconsistencies in mainstream and underground approaches to racial identity development, Sellers et al. (1998) developed the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), which provides a conceptual framework for understanding both the significance of race in the self-concepts of Blacks and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of that racial category. The MMRI operates with four assumptions: 1) identities are situationally influenced as well as stable properties of a person; 2) individuals have a number of different identities and that these identities are hierarchically ordered; 3) individuals' perception of their racial identity is the most valid indicator of their identity; the status of an individual's racial identity is the primary concern over its development. The model has four dimensions, and five sub-dimensions:

- *Salience* refers to the extent to which a person's race is a relevant part of her or his self-concept at a particular moment in time.
- *Centrality* refers to the extent to which a person normatively defines her or himself with regard to race.

- *Regard* refers to the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively. Regard includes three sub-dimensions: *racial regard,* affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race in terms of positive-negative valence; *private regard*, the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively toward Black people as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being Black. This component of regard is consistent with the concept of psychological closeness and racial pride; *public regard,* the extent to which individuals feel that others view Black people positively or negatively.
- *Ideology* refers to an individual's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes with regard to the way she or he feels that the members of the race should act. Ideology includes four philosophies: nationalist, which stresses the uniqueness of being Black; oppressed minority, which emphasizes the similarities between the oppression that African Americans face and that of other groups; assimilationists ideology, characterized by an emphasis on the similarities between Black people and the rest of American society, and; humanist, which emphasizes the similarities among all humans.

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)

To operationalize the MMRI, Sellers et al. (1997) developed the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), a 51-item scale that measures Black racial identity, using the three stable dimensions (centrality, ideology, and regard) of the MMRI and omits the MMRI‘s salience dimension because the situationally-dynamic nature of the salience scale would be difficult to measure the diversity of experiences with the Black community. Though the original study was done with Black Americans, the MIBI has been validated with Black Britons (Walsh, 2001) and

Black Germans (Wandert, et al., 2009), suggesting some generalizability across the Black diaspora.

Race and Black culture

Chaney and Fairfax (2013) suggest that race, as it relates to "blackness," refers to the "shared history, ways of speaking and psychological identity" (p. 21). As Crocket (2008) contends, Blackness is the construct of an essentialized Black culture, “or Black cultural identity [that] involves [and relies] on persons and other symbolic material representations socially and historically constructed as ‘Black’ (e.g. speech and phonetic conventions, folklore, style, fashion, music, use of the body and Black physical form)” (p.245). Hall (1993) asserts that blackness has come to signify the various communities that keep black traditions, historical experiences, aesthetics, and counternarratives. Cashmore (1997) suggests that Black culture embodies the values, ambitions and orientations unique to Black people, whether in the States, Britain or elsewhere in the diaspora. Because it is something that is learned, Black culture is not something that derives from Black people as a “race,” but must come from experience. “The Black Experience,” Cashmore argues, is a set of social and historical conditions that all peoples whose ancestors originated in Africa have through in one way or another and which unifies them. Struggle is the nucleus of the experience, as exile, enslavement and discrimination were all integral parts of the experience. Out of the struggle comes unity of purpose and identity, and a sense of resolve and cohesion.

Defining culture

Culture is a society’s arts, beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992). We are not born with culture, but rather acquire it through language

and transmit it to future generations, through instruction (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992). Culture exists in material (i.e., sites of worship, media, schools, neighborhoods, attired, aesthetic, etc.) and non-material forms (values, beliefs, language, etc.) (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992). The materiality of culture is the notion that the physical properties of a cultural artifact have consequences for how the object is used. Stated differently, it is the symbolic representations and ideologies (non-material) of a culture (i.e., values, beliefs, morals, languages, etc.) that become the driver for the way in which a physical object (material) is understood.

Culture and meaning-making

Culture is communicated by the shared construction of communication symbols that help shape social reality (Hall, 1997). Symbolic interactionism explains how signs and symbols, including language, visuals, music, and gestures contribute to human behavior, human beings' construction of social reality and shared meaning in a culture (Goffman, 1959; Hall, 1997, Mead, 1934). Much of the theory's foundation comes from Mead (1934) who saw human behavior as a social construction, shaped and refined by "the conversation of gestures," or unconscious communication that elicits responses in others. Out of this conversation of gestures comes language, or conscious communication, which occurs through the use of symbols. Meade argued that language allows a symbolic "taking in" of an external social situation into the conduct of the individual himself such that a refining of behavior takes place for the "self" and society (Baran & Davis, 2015, p. 304). This process of symbolic interaction is how human beings come to know how they should function within a society or in a particular role and provides the basis of understanding for the mutuality of the relationship between the individual and society (Meltzer, 1964).

Mead pointed out that communication symbols are arbitrary and meaningless except to others who know how to decode them. Hall's (1997) model of encoding and decoding suggested that meaning is constructed through shared cultural and linguistic commonalities. It depends on the mental "representation" of concepts and images formed in thoughts which can stand for or "represent" concrete ideas (people, chairs or animals) or abstract concepts (death, love or fear). It is fixed to a symbolic function and through shared culture, represented by real or abstract language (this includes visual images, facial expressions, gestures, and the language of fashion and clothes), signs, and images to represent things, human beings organize, cluster, arrange and classify concepts and establish relationships between them (p. 15). These shared cultural and linguistic commonalities are how human beings make sense of the world, express themselves and communicate meaningfully to others (Grose, 2006; Jacobs, 1999).

Culture represents the symbolic representations of particular groups of people. If people of different races are considered distinct groups, even from a constructionist perspective, culture would represent the material and immaterial practices of those different groups of people, including their languages, religious expressions and practices, aesthetics, and value systems. Thus, Black people in the United States are a racialized group who possess cultural dimensions and practices that are largely born out of the history of having been brought to the United States as slaves. Central to black culture are concepts of collectivism, religion, family, shared culture, resistance to oppression and egalitarianism (Shelby, 2002; Shelby & McPhearson, 2004; Sellers et al., 1997; Cross, 1985; Beckett & Smith, 1981; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997; Willie & Reddick, 2010; Staples, 1981; Chaney & Fairfax, 1995). Using the operational definitions of materiality, material Black culture would include the Black church (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998), motherhood (Hill-Collins, 1987), music, the Black family, political organizations (Dyson, 1996), and hip-hop

(Neal, 2013). The remainder of this section will discuss five essential elements of Black culture within the territories known as the United States of America: the Black family, the Black church, Black hair, Black music and soul food–and the historical shaping of their present-day notions.

The Black Family

In Gutman's (1997) examination of the Black family prior to and after emancipation, he contends that "[t]o focus on the 'family' also means to focus on 'culture.' Socialization nearly always occurs first in families, and it is through families that historically derived beliefs usually pass from generation to generation" (p. xxi). Hence, to fundamentally understand Black culture is to understand the Black family, its origins, and its unique structure.

The traditional nuclear family model was, no doubt, disrupted as a result of slavery. As legal property of slave owners, enslaved Black people were prohibited from entering into any legally enforceable contracts, and therefore, prohibited from marrying (Goring, 2006). Instead, couples joined together in quasi-marital unions sanctioned by plantation owners (Goring, 2006). Once married, however, the institution of slavery did not permit men to assume the dominant role in the family (Staples, 1981). In addition, As Hallam (2004) points out, because of the high premium placed on male labor, throughout every period of American slavery, Black men were the most likely to be parted from their families.

There is, indeed, no shortage of literature that points out the many ways in which the institution of slavery disorganized and fragmented Black family life, however Gutman (1997) argues that this conclusion underestimates the adaptive capacities of those who were enslaved, and their children. That resiliency, undoubtedly, was a result of the significance of family and its formation, particularly fictive kinship, or extended family bonds that predated slavery. Chatters, Taylor and Jayakody (1994) cite Patterson (1967) and Gutman (1976) and note that West African

cultures viewed kinship as normal idiom of social relations. Kinship, however, was transformed, as a result of slavery, to a socialization of sorts—one that helped socialize children into the slave communities, and to help bind unrelated individuals to one another for support. This occurred first during transport to the Americas on slave ships and later on plantations, where parents and other adults taught children to address older persons who were unrelated to them either blood or marriage by the title "Aunt" or "Uncle." By adapting distinctive domestic arrangements and kin networks, enslaved Black people developed a new culture which formed the social basis of Black communities (Gutman, 1977). During the civil war and in the early years of reconstruction, there is evidence that suggests Black familial and kin beliefs were still very much present (Gutman, 1977). Perrone (2019) notes that many newly freedpeople used the judicial system to fight for the legitimacy of Black marriages, emancipated children, and unconventional networks of kin. Thus, the Black family is unique in that it is not just the traditional Western nuclear family (i.e., mother/father/children) that it comprises, but rather a network of related and non-related extended family, “kin,” whose bonds are just as significant and meaningful. Extended family play an important role in maintaining cultural practices and socializing Black children in Black families, binding the kin network tightly together.

But the nature of Black families is much more complex than just the historical legacy rooted in slavery. It has existed in a system that has consistently devalued its men, women and children and criticized the Black dyad, which has long been ordered along socio-psychological factors (i.e., feelings, behaviors, attitudes, etc.) rather than the economic dependence, like that seen in white male/female relationships (Staples, 1981). The 1965 Moynihan Report, which outlined the failures of the BBlack community, represents the clearest institutionalized criticism of the Black family’s structure and its diversion from American patriarchy. Officially titled The

Negro Family: The Case for National Action and named for its author, former Assistant Secretary of Labor and U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the report outlined the state of the Black family and called the federal government to action by targeting its structure. It focused primarily on the pathology of African Americans and argued that the matriarchal structure of Black culture weakened the ability of Black men to function as authority figures. The report argues that "the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well" (Office of Policy Planning and Research, 1965, p. 29).

Though the report was commissioned to help identify and remedy economic challenges related to racial inequities in America (Bobo & Charles, 2009), it pathologized Black men and women (Gans, 2011) and assumed the Black family was unstable, disorganized, and unable to provide its members with the social and psychological support and development needed to assimilate fully into American society (Dodson, 1981). Furstenberg (2009) argued that the report was flawed because it relied too heavily on race and failed to account for economic and class structures that organize and influence patterns of family formation, which, according to Franklin and James (2015) include the northern migration that resulted in the loss of communal institutions, welfare policies, decreasing job opportunities for lower class Black men, and social isolation in neighborhoods of high poverty. Gutman (1997) and Billingsley (1992) contradict the report and notes that from the end of slavery up until approximately 1980, the majority of African American families had been married couples, however the legacy of the 1965 report fueled and continues to fuel the stereotypes related to the Black family, which include an

emphasis on the dysfunction of Black children, absent fathers, teenage-pregnancy, single-parent female-headed homes, drug use, and poverty (Franklin & James, 2015).

As noted, there is no shortage of criticism about the Black family, however a cultural perspective would examine it through a values lens. Therefore, as a collective rooted in the struggle of enslavement and oppression in American, the Black family values education (i.e., skill development, learning, and knowledge), spirituality, self-governance, service to others, cooperation with others, and race pride (Billingsley, 1992). Its fictive kin culture can be seen in its members "play mother[s], brother[s], or sister[s], aunt[s], uncle[s], or cousin[s]" (Billinglsey, 1992, p. 31). These cultural practices are demonstrated and maintained through activities such as family reunions and annual church homecomings, which act to reinforce extended kinship bonds and transmit cultural values and ways of being toward kin from generation to generation (Jones, 1980). Thus, despite much scholarship on the condition of the Black family, which is often polarizing, it continues to remain a "resilient and adaptive institution reflecting the most basic values, hopes, and aspirations of the descendants of African people in American" (Billingsley, 1992, p. 17).

The Black Church

The Black church is, arguably, the cornerstone of Black culture. It has served as the primary basis for social cohesion for the Black collective since slavery, where Black people found "hope in the scriptural promises of a future void of oppression" (Avent & Cashwell, 2015, p 83). As such, the church has offered freedom and release from Black people's economic, emotional, social and political burdens (Barnes, 2005). Conversely, it has served to fill the gap in between the collective's political, social, economic, educational, and spiritual realities and needs

(Barnes, 2005). It is not one singular place, or one singular denomination led by one single person, but rather as Douglas and Hopson (2000) point out, it is a “multitudinous community of churches, which are diversified by origin, denomination, doctrine, worshiping culture, spiritual expression, class, size, and other less-obvious factors” (p. 96). What unites them is their special history, culture, and role in shaping Black life through prayer, songs and other religious symbols, and community action among Black congregations (Barnes, 2005; Douglas & Hopson, 2000). Today "the Black church" is widely understood to include the following seven major Black Protestant denominations: the National Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Convention, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of God in Christ (Mellowes, 1996-2000).

Diverse faiths existed in African communities well before slavery, including Islam, traditional African religions, and Christianity (PBS, 2003). West African people – where the slave trade thrived -- were introduced to Catholicism in the 1500s after the Portuguese conquered the kingdoms of Ndongo and Kongo, present day Angola and the coastal Congo, suggesting that African people were aware of, and likely practicing Christianity prior to coming to the New World (Mellowes, 1996-2000). Nonetheless, up to 20% of enslaved Africans were Muslims (PBS, 2003). In the New World, these religions were thrust together, and African people, who had long practiced mixing religious beliefs, continued to hold on to their practices by transforming them in creative ways, even under the harsh conditions of slavery (PBS, 2003).

In the New World, white slave owners introduced a version of Christianity that stressed obedience and duty, and the message of the apostle Paul: “Slaves, obey your masters” (Mellowes, 1996-2022). Despite this mechanism of control, Christianity offered enslaved people

salvation and spiritual security, regardless of their status in life (McKinney, 1971). There was a freedom in death, and Christianity offered "a transition from suffering on earth to a promise of reward and deliverance in heaven" (Avent & Cashwell, 2015, p. 83). There was contention initially on whether enslaved people should be Christians, as the unedited doctrine directly contradicted the institution itself (McKinney, 1971). Rae (2018), however, notes that large parts of the Bible were mined by pro-slavery polemicist for examples that supported the institution. Whites forbade enslaved people from reading the Bible, for fear that they would understand the inconsistencies that justified the institution and, the deferred hopes of freedom until after death would decrease, provoking a surge of strength and demand for emancipation (Avent & Cashwell, 2015). In addition to not being able to read the Bible, enslaved people were not allowed to gather for worship, for fear that if allowed to worship independently they would plot a rebellion against their owners (Maffly-Kipp, 2001). They were required to attend white-controlled churches, where white clergy preached messages of strict obedience (Maffly-Kipp, 2001). Because of this, enslaved people resorted to informal worship gatherings in secret locations, using signals, passwords and messages, not discernible to whites (Avent and Cashwell, 2015; Maffly-Kipp, 2001), creating the invisible institution" (para. 4). This is the foundation to what Fountain (2010) describes as the blend of traditional African religion that "merged with Christianity to create a uniquely African American form of the Christian faith" (p. 1). This included a continued belief in life after death, a belief in the power of the human voice (i.e., singing), dance, and the importance and ritualization of funerals (PBS, 2003). Maffly-Kipp (2001) notes:

> …it was here that the spirituals, with their double meanings of religious salvation and freedom from slavery, developed and flourished; and here, too, that Black preachers, those who believed that God had called them to speak his Word,

> polished their "chanted sermons," or rhythmic, intoned style of extemporaneous preaching. Part church, part psychological refuge, and part organizing point for occasional acts of outright rebellion (Nat Turner, whose armed insurrection in Virginia in 1831 resulted in the deaths of scores of white men, women, and children, was a self-styled Baptist preacher), these meetings provided one of the few ways for enslaved African Americans to express and enact their hopes for a better future (para. 4).

By the mid 1700s, slaveholders began allowing for religious training of enslaved Black people, however there was a growing sentiment that enslaved people were not welcome in white churches. As a result, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1787 (McKinney, 1971). The Negro Baptists formed in the early 1800s. Thus, the Black church is one of, if not the first Black institutions born out of as a direct result of discrimination. As McKinney (1971) notes, the Black church is “a child of protest”; formed because of the unwillingness of whites' acceptance of Black people’s equality (p. 457).

Following emancipation, as formal education of religious leaders increased, and more and more Black churches were established, religion became an expression of freedom, marking a break from white paternalism and creating an opportunity to build Black political power (Irons, 2018; McKinney, 1971). During Reconstruction, Black churches became instrumental in educational, political, and small-scale economic enterprise development as Black people sought autonomy, equality, and respect (McKinney, 1971). Painter (1992) notes that Black churches commonly operated schools alone or in cooperation with city councils. This focus on resource development is what made the Black church instrumental to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Calhoun-Brown (2000) points out the resource-richness of the Black church, and how the contribution of its organizational resources (i.e., social communication networks, facilities, audience, leadership, and money) were critical in the success of the movement. In addition to

resources, she suggested that the Black church was able to help mobilize people to participate in non-violent action because church members could understand the concept of non-violence from a religious frame. At a national level, the church was key in pulling churches directly into the movement and making it a dynamic force, as evidenced by the work of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Morris, 1996).

The 1960s ushered Black theology into the Black religious consciousness, which evolved alongside the political and social shifts happening during the Civil Rights and Black Power movements (Cone, 2018). Black theology called Black people to deconstruct and acknowledge the relationship between whiteness and Christianity, and challenge the role that relationship played in the material realities of Black people (Cone, 2018; Reddie, 2020). It begs the question, "what does it mean to be Black and Christian" and reflects a radical interpretation of the meaning of "God's liberating presence in a society where Blacks were being economically exploited and politically marginalized because of their skin color" (Cone, 1984, p. 5). Thus, Black theology challenges the hypocritical nature of Western Christianity–that which used Jesus to subjugate and oppress Black people.

Even though there has been a decline in attendance in the Black church over the years, it continues to play a role in organizing and shaping Black thought (Pew Research Center, 2021; Truss, 2018). Prayer remains a central part of the Black religious experience, with Black people believing that prayer can heal physical illness and protect them (Pew Research Center, 20201). Its significance in Black political life is still present, with many political leaders such as former President Barack Obama and Reverend Raphael Warnock leveraging its resources for visibility and political gains. It has endured for centuries, and its significance is grounded in the social, political, and educational development and support of the Black collective. As Calhoun-Brown

(2000) notes, “when African Americans were prevented from building institutions of their own and precluded from participating in the institutions of mainstream America, churches developed and contained civil society for them” (p. 169). Thus, the Black church has always remained at the intersection of community, culture, politics, and religion.

Soul Food

With culinary traditions in Africa and the Caribbean, soul food is the “intellectual invention and property of African Americans … made from simple inexpensive ingredients" (Opie, 2010, p. xi). The term “soul food” was born during the Black power era of the 1960s, emphasizing the shared struggle, survival, and spiritual experiences of African people in the U.S (Opie, 2010). Soul food is more than just the food itself–which most point out include fried chicken, yams, Black eyed peas, chitterlings, and collard greens–it is the Black hand in the kitchen--the Black body who prepares it (Henderson, 2007). It represents “a connection to Africa and the diet of enslaved Blacks, something inherent in the Black body, and a tool to define a Black identity” (Henderson, 2007, p. 82). Soul food, as Henderson (2007) asserts, was encoded with Blackness.

Though African people brought their indigenous culinary and horticulturist practices over to America, once enslaved, they had to make do with the scraps and leftovers from their white slave owners (Opie, 2010). What was supposed to be used for nourishment, was often used as a means of control via reward or punishment by slave owners (Covey & Eisnach, 2009). Despite this external control mechanism, enslaved African people were able to use food both as a point of social relations and to exercise choice and control over their own lives–creating and sharing recipes, cooking meals together, and sharing whatever food they had with each other (Covey &

Eisnach, 2009). They created flavorful and nutritious dishes by drawing on rich African and Caribbean traditions of peppers and spices (Covey & Eisnach, 2009). This included using leafy green vegetables and smoked ingredients for flavoring, creating various fritters, the use of okra, nuts, and seeds, and an abundance of peppery and spicy hot sauces (Harris, 1995). Covey & Eisnach (2009) cite Edelson's (2006) assertion that "making food, eating food, and expressing preferences about it were arenas in which the enslaved controlled the character of their material lives." (p. 209). Thus, food for enslaved African people was more than just sustenance, but was critical to their sense of identity, membership and community.

Post-emancipation, when many newly freed Black people were poor and could not afford more expensive cuts of meat, like neckbones, liver, and ham hocks, food became symbols of social and moral superiority (AAREG, 2002; Whitehead, 1992). Whitehead notes that the early iteration of soul food, before it was called soul food, was referred to as "nigger food" by low-income whites, and "poor people's food" by higher-income whites. By the 1960s, during the collective Black political and social awakening of the Black power era, soul food was used by middle class Blacks to distance themselves from middle class white values and align themselves with lower-class Black people. Soul food restaurants were central to the notions of community during the civil rights movement, providing safety and sustenance for leaders who traveled through the south where segregation marked who could eat where (Miller, 2022). As such, contemporary notions of soul food, which are so central to the Black collective, have evolved to represent notions of family, love, and community–a nod to the "idea that Black people, struggling under the yoke of slavery and the post-slavery experiences of sharecropping, Jim Crow racism, migration north, and discrimination could at least rely on the comforts of the

traditional foods that solidified their relationships with one another in the face of adversity" (nettles, 2007, p. 108).

Black Hair

Yet another cultural representation of Black identity that has been (re)negotiated is hair. Nabugodi (2022) points out that hair, as a cultural signifier, existed well before slavery–in many of the West African culures from which slaves were taken. She notes that:

> Hair styles were used to indicate personal characteristics such as social and marital status, tribal affiliation, age, profession, or religion. In preparation for the slave-ship hold, captured Africans had their hair shaved off: while the immediate motive was hygiene, the act of shaving anticipated the social and cultural death that awaited at the far end of their passage across the Atlantic (p. 80).

African hair texture was described as "wool," a description that was necessary in the development of a racial hierarchy that justified enslaving human beings. As Nabugodi suggests, hair became an important characteristic in positions on race, as it served to defend and naturalize the kidnapping and enslavement of African people via dehumanization. She uses written accounts of African hair descriptions that present it not as "like wool" but "wool" itself, not hair. Thus African hair became both a phenotypical marker that African (and subsequently African American) people were not human.

In the New World, enslaved Africans did not have the time for the elaborate hair styling practices of their West African cultures (White & White, 1995). Many of the enslaved women who worked the fields covered their hair in head-rags due to the harsh conditions and demands of their work. This was a different aesthetic presentation than Black people who worked in the slave owner's house, or "The Big House," who sometimes mimicked the hairstyles of their enslavers

(Griffin, 2019). Black hair, thus, also became a class maker for both inside and outside the collective - that kinky hair was inferior to the hair of whites, and to Black people who could emulate the hair styles of whites. The trend of emulating white hair styles through the use of straightening applications (i.e., pressing, conking, perming, wigs), was seriously challenged during the 1960s and 1970s, as Black people began to view hair as a political statement and a symbol of the Black power and the "Black is Beautiful" movements (Bellinger, 2007; Griffin, 2019). Natural hair styles, particularly the afro, became a symbol of racial pride and rebellion of white American standards of beauty, however, the 1980s and 1990s ushered in more messaging for Black women to alter the texture of their hair (Griffin, 2019). The afro hairstyles, also during that time, became a symbol of delinquency for Black men, again assigning a value judgment to Black hair (Bellinger, 2007). It has only been since the 2000s that there has been a resurgence and widespread adaptation of the natural hair movement, fueled by the spread of information via the advent of social media, which has enabled Black people to discuss their stories, hair care tutorials and product information (Griffin, 2019).

Thus, hair has profound implications for how African Americans experience the world. It is never "just hair," and is always more than just a hairstyle, as Gougen (2021) points out. Its complex history and relationship to imperialism and racialization makes the variety of Black hair presentation uniquely a political aesthetic practice and an ethnic signifier with both symbolic meaning and significance (Mercer, 2003).

Black Music

Music is the "mother tongue" of Black culture, a non-verbal language that communicates Black people's worldly concerns and spiritual aspirations (Salaam, 1995). It is a creative

expression rooted in African tradition, born out of a systematic deprivation of more refined instruments of human expression like reading and writing (Salaam, 1995). From spirituals, to blues and jazz, rock n' roll to hip hop, Black music has operated within sociocultural constraints, innovating and adapting to create a musical tradition that reflects the deepest levels of the realities of Black existence (Salaam, 1995; Sullivan, 2001). It has been and continues to be the central way the collective has remained connected to their African heritage while protesting the bleak conditions Black people have faced throughout history (Sullivan, 2001).

Sullivan (2001) emphasizes how critical music was in the organization of early slave uprisings. Using the African drum for communication, enslaved Africans were able to spread messages in a rhythmic language not understood by whites, organizing revolts on slave ships and land (Sullivan, 2001). Once the connection between drumming, communication, and resistance was eventually made, a ban on African drums and drumming was instituted which contributed to "the slaves' cultural disorientation by weakening ties to the music that had filled their African existence" (p. 22). To fill the gap left by the ban on drums,

> …slaves developed ways to imitate drumming's complex polyrhythms by contriving new means of creating rhythm. They began using whatever means of rhythm-making were at hand: European instruments, household items such as spoons, jugs, and washboards, or even their own bodies used as percussive surfaces in a style that came to be known as "patting juba" or "slapping juba." Intricate vocal rhythms and styles developed to imitate the drum patterns, even seeking to capture the essence of multiple drums into a single vocal line (p. 22).

The 'Negro' spiritual is the core musical expression of the Black experience. White (1983) cites Johnson (1925) assertion that the slave spirituals possess the fundamental form, structure and characteristics of African music, with a striking rhythmic quality. It developed as a more acceptable, and sometimes encouraged, form of music expression for enslaved Black people

because, on its surface, the spiritual was seen as an embrace of Christianity, and thus, a less threatening form of musical expression by slave owners. The lyrics, however, were often coded with subversive messages of support, unity, and revolt, and even directions to the Underground Railroad (Sullivan, 2001). White (1983) cites Lovell's (1939) suggestion that three themes run through the Negro spiritual:

> (1) the slave's desire for temporal freedom, as revealed in Frederick Douglass' remark that the spirituals were 'tones breathing the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony again slavery' ; (2) 'the slave's desire for justice in the judgment upon his betrayers which some might call revenge'; and (3) read correctly, they formulated the slave's' tactic of battle, the strategy by which he expected to gain an eminent future'. The spiritual, then, conveyed physical and metaphysical resistance to enslavement, as witnessed by such lines as: 'My Lord delivered Daniel... Why can't He deliver me?' or 'We'll Soon Be Free' (p. 256).

The blues, as a genre, grew out of the longstanding oral tradition of the Negro spiritual—a reflection of the bitter and disheartening realization that, although slaves were granted emancipation, Black equality was, by no means, guaranteed (Suisman, 2004). The Blues centered a melancholic disappointment, and vented frustration and disillusionment, resulting in a shared sense of adversity (Sullivan, 2001). It emphasized improvisation, spontaneity, and artist-audience interaction (Steinfeld, 2016). As was a pattern that would emerge in future genres of Black music, including jazz, rap, rock & roll, and hip-hop, racial gatekeeping and cultural stereotypes kept Black musicians from enjoying the fruit of blues as a commodity. Blues was admonished by white people and condemned as a sexual and cultural threat, while adapted by white creators, just as Black creatives were denied the recognition of their contribution and its impact on white or mainstream culture (Hansen, 1960; Herrick, 2016; Duffy, 2009).

Born in the Black community of turn-of-the-century New Orleans, jazz shared a similar trajectory, early on (Ward & Burns, 2000). It, too, emphasized improvisation but also reflected a tremendous sense of sophistication and creativity for Black people who had very little formal musical training (Ward & Burns, 2000). Dubbed "nigger music," Early and Monson (2019) point out that, because jazz music in its early days was performed in brothels, it was associated with sex and the erotic. They note that jazz "came to define a kind of Black male existentialism function as 'a symbol of engagement and detachment, of punishing discipline and plush pleasure that operated cooperatively…'" (p. 6). Despite its widespread popularity, it was largely commodified and distributed (controlled) by white record labels, while Black artists marginally enjoyed the long-term pay-off of their art (Cashmore, 1997). This is true of rock & roll, the genre created by Black rhythm and blues (R&B) artists who were effectively erased from the rock 'n roll origin story (Cashmore, 1997).

The introduction of the Black power movement in the 1960s saw the transformation of soul music to revolutionary and radical (Vincent & Riley, 2013). As Black people shifted into more of a resistance stance on their social and political realities, the music became a reflection of the reclaiming of identity (Vincent & Riley, 2013). James Brown's (1968) "I'm Black and I'm Proud," Sam Cooke's (1964) "A Change is Gonna Come," Sly and the Family Stone's (1969) "Don't call me Nigger, Whitey," and Curtis Mayfield's (1964) "Keep on Pushing," all reflected a political consciousness that had not existed in an overt way before. Aretha Franklin's (1972) in her song "To be Young, Gifted, and Black" asserts:

In this whole world, you know
There are millions of boys and girls
Who are young, gifted and Black
With their souls intact, and that's a fact
You are young, gifted and Black
We must begin to tell our young

There's a world waiting for you, you
Yours is the quest that's just begun
When you're feeling real low
Here's a great truth you should remember and know
That you're young, gifted, and Black
You got your soul intact, oh and that's a fact

It is within this trajectory that we can, then, understand the emergence of rap and hip-hop music as contemporary socio-cultural-political productions that reflected the material realities of Black people in the 1980s and 1990s. Against the backdrop of enormous social and economic inequities between poor and rich, rap music became an art of protest but also a form of storytelling that reflected the moment. As poor Black youth navigated an aesthetic landscape that left communities decimated by crime and drugs, music once again served to express the realities of the collective. This can be seen in Public Enemy's (1989) "Fight the Power" and NWA's (1988) "F–-k the Police." As Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five (1982) note in their seminal song, "The Message":

Broken glass everywhere
<u>People pissing on the stairs, you know they just don't care</u>
I can't take the smell, can't take the noise
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat
I tried to get away, but I couldn't get far
'Cause a man with a tow truck repossessed my car

As Boyd (2004) points out, rap music is the most visible form of Black cultural expression in contemporary culture. The oral tradition is continued in the stories that are brought to life, which offer both a narration and a critique of the socio-political realities of the community. The art, however, has been co-opted by mainstream sources, shifting the music from social commentary to mainstream popularity – from cultural expression to cultural commodity. Rap

and hip-hop are arguably the world's bestselling musical forms, being used to sell everything from fast food, to athletic wear, cars and clothes, but continues to receive tremendous criticism for its glorification of misogyny and violence (Rose, 1989; Krims, 2002). Krims (2002) cites Kelley's (1994) "ghettocentricity" of hip hop and rap music - or the description of a "particular economic/historical moment, one possible only in contemporary cultural production" (p. 66) – and argues that it can described in the Marxist tradition; that the commodification of hip hop is a specific product of late, or multinational, capitalism that exploits post-industrial poverty.

Music is, indeed, the "Mother Tongue" of the Black collective, a cultural expression "forged in the smelter of oppression and exploitation" (Cashmore, 1997, p. 10). Black music is rooted in African history but also in the denial of more sophisticated linguistic expressions–a nonverbal language with depth and intensity of emotion. It has always been a weapon that paralleled social movements and goes hand and hand with knowledge and pride in the history of the Black struggle (Vincent & Riley, 2013). Its influence on American culture is clear, however, the music and its artists have always been separated, relegated to a category of "race music" or Black music and denied its proper contribution (Garofalo, 2002).

In summary, embedded in Black culture are notions of family, religion, community, and political resistance, but greater than that, a sense of pride, resolve and resilience (Shelby, 2002; Shelby & McPhearson, 2004; Sellers et al., 1997; Cross, 1985; Beckett & Smith, 1981; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997; Willie & Reddick, 2010; Staples, 1985; Chaney & Fairfax, 1995). It is born out of contexts that were meant to harm and hurt, and thus, serves to soothe and heal the wounds of racism (Cashmore, 1997). As noted in social identity literature, Black people have worked to shift the negative dimensions by which their group identity characteristics have been judged. These negative dimensions have received criticism from the dominant culture, but,

paradoxically, have been exploited and commodified to serve their interests. Corporate interests have long dominated what Horkehimer and Adorno (1944) named the "culture industry" – with elite power being maintained through the reproduction of mass culture and the reproduction of sameness, giving the illusion of choice, competition, and individuality. They argued that the culture industry's ideology is business, and its goal is to create as many consumers of culture as possible. With this, the culture industry becomes a powerful agent in perpetuating capitalism, with people becoming dominated by consumption. This creates a unique problem for the commodification of Black culture: Because so much of it is born of struggle, the exploitation of it effectively makes Black suffering and pain a commodity – something to be bought and sold. Corporations that profit from Blackness, the Black body, and Black pain (Grundy, 2018) traffick in cultural exploitation. Austin (2004) notes that Black people are deeply resentful of commodification, particularly because it is often accompanied by an effort to increase the thing's appeal to consumers in the white-dominated mainstream. She pointed out that "Black culture commodified similarly loses its organic edge-its authenticity, its purity, its originality, its spontaneity, its vibrancy, and most importantly its rootedness" (p. 9). The next section explores the commodification of culture, particularly Black culture, and its relationship to capitalism.

Cultural Commodification

Hall (1997) points out that discourse, signs, and codes are mapped in structures of dominance—enforcing or preferring one semantic domain over another. He argued that power is maintained through the encoding and decoding of ideologies in the communication process. These codes are how power and ideology are made to signify in particular discourses. This is important to consider because it gets at the process of transforming the meaning of something

into a product for commercial purposes. This process, known as commodification, originates from Marx's conception of the relationship between power, labor, class, and capitalism (Marx, 1990). Marx saw commodification as "expropriating the means of production from much of the population in order to create a supply of laborers who must labor in order to purchase, and consumers unable to produce for their direct use" (Butsch, 1984, p. 218). As class has become understood to represent more than just the working class and elite, but rather different cultural demarcations including ideology, language, race, gender, and identity, so has how cultural products are transformed for mainstream consumption by those in the dominant class. This process, known as cultural commodification, is the transformation of material and immaterial cultural products into commodities to be bought and sold (Chomsaeng, 2020).

Both diffusion and defusion are related to the process of cultural commodification (Haenfler, 2017). These sociological processes represent the ways that identities and cultures are wiped of their individual meanings and commercialized for mass consumption (Haenfler, 2017). Diffusion is the process of spreading the commodity (i.e., style, idea, value, norm, etc.) to a wider audience. This starts at the point in which advertising and promotion begins – from advertising on television, poster and t-shirt printing, and social media (Haenfler, 2017). Defusion is the process of depoliticizing or 'watering down' the values, meanings, ideals, and subversive potential of a group (Haenfler, 2017). Defusion is where meaning is altered to commodify things that may not have been accepted by mainstream or dominant audiences. By altering meaning for greater palatability, certain parts of identities and cultures are left to enjoy while other aspects are left out, constructing the identity or item to be more marketable (Haenfler, 2017). Chomsaeng (2020) notes that diffusion usually helps introduce the products to the consumers while defusion

reintroduces the products to the market, and, as a result, enable the capitalists to earn more money from creating product images and drawing attention from the consumers.

Cultural commodification of Black culture.

Commodifying Blackness, thus, involves transforming the representations of Black people or other symbolic and material artifacts of Black cultural life (e.g. speech and phonetic conventions, folklore, style, fashion, music, usage of the body, and the physical form itself) into commodities to be bought and sold. Commodified Blackness also involves divorcing the cultural meanings embedded in those representations and artifacts, namely the struggle, pain, racism, and discrimination mentioned by Cashmore (1997), in order to make them more palatable to the dominant culture. Wallace (2020) explores the commodification of streetball, a distinct form of basketball developed by "marginalized" Black men excluded from and exploited by mainstream institutions. He argues that its appearance in mainstream media divorces the practice itself from the structural contexts of its production and conceals the effects of structural racism.
Stevens (2021) studied Blackfishing, a practice in which cultural and economic agents appropriate Black culture and urban aesthetics in an effort to capitalize on Black markets. He explores how Black identity is mined for its cultural and economic value in the context of digital labor and then exploited and appropriated. Stevens uses the example of how hashtags that originate from marginalized groups to create, shape, and circulate narratives about issues facing their community, become popular currency that corporations, competing voices, and users with large followings can easily access, use, and distribute to spotlight their voices at the expense of the initial group. He further argues that social media models who appropriate Black culture and urban aesthetics (i.e., Afrocentric hairstyles, music, and space) obscure the more racially charged

aspects of Black existence, drawing boundaries around which depictions of Blackness are desirable, and thus, profitable. It is for this reason why, as Austin (2004) points out, that Black people are deeply resentful of commodification. She pointed out that "Black culture commodified … loses its organic edge-its authenticity, its purity, its originality, its spontaneity, its vibrancy, and most importantly its rootedness" (p. 9).

Leornard (2009) cites Collins's (2006) assertion that the process of commodification is not simply about selling "an essentialized Black culture," but rather a particular construction of Blackness that has proven beneficial to whites. hooks (1992) argued that it is through commodification that power is maintained, as the Other is consumed, or "cannibalized." She argued that commodity culture in the U.S. exploits conventional thinking about race allowing for a proximity that absolves one of any real political action that would lead to a difference in material conditions for those that have been consumed. Leong's (2013) racial capitalism is a related concept of commodification, conceptualized as the systemic phenomenon of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person. Leong argues that in a society preoccupied with diversity, non-whiteness is a valued commodity. She specifically looks at affirmative action and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and contends that affiliation with nonwhite individuals becomes merely a useful means for white individuals and predominantly white institutions to acquire social and economic benefits while deflecting potential charges of racism and avoiding more difficult questions of racial equality.

The value of non-whiteness is still largely measured by its worth to white people and predominantly white institutions. This has become particularly salient since the rash of police killings of unarmed Black people that reached peak visibility with the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012, sparking the Black Lives Matter movement. The mediated and viral nature of the videos

of unarmed Black people being murdered by the police made visible what has been hidden - the experiences of Black men and women when they encounter the police - and forced the U.S. to take note. That visibility was made hypervisible in 2020, as the U.S.'s race problem became both operationalized and contextualized following (1) the killing of George Floyd, Ahmed Aubery and Breonna Taylor; (2) the racialized U.S. presidential election between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, and; (3) the COVID-19 pandemic which sparked an increase Asian hate. Demands from consumers forced corporations to reflect on and reckon with their own historical connections to racial injustice, discrimination and exclusionary practices.

In response, numerous companies and brands have made significant financial commitments and shifted messaging and rebranding efforts to make visible and amplify the fight for racial equality, demonstrate allyship, and support for African Americans and other communities of color (Bonaparte, 2020; Jan, McGregor & Hoyer, 2021). Netflix launched a "Black Lives Matter" Collection of movies, television shows, and documentaries that featured "over 45 titles about racial injustice and the experience of Black Americans" (Spangler, 2020, para. 1). Apple released a Black history Apple watch band, with red, green, and Black stripes - the colors representing the Pan-African flag (Jabali, 2021). Nike launched a Colin Kaepernick "Just Do It" campaign that donned the former NFL in a visual aesthetic fashioned after the Black Panther Party (Grundy, 2018). Shan Shui, a South Carolina based nonprofit, created a jewelry line made from shattered glass from BLM protests (BET, 2020). They titled the line "Wear their names," a play on "Say their names"—the call of remembrance of Black victims of police violence (BET, 2020) and named pieces after victims of police violence (i.e., "The Trayvon", "The Breonna", etc.). Corporate financial commitments to racial and social justice have been tremendous. Jan, McGregor and Hoyer (2021) found that, as of August 2021, America's 50

biggest public companies and their foundations collectively committed at least $49 billion since George Floyd's murder in May 2020 to address racial inequality. However, they found that more than 90 percent of that amount, roughly $45.2 billion–was allocated as loans or investments the corporations could stand to profit from, more than half in the form of mortgages. In sum, the large majority of financial commitments made to address racial inequalities ultimately benefit the corporations making the commitments. Corporate support for racial justice indeed amplifies and makes visible the fight, however, what is clear from both a financial and communications perspective, is that race-centered corporate social responsibility efforts are profitable.

These examples signify what King and Busa (2017) identify as corporatization, a variant of commodification where ideas and practices initiated by social movements come to be largely dominated by corporate interests. Corporations have been highly criticized for these commodifying, commercializing and sloganizing efforts (Bonaparte, 2020; Menon & Kiesler 2020). As corporations shifted messaging and branding to align with the Black Lives Matter movement, activists and scholars have called out the performative nature of this support, noting it as reactionary and inauthentic (Jan, McGregor, Mere, & Tiku, 2020). Austin, Gaither & Gaither (2019) contend that recent CSA has been criticized as woke washing or attempts by companies to appear socially conscious to make profits. Imara (2020) points out the commodification inherent in public displays of allyship via public relations campaigns that see BLM as an opportunity to maintain Black consumership. She notes that, without real investment in structural change, corporations are merely paying lip service, commodifying Black death and profiting off the movement of racial violence (Imara, 2020). Further, in commodifying BLM, critics argue, corporations are profiting from Blackness, the Black body and Black pain (Grundy, 2018). Imara (2020) rejects the well-intended motivations of specific individuals within these

organizations and emphasizes that these maneuvers are "tantamount to cooptation of Black struggle and the commodification of Black death" (para. 19).

In summary, commodifying Blackness is the transformation of the representations of Black people and the symbolic and material artifacts of Black cultural life (e.g. speech and phonetic conventions, folklore, style, fashion, music, usage of the body, and the physical form itself) into products that are bought and sold (hooks, 1992; Leonard, 2009). It ties these representations to structures of profitability, and does so by divorcing the cultural meanings embedded in those representations and artifacts from the structural contexts of its production, namely the struggle, pain, racism and discrimination endured by Black people, in order to make them more palatable to the dominant culture (Cashmore, 1997; Collins, 2006; Wallace, 2020). The result is a concealing of racism and the effects of racism, which ultimately maintains racial hierarchy and power.

As corporate social responsibility efforts increasingly center Black people, race becomes a new measure by which to understand how those efforts are seen as authentic. Based on the review of literature on CSR and CSA, Blackness and Black culture, authenticity, and commodification, the last and final section is a conceptualization of race-centered corporate social responsibility and perceptions of authenticity of those efforts.

Conceptualizing Race-Centered CSR

This study samples from Coombs and Holladay's (2012) definition of CSR and Dodd and Supa's (2014) definition of CSA and incorporates Jannsen's (2013) and Logan's (2020) critical perspective to conceptualize and define race-centered CSR. As noted before, CSR and CSA are conceptually different--whereas CSR is a set of voluntary contributions that are *consistent with a*

corporation's mission (with all stakeholders), which *contributes to the corporations' bottom line*, CSA *focuses on socio-political issues that are divorced from a corporation's mission, may potentially isolate organizational stakeholders*, and *affect a corporation's bottom line*. In a race-centered context, because efforts or discussions to bring awareness to and increase racial equity are met with increasing polarization, corporations that use traditional CSR activities like cause-related and social marketing, philanthropic efforts (i.e., donating money), humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, and diversity and inclusion work are taking a position on a race-related issue.

Being aware of the way in which race orders society and our social relations is being weaponized as "woke" and co-opted as a symbol by those who push back on racial equality (Zavattaro, 2022). What was once understood as moral and fair for underrepresented racial groups, like equal protection and fair treatment, has now become a matter of socio-political controversy. Corporations who choose to include any element of race in their CSR activities are making a socio-political declaration that could potentially alienate other stakeholders who do not share the same positions. For example, Ben & Jerry's creation of a new flavor of ice cream to promote the People's Response Act, legislation proposed by Democratic Representative Cori Bush (D-M.)—legislation that seeks to curb the disproportionate share of police violence against people with mental illnesses and other health complications—can be seen as the company taking a stand on issues that impact Black people, particularly police violence.

Therefore, in this study, race-centered CSR is defined as an organization's voluntary contribution to repair racial inequities through the improvement of labor standards and working conditions, employee and community relations, social equity, gender balance, human rights, good governance, and anti-corruption, diversity initiatives, and community support, to include

programs and projects for underrepresented racial groups (UNIDO, 2022; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). This study uses Black people as a racial group to examine race-centered CSR. Because race-centered CSR includes CSA, the activities under the title "race-centered CSR" include *traditional CSR activities* (i.e., social issue or cause related marketing, philanthropic efforts, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, diversity and inclusion) and *taking a public stance on a controversial, racially implicated issue that can contribute to or affect a company's bottom line* (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Dodd and Supa, 2014; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Zheng, 2020). This conceptual definition uses the term CSR because it is generally understood to encompass many different activities, not just taking a position on a controversial issue, and therefore includes CSA.

The definition of race-centered CSR in this study also reflects a critical approach to CSR as suggested by Robinson (2004) and Logan (2020). Both argued that because corporations have historically benefited from the forced labor of Black people and racial oppression, they have a responsibility toward improving race relations. In addition, as outlined by Janssen (2013) corporations should take a rhetorical approach toward reconciliation that emphasizes the importance of corporations creating historical accountability, taking responsibility, making public acknowledgements, and remembering its past.

Based on the definition, I operationalize race-centered CSR in the following ways. Note that this list is not exhaustive:

1. Donating/investing money to organizations that support Black people directly or issues that impact Black people.
2. Donating/investing money in physical communities where Black people live
3. Advocating for police and/or criminal justice reform.

4. Declaring that “Black Lives Matter.”
5. Increasing the number of Black product or content developers and creators.
6. Donating/investing money to Black people directly (reparations).
7. Increasing hiring of Black employees, contractors or suppliers.
8. Increasing the number of Black people on the corporation’s board of directors.
9. Acknowledging past wrongdoings against the Black community.
10. Apologizing for past wrongdoings against the Black community.
11. Creating a work environment where Black people feel safe.
12. Creating opportunities for people to talk about race.
13. Dedicating organizational or staff time to Black social issues.

An example of advocating for police and/or criminal justice reform is Puma who launched its #REFORM campaign, which gives activists in sports and entertainment support in fight for criminal justice reform. One result of that campaign was the Clyde Court Disrupt “Peace on Earth” shoe. Puma donated $5 from the sale of each pair to the Trayvon Martin Foundation. An example of acknowledging past wrongdoings against the Black community is REI’s production of “Brotherhood of Skiing,” a mini documentary about racism in skiing. An example of increasing hiring of Black employees, contractors or suppliers is The Home Depot’s joining the Billion Dollar Roundtable Inc. (BDR), a nonprofit organization that promotes supplier diversity excellence and best practices. The BDR consists of U.S.-based corporations that spend $1 billion or more annually with minority and women-owned suppliers. An example of increasing the number of Black product or content developers and creators is Netflix’s launch of the “Black Lives Matter” collection to U.S. subscribers which featured over 45 titles about racial injustice and the experience of Black Americans. As mentioned by the company’s CEO, showcasing the

collection reflected the company's commitment to true and systemic change through highlighting powerful and complex narratives about the Black experience.

Conceptualizing Authenticity in Race-Centered CSR

Using Wicki and Van Der Kaaij's (2007) suggestion, authentic CSR is the internalized and credible value system of a corporation, reflected through efforts that build trust, consistently over time. It reflects a sense of honesty, truthfulness, integrity, sincerity, consistency and community engagement. As mentioned before, this study borrows Alhouti, Johnson, and Holloway (2016) definition that authentic CSR actions are actions perceived as genuine, stakeholder-oriented, less commercial and beyond legal requirements, and are influenced by fit,, impact and reparations. Based on this definition of CSR authenticity, this study incorporates theories and concepts of social identity theory, Black identity, Black commodification, and reconciliation into conceptualizing race-centered CSR authenticity.

As a social construct, the concept of authenticity can be understood as subjective, built and accepted through co-creation of communication and cultural symbols. Much of the literature on authenticity in CSR has focused on a universal consumer, however, as a social construct, it relies on and can be influenced by social identity. As Brewere and Yuki (2007) suggest, cultural or social identity are related in that culture regulates and defines social identity and social identification. Therefore, social identity becomes a driver for understanding how groups of people come to understand authenticity.

For the Black collective, many cultural dimensions and practices were largely born out of the history of having been brought to the United States as slaves and the experiences of life in exile, enslavement and discrimination. Cashmore (1997) suggests that Black culture embodies the values, ambitions and orientations unique to Black people, whether in the States, Britain or

elsewhere in the diaspora. Because it is something that is learned, Black culture is not something that derives from Black people as a "race," but must come from experience. As noted in social identity literature, Black people have worked to shift the negative dimensions by which their group identity characteristics have been judged. These negative cultural dimensions have received criticism from the dominant culture, but, paradoxically, have been exploited and commodified to serve their interests.

Commodified Blackness involves divorcing the cultural meanings embedded in representations and artifacts of Blackness, namely the struggle, pain, racism and discrimination mentioned by Cashmore (1997), in order to make them more palatable to the dominant culture. Corporatization, a variant of commodification where ideas and practices initiated by racial justice movements come to be largely dominated by corporate interests, has been criticized for being inauthentic because they do not invest in structural change, only pay lip service, commodify Black death and profit off the movement of racial violence.

Because concepts of collectivism, religion, family, shared culture, resistance to oppression and egalitarianism (Shelby, 2002; Shelby & McPhearson, 2004; Sellers et al., 1997; Cross, 1985; Beckett & Smith, 1981; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997; Willie & Reddick, 2010; Staples, 1981; Chaney & Fairfax, 1995) are central to Black culture, perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR would be influenced by how corporations have historically treated and centered these ideas and whether they have ever profited from them. In addition, perceptions of race-centered CSR would be influenced by how corporations have attempted to reconcile oppressive or racist conditions, particularly for the Black community.

Therefore, authentic race-centered CSR (1) reflect a company's consistent and long-term commitment to issues that impact underrepresented racial groups, (2) center and communicate

cultural meaning relative to racial identity (i.e., community values, sentimentality); (3) are meaningful relative to the company's ability to address racial issues, and; (4) include reconciliation discourse or elements of reparations to make right either, (a) the corporation's historical wrongs against a particularly racial group or, (b) broader social, political or economic wrongdoings against a particular racial group.

Conceptualizing Inauthencitiy in Race-Centered CSR

Conversely, inauthentic race-centered CSR is defined as reactive, defensive and performative responses to addressing racial inequities. As Bhattacharya and Sen suggest, inauthentic CSR are activities that come from a reactive, defensive or competitive position. Murray and Vogel (1997) assert that reactive CSR is when corporations engage to protect their image after some socially irresponsible actions have been reported. Caroll (1979) suggested that a defensive strategy is a pre-emptive one, which anticipates changes in the demands of stakeholders through predictive scanning systems. These assertions are consistent with Alhouti, Johnson, and Holloway's (2016) suggestion that reparative CSR is seen as inauthentic when the CSR initiatives are perceived as being done out of necessity or to save face. Imara (2020) suggests that much of the reactive nature of CSR activities aimed at the Black community via public displays of allyship through public relations campaigns are an effort to simply maintain Black consumership, thus rending them inauthentic and serving a form of commodification of Black culture. Leong's (2013) racial capitalism and Banks' (2022) diversity capital suggest the corporations use diversity as image management and to leverage opportunities related to race and ethnicity while changing very little structurally. Therefore, I conceptualize inauthentic race-centered CSR activities commodify Black culture by divorcing the cultural meaning embedded

in representations from the structural contexts of its production, thereby exploiting the culture for economic gain—both directly and indirectly—without any real structural change.

Summary and Research Questions

As corporate social responsibility efforts increasingly center race, race itself becomes a new measure by which to understand how those efforts are seen as authentic. To investigate the relationship between race and perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR, the following research questions guide the study:

RQ1. *Do traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, issue involvement, self-serving motive), racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks), perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR?*

RQ2a. *Do traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, and racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Black) and perceptions of commodification?*

RQ2b. *Do traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, and racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Black) influence perceptions of reconciliatory discourse?*

RQ3. *Does racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks) influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR?*

RQ4. *Do traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, identification with Black identity perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR within the Black public?*

RQ5. *Do traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR within the non-Black public?*

Rationale for Research Questions 1-5: The literature on authenticity in corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy are both related to a corporation's honesty, truthfulness, integrity, sincerity, consistency, and community engagement to issues that impact the company and its stakeholders. Authenticity in CSR and CSA has assumed a universal public, however authenticity, as a cultural construct, suggests that social identity can motivate how groups of people come to understand it. To examine this assumption, research questions 1-5 have been created.

As noted, literature suggests a relationship between CSR and CSA and boycott, purchase intention, and brand loyalty (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Alhouti et al., 2016; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Cornwell & Coote, 2003; Zhang & Borden, 2022). Therefore, we pose the research questions six and seven for investigative purposes:

RQ6. *Does race-centered CSR authenticity influence (a) boycott, (b) purchase intention, (c) brand loyalty for Black publics?*

RQ7. *Does race-centered CSR authenticity influence (a) boycott, (b) purchase intention, (c) brand loyalty for non-Black publics?*

Rationale for Research Questions 6 and 7: Though this relationship has been established with traditional CSR and CSA, race-centered CSR is a new concept, and, as such, the relationship cannot be hypothesized.

To investigate perceptions of authenticity in race-centered CSR, the following hypotheses questions guide the study:

H1. *Perceptions of cultural commodification negatively influence perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity for Black publics.*

H2. *Perceptions of reconciliatory discourse positively influence perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity for Black publics.*

Rationale: Because concepts of collectivism, religion, family, shared culture, resistance to oppression and egalitarianism are central to Black culture, perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR would be influenced by how corporations have historically treated and centered these ideas and whether they have ever profited from them (commodified). In addition, perceptions of race-centered CSR would be influenced by how corporations have attempted to reconcile oppressive or racist conditions (reconciliation), particularly for the Black community. See *Appendix 1* for a visualization of variable relationships.

Chapter 3. Methods

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize authenticity of race-centered CSR. To examine the research questions and hypotheses, an online survey was conducted. This section will discuss the type of study design, sample, and measures.

Study Design

This research employed a pre-test, a pilot study, and a main study. The pre-test was used for face validity of the survey instrument. The pilot study was conducted to identify a range of corporations and their race-centered CSR activities to use in the main study, and to test the newly developed scales.

Both the pilot and main study employed an online survey. Survey research is the systematic collection of information from a sample of individuals drawn from a specified larger population through their responses to questions (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 160; Schwarz, Groves & Schuman, 1998). As Wimmer and Dominic (2014) point out, surveys are a useful way to collect a large amount of data from a variety of people, examine many variables, and use a variety of statistics to analyze the data. Survey research is often used to describe and explore human behavior and is therefore used frequently in social science research (Singleton & Straits, 2009). Because surveys are used to uncover general trends in people's opinions, experiences, and behavior, it is preferrable over interviews, which are best used to learn detailed information from a few specific people (Driscoll, 2011). In addition, surveys offer the opportunity for generalizability—meaning statistical testing can be applied and results from a study sample can be applied to a larger population, allowing for predictions (Wimmer & Dominic, 2014).

Study Procedure and Sample

Pre-Test

The purpose of the pre-test was to ensure face validity of the scales. As Converse and Presser (1986) note, pretests are critical in determining if a survey instrument will function properly as valid and reliable social science research tools. Because the CSR authenticity and racial identity survey instruments have been validated, the researcher was interested in the face validity of the reconciliation and commodification sections of the instrument.

Measurement Development

Commodification Scale

Measures for cultural commodification were adapted from the conceptualizations of Cashmore (1997), hooks (1992), Collins (2006), Imara (2020), Leonard (2009), and Wallace (2020). These measures were operationalized as: 1) concealing racism and the effects of racism; 2) divorcing cultural meaning from Black cultural life and its artifacts; 3) making Black cultural life and its artifacts more palatable for dominant culture; 4) buying and selling Black cultural life and its artifacts; 5) using Black cultural life to make profits; 6) romanticizing Black cultural life and its artifacts; 7) maintaining racial hierarchy and power; 8) a form of voyeurism; 9) tokenized representation. See Table 1.

Table 1: Commodification Scale - Pre-Test Version

Commodification Scale
The company is addressing racism and the effects of racism
The company is selling Black culture to the masses
The company is using Black cultural life to make profits
The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness
The company is ignoring the sentimental value of Black culture
The company is altering the meaning of Black culture

The company is appropriating Black culture
The company is only attempting to maintain Black consumership

Reconciliation Scale

Measures of reconciliation are adapted from conceptualizations of Hatch (2003), Janssen (2003), and Myers (2000). Hatch suggests that reconciliation involves reporting and acknowledging the truth about past offenses symbolic actions of apology and forgiveness symbolic and material reparation. Janssen (2003) offers that corporations have a responsibility toward reconciliatory discourse, which hinges on recognition of the past as a moral issue create historical accountability take responsibility make public acknowledgements. Myers (2000) suggests that reconciliation involves public policy response to the apparent failure of alternative means of remedying racial and ethnic economic inequality, affirmative action and race-based initiatives for redressing past wrong, acknowledgment of prior wrongs, official apology for those wrongs, and reparations (compensation for the wrongs). See Table 2.

Table 2: Reconciliation Scale - Pre-Test Version

Reconciliation
The company is making a real or symbolic apology for past wrongdoings
The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings
The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings
The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings
The company is making amends for past wrongdoings
The company is creating racial and social justice change
The company is remedying racial economic inequality

Expert Review

Using guidance on sample size from Carpenter (2018), six experts were recruited to review and provide feedback on the commodification and reconciliation scales (See Table 3).

Carpenter notes that "experts should consist of methodologists, intended participants, and subject matter researchers" (p. 34) and they can provide open-ended feedback. The six experts were recruited based on their methodological skill and/or understanding of critical concepts of race.

Table 3: Subject Matter Experts

Name	**Title**	**Field/Area of Expertise**
Anthony Natale, PhD	Associate Professor, Zarrow School of Social Work, University of Oklahoma	Health equity, curriuculum design, institutional DEIB, evaluation
George Daniels, PhD	Associate Professor of Journalism, University of Alabama & Member of Minorities and Communication Division of Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication	Diversity issues in the media workplace and change in the television newsroom
Lee Edwards, PhD	Professor of Strategic Communications and Public Engagement in the Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science	Socio-cultural and critical perspectives in strategic communications
Periloux Peay, PhD	Assistant Professor of Political Science, Georgia State University	American Politics, Black Politics, American Political Institutions, Public Policy, Social Movements
Rafael Matos, PhD	Student Research Chair, Minorities and Communication Division of Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication	Cultural studies, crisis communication, corporate communication, and instructional design.
Tekisha Everette, PhD	Executive Vice President. Trust for America's Health	Race, gender, and social justice in social policy

The experts were provided the scales via email and asked to provide feedback based on if the scales "contained complex wording or language, questions requiring estimation, vagueness in questions or response categories, double-barreled questions, and leading or biased

questions." The scales were modified based on their feedback. Specifically, experts were concerned about the double-barreled nature involved in the "making a real or symbolic apology for past wrongdoings" in the reconciliation scale and "addressing racism and the effects of racism" in the commodification scale. In addition, "sentimental value" in the commodification scale was seen as unclear and needing further elaboration. Other minor feedback involved replacing vague or leading words like "remedying", "appropriating", or "only" and providing more precise words to explain these concepts. See Table 4 for modified commodification scale and Table 5 for modified reconciliation scale.

Table 4: Original vs. Pre-Test Commodification Scale

Original	Revised
1. The company is addressing racism and the effects of racism	1. The company is addressing racism through this activity.
2. The company is selling Black culture to the masses	2. The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity.
3. The company is using Black cultural life to make profits	3. The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity.
4. The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness	4. The company is using Black culture to make profits through this activity.
5. The company is ignoring the sentimental value of Black culture	5. The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness through this activity.
6. The company is altering the meaning of Black culture	6. The company is ignoring the struggle and resiliency associated with the history of Black people in the U.S. through this activity.
7. The company is appropriating Black culture	7. The company is altering the cultural meanings associated with the struggle and resiliency of Black people in the U.S. through this activity.
8. The company is only attempting to maintain Black consumership	8. The company is using Black culture for its own benefit through this activity.
	9. The company is attempting to maintain Black consumership through this activity.

Table 5: Original vs. Pre-Test Reconciliation Scale

Original	Revised
1. The company is making a real or symbolic apology for past wrongdoings	1. The company is making an apology for past wrongdoings
2. The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings	2. The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings
3. The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings	3. The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings
4. The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings	4. The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings
5. The company is making amends for past wrongdoings	5. The company is making amends for past wrongdoings
6. The company is creating racial and social justice change	6. The company is attempting to create racial justice change
7. The company is remedying racial economic inequality	7. The company is attempting to create social justice change
	8. The company is trying to address racial economic inequality

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was twofold: to select corporations and CSR activities and to test the validity of newly developed reconciliation and commodification scales. An initial list of 27 corporations and their CSR activities were developed using Jan, McGregor, & Hoyer's (2021) list of 50 major American corporations that committed support for racial justice following the death of George Floyd, Banks (2022) study on ethnic support of corporate America, and a Google search of activities based on the definition of race-centered CSR and examples of race-centered CSR activities. The Google search included terms like "corporations + Black Lives Matter" and "African American community + corporate social responsibility." Though scholarship provided numerous examples, the researcher used Google to obtain a sample that reflected at least one of the 13 kinds of race-centered CSR (i.e., *donating/investing money to organizations that support Black people directly or issues that impact Black people;*

donating/investing money in physical communities where Black people live, advocating for police and/or criminal justice reform, etc.). See Table 6.

Table 6: Pilot Study Corporations/CSR Activities Initial List

1	Apple	Launched the Racial Equity and Justice Initiative to challenge systemic racism, advance racial equity nationwide. Commitments build on Apple's $100 million pledge and include a first-of-its-kind education hub for HBCUs and an Apple Developer Academy in Detroit
2	Mattel	Increased its Barbie Dream Gap Project donation to $500,000 starting with $250,000 to the NAACP and another "$250,000 to fund educational programs focused on supporting Black girls."
3	Viacom	Partnered with the "I Have A Dream" Foundation to engage in a service opportunity (assembling care packages for college students) in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
4	Ralph Lauren	Expanded its partnership with Morehouse College and Spelman College, to create a limited-edition collection inspired by the schools' rich heritage and esteemed traditions. The campaign was produced by an all-Black cast including its photographer, creative directors, cinematographer and talent — predominantly comprising students, faculty and alumni at both institutions.
5	Spotify	In celebration of Juneteenth and Black Music Month, one of Spotify's flagship playlists, "New Music Friday" will exclusively feature Black artists on Friday,
6	Target	Made Juneteenth an official company holiday in 2020, a year before it became a federal holiday.
7	Andersen Windows and Doors	Sponsored and celebrated Black Music Month with "A celebration of Black Music: Music is the Window to Our Souls" a concert event featuring an authentic reenactment and tribute to the greatest soul performers of the sixties.
8	Netflix	Committed $100 million over the next five years to fund organizations that help underrepresented communities find jobs in TV and film.
9	The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County	Houston's transit agency installed yellow seats to honor Rosa Parks ahead of her birthday this month.
10	Johnson & Johnson	Committed $100M over the next five years to invest in and promote health equity solutions.
11	Denny's	Created the "Re-ignite the Dream" campaign in 2002, aimed at raising and donating money to the National Civil Rights Museum. A portion from the restaurant's All-American Slam meal was donated to the expansion of the museum, and ended with Denny's donating $1m.
12	McDonald's	"One of Us" advertisement and donated undisclosed amount to National Urban League and the NAACP.
13	Proctor & Gamble	"The Choice" advertisement that asks white people to use their position of power in America to actively combat racism. The ad ends by directing viewers to a section of P&G's website created earlier this month that provides resources for tackling racism.

14	The Home Depot	Joined the Billion Dollar Roundtable Inc. (BDR), a nonprofit organization that promotes supplier diversity excellence and best practices. The BDR consists of U.S.-based corporations that spend $1 billion or more annually with minority and women-owned suppliers.
15	Nike	"For Once, Don't Do It" advertising and pledged $40M over four years to social justice organizations.
16	Ben & Jerry's	created a new flavor of ice cream to promote the People's Response Act, legislation proposed by Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., that seeks to curb the disproportionate share of police violence against people with mental illnesses and other health complications.
17	L'Oreal Paris	Made a statement that the company "stands in solidarity with the Black community and against injustice of any kind" and made a "commitment to the NAACP"; however Three years prior, L'Oréal parted ways with its first transgender ambassador Bergdorf after she spoke out about the racism surrounding Charlottesville's 2017 Unite the Right rally, which left three dead and more injured.
18	REI	Produced "Brotherhood of Skiing," a mini-documentary about racism in skiing.
19	Google	Black history Month ad titled "The Most Searched: A Celebration of Black History Makers" 90-second spot features the most searched African-Americans who made history—including abolitionist Frederick Douglass, musician Louis Armstrong and poet Maya Angelou—and the moments that defined it, like the Montgomery bus boycott and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech.
20	Capital One	During Black History Month, the company recognized their associates' innovation and achievements, and hosts panel discussions with leaders, art exhibitions, and a unique visual and auditory experience
21	Caterpillar	During Black history month, the company recognized Black/African American colleagues' contributions both internally and externally and highlighted their Black Employee Resource Group.
22	EBay	During Black History Month, the company hosted a series of virtual events led by Black employees that celebrate the long-lasting impact of Black women and the African diaspora culture through game nights, Black cinema watch parties, fireside chats, and panel discussions covering various topics, including technology, culture, and wellness.
23	Netflix	Launched a "Black Lives Matter" collection to U.S. subscribers, featuring over 45 titles about racial injustice and the experience of Black Americans.
24	Amazon	Sponsored an inaugural Juneteenth Unityfest, presented by the Robert Randolph Foundation to to commemorate and celebrate Juneteenth and Black culture with musical performances, inspiring remarks, films, comedy, storytelling, and appearances by civic leaders and influencers
25	Under Armor	Focused on recruiting efforts on improving representation of historically underrepresented groups in corporate locations, particularly at the director level and above.
26	Puma	Launched its #REFORM campaign in 2018, giving activists in sports and entertainment support in fight for criminal justice reform. One result of that campaign was the Clyde Court Disrupt "Peace on Earth" shoe. Puma donated $5 from the sale of each pair to the Trayvon Martin Foundation.

27	Koch Industries	Removed conviction history questions from its job applications. Koch Industries followed up its move by encouraging the passing of "Ban the Box" legislation in the remaining 15 states where it's not yet been adopted.

The initial list of 27 corporations and their activities was refined to 15 after analyzing for: 1) which were most closely matched the operational definitions of race-centered CSR; 2) which were clear enough to communicate in a survey without an excess of context (for the purpose of word count); 3) duplicate companies; 4) range across types of operational definitions. See Table 7 for the final list.

Table 7: Pilot Study Corporations/CSR Activities Final List

1	Mattel	Increased its Barbie Dream Gap Project donation to $500,000 starting with $250,000 to the NAACP and another "$250,000 to fund educational programs focused on supporting Black girls."
2	Viacom	Partnered with the "I Have A Dream" Foundation to engage in a service opportunity (assembling care packages for college students) in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
3	Spotify	In celebration of Juneteenth and Black Music Month, one of Spotify's flagship playlists, "New Music Friday" will exclusively feature Black artists on Friday,
4	Andersen Windows and Doors	Sponsored and celebrated Black Music Month with "A celebration of Black Music: Music is the Window to Our Souls" a concert event featuring an authentic reenactment and tribute to the greatest soul performers of the sixties.
5	Netflix	Committed $100 million over the next five years to fund organizations that help underrepresented communities find jobs in TV and film.
6	The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County	Houston's transit agency installed yellow seats to honor Rosa Parks ahead of her birthday this month.
7	Denny's	Created the "Re-ignite the Dream" campaign in 2002, aimed at raising and donating money to the National Civil Rights Museum. A portion from the restaurant's All-American Slam meal was donated to the expansion of the museum, and ended with Denny's donating $1m.
8	Proctor & Gamble	"The Choice" advertisement that asks white people to use their position of power in America to actively combat racism. The ad ends by directing viewers to a section of P&G's website created earlier this month that provides resources for tackling racism.
9	The Home Depot	Joined the Billion Dollar Roundtable Inc. (BDR), a nonprofit organization that promotes supplier diversity excellence and best practices. The BDR consists of U.S.-based corporations that spend $1 billion or more annually with minority and women-owned suppliers.

10	Nike	"For Once, Don't Do It" advertising and pledged $40M over four years to social justice organizations.
11	Ben & Jerry's	created a new flavor of ice cream to promote the People's Response Act, legislation proposed by Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., that seeks to curb the disproportionate share of police violence against people with mental illnesses and other health complications.
12	REI	Produced "Brotherhood of Skiing," a mini-documentary about racism in skiing.
13	Caterpillar	During Black history month, the company recognized Black/African American colleagues' contributions both internally and externally and highlighted their Black Employee Resource Group.
14	Under Armor	Focused on recruiting efforts on improving representation of historically underrepresented groups in corporate locations, particularly at the director level and above.
15	Puma	Launched its #REFORM campaign in 2018, giving activists in sports and entertainment support in fight for criminal justice reform. One result of that campaign was the Clyde Court Disrupt "Peace on Earth" shoe. Puma donated $5 from the sale of each pair to the Trayvon Martin Foundation.

Sample

The pilot study, which employed a purposive snowball sample, ran from January 8 – 29, 2023 using the Qualtrics platform. Participants were recruited via the researchers own networks on social media and through email. Because Black people served as the referent group for the pilot and main studies, they needed to represent 50% of the total sample. Thus, the sampling technique, required a non-probability quota sampling method. Quota sampling is "a type of non-probability sampling where researchers form a sample of individuals who are representative of a larger population" (Simkus, 2022, para. 1). As indicated by Morrow et al. (2006), non-proportional quota sampling is a feasible option to obtain ethnically or racially diverse and at-risk samples. The survey quota feature was turned on in Qualtrics and was set such that after the sample reached half non-Black participants, those participants would be routed to the end of the survey. The purpose of this was to obtain responses from at least 50% of Black respondents.

The study followed guidance on internal pilot study sample size from Connelly (2008) who noted that extant literature suggested the pilot study sample should be 10% of the sample

projected for the larger parent study. Upon the close of the survey, there were 205 recorded responses. After accounting for uncompleted surveys and the attention verification question, the pilot study yielded 67 viable responses. Feedback from participants in the researchers own network indicated that many respondents were unable to think of a CSR activity, and, because the force response feature was turned on in the survey, could not advance in the survey, so the enormity of attrition is reflected in incompletes. Respondents reflected 49.3% Black (n = 33) and 50.7% non-Black (n = 34) people who are living in the United States and are 18 years old or older. American descendants of slavery represented 34.3% (n = 23) of respondents, African people represented 10.4% (n = 7), Afro-Latino/a/x represented 3% (n = 2) and Afro-Caribbean represented 1.5% (n = 2). The mean age of respondents was 37.67. Female respondents represented 72% of total respondents (n=49), and male respondents represented 23.5% (n = 16). There were two respondents who selected "prefer not to say" for gender. The majority of participants had household incomes that exceeded $100,000 (38.2 %) and had graduate or professional degrees (50%).

Procedures

First, participants were first asked to identify their racial identity. If the participant identified their racial identity as Black, they were prompted to expand upon their Black identity—African, Afro-Latino/a/x, Afro-Caribbean, or American descendent of slavery. Identification with Black was subjective and left up to participants to choose, however the sample was limited to U.S. participants. The purpose of this was to capture the range of Black identities in the U.S. and to capture and understand variance in perceptions between Black identity groups. Next, participants were provided the definition of race-centered corporate social responsibility as conceptualized by the researcher and provided an example. Uber Eats'

cancellation of delivery fees for Black-owned restaurants was used as the example to exemplify race-centered CSR. A picture of a 2020 Forbes article with a description of the activity was included (see Figure 1).

FORBES > MONEY > PERSONAL FINANCE

Uber Eats Delivery Fees Cancelled For Black-Owned Restaurants

Kori Hale Contributor

I'm the CEO of CultureBanx, redefining business news for minorities.

Follow

Jun 9, 2020, 06:05pm EDT

Figure 1: Pilot Study CSR Example - Uber

Next, participants were provided the researcher's definition of "authentic" race-centered corporate social responsibility. Following procedures from Alhouti et al. (2016), they were asked to name a company that they perceive engages in authentic CSR activites and the activity itself. Then, they were then asked to discuss why they believed the activity was authentic. The same procedure was followed for the inauthentic CSR activity: Participants were given the researcher's definition of inauthentic CSR and given L'Oreal Paris as an example. A picture of a 2020 Evening Standard article titled "Munroe Bergdorf slams L'Oréal for Black Lives Matter tweet after brand sacked the trans model in 2017" with a subheadline that reads "Bergdorf was fired from the company after speaking about race online in 2017." A description accompanied the picture that read:

"An example of a reactive and/or performative response could be L'Oreal Paris, who, in 2020 made a statement that the company "stands in solidarity with the Black community and against injustice of any kind" and made a "commitment to the NAACP." Three years prior, however, L'Oréal parted ways with its first transgender ambassador Bergdorf after she spoke out about the racism surrounding Charlottesville's 2017 Unite the Right rally, which left three dead and more injured."

Figure 2: Pilot Study CSR Example - L'Oreal

Next, participants were then asked to name a company that they perceive engages in inauthentic CSR activities, the activity itself, and why they believed it to be inauthentic.

For participants who unable to think of any companies, participants were shown the list of 15 corporations and their race-centered CSR activities. They were then asked to rank the top five (5) most authentic, and top five (5) most inauthentic (least authentic). They were then asked to identify the one most authentic and one least authentic from their lists and asked to complete the reconciliation and commodification scales based on those choices.

Findings: Pilot Study

Cronbach's α was calculated for the commodification and reconciliation scales for respondents authentic and inauthentic choices. Because Black participants were the referent group, the researcher was interested in the internal consistency of measures of the entire sample ***and*** the Black participant sample. The reconciliation scale's reliability was moderate across the entire sample and the Black participant sample and for both authentic and inauthentic CSR choices. The internal consistency was low for perceptions of commodification (α = .59*)* in inauthentic CSR for the entire sample. For the Black sample, the internal consistency was low for perceptions of commodification in authentic CSR (α = .50). It was concluded that the alpha was likely because the second statement ("The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity") which is a negative frame, is between two statements that were positively framed ("The company is addressing racism through this activity" and "The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity" statements). This may have caused respondents to misinterpret the direction of answers.

Table 8: Pilot Study Commodification Scale

Commodification Scale	**Authentic CSR**	**Inauthentic CSR**	**Black + Authentic CSR**	**Black + Inauthentic CSR**
The company is addressing racism through this activity.				
The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity.				
The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity.				
The company is using Black culture to make profits through this activity.	*M* = 3.25	*M* = 2.39	*M* = 3.34	*M* = 2.52
The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness through this activity.	SD = .65	SD = .59	SD = .53	SD = .66
The company is ignoring the struggle and resiliency associated with the history of Black people in the U.S. through this activity.	α = .71	α = .59	α = .50	α = .70
The company is altering the cultural meanings associated with the struggle and resiliency of Black people in the U.S. through this activity.				

The company is using Black culture for its own benefit through this activity. The company is attempting to maintain Black consumership through this activity.				

Table 9: Pilot Study Reconciliation Scale

Reconciliation Scale	**Authentic CSR**	**Inauthentic CSR**	**Black + Authentic CSR**	**Black + Inauthentic CSR**
The company is making an apology for past wrongdoings The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings The company is making amends for past wrongdoings The company is attempting to create racial justice change The company is attempting to create social justice change The company is trying to address racial economic inequality	*M* = 3.10 SD = .81 α = .83	*M* = 2.38 SD = .64 α = .78	*M* = 3.02 SD = .66 α = .72	*M* = 2.40 SD = .65 α = .76

The open-ended responses to CSR corporations resulted in a list of 58 corporations and their authentic CSR activities and 38 corporations and their inauthentic CSR activities for a total of 96 corporations and their CSR activities.

Table 10: Pilot Study Findings - Corporations/CSR Activities

Authentic	**Inauthentic**
1. Target 2. Nike 3. Dove 4. NFL 5. Georgetown University 6. Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream 7. Starbucks 8. ESPN 9. Best Buy 10. UCSF Medical Center 11. Bank of America 12. Netflix 13. UPS	1. Walmart 2. Bath and Body Works 3. Dove 4. Gun Manufacturers 5. Phillips66 6. Wells Fargo 7. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 8. Gucci 9. Tesla 10. NFL 11. Nike 12. Starbucks

14. Walmart 15. McDonald's 16. Hulu 17. Raytheon Technologies 18. Hanover Insurance Group 19. Aunt Jemima 20. Momentum Nonprofit Partners 21. Proctor & Gamble 22. PayPal 23. Amazon 24. CITI 25. REI 26. New American Funding 27. NHL's New Jersey Devils 28. AT&T 29. Google 30. Verizon 31. Virginia State University 32. Home Depot 33. The United States Military 34. NBA 35. Good American Denim 36. Airbnb 37. Rare Beauty 38. Voya Financial Services 39. Panhellenic 40. Kylie Cosmetics 41. Pepsi 42. Gilead Sciences 43. Kellog 44. SKIMS 45. Apple 46. Black Lives Matter 47. Microsoft 48. Barbie 49. Docusign 50. Fenty Beauty 51. CORE Strengths 52. Chase 53. Evanston, Illinois 54. JP Morgan Chase 55. WeWork 56. Robert Wood Johnson 57. Color of Change 58. Disney	13. Netflix 14. Facebook 15. Instagram 16. Chase Bank 17. The Learning Channel 18. Walgreens 19. Pepsi 20. H&M 21. CoverGirl 22. Barnes and Noble 23. Dennys 24. Express 25. Amazon 26. Bank of America 27. Target 28. Kylie Cosmetics 29. State Farm 30. University of Oklahoma Foundation 31. Boy Scouts of America 32. Tarte 33. Chick-Fil-A 34. Urban Outfitters 35. Twitter 36. Fox Corporation 37. Mrs. Butterworth 38. Tik Tok

Using the original list of 15 corporation developed for the pilot study, and the 96 corporations and their CSR activities obtained through the open-ended responses of the pilot study, a list of 111 corporations and their CSR activities were compiled. The researcher assembled the corporations and their corresponding CSR activities by ranking and, after accounting for duplicates, the following list of 15 corporations and their CSR activities was compiled.

Table 11: Pilot Study Findings - Corporations/CSR Activities Final List

Netflix	In 2021, Netflix announced that it had invested $100 million into six Black-led financial institutions in the U.S., as part of the company's pledge to allocate 2% of cash holdings into banks serving the Black community. This pledge supports Netflix's 2020 commitment to helping close the wealth gap in Black communities.
Target	In 2021, Target committed to spending $2 billion with Black-owned businesses by 2025. In 2022, the company announced the Roudel Media Fund, which will award more than $25 million in media to diverse-owned and founded brands through its in-house media company by 2025.
Ben & Jerry's	Ben & Jerry's created of a new flavor of ice cream to promote the People's Response Act, legislation proposed by Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., that seeks to curb the disproportionate share of police violence against people with mental illnesses and other health complications. The company acknowledges that the flavor supports the vision of the world in which every community is safe and everyone including Black and Brown people can thrive.
Nike	In 2020, Nike released the "For Once, Don't Do It" advertising campaign challenging racism in America. In a 60-second Nike ad, white text over a black background reads "For once, don't do it. Don't pretend there's not a problem in America. Don't turn your back on racism. Don't accept innocent lives being taken from us."
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County	In 2022, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County's installed a commemorative yellow seat at the front of each bus to honor Rosa Parks act of courage. The memorial was intended to mark Transit Equity Day, which is celebrated on February 4, the birthday of Parks.
NFL	The NFL imprinted "End racism" and "It takes all of us" in the end zones at each stadium during the 2020 season. The NFL also allowed similar visuals to be worn on players' helmets and as patches on team caps. Players could choose either the name of a victim or one of four pre-approved phrases from the league to display on their helmets or caps: "Stop hate," "It takes all of us," "End racism" or "Black Lives Matter." Coaches and on-field officials could wear the same.

Spotify	In 2020, Spotify celebrated Black Music Month, spotlit the protests around George Floyd's death, and commemorated Juneteenth on-platform by highlighting the musical and cultural contributions of Black creators throughout history. In addition, one of Spotify's flagship playlists, "New Music Friday" exclusively featured Black artists on Fridays.
Walmart	In 2022, to commemorate Juneteenth, Walmart sold an assortment of Juneteenth-themed items, including Celebration Edition: Juneteenth Ice Cream, a red velvet and cheesecake-flavored dessert sold under its Great Value label. A label on the ice cream pint read: "Share and celebrate African American culture, emancipation and enduring hope."
Proctor & Gamble	Proctor & Gamble created "The Choice", an advertisement that asks white people to use their position of power in America to actively combat racism. The 75-second ad nods to the Black Lives Matter movement and emphasizes that White individuals not personally viewing their actions as racist is not enough to create real change. The ad ends by directing viewers to a section of Proctor & Gamble's website created earlier this month that provides resources for tackling racism.
Anderson Doors and Windows	Andersen Windows and Doors sponsored and celebrated Black Music Month with "A celebration of Black Music: Music is the Window to Our Souls" a concert event featuring an authentic reenactment and tribute to the greatest soul performers of the sixties. The company stated that the program was meant to showcase what Black music means to the culture and fabric of America.
Mattel	In 2020, Mattel launched their Play Fair commitment, which included increasing Black representation across products and content, spotlighting more Black role models and dedicating resources to further support Black girls. In addition, they donated $250,000 to NAACP youth programs.
McDonald's	In 2022, McDonald's launched their Black and Positively Golden Scholarship Program in partnership with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF). The scholarship program awards $1,000,000 in scholarships to students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
Caterpillar	During 2020 Black History Month, Caterpillar recognized its Black/African American colleagues' contributions both internally and externally, launching a website to highlight those contributors. In addition, they highlighted their Black Employee Resource Group - Caterpillar African American Network (CAAN) - which was the company's first ERG, Founded in 2002.
Pepsi	Pepsi developed the "Live for Now Moments Anthem" featuring Kylie Jenner who, in the advertisement, participates in a protest and bridges the gap between protestors and the police by offering a police officer a Pepsi. Pepsi stated that their intention was to reach millennials and "to project a global message of unity, peace, and understanding."
NBA	The NBA allowed every NBA player to kneel during the national anthem while wearing "Black Lives Matter" shirts. Black Lives Matter was also written on the courts at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in the Walt Disney World Resort near Orlando, where the NBA finished its season with 22 teams inside a bio-secure bubble. NBA jerseys sold as merchandise were printed with phrases such as: 'Justice Now', 'See Us', 'Hear Us', 'Respect Us', 'Love Us'.

Main Study

Sample

A total of 586 people living in the United States and 18 years old or older were recruited from Dynata, a sampling company. Dynata implements stringent redirects for survey participants (i.e., over quotas, missed verification questions, incompletes, etc.) therefore there were no incomplete surveys. As noted, the sample for both the pilot and main studies were a non-probability quota sampling method. As such, the sampling panels used the most recent Pew Research Center Data (2022) to reflect population education, gender, income, education, and geography medians for Black survey participants (See Table 8). After Dynata ran a soft launch of the study with 10% of the sample, the Black sample was further contained via quotas for African respondents. Using the most recent Pew Research Center (2022) data, the quota for African respondents was set to 10%.

Table 12: Black Proportional Sample Demographics

Demographics	**Categories**	**(%)**
Age	2012 – 2022	10%
	Generation Z (1997-2012)	25%
	Millenial (1981-1996)	23%
	Generation X (1965-1980)	19%
	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	18%
	Silent/Greatest (1928-1945)	5%
Gender	Male	48%
	Female	52%
Education	High School Diploma	44%
	Some Collge	33%
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	26%
Income	< $25,000	31%
	$25,000 - $49,999	25%
	$50,000 - $74,999	17%
	$75,000 - $99,999	10%
	$100,000+	17%
Geography	South	56%
	Midwest	17%

	Northeast	17%
	West	10%

Census data for 2020 was used to obtain proportional sample data for non-Blacks (See Table 9).

Table 13: Non-Black Proportional Sample Demographics

Race	White alone	75.8%
	American Indian/Alaska Native	1.3%
	Asian	6.1%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.03%
	Hispanic or Latino	18.9%

The mean age of respondents was 45 years. Male respondents constituted 40% (n = 233) of survey respondents, and women made up 59% (n = 348). Approximately 1% of respondents identified as non-binary/third gender (n = 3) or preferred not to say their gender (n = 2). The majority of respondents were employed: 57% (n = 333); not currently married: 63%; (n = 367), not a college graduate: 60% (n = 351), were not shareholders in a publicly traded company: 81% (n = 477), and were more liberal in their political ideology: 75% (n = 437).

Table 14: Demographics

Demographics	**Categories**	***M*(SD) or *n*(%)**
Age		*M*(SD)=45.04 (14.535)
Gender	Male	*n*=233(39.8%)
	Female	*n*=348 (59.4%)
	Non-binary	*n*=3 (.05%)
	Prefer not to say	*n*=2 (.04%)
Race	White	*n*=206 (35.2%)
	Black/African American	*n*=295 (50.3%)
	American Indian/Alaska Native	*n*=4 (.7%)
	Asian	*n*=25 (4.3%)
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	*n*=0 (0%)
	Hispanic or Latino	*n*=38 (6.5%)
Education	Non-college graduate	*n*=351 (59.9%)
	College graduate	*n*=233 (39.8%)

Political Leanings	Conservative	*n*=148 (25.3%)
	Liberal	*n*=438 (74.7%)
Employment	Unemployed	*n*=253 (43.2%)
	Employed	*n*=333 (56.8%)
Marital Status	Single	*n*=367 (62.6%)
	Married	*n*=219 (37.4%)
Religiosity	Religious	*n*=365 (62.3%)
	Non-religious	*n*=221(37.7%)
Shareholder	Yes	*n*=109 (18.6%)
	No	*n*=477 (81.4%)

The research sample was divided into binary groups – Black (n = 295) and non-Black (n = 291). Identification with Black was subjective and left up to participants to choose, however the sample was limited to U.S. participants. If participants selected Black as their racial group, they were routed to a question that asked them to choose what descriptor best represents their Black identity, which is represented as follows: African: 7.5% (n = 22), Afro-Caribbean: 11.9% (n = 35), Afro-Latino/a/x: 3.7% (n = 11), or American Descendent of Slavery: 76.9% (n = 227). This was added to capture the range of Blackness in the U.S.

Procedures

Following procedures in Zhang and Borden (2022), participants were shown a randomized set of five companies from the 15 companies identified from the pilot study and asked to select one. This was done to prevent participants from selecting the same companies over and over. Once they selected the company, the participants were provided the definition of race-centered corporate social responsibility as conceptualized by the researcher and provided two examples: Uber Eats' cancellation of delivery fees for Black-owned restaurants (Fig. 3) and PUMA's #REFORM campaign (Fig. 4).

Figure 3: Race-Centered CSR Example – Uber Eats

Caption that participants read: An example of race-centered corporate social responsibility (CSR) is Uber Eats decision to cancel delivery fees for Black-owned businesses. The company featured a list of Black-owned restaurants in the app for this promotion based on publicly available sources, along with information from local organizations and business associations. Uber's CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said in a statement: "We are committed to supporting the [B]lack community."

Figure 4: Race-Centered CSR Example - Puma

Caption that participants read: Another example is PUMA's #REFORM campaign

Participants were then shown the race-centered CSR activity of the company they selected. For example, if Netflix was selected, participants were shown the following statement: "The company you selected was Netflix. In 2021, Netflix announced that it had invested $100 million into six Black-led financial institutions in the U.S., as part of the company's pledge to allocate 2% of cash holdings into banks serving the Black community. This pledge supports Netflix's 2020 commitment to helping close the wealth gap in Black communities." Participants who selected Nike saw the following: The company you selected was Nike. In 2020, Nike released the "For Once, Don't Do It" advertising campaign challenging racism in America. In a 60-second Nike ad, white text over a black background reads, "For once, don't do it. Don't pretend there's not a problem in America. Don't turn your back on racism. Don't accept innocent lives being taken from us."

Next, participants were asked to answer the remaining questions on perceptions of authenticity, racial identity, purchase and boycott intention and the cultural commodification, reconciliation scales based on the company they selected.

Table 15: Selected Corporations

Corporations Selected	Frequency All respondents	Percent %	Frequency Black respondents	Percent %
Netflix	60	10.2	28	9.5
Target	50	8.5	19	6.4
Ben & Jerry's	29	4.9	13	4.4
Nike	59	10.1	32	10.8
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County	10	1.7	4	1.4
NFL	40	6.8	24	8.1
Spotify	24	4.1	13	4.4
Walmart	89	15.2	46	15.6
Proctor & Gamble	43	7.3	19	6.4

Anderson Doors and Windows	4	.7	2	.7
Mattel	18	3.1	7	2.4
McDonald's	72	12.3	37	12.5
Caterpillar	13	2.2	9	3.1
Pepsi	49	8.4	22	7.5
NBA	26	4.4	20	6.8
Total	586	100.0	295	100.0

Measurements

Commodification Scale

The low internal consistency of the commodification scale suggested that the scale needed to be modified. As mentioned before, It was concluded that the alpha was likely lo because the second statement ("The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity") which is a negative frame, is between two statements that were positively framed ("The company is addressing racism through this activity" and "The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity" statements). The commodification scale was revised based on this to reflect both positive statements next to each other, and reversing the he 5-point Likert Scale to reflect a logical order of 1-Strongly Disagree as low and 5-Strongly Agree as high. See Appendix 5 for commodification scale development iterations from development through the main study.

Table 16: Main Study Commodification Scale

Commodification Scale *M* = 3.24, SD = .71, α = .80
The company is addressing racism through this activity.
The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity.
The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity.
The company is using Black culture to make profits through this activity.
The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness through this activity.
The company is ignoring the struggle and resiliency associated with the history of Black people in the U.S. through this activity.

The company is altering the cultural meanings associated with the struggle and resiliency of Black people in the U.S. through this activity.
The company is using Black culture for its own benefit through this activity.
The company is attempting to maintain Black consumership through this activity.

Reconciliation Scale

Since the cronbach's α indicated strong consistency in the pilot study, the only modification made was to change the 5-point Likert scale to be a logical order of 1-Strongly Disagree as low and 5-Strongly Agree as high and consistent with other scale measures. See Appendix 6 for reconciliation scale development iterations from development through the main study.

Table 17: Main Study Reconciliation Scale

Reconciliation Scale *M* = 2.85, SD = .98, α = .93
The company is making an apology for past wrongdoings
The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings
The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings
The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings
The company is making amends for past wrongdoings
The company is attempting to create racial justice change
The company is attempting to create social justice change
The company is trying to address racial economic inequality

CSR Authenticity and Antecedents

Perceptions of authenticity was measured using Alhouti, Johnson, and Holloway's (2016) consumer perceptions of CSR authenticity scale, a 7-point Likert scale (1-Strongly Disagree/7-Strongly Agree), which sees perceptions related to (1) congruity between a company's identity and the cause (fit); (2) the CSR activity's meaningfulness and the company's relative ability to resolve the social issue at hand (impact), and (3) how the company handles a past wrong through the CSR activity (reparations). The scale was modified for relevancy and ease of

reading/understanding for this study. First, the reparation items were removed. This was done because the context in which the questions were asked in the original study was not relevant to this study (Participants answered the scale item questions based on a hypothetical situation --"if the company were to be involved in negative publicity, the participant should think about how the company would react to the negative event"). In addition, the reparation items were also removed because this study created and used the reconciliation scale. For ease of reading/understanding, the boycott scale items were adopted from Hong and Li (2016). Lastly, the scale items were modified to reflect the race-centered definition created for this study and changed to a 5-point Likert scale to be consistent with other scale measures to (1 – Strongly Disagree/5 - Strongly Agree).

Table 18: CSR Authenticity, Antecedents and Consequences

CSR Authenticity *M* = 3.53, SD = .90, α = .96 The company's CSR actions are genuine. The CSR action preserves what the company means to me. The CSR action captures what makes the company unique to me. The company is being true to itself with this CSR action. The company is standing up for what it believes in with this CSR actions. The company is acting as a socially responsible company with this CSR action. The company is concerned about repairing racial equity. This CSR action reflects the company's consistent commitment to racial equity.
Impact *M* = 3.47, SD .90, α = .81 I believe that the company donated a fair portion of its resources relative to its success and/or size. Resources include, among other things, a company's time, staff, space, money, etc. The CSR action will have a long-term impact. A large monetary commitment appears to have been made to repair racial equity.
Self-Serving Motive *M* = 3.51, SD = .83, α = .92 The company feels that their Black customers expect race-centered CSR actions. The company feels that all their customers expect race-centered CSR actions. The company feels society in general expects them to be involved in race-centered CSR. The company feels their stockholders expect the company to have race-centered CSR initiatives. The company will get more Black customers by engaging in this CSR actions. The company will get more customers by engaging in this CSR actions. The company will keep more of their Black customers by taking this CSR action.

The company will keep more of their customers by taking this CSR action. The company hopes to increase its profits through this CSR action.
Fit *M* = 3.55, SD = 1.07, α = .92 The company's CSR action is in accordance with the company's values and beliefs. How do you think the company's race-centered CSR initiatives fit with the firm (For example: relative to how it aligns with what the firm sells, who it sells to, the company's identity, or the interests of its customers). Low fit/strong fit lmao Dissimilar/similar Inconsistent/consistent Not complementary/complementary
Boycott *M* = 1.87, SD = .94, α = .71 I will stop purchasing from the company. I am tempted to boycott the company. I will not be purchasing from the company
Purchase Intention *M* = 4.16, SD = 1.03, α = .96 Please rate the likelihood that you continue to shop with the company in the future Very unlikely/very likely Very improbable/very probable Impossible/very possible No chance/certain
Brand Loyalty *M* = 3.55, SD = 1.10, α = .86 I would consider myself to be loyal to the company. The company would be my first choice.

Issue Involvement

The study also borrows Zhang and Borden's (2022) issue involvement scale – a 12-item Likert Scale. As indicated by the authors, stakeholders' involvement with the advocated issue is positively associated with overall legitimacy perceptions of CSA actions. Stated a different way, the more a person feels a personal connection to the issue, the more they see the CSA issue as legitimate. The measurement is on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree/5 - Strongly Agree).

Table 19: Issue Involvement Scale

Issue Involvement *M* = 3.36, *SD* = .91, α = .96 The issue affects my ability to live my life as I want to

The issue directly affects my life It is easy to think of ways that the issue affects me The issue is directly relevant to my life The issue has an impact on values that I care about My opinion on the issue relates to values that I care about My attitude on the issue relates to values that I care about I tend to base my attitudes on my general principles about how life should be lived II9 - The issue affects people close to me The issue is important to people close to me The issue affects social groups I identify with The issue is important to social groups I identify with

Racial Identity

Racial identity was measured using Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, and Smith's (1997) Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI). The MIBI is a 56-item, 7-point Likert scale (1- Strongly Disagree/7- Strongly Agree) that measures the degree to which a person is connected to their racial identity. The scale consists of seven subscales representing three stable dimensions of African American racial identity: (1) Centrality–the extent to which a person normatively defines her or himself with regard to race; (2) Ideology–an individual's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes with regard to the way she or he feels that the members of the race should act, and; (3) Regard–a person's affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race. consumer perceptions of CSR authenticity (See Appendix 3 for original scale). The scale was modified based on Johnson's (2013) concerns regarding the length of the scale for participants. This study followed Johnson's use of elements of the centrality scale (i.e., how central Black is to a person's self-concept) and private regard subscale (i.e., how a person feels about being Black). This resulted in a six-question 5-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree/5 - Strongly Agree).

Table 20: Racial Identity Scale

Racial Identity *M* = 1.59, SD = .83, α = .91

Being Black is an important reflection of who I am
I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people
I have a strong attachment to other Black people
I feel good about Black people
I am happy that I am Black
I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society

Chapter 4. Findings

To answer RQ1, a hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess if traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement, and brand loyalty), racial identity (Blacks = 1 vs. non-Blacks = 0), perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR after controlling for employment (0 = employed, 1 = not employed), marital status (0 = married, 1 = not married), gender (0 = male, 1 = female), education (0 = college graduate, 1 = not a college graduate), political ideology (0 = conservative, 1 = liberal), age, religiosity (0 – religious, 1 = not religious), and shareholder in a major corporation (0 = yes, 1 = no). Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 2% of the variance ($R^2 = .020$) in perceptions of authenticity. After entry of traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity—fit ($\beta = .19$, $t = 7.13$, $p < .001$), impact ($\beta = .40$, $t = 12.26$, $p < .001$), self-serving motive ($\beta = .32$, $t = 9.34$, $p < .001$), issue involvement ($\beta = .14$, $t = 5.35$, $p < .001$), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 79%, ($R^2 = .787$), $F(12, 565) = 173.89$, $p < .001$, accounting for an R^2 change of 77% . In Model 3, racial identity (Blacks and non-Blacks) ($\beta = -.04$, $t = -1.73$, $p > .05$), commodification ($\beta = -.07$, $t = -3.24$, $p < .05$) and reconciliation ($\beta = -.01$, $t = -.28$, $p > .05$) were entered, explaining 79%, ($R^2 = .792$), $F(15, 562) = 142.51$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the introduction of racial identity, commodification and reconciliation accounted for an additional .01% of variance for authenticity effects. These findings suggest that traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive,

and issue involvement, and brand loyalty) and perceptions of commodification predict perceptions of CSR authenticity in all respondents. (See Table 21).

Table 21: RQ1 Results (DV: Perceptions of Authenticity/Blacks vs. non-Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Age	-.00	.02	.02
Gender	.03	.01	.01
Religiosity	-.06	-.02	-.02
Political Ideology	.13**	.00	.00
Marital status	-.03	.01	.02
Employment	-.01	.01	.02
Education	.02	-.04	-.04
Shareholder	-.01	.01	.00
Fit		.18***	.18***
Impact		.02***	.38***
Self-serving Motive		.01***	.34***
Issue Involvement		-.02***	.17***
Racial identity (0 = non-Black/1 = Black)			-.04
Commodification			-.07*
Reconciliation			-.01

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

To answer RQ2a, a hierarchical logistical regression was run to understand the relationship between traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, issue involvement), racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Black) predict perceptions of commodification. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 3% of the variance (R^2 = .029) in perceptions of commodification. After entry of traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, fit (β = -.14, t = -2.63, p < .05), impact (β = -.08, t = -1.32, p > .05), self-serving motive (β = .30, t = 4.48, p < .001), issue involvement (β = .27, t = 5.21, p < .001), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 18%, (R^2 = .176), F(12, 565) = 10.07, p < .001, accounting for an R^2 change of 15%. In Model 3, racial identity (Blacks and non-Blacks) (β = -.03, t = -.80, p > .05) was entered, explaining 18%, (R^2 = .177), F(13, 562) = 9.34, p < .001. Therefore, the introduction of racial identity accounted for less than 1% of variance for perceptions of commodification effects. These findings suggest that, of the traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, fit, self-serving motive and issue involvement are significant predictors of perceptions of commodification. (See Table 22).

Table 22: RQ2a Results (DV: Perceptions of Commodification /Blacks v. non-Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Age	-.09*	-.06	-.06
Gender	.06	.05	.05
Religiosity	-.04	-.01	-.01
Political Ideology	-.01	-.06	-.06
Marital status	-.11*	-.07	-.07

Employment	.03	.05	.05
Education	-.04	-.03	-.03
Shareholder	-.06	-.06	-.06
Fit		-.14**	-.13**
Impact		-.08	-.09
Self-serving Motive		.30***	.30***
Issue Involvement		.27***	.28***
Racial identity (0 = non-Black/1 = Black)			-.03

p < .05*, *p* < .01**, *p* < .001***

To answer RQ2b, a hierarchical logistical regression was run to understand the relationship between traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, issue involvement), racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Black) and perceptions of reconciliatory discourse. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 2% of the variance (R^2 = .018) in perceptions of reconciliatory discourse. After entry of traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, fit (β = -.21, t = -3.98, p < .001), impact (β = -.20, t = -3.08, p < .05), self-serving motive (β = -.02, t = -.26, p > .05), issue involvement (β = .04, t = .71, p > .05), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 14%, (R^2 = .142), F(12, 565) = 7.79, p < .001, accounting for an R^2 change of 12%. In Model 3, racial identity (Blacks and non-Blacks) (β = .02, t = .38, p > .05) was entered, explaining 14%, (R^2 = .142), F(13, 564) = 7.19, p < .001. Therefore, the introduction of racial identity accounted for zero percent of variance for perceptions of reconciliatory discourse. These findings suggest that, of the traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, fit and impact are significant predictors of perceptions of reconciliatory discourse. (See Table 23).

Table 23: RQ2b Results (DV: Perceptions of Reconciliation /Blacks v. non-Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Age	.01	.01	.01
Gender	.01	.01	.02
Religiosity	-.01	-.02	-.02
Political Ideology	-.03	.02	.02
Marital status	.06	.06	.06
Employment	-.09*	-.09*	-.09*
Education	-.07	-.04	-.05
Shareholder	.00	-.01	-.01
Fit		-.21***	-.21***
Impact		-.20**	-.19**
Self-serving Motive		-.02	-.02
Issue Involvement		.04	.03
Racial identity (0 = non-Black/1 = Black)			.02

To answer RQ3, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity between Blacks and non-Blacks. The was a significant difference in perceptions for Blacks (*M* = 3.62, SD = .78) and non-Blacks (M = 3.44, SD = .99); t (550.34) = -2.40, p < .05, two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -

.17705, 95% CI: -.321 to -.032) was small (d = -1.99). This finding suggests that Black participants perceived higher levels of authenticity in race-centered CSR than non-Blacks.

To answer RQ4, multiple regression was used to assess if traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, issue involvement), identification with Black identity, perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR *within the Black public* after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 3% of the variance (R^2 = .027) in perceptions of authenticity. After entry of traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit (β = .17, t = 4.82, p < .001), impact (β = .427, t = 9.56, p < .001), self-serving motive (β = .31, t = 6.78, p < .001), issue involvement (β = .12, t = 3.24, p < .01), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 75%, (R^2 = .753), F(12, 278) = 70.45, p < .001, accounting for an R^2 change of 73%. In Model 3, identification with Black identity (β = .044, t = 1.37, p > .05), commodification (β = -.09, t = -2.84, p < .05) and reconciliation (β = -.01, t = -.29, p > .05) were entered, explaining 76%, (R^2 = .761), F(15, 274) = 49.43, p < .001. Therefore, the introduction of Black identity, commodification, and reconciliation accounted for less than 1% of variance for authenticity effects. These findings suggest that traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement), education and perceptions of commodification predict perceptions of CSR authenticity for Black publics. (See Table 24).

Table 24: RQ4 Results (DV: Perceptions of Authenticity/Black)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Age	.08	.04	.04
Gender	-.09	-.01	-.00
Religiosity	-.09	-.05	-.05
Political Ideology	.04	.04	.04
Marital status	.10	.03	.03
Employment	.00	.00	.01
Education	-.05	-.07	-.08**
Shareholder	.05	.04	.03
Fit		.17	.15***
Impact		.43	.41***
Self-serving Motive		.31	.33***
Issue Involvement		.12	.15**
Black identity			-.04
Commodification			-.09**
Reconciliation			.01

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

To answer RQ5, multiple regression was used to assess if traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement, and brand loyalty), perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence

perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR *within the non-Black public* after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 5% of the variance (R^2 = .050) in perceptions of authenticity. After entry of traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit (β = .21, t = 5.12, p < .001), impact (β = .36, t = 7.47, p < .001), self-serving motive (β = .30, t = 5.85, p < .001), issue involvement (β = .16, t = 4.32, p < .001), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 81%, (R^2 = .812), F(12, 274) = 98.61, p < .001, accounting for an R^2 change of 76%. In Model 3, commodification (β = -.07, t = -2.38, p < .05) and reconciliation (β = .01, t = .26, p > .05) were entered, explaining 81%, (R^2 = .816), F(14, 272) = 86.11, p < .001. Therefore, the introduction of commodification and reconciliation accouted for less than 1% of variance for authenticity effects. These findings suggest that traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement) and perceptions of commodification predict perceptions of CSR authenticity for non-Black publics. (See Table 25).

Table 25: RQ5 Results (DV: Perceptions of Authenticity/non-Black)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Age	-.06	.02	.02
Gender	.11	.02	.02
Religiosity	-.03	.00	.00
Political Ideology	.14	-.02*	-.03

Marital status	-.13	.02	.01
Employment	-.02	.02	.02
Education	.06	-.01	-.01
Shareholder	-.08	-.01	-.02
Fit		.21***	.20***
Impact		.36***	.36***
Self-serving Motive		.30***	.32***
Issue Involvement		.16***	.18***
Commodification			-.07*
Reconciliation			.01

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

To answer RQ6a, a hierarchical linear regression was calculated to predict if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *boycott* for *Black publics* after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 5% of the variance (R^2 = .049) in boycott intention. After entering CSR authenticity (β = -.20, t = -3.50, p < .001), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 10%, (R^2 = .089), $F(9, 281) = 3.04$, p < .05, accounting for an *additional* 4% of variance for boycott effects. The model is significant and findings indicate that CSR authenticity and political ideology are significant predictors of boycott for Black publics. (See Table 26).

Table 26: RQ6a Results (DV: Boycott/Blacks)

Predictor Variables

	Model 1	**Model 2**
Age	-.06	-.05
Gender	-.02	-.04
Religiosity	-.06	-.07
Political Ideology	**-.15****	**-.14***
Marital status	-.11	-.09
Employment	-.03	-.03
Education	-.02	-.02
Shareholder	.02	.03
CSR Authenticity		**-.20*****

p < .05*, *p* < .01**, *p* < .001***

To answer RQ6b, a hierarchical linear regression was calculated to predict if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *purchase intention* for <u>*Black publics*</u> after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 6% of the variance (R^2 = .061) in purchase intention. After entering CSR authenticity (β = .369, t = 6.80, p < .001), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 19%, (R^2 = .194), $F(9, 281) = 7.50$, p < .001, accounting for an additional 13% of variance for purchase intention effects. The findings suggest that CSR authenticity, marital status, and age are significant predictors of purchase intention for Black publics. (See Table 27).

Table 27: RQ6b Results (DV: Purchase Intention/Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	**.15***	**.12***
Gender	-.08	-.04
Religiosity	-.07	-.04
Political Ideology	.03	.01
Marital status	**.23*****	**.19*****
Employment	-.03	-.04
Education	-.03	-.02
Shareholder	-.01	-.03
CSR Authenticity		**.37*****

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

To answer RQ6c, a hierarchical linear regression was calculated to predict if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *brand loyalty* for <u>*Black publics*</u> after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 3% of the variance ($R^2 = .026$) in brand loyalty. After entering CSR authenticity ($\beta = .44$, $t = 8.09$, $p < .001$), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 21%, ($R^2 = .210$), $F(9, 281) = 8.29$, $p < .001$, accounting for an *additional* 18% of variance for brand loyalty effects. The model is significant and findings indicate that race-centered CSR authenticity is a significant predictor of brand loyalty for Black publics. (See Table 28).

Table 28: RQ6c Results (DV: Brand Loyalty/Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	.01	-.03
Gender	-.11	-.07
Religiosity	-.05	-.01
Political Ideology	-.02	-.03
Marital status	**.13***	.09
Employment	.01	.00
Education	.00	.02
Shareholder	-.03	-.05
CSR Authenticity		**.44*****

To answer RQ7a, a hierarchical linear regression was calculated to predict if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *boycott* for <u>*non-Black publics*</u> after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 4% of the variance (R^2 = .043) in boycott intention. After entering CSR authenticity (β = -.29, t = -4.94, p < .001), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 12%, (R^2 = .120), $F(9, 277) = 3.58$, p < .001, accounting for additional 8% of variance for boycott effects. The model is significant, and findings suggest that CSR authenticity is a significant predictor of boycott for non-Black publics. (See Table 29).

Table 29: RQ7a Results (DV: Boycott/non-Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	.01	.-.01
Gender	-.02	.01
Religiosity	-.08	-.09
Political Ideology	-.15	-.11
Marital status	-.04	-.08
Employment	-.00	-.01
Education	-.03	-.01
Shareholder	-.18	-.04
CSR Authenticity		**-.29*** **

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

To answer RQ7b, a hierarchical linear regression was calculated to predict if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *purchase intention* for <u>*non-Black publics*</u> after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 4% of the variance ($R^2 = .038$) in purchase intention. After entering CSR authenticity ($\beta = .463$, $t = 8.62$, $p < .001$), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 24%, ($R^2 = .241$), $F(9, 277) = 9.80$, $p < .001$. (See Table 30), accounting for an additional 20% of variance for purchase intention effects. The findings suggest that perceptions of CSR authenticity is a significant predictor for purchase intention for non-Black publics.

Table 30: RQ7b Results (DV: Purchase Intention/non-Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	-.09	-.07
Gender	.07	.02
Religiosity	-.02	-.00
Political Ideology	.12	.05
Marital status	-.09	-.03
Employment	-.00	.01
Education	.10	.07
Shareholder	-.07	-.03
CSR Authenticity		**.46*** **

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

To answer RQ7c, a hierarchical linear regression was calculated to predict if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *brand loyalty* for <u>*non-Black publics*</u> after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 4% of the variance ($R^2 = .039$) in brand loyalty. After entering CSR authenticity ($\beta = .597$, $t = 12.29$, $p < .001$), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 38%, ($R^2 = .378$), $F(9, 277) = 18.69$, $p < .001$, accounting for an additional 34% of variance for brand loyalty effects (See Table 31). The findings suggest that perceptions of CSR authenticity is a significant predictor for brand loyalty for non-Black publics.

Table 31: RQ7c Results (DV: Brand Loyalty/non-Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	-.11	-.08
Gender	-.03	-.10
Religiosity	-.01	.01
Political Ideology	.15*	.07
Marital status	-.04	.04
Employment	.00	.02
Education	.08	.04
Shareholder	-.05	-.01
CSR Authenticity		.60***

A hierarchical regression was used to test H1 – that perceptions of cultural commodification negatively influences perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity *for Black publics* after controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 3% of the variance (R^2 = .027) in perceptions of cultural commodification. After entering commodification (β = .012, t = .21, p > .05), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 3%, (R^2 = .027), F(9, 281) = .86, p > .05. (See Table 32), accounting for a zero percent change in R^2. The hypothesis was not supported.

Table 32: H1 Results (DV: Authenticity/Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	.08	.08
Gender	-.09	-.09
Religiosity	-.09	-.09
Political Ideology	.04	.04
Marital status	.10	.10
Employment	.004	.00
Education	-.05	-.04
Shareholder	.05	.05
Commodification		.01

$p < .05$*, $p < .01$**, $p < .001$***

A hierarchical regression was used to test the H2 – that perceptions of reconciliatory discourse positively influence perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity for Black *publics.* After controlling for employment, marital status, gender, education, political ideology, age, religiosity, and shareholder status in a major corporation. In Model 1, all demographic data were entered, explaining 3% of the variance ($R^2 = .027$) in perceptions of reconciliatory discourse. After entering reconciliation ($\beta = -.241$, $t = -4.14$, $p < .001$), Model 2 shows that the total variance explained was 8%, ($R^2 = .082$), $F(9, 281) = 2.81$, $p < .01$. (See Table 33), accounting for an additional 6% of variance for perceptions of authenticity effects. The hypothesis was supported.

Table 33: H2 Results (DV: Reconciliatory Discourse/Blacks)

Predictor Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Age	.08	.07
Gender	-.09	-.06
Religiosity	-.09	-.08
Political Ideology	.04	.04
Marital status	.10	.11
Employment	.00	-.03
Education	-.05	.05
Shareholder	.05	.05
Reconciliation		**-.24*** **

Chapter 5. Discussion

Since the contentious summer of 2020, corporations have responded to demands that they reckon with their own historical connections to racial injustice and discrimination. Since then, there have been numerous corporations that have shifted their messaging and redirected dollars to align with and amplify the fight for racial equity and social justice. These corporate social responsibility efforts that center race have drawn criticism for being nothing more than "woke-washing"— attempting to appear socially conscious to make profit. Scholars and activists have called out these activities as commodifying, commercializing, and sloganizing racial equity campaigns. On the other side, scholars like Robinson (2002), Logan (2021), Zhang (2020), and Janssen (2013), and have articulated critical frameworks for corporations to engage in responsible and equitable race-centered and reparative corporate social responsibility efforts. This study sought to both conceptualize, operationalize and understand perceptions of these types of activities. Using literature on CSR, CSA, authenticity, race, commodification and reconciliation, this study conducted a survey of *n*= 586 participants to examine perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity between Black and non-Black publics. The researcher developed two new scales to measure perceptions of commodification and reconciliatory discourse as antecedents for race-centered CSR activities. The following section discusses the findings for each of the research questions.

Discussion of Results

RQ1 asked if traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement), racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks), perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of

race-centered CSR for all survey participants (both Blacks and non-Blacks). In the first model (see Table xx), political ideology was a significant predictor of perceptions of authenticity, without considering antecedents, race, or perceptions reconciliation or commodification—that is, liberal respondents were more likely to find the CSR activities as authentic without any other variables present. This finding is consistent with the idea that liberals are characterized by their support of values that favor diversity, fairness, social eqality and support for individuals in need (Adaval & Wyer, 2022). When the traditional antecedents were introduced in the second model, political ideology no longer became a predictor and traditional antecedents became the primary driver in race-centered CSR authenticity. Consistent with results from Alhouti, Johnson and Holloway (2016) and Zhang and Borden (2022), in race centered CSR, important antecedents also include if the company's identity and/or personality fits with the fight for racial justice and equity (fit), if the CSR activity is impactful relative to the resources the company uses toward the fight for racial justice and equity (impact), whether the company is reactive or defensive in its motive to participate in the fight for racial justice and equity (self-serving motive), and whether the CSR activity is particularly important to the stakeholder (issue involvement).

Findings for RQ1 also indicate that perceptions of commodification are negatively related with perceptions of CSR authenticity—that is, the more respondents perceived commodification in the CSR activity, the less they perceived the activity as being authentic. Commodification of Black culture, in the context of this study was concerned with the way in which the company's CSR activity obscured or ignored structural racial issues, and/or tokenized, voyeurized, or romanticized Black cultural life. As hooks (1992) asserted, commodity culture exploits conventional thinking about race allowing for a proximity that absolves one of any real political action that would lead to a difference in material conditions for those that have been consumed.

The perception of commodifying Black culture is consistent with literature on commodification as a "watering down" of values, meanings, and ideals (Haenfler, 2017) and, conversely, **not** related to the ideas of CSR authenticity such as honesty, truthfulness, integrity, sincerity, consistency noted by Song and Dong (2022).

An unanticipated finding from RQ1 was that perceptions of reconciliatory discourse was not a significant predictor of authenticity. Reconciliation was a significant component of the race-centered CSR conceptualization and was understood to be a necessary component to a corporation's voluntary contribution to improve race relations. This would have included how corporations have attempted to reconcile oppressive or racist conditions, particularly for the Black community via accountability, accepting responsbility and public acknowledgements (Janssen, 2013). As Logan (2021) pointed out, corporations have a responsibility to mobilize their organizational resources to draw attention to the systematic and structural systems in place that shape race relations. The findings from the study provide more insights into these theoretical ideas and suggests that, though there may be reconciliatory discourse embedded in race-centered CSR, publics – both Black and non-Black – were unable to discern it and/or, it did not matter. The findings suggest that the antecedents of CSR authenticity go much further in demonstrating a corporation's commitment to racial publics than discourse. In addition, most research on reconciliation or reconciliatory discourse has been from a critical cultural perspective, which is highly theoretical. This is the first empirical study investigating publics' perception of critical cultural concepts. Future research could explore alternative methods to investigating perceptions of reconciliatory discourse, including textual analysis of press releases and interviews.

Another unanticipated, but interesting finding is that racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks) had no predictive value. This is a significant finding in the context of race-centered CSR

in that it demonstrates that race itself does not contribute to perceptions of its authenticity. Regardless of race, general publics are able to recognize whether or not a corporation is commodifying or engaging authentically with respect to racialized publics. This finding could be because of the hyperracial climate that we are currently living in. Since the contentious summer of 2020, conversations about and efforts around access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging have increased exponentially. Publics are increasingly aware of the ways in which race is made visible and invisible and who is contributing to (and detracting from) that visibility. It is surmised that publics have more information to make assessments about how corporations are engaging because of increased knowledge campaigns around race, contributing to more agreed upon ideas of what is "good" and what is "bad" with respect to race. As mentioned before, trust, credibility, and other dimensions of publics' perceptions of CSR have focused on a generalized or universal consumer. The implications of this finding affirm that there are, indeed, agreed upon (universal) dimensions of publics' perception of CSR—both authentic in the conventional sense, and inauthentic (commodification) in the race-centered context.

RQ2a asked what the relationship is between all the variables: 1) traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement), racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Black) and perceptions of cultural commodification. In the first model (see Table 17), age and marital status were significant negative predictors of perceptions of commodification – that is, younger and married respondents were more likely to perceive commodication. Gen Z and Millenials are driving activist movements, however, because of the unprecedented social conditions in which they have lived (i.e., climate change, inequality and social unrest, political division, economic distress), are much more distrustful and pessimistic (Baralt et al., 2020; Carnegie, 2022). Haski-Levanthal, Pournader and McKinnon (2017) found

that older age groups ranked positive CSR attitudes higher than younger age groups, due in part to life and work experience which contribute to more complex ways to consider morality and ethics. The literature does not give us clear guidance on the relationship between marriage and perceptions of CSR, however, according to Gallup (2009) marital status is correlated with race, which in turn is associated with party identification, and thus, political ideology. Specifically, conservatism has been noted to impact CSR reactions, especially for irresponsible companies (Jasinenko, Christandl, Meynhardt, 2020). Thus, it is possible to hypothesize that some of the relationship between marital status and party identification is based on differences by race (Gallup, 2009).

When traditional antecedents were introduced in the second model, age and marital status no longer predicted perceptions of authencitiy. Instead, fit, self-serving motive, and issue involvement became predictors. Fit was a negative predictor – that is, the less respondents perceived that the company's identity fit with the fight for racial justice and equity, the more they perceived commodification. On its face, this finding is in line with the notion that commodification, as it relates to CSR, is concerned with the performance or appearance of fighting for racial justice which should be understood as inauthentic. A corporation's fit with race-centered CSR would be a company's consistent commitment to issues affecting the Black community. Therefore, the less consistent commitment, the higher the commodification perceptions.

Self-serving motive and issue involvement were positive predictors of commodification. Self-serving motive, in a race-centered CSR context referred to the respondent's perception that the company was motivated by stakeholder requirements—particularly, Black people, or by a strategic decision to meet the expectations of Black consumers, maintain Black consumership

and make a profit. This is consistent with the idea of commodification as using Black culture to make a profit. Ellen et al. (2006) asserted that strategic motives have been shown to positively impact consumers, however, in a race-centered context, strategic motivation may be closely related to commodification as to have an opposite impact. In addition, the more the CSR activity was particularly important to the stakeholder, the more likely they were to see the activity as commodification. Results suggested that, as stakeholders internalize race-centered issues, the more critically they assess a corporation's motivations in engaging in those race-centered issues.

The CSR activity's impact relative to the resources the company uses toward the fight for racial justice did not predict perceptions of commodification. Conceptually, the two concepts are unrelated in that commodification, in the context of this study, is about the perversion of Black culture to make money, whereas impact is about the resoures the corporation is deploying to solve racial justice issues.

In the third model, racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks) was not significant , again confirming that regardless of race, general publics are able to recognize whether or not a corporation is commodifying or engaging authentically with respect to racialized publics.

RQ2b asked what the relationship is between traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity (fit, impact, self-serving motive, and issue involvement), racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Black) and perceptions of reconciliatory discourse. In the first model, employment was a negative predictor of perceptions of reconciliatory discourse, indicating that respondents who were employed were more likely to perceive reconciliatory discourse. Across CSR literature are studies that explore the relationship between employee perceptions of CSR activities (Latif et al., 2022; Lee, Park, & Lee, 2013). Based on this literature, study results suggested that those who

are employed are more sensitive to the ways in which corporations are attempting to engage in race-centered CSR because they are likely exposed to similar ways in their workplaces.

When traditional antecedents were introduced in the second model, employment remained, and fit and impact became negative predictors. The less respondents perceived a corporation's identity fit with the fight for racial justice and equity, the more they perceived reconciliatory discourse. In addition, the less respondents perceived the company to be impactful, the more they perceived reconciliatory discourse. This is an interesting finding, because reconciliation was conceptualized as a contributor to perceptions of authenticity. Low fit CSR is not a predictor of authenticity. An explanation of this finding could be that respondents may have understood reconciliatory discourse to be just "talk" and not action-oriented in a meaningful way, thus not a demonstration of authentic actions. This could have led to the negative relationship between impact, fit and reconciliation perceptions. This suggests that there might be mediators and moderators between this relationship that go beyond the scope of this research and should be explored in future research.

Self-serving motive and issue involvement were not significant predictors of reconciliatory discourse. Reconciliation might be a separate concept not quite related to race-centered CSR—that is, whether people perceive a company has really reconciled on the historical issue of racial injustice has nothing to do with what the company actually did/does. It requires much more.

RQ3 asked whether racial identity (Blacks vs. non-Blacks) influences perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR. Findings indicate that, when not taking into consideration effects of traditional CSR antecedents (fit, impact, self-serving motives and issue involvement) and demographic controls, Black participants were more likely to perceive authenticity in race-

centered CSR than non-Blacks. This, too, was an unanticipated finding of this study. To drill down on this finding, further post-hoc analysis were conducted to understand the relationship between the corporations that Black respondents chose to investigate to see if this result was a reflection of collective brand loyalty, brand recognition or familiarity with the CSR activity. Consider Target and McDonald's, which were both corporations in the study sample. McDonald's, as a corporation, has had a long relationship in the Black community for providing jobs and educational scholarships and thus has a favorable presence (Banks, 2022). Target's recent campaign to invest in Black-owned businesses has become visually obvious in representations in stores. In other words, the concern was that Black respondents were responding based on businesses favorable to the Black community. Data analysis on corporations that Black respondents' chose suggests a relative spread across all 15 corporations – from .7% (n = 2) respondents selecting Anderson Doors and Windows to 15.6% (n = 46) percent selecting Walmart. Approximately 60% (n = 176) of Black respondents said they frequently purchased from or used the services from the corporations they chose, however just over half (n = 150) of respondents were not at all familiar with the CSR activity. Only 13.5% (n = 40) of Black respondents were very or extremely familiar with the CSR activity. This suggests that most respondents were aware of the corporation, but relatively unfamilary with the CSR activity.

The activity examples that were given in the survey were very concrete. For example, the Ben & Jerry's CSR description stated "Ben & Jerry's created of a new flavor of ice cream to promote the People's Response Act, legislation proposed by Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., that seeks to curb the disproportionate share of police violence against people with mental illnesses and other health complications. The company acknowledges that the flavor supports the vision of the world in which every community is safe and everyone including Black and Brown people can

thrive." The NFL's CSR description stated: "The NFL imprinted "End racism" and "It takes all of us" in the end zones at each stadium during the 2020 season. The NFL also allowed similar visuals to be worn on players' helmets and as patches on team caps. Players could choose either the name of a victim or one of four pre-approved phrases from the league to display on their helmets or caps: "Stop hate," "It takes all of us," "End racism" or "Black Lives Matter." Coaches and on-field officials could wear the same." It is possible that, once Black respondents concretely learned about the CSR activity, they responded with support. There are implications here for CSR communication, rather than CSR itself—that is, the content of the CSR communication and the way in which publics come to the information and come to make sense of that information. Colleoni (2013) found that companies do not share a common audience public, but rather tend to develop their own audiences. In addition, Pomering, Johnson and Noble (2013) found that.many consumers are rather unaware of CSR initiatives and some level of advertising is needed. Based on these literature and findings from the current study, it is contended that Black publics are not cultivated, nor are they targeted in communication about a company's CSR activities, but rather come to race-centered CSR passively or when there is a crisis or scandal. Once they learned about the activities in a way that was clear, with messaging showing actionable support for the Black collective, they responded with support.

RQ4 asked if traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, identification with Black identity, perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification influence perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR *within the Black public*. In Model 1 (see Table 18), there are no demographic variables that predict perceptions. In Model 2, the results are consistent RQ1—traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity are significant predictors of race-centered CSR authenticity within the Black public. Once the traditional antecedents are

introduced into Model 2, education becomes a significant negative predictor of perceptions of authenticity, meaning Black respondents with higher education[1] were more likely to perceive the CSR activities as authentic. Only 35% of Black respondents were college-graduates. An explanation of this finding could be that as education exposes us to new ideas, thus, providing diverse frameworks for analyzing information to make informed choices, Black respondents with more education are thinking about corporate engagement with Black publics and the concept of authenticity in more expansive ways.

Perceptions of commodification and reconciliatory discourse were introduced in the third model. The results for RQ4 indicate that perceptions of commodification predict perceptions of CSR authenticity with the Black public as well, however, and consistent with RQ1 only when traditional antecedents are present. Again, commodification is a negative predictor. This finding indicated that perceptions of commodification have an inverse relationship with authenticity for Black publics. Commodification offers a particular construction of Blackness that has proven beneficial to white (Leonard, 2009), and, because Black culture commodified loses its originality and its vibrancy, it is perceived as deeply inauthentic (Austin, 2004).

Reconciliatory discourse was not a significant predictor for authenticity for Black publics in RQ4. As discussed before, whether people perceive a company has really reconciled on the historical issue of racial injustice has nothing to do with what the company actually did/does. It could be for this reason that the traditional antecedents of CSR go much further in demonstrating what a company is actually doing, versus what could be perceived as just “talk” and/or performative itself.

[1] Education was coded 0 = college graduate/1 = non-college graduate.

RQ4 attempted to understand if the degree or strength of connection to one's Black identity predicted perceptions of CSR authenticity, thus the Black identitiy scale was introduced in the third model as well. Similar to the racial identity variable, the Black identity turned out to not be significant. This study followed Johnson's use of elements of Sellers et al. (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identitiy's (MMRI) centrality scale (i.e., how central Black is to a person's self-concept) and private regard subscale (i.e., how a person feels about being Black). Findings suggests that perceptions of authenticity and inauthenticity in race-centered CSR is recognizable no matter how a Black person defines themselves in regard to their Blackness, or how positively or negatively a Black person regards being Black. Stated a different way, authentic and inauthentic race-centered CSR is recognizable no matter how Black one believes themselves be.

RQ5 asked if traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, perceptions of reconciliatory discourse and perceptions of cultural commodification are significant with perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR *within the non-Black public*. In the first model, political ideology and marital status were significant predictors, which was different than the Black public sample, where these demographic variabls were not predictors. This suggests that, without the consideration of other variables, more liberal non-Black publics were more likely to perceive the race-centered CSR activities as authentic. It is important to note that 67% of the non-Black respondents identified as liberal, and that the non-Black sample was made up of 75% white respondents. This suggests a "liberal white" ideology in responses, which is consistent with more liberal immigration policies, and an embracing of racial diversity and affirmative action (Khalid, 2019). CSR activities that contribute to improving racial equity would thus be seen as authentic from this perspective. Traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity were introduced in the second

model. Political ideology was no longer a predictor, however, consistent with RQ1 and RQ4 – traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity were significant predictors of authenticity for non-Black publics.

Perceptions of commodification and reconciliatory discourse were introduced in the third model. Consistent with RQ1 and RQ4, traditional antecedents and perceptions of commodification were significant predictors of authenticity. Again, commodification was a negative predictor, meaning the less non-Black respondents perceived commodification, the more likely they were to perceive authenticity in the race-centered CSR. As mentioned before, race-centered CSR activity is concerned with the way in which corporations obscured or ignored structural racial issues, and/or tokenized, voyeurized, or romanticized Black cultural life. Non-Black respondents were able to recognize that these ways of being were inconsistent with the related ideas of CSR authenticity as honest, truthful, sincere and consistent, demonstrating further that racial identity is not important in our understanding of inauthentic CSR.

Reconciliatory discourse, again, was not a significant predictor for non-Black publics in RQ5, demonstrating more finitely that discourse seems to be less important than the traditional antecedents of CSR. Again, whether people perceive a company has really reconciled with their historical injustices or historical injustices more broadly may have nothing to do with what the company actually did/does. The topic of reconciliatory discourse requires further research.

Unlike Alhouti et al.'s (2016) findings, self-serving motive was significantly postivitely related to race-centered CSR authenticity for both RQ4 and RQ5 –both Black and non-Black publics. In race-centered CSR, respondents' perception that the company was motivated by stakeholder requirements—particularly, Black people, or by a strategic decision positively influenced perceptions of authenticity. This seems to contradict findings from RQ2a in that self-

serving motive is significantly related to commodification, however this study indicated that both can be true, depending on how the motive is interpreted by a public. A corporation's desire to keep and engage a particular racialized public can be interpreted as negative (commodification) or positive (authentic), depending on how a public interprets the motivations of the corporation. For example, a Black respondent could see themselves reflected in the corporation's strategic decision and feel positive about the corporation's CSR action regardless of its ego-centric motivation. The converse is possible too. That interpretation can be driven by a number of different variables, of which may be outside the scope of this study. Future research on self-serving motive in the context of race-centered CSR is, thus, necessary.

RQ6a asked if race-centered CSR authenticity influences boycott for *Black publics.* In the first model, political ideology was a significant negative predictor, indicating that conservative Black publics were more likely to boycott a corporation engaging in race-centered CSR. Only 18% of Black respondents identified as conservative which, then, offers an interesting finding. Black conservatism is concerned with socio-economic status, income, capitalism, individual achievement, and cooperation with whites as a means toward racial equity (Lewis, 2005). Race-centered CSR, which is rooted in resource reallocation and acknowledgment of racial inequity, stands in opposition to the values of Black conservatism, so it makes sense why they are more likely to boycott a corporation engaging in race-centered CSR.

CSR authenticity was introduced in the second model. Political ideology remained a predictor, and CSR authencitiy had a negative predictive relationship with boycott, meaning that the more likely Black respondents perceive CSR authenticity, the less likely they are to boycott the company. This is consistent with previous research (Alhouti et al., 2016; Zhang & Borden, 2022) on boycott as a consequence of authenticity .

RQ6b asked if race-centered CSR authenticity influences purchase intention for *Black publics*. In the first model, age and marital status were significant predictors, meaning older Black publics and unmarried Black publics were more likely to purchase from the companies engaged in race-centered CSR. The literature does not give good direction on these variables in relation to purchase intention for Black publics, particularly as it relates to CSR, however, as discussed before, age is related to more positive attitudes toward CSR and marital status is related to political ideology.

Perceptions of CSR authenticity was introduced in the second model. Age and marital status remained predictors, and perceptions of CSR authenticity became a significant predictor of purchase intention for Black publics—that is, the more Black publics perceived authenticity in the CSR activity, the more they intended to purchase from the companies. This is consistent with previous literature on purchase intention as a consequence of authenticity (Alhouti et al., 2016; Zhang & Borden, 2022).

RQ6c asked if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *brand loyalty* for *Black publics.* In the first model, marital status was a significant predictor. Once CSR authenticity was introduced in the second model, marital status no longer became a predictor but CSR authenticity was significant, meaning the more Black publics perceived authencitity, the more likely they would be loyal to the brand. Again this finding is consistent with previous literature.

RQ7a asked if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *boycott* for *non-Black publics.* Findings indicate that CSR authenticity has a negative predictive relationship with boycott for non-Black publics as well. This suggests that, similar to Black respondents, the more non-Black respondents perceive CSR authenticity, the less likely they are to boycott the company.

RQ7b asked if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *purchase intention* for *non-Black publics.* Findings indicate that CSR authenticity is a significant predictor of purchase intention for non-Black publics. This suggests that, similar to Black respondents, the more non-Black publics perceived authenticity in the CSR activity the more they intended to purchase from the companies.

RQ7c asked if race-centered CSR authenticity influences *brand loyalty* for *non-Black publics.* In the first model, political ideology was a significant predictor, suggesting that liberal respondents were more likely to be loyal to a brand engaging in race-centered CSR. Again, liberal ideology is consistent with racial diversity and affirmative action practices (Khalid, 2019). CSR activities that contribute to improving racial equity would thus be seen as authentic from this perspective, and lend itself to brand loyalty. Once CSR authenticity was introduced in the second model, political ideology no longer became a predictor but CSR authenticity was significant, meaning the more non-Black publics perceived authencitity, the more likely they would be loyal to the brand.

For RQs 6-7, traditional consequences for CSR authenticity—boycott, purchase intention, and brand loyalty—appear to hold true for race-centered CSR. There is a negative association between boycott and CSR authenticity, and a positive association between purchase intention—the more likely publics perceive CSR authenticity, the less likely they are to boycott. Conversely, the more publics perceived CSR authenticity, the more likely they intend to purchase from the company. Consequences of CSR authenticity is well documented in the literature, and includes product utilization, word-of-mouth, purchase decision, brand loyalty and purchase intention (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Cornwell & Coote, 2003; Dodd & Supa, 2014). As late as 2021, these associations have been made (Afzali & Kim, 2021).

These findings contribute to the validity of boycott, purchase intention, and brand loyalty as consequences of CSR authenticity.

This is true irrespective of racial identity (Blacks and non-Blacks), however there are some differences in demographic drivers by racial identity. Political ideology was a driver for both Blacks and non-Blacks, but in inverse ways. Whereas conservatism drove negative outcome behavior in Black respondents, liberalism drove positive outcome behaviors in non-Blacks, which was mostly comprised of white public. Specifically, Black conservatives were more likely to boycott, and white liberals were more likely to continue to purchase from a brand engaging in race-centered CSR. This is an interesting finding as it relates to race-centered CSR that could be explored further – that is, drilling down on how political ideology of racialized publics contribute to consequences of authenticity. Age and marital status were also drivers for Black publics, another finding that requires more investigation.

H1 asserted that perceptions of cultural commodification negatively predicted perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity *for Black publics*. The hypothesis was not supported. This finding was based on a linear regression bivariate analysis, controlling for demographic variables. This may seem contradictory to RQ4, where commodification significantly negatively predicted perceptions of CSR authencitiy in Black publics. However, once traditional antecedents were introduced along with other variables, the statistical analysis reflected a more nuanced and robust interpretation of how Black publics perceived CSR authenticity and commodification. When considering traditional CSR antecedents, Black publics were more likely to make judgments of authenticity perceptions based on commodification perceptions.

H2 asserted that perceptions of reconciliatory discourse positively influence perceptions of race-centered CSR authenticity *for Black publics*. This hypothesis was supported. There was a negative predictive relationship between CSR authenticity and perceptions of reconciliatory discourse, indicating that the more Black publics perceived reconciliatory discourse, the less they perceived CSR authenticity. This may seem like a contradictory finding to RQ1 and RQ4 which shows that it was not significant for Black respondents when controlling for antecedents but was significant when considered alone. On its own, as a bivariate coefficient, reconciliatory discourse seems to matter for Black publics, but, as outlined by findings from RQ4, traditional anteceents go further for respondents in demonstrating a corporation's commitment to race-centered CSR.

Theoretical Implications

Racial publics are not delineated in the CSR literature. Scholars like Robinson (2002) and Logan (2021) have theorized and conceptualized about the responsibility of corporations to race, but no scholarship exists on racialized publics and their perception of these types of CSR activities. In addition, very little empirical research exists on these critical cultural concepts. This study contributes to the development of scholarship on corporations' responsibility by conceptualizing, operationalizing, and testing these critical concepts of race-centered CSR, authenticity and inauthenticity in race-centered CSR, and racial publics' responses to these activities. CSR literature has assumed a generalized and universalized public, however a critical perspective challenges us to include multiple voices and suppressed publics (Dozier & Lauzen, 2000). It calls for an examination of the differences and similarities of ideologies and values, and how they are translated and universalized (Kellner, 1993).

The findings of this study suggests that: 1) there ***is*** a universal understanding of authenticity in race-centered CSR; 2) there ***is*** a universal understanding of what commodification of Black culture is in the context of race-centered CSR; 3) there is ***not*** a universal understanding of reconciliation in the context of race-centered CSR, and 4) the recognition of commodification is related to perceptions of authenticity of race-centered CSR when traditional antecedents of CSR are considered. In addition, there are subtle differences in demographic drivers between Blacks and non-blacks, particularly political ideology (conservative Blacks vs. liberal whites) and education, age, and marital status of Black respondents. The study contributes to the body of literature on empirical and critical approaches to corporate social responsibility.

This study also makes visible corporation's practices of engaging in racialized CSR activities, particularly Black people. As noted, literature on CSR has assumed a generalized—or non-racialized—public. In acknowledging and centering race, particularly Blackness, this research elevates the voices of Black people, and cements their thoughts and opinions on how they perceive corporate engagement in race-centered CSR activities. This study responds to Edward's (2012) call that public relations scholars engage in critical scholarship and analyses of the ways in which the profession makes groups of people visible or invisible.

Findings suggest that race-centered CSR is a distinct concept from conventional CSR, but not because of differences in perception of racial groups but because of the recognition of commodification and its negative relationship with authenticity across racial groups. Stated differently, Blacks and non-Blacks were equally able to recognize the commodification of Blackness in race-centered CSR activities, and that recognition predicted perceptions of authencity. This negative relationship between commodification and authenticity exists considering other antecedents of conventional CSR. The relationship between commodification

and (in)authenticity can really be understood as the recognition of perversion of Black culture via the appearance of altruism. Stated a different way, CSR gives the illusion of goodwill, however, commodifying Black culture calls out the illusion as inauthentic. It is important to note that corporations are in the business of commodification—that is, corporations exists to sell things. They do not, however, exists to sell culture. To engage in such, cloaked in benevolence is universally recognizable. This study contributes the concept of race-centered CSR, and contributes the concept of cultural commodification to CSR literature as an antecedent measure of authenticity of race-centered CSR. Co-optation of cultural movements is well documented in CSR literature. Malkan's (2007) "pink washing", or the activities of companies and groups that position themselves as leaders in the struggle to eradicate breast cancer while engaging in practices that may be contributing to rising rates of the disease." Westerveld's (1986) greenwashing, or when a corporation increases its sales or boosts its brand image through environmental rhetoric or advertising, but in reality, does not make good on these environmental claims (Cherry, 2013). The same is true for corporate co-optation of LGTBQ Pride (Brammer, 2019). There have been studies that explore corporate social responsibility that target racial efforts as "woke washing" and commodifying, however, this study goes further than theorizing about the phenomenon, but operationalizes the behaviors involved in commodification—that is, how a corporation might position themsleves authentically or inauthentically in the fight for racial justice.

Findings from this research provide more insight on theoretical ideas of discursive historical accountability to the Black community via accepting responsibility, apologizing, asking for forgiveness and public acknowledgements as noted by Janssen (2013) and Waymer and Logan (2021). As mentioned before, reconciliation was seen as an integral and necessary

component of race-centered CSR—that is, in order for corporations to work toward racial equity and justice, there would first have to be an acknowledgement of inequities. This study suggests two things. First, reconciliatory discourse alone, does indeed, have a relationship with authenticity. Publics were able to recognize corporations' efforts toward taking responsibility, apologizing, and asking for forgiveness for racial inequities and relate these efforts to concepts of authenticity (i.e., consistency, social responsibility, working to repair racial inequities, etc.). However, and secondly, when traditional antecedents and commodification perceptions were considered, reconciliatory discourse did not seem to matter as much. This was true for Blacks and non-Blacks. This indicates that the perception of whether a corporations has rhetorically reconciled its historical relationship to injustice may have little to do with what the company actually did/does, which is reflected more clearly in the traditional antecedents and commodification. From a critical perspective, reconciliation is important for corporations who have previously benefited from the exploitation and inequities of Black people, however empirical results of this study suggests that publics are much more concerned with a corporation's behavior, rather than its rhetoric. This is not at all to diminish the value of reconciliatory discourse in a rhetorical sense, particularly in a race-centered context. Again, scholars have indeed noted the importance of corporations making public declarations and apologies for historical connections to discrimination, racism, and forced labor. As Janssen (2013) points out, this practice is important as corporations begin to "create sustainable policies that can strengthen corporate citizenship and an serve as a means of (re-)legitimation (p. 64). It becomes the basis for long-term CSR commitments to justice. This study supports the notion that there appears to be conflict between theory and practice—that is, what is normative from a theoretical perspective and what is practical from a stakeholder perspective. The findings from

the study suggest that practically, stakeholders are much more interested in what a corporation is doing, rather than what it is saying.

Consistently, across race, a company's fit with the fight for racial justice and equity, the impact of the CSR activity relative to the company's resources in the fight for racial justice and equity, the company's motivation to participate in the fight for racial justice and equity, and whether the CSR activity is particularly important to the stakeholder are consistent drivers in perceptions of authenticity. As such, this study contributes to the CSR literature in understanding traditional antecedents of CSR and how they interact with race-centered CSR and drive perceptions of authenticity. The study first operationalizes the antecedents in the context of race-centered CSR, and findings validate their importance in perceptions of authenticity.

Race-centered CSR, as a spoke in the umbrella of traditional CSR, appears to be contested. What the literature segments and defines narrowly as social responsibility marketing, , or social issue or cause related marketing, philanthropic efforts, humane employee treatment, volunteer initiatives, or diversity and inclusion work, stakeholders see as authentic or inauthentic ways toward repairing racial inequities. The tensions between normative and practical conceptions of what CSR is seems to exist separately from consumers and stakeholder perceptions. Normatively, corporations participate in activities that contribute to its stakeholders, society and the environment because they have a moral obligation. Practically, CSR is a reflection of the bottom line. From a publics' perspective, neither appears as important as the activity itself, its impact on the individual or their community, and their personal involvement in the issue. This could also be why reconciliatory discourse was not as important as the concrete CSR actions the corporations engaged in and how close those activities were to the individuals

themselves. This study suggests that publics' view of race-centered CSR is much more narrowly defined than what the literature tells us it, challenging us to critique definitions.

Practical Implications.

This study provides context for practitioners and corporations intending to engage with Black publics by examining how corporate messaging aligns with the Black community's values, authenticity, and sense of agency. Scholars and activists have called for corporations to engage in meaningful discourse—taking up the positon to support Black lives, and speak out about racial justice. This study demonstrates that it is not enough to just focus on the discursive elements of allyship, or from a practitioner perspective, create communication campaigns to align with Black community values. Rather a parallel process of community engagement, investment and commitment is necessary and should be developed. As outlined in the traditional antecedents of CSR authenticity, this could be making sure that a corporation's internal values match with its commitment to racial justice (i.e., fair hiring and recruiting practices, supplier diversity, board representation), or determining what is impactful to the fight for racial justice relative to the company's reosurces—that is, where the company might have the greatest influence to change racial issues. Communication campaigns might be better done after this work has been completed.

First, reconciliatory discourse alone, does indeed, have a relationship with authenticity. Publics were able to recognize corporations' efforts toward taking responsibility, apologizing, and asking for forgiveness for racial inequities and relate these efforts to concepts of race-centered CSR authenticity (i.e., consistency, social responsibility, working to repair racial inequities, etc.). However, and secondly, when traditional antecedents and commodification perceptions were considered, reconciliatory discourse did not seem to matter as much. This was

true for Blacks and non-Blacks. This indicates that the perception of whether a corporation is attempting to rhetorically reconcile its historical relationship to injustice may have little to do with what the company actually did/does. A company's attempt to reconcile with Black people via reconciliatory discourse could be seen as insufficient in comparison to consistent, genuine and socially responsible behavior, which is reflected more clearly in the traditional antecedents. Performative displays of allyship and the perversion of Black culture is also clearly understood to contribute to inauthentic CSR. Rhetoric is positioned somewhere more nebulous, a theoretical concept that, from a critical perspective in the context of race-centered CSR, serves to challenge the ways in which corporations have benefited from the forced labor of Black people. Empirically, however, the practice does not seem to matter as much to publics, who appear to be much more concerned with the CSR actions themselves, rather than what could be perceived as just "talk." This should not dissuade corporations for engaging in reconciliatory discourse, but rather they should parallel discourse with concrete CSR activities to strengthen publics' connection and perceptions of authenticity.

Lastly, far too often, Black publics come to know of a corporation's race-centered CSR passively and when there is a scandal or crises. The study hopes to inform on how to strategically engage and communicate with historically marginalized publics by demonstrating that there is an opportunity to maximize engagement and relationship-building with racialized publics, ultimately increasing the chance for community support for race-centered CSR. In addition to making sure that the company's identity and/or personality fits with the fight for racial justice and equity (fit), the CSR activity is impactful relative to the resources the company uses toward the fight for racial justice and equity (impact), whether the company is reactive or defensive in its motive to participate in the fight for racial justice and equity (self-serving motive), and

whether the CSR activity is particularly important to the stakeholder (issue involvement), practical implications of this study suggest cultivating racialized publics and providing them with clear information on the extent of race-centered CSR. For example, a corporation could take inventory of relationships with racialized stakeholders and publics including employees, supplier and employee recruiting networks (i.e., universities, community groups, clubs, professional organizations), consumers and boards and a strategy for engagement, such that when CSR activities are developed, communication can be rolled out specifically to those stakeholders and publics.

Study Limitations and Future Research

This is one of the first empirical studies investigating publics' perception of highly theoretical critical cultural concepts. One limitation of the study is the quantitative nature of inquiry, which cannot fully capture critical concepts such as power, representation, or inequities. Future research could explore alternative methods to investigate perceptions of commodification and reconciliatory discourse, particularly textual analysis, focus groups and interviews of publics. Textual analyses of press releases, social media posts or company statements might have uncovered embedded reconciliatory discourse. Interviews and focus groups could provide deeper understanding of the complexities of concepts and allow participants to ask follow-up questions and clarify responses. Quantitative research could compliment this work, creating triangulation of findings.

Reconciliatory discourse, as a measure, was a significant concept of race-centered CSR but was not significant when considering traditional antecedents and commodification. Across the study however, findings suggests that either: 1) there may be mediators or moderators within the relationship between reconsiliatory discourse and CSR authenticity perceptions that go

beyond the scope of the study, or 2) reconciliatory discourse is unrelated to race-centered CSR when considering commodication and other traditional CSR antecedents. Future research should investigate conceptualizations of reconciliatory discourse and its relationship to race-centered CSR and explore other related concepts.

Findings from this study suggest that there are outcomes differences in political ideology between Blacks and non-Blacks—specifically, Black conservatives were more likely to boycott, and liberal whites were more likely to continue to purchase from a brand engaging in race-centered CSR. Future research should focus on how political ideology of racialized publics contribute to consequences of authenticity.

This study contradicts Alhouti et al.'s (2016) study where self-serving motive was not significant. The findings in this study indicate that, in a race-centered CSR context, respondent's perception that the company was motivated by stakeholder requirements or strategic decision was both significantly related to perceptions of authenticity and commodification. This suggests that both can be true, which could be driven by a number of different variables that are likely outside the scope of this study. Future research should explore how racialized publics' perceive a corporation's motivation in the context of race-centered CSR.

As mentioned before, public education on issues of access, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, particularly as it relates to race, has increased exponentially since 2020. As publics become more knowledgeable on issues of race and power, there becomes an opportunity for understanding how reception of race-centered CSR changes over time—that is, how do racialized or non-racialized publics come to understand corporations and their race-centered CSR activities as authentic or inauthentic. Future research could include a longitudinal study, which could capture these changes if they exist.

Conclusion

We have reached an apex in corporate responses to the racial and social shifts in the U.S. The contentious summer of 2020 brought a flurry of demands from scholars, activists, and stakeholders that corporations be leaders in social responsibility, particularly with regard to racial justice and equity. As corporations have responded to the demands via public relations, CSR, CSA and philanthropic campaigns, some have done better than others. The purpose of this study was to conceptualize and operationalize these campaigns as *race-centered CSR* and test perceptions of their authenticity. Findings from this study suggest that, even though the intersection between theory and perception is muddled, commodification of Black culture is clearly understood as inauthentic by Black and non-Black publics. This ultimately has implications for how publics will continue to engage with a company.

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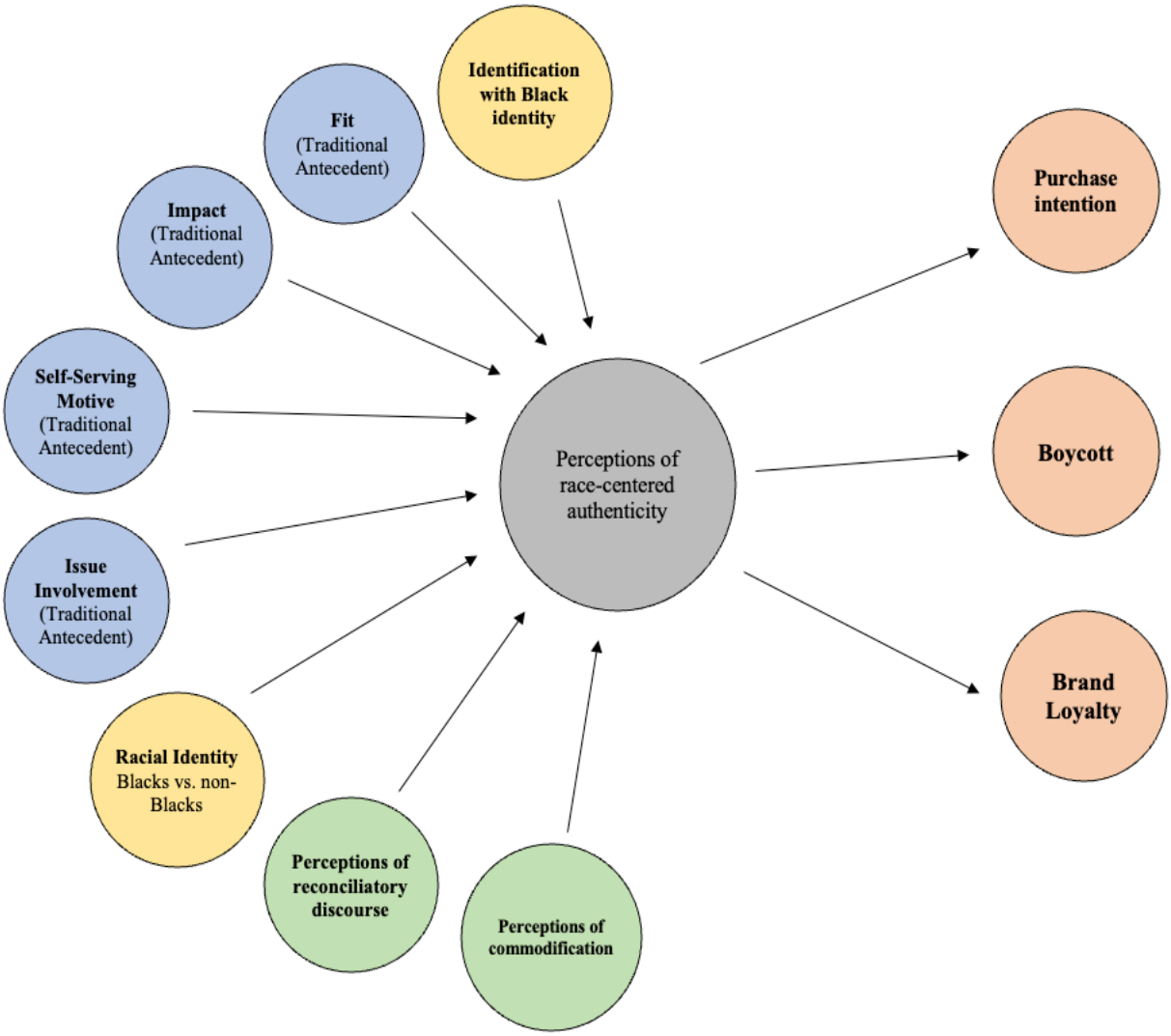
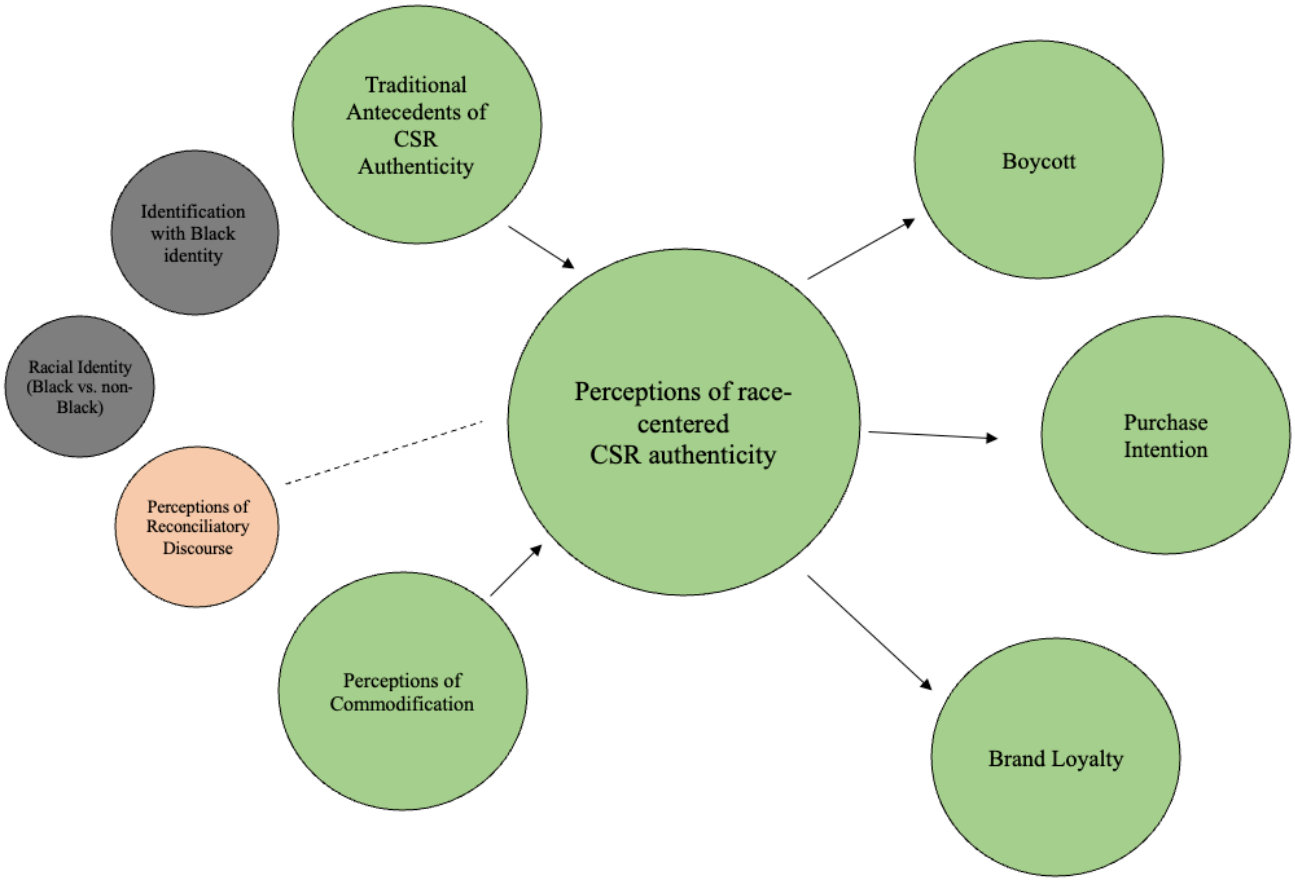
Appendix

Appendix 1: Proposed Race-centered CSR Conceptual Model



Appendix 2: Conceptual model based on findings



Appendix 3: CSR Authenticity Measures

CSR Authenticity (Alhouti, Johnson & Holloway, 2016)	
CSR Authenticity	The company's CSR actions are genuine The CSR action preserves what the company means to me The CSR action captures what makes the company unique to me The company's CSR action is in accordance with the company's values and beliefs The company is being true to itself with its CSR actions The company is standing up for what it believes in The company is a socially responsible company The company is concerned about improving the well-being of society.
Impact	I believe that the company donates a fair portion of its resources relative to its success The company's CSR acts have a long-term impact A large monetary commitment appears to have been made to the cause the company donates to
Self-serving motive Whether the company is perceived to be motivated by stakeholder requirements or by a strategic decision.	The company feels that their customers expect CSR actions The company feels society in general expects them to be involved in CSR The company feels their stockholders expect the company to have CSR initiatives The company will get more customers by taking a CSR action The company will keep more of their customers by taking a CSR action The company hopes to increase its profits through its CSR action
Reparation If the company were to be involved in negative publicity, the participant should think about how the company would react to the negative event	The company would make an obvious apology The company would have taken into account consumers' emotions in responding to the negative publicity The company would make sure that the consumers are informed about corporate response to the negative publicity The company would have provided necessary information about its response to the negative publicity I think that the company would have a desire to look for the root of the problem
Fit	How do you think the company's CSR initiatives fit with the firm (For example: relative to how it aligns with what the firm sells, who it sells to, the company's identity, or the interests of its customers). Low fit/strong fit Dissimilar/similar Inconsistent/consistent Not complementary/complementary

Boycott	I am boycotting the product of the company I have already boycotted products from the company I often boycott products from the company
Purchase intent	Please rate the likelihood that you continue to shop with the company in the future Very unlikely/very likely Very improbable/very probable Impossible/very possible No chance/certain
Brand Loyalty	I would consider myself to be loyal to the company The company would be my first choice
Optimism	I always look on the bright side of things I'm a believer in the idea that "every cloud has a silver lining." I'm always optimistic about my future In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.

Appendix 4: Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)

Racial identity (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997)	
Centrality Scale *Extent to which a person normatively defines her or himself with regard to race*	Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself (reverse scored) In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am (reverse scored). I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people I have a strong attachment to other Black people Being Black is an important reflection of who I am Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships (reverse scored)
Regard Scale *A person's affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race.*	
Private Regard Subscale	I feel good about Black people I am happy that I am Black I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements I believe that because I am Black, I have many strengths O often regret that I am Black Blacks contribute less to society than others Overall, I often feel that Blacks are not worthwhile.
Ideology Scale *An individual's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes with regard to the way she or he feels that the members of the race should act*	
Assimilation Subscale	Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as white people who also espouse separatism A sign of progress is that Blacks are in the mainstream of America more than ever before Because America is predominantly white, it is important that Blacks go to white schools so that they can gain experience interacting with whites. Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated Blacks should feel free to interact socially with white people Blacks should view themselves as being Americans first and foremost The plight of Blacks in America will improve only whiten Black are in important positions within the system.
Humanist subscale	Black value should not be inconsistent with human values (omit from analyses) Blacks should have the choice to marry interracially Blacks and whites have more commonalities than differences Black people should not consider race when buying art or selecting a book to read Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues

	Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black We are all children of a higher being, therefore, we should love people of all races Blacks should judge whites as individuals and not as members of the white race People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations.
Oppressed Minority subscale	The same forces which have led to the oppression of Blacks have also led to the oppression of other groups The struggle for Black liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups Blacks should learn about the oppression of other groups Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups (omit from analyses) There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans. Blacks will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other oppressed groups Blacks should try to become friends with people from other oppressed groups The dominant society devalues anything not white male oriented (omit from analyses)
Nationalist Subscale	It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music, and literature Black people should not marry interracially (omit from analyses) Blacks would be better going to schools that are controlled and organized by Blacks Black people must organize themselves into a separate Black political force Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today Blacks and whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned.

Appendix 5: Main Survey Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE	
Consent to Participate in Research at the University of Oklahoma [IRB no: 15627 Approval date: 02/21/2023] You are invited to participate in research about corporate social responsibility efforts that target Black consumers. This research is being conducted through The University of Oklahoma Norman Campus. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey that asks you to give your opinion on corporate social responsibility efforts that target Black consumers. In addition, you will be asked to provide demographics information about yourself. It should take you about 30 minutes to finish the study. We anticipate that there will be no risks or benefits of completing this survey and there is no compensation associated with this survey. Your participation is completely voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. Even if you choose to participate now, you may stop participating at any time and for any reason. Your data (including direct quotations from the responses you provide to the open-ended questions in the study) may be used in this or future research studies, unless you contact us to withdraw your data. The data are collected via an online survey system that has its own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. No assurance can be made as to their use of the data you provide. If you have questions about this research, please contact: Ajia Meux at ajiameux@ou.edu or Dr. Angela Zhang at angelazhang@ou.edu. You can also contact the University of Oklahoma–Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu with questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, or if you don't want to talk to the researcher. By answering the survey questions, I agree to participate in this research. Please print this page for your records.	
Race	**What is your race?** American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Other - Please Specify (e.g., Multiracial) White

	If the participant selects Black as their race, they will be taken to the racial identity scale. If they select any other race, they will be taken to the demographics section
Black Identity	Which of the following represents your Black identity? African Afro-Latino/a/x Afro-Caribbean American descendent of slavery
Instructions: First, we'd like for you to choose a corporation from the list below.	
Corporations	Netflix Target Ben & Jerry's Nike Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County NFL Spotify Walmart Proctor & Gamble Anderson Doors and Windows Mattel McDonald's Caterpillar Pepsi NBA

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the statements below carefully. You will be prompted to answer a series of questions based on the statements.

Race-centered corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as an organization's voluntary efforts to repair racial inequities. They engage in these efforts through a variety of ways including improving labor standards and working conditions, employee and community relations, social equity, and gender balance for underrepresented racial groups. For the Black community, this could include, but is not limited to:

- Donating/investing money to organizations that support Black people directly or issues that impact Black people.
- Donating/investing money in physical communities where Black people live.
- Advocating for police and/or criminal justice reform.
- Declaring that "Black Lives Matter."
- Increasing the number of Black product or content developers and creators.
- Donating/investing money to Black people directly (reparations).
- Increasing hiring of Black employees.
- Increasing the number of Black people on the corporation's board of directors.
- Acknowledging past wrongdoings against the Black community.
- Apologizing for past wrongdoings against the Black community.
- Creating a work environment where Black people feel safe.

- Creating opportunities for people to talk about race.
- Dedicating organizational or staff time to Black social issues.

FORBES > MONEY > PERSONAL FINANCE

Uber Eats Delivery Fees Cancelled For Black-Owned Restaurants

Kori Hale Contributor

I'm the CEO of CultureBanx, redefining business news for minorities.

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Jun 9, 2020, 06:05pm EDT

An example of race-centered corporate social responsibility (CSR) is Uber Eats decision to cancel delivery fees for Black-owned businesses. The company featured a list of Black-owned restaurants in the app for this promotion based on publicly available sources, along with information from local organizations and business associations. Uber's CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said in a statement: "We are committed to supporting the [B]lack community."

Athletes and Artists support causes that matter most

Global Sports Brand PUMA has launched #REFORM, a new platform that will give activists from the worlds of sports, music and entertainment support in championing causes and encouraging conversations around issues such as universal equality and criminal justice reform.

Another example is PUMA's #REFORM campaign

Familiarity with brand	**To what extent are you familiar with this corporation?** Not at all familiar Slightly familiar Moderately familiar Very familiar Extremely familiar
[CSR activity appear: "The company you selected was XXXX" with a description of the CSR activity] Instructions: Please answer the rest of the questions based on the brand and the CSR activity in mind.	
Familiarity with CSR activity	**How familiar are you with [company's] CSR activity?** Not at all familiar Slightly familiar Moderately familiar Very familiar Extremely familiar
CSR Authenticity	The company's CSR actions are genuine The CSR action preserves what the company means to me The CSR action captures what makes the company unique to me The company is being true to itself with this CSR action The company is standing up for what it believes in with this CSR actions The company is acting as a socially responsible company with this CSR action The company is concerned about repairing racial equity This CSR action reflect the company's consistent commitment to racial equity.
Impact	I believe that the company donated a fair portion of its resources relative to its success and/or size. Resources include, among other things, a company's time, staff, space, money, etc. The CSR action will have a long-term impact A large monetary commitment appears to have been made to repair racial equity
Self-serving motive	The company feels that their Black customers expect race-centered CSR actions The company feels that all their customers expect race-centered CSR actions The company feels society in general expects them to be involved in race-centered CSR The company feels their stockholders expect the company to have race-centered CSR initiatives The company will get more Black customers by engaging in this CSR actions The company will get more customers by engaging in this CSR actions The company will keep more of their Black customers by taking this CSR action The company will keep more of their customers by taking this CSR action The company hopes to increase its profits through this CSR action

Issue Involvement	The issue affects my ability to live my life as I want to The issue directly affects my life It is easy to think of ways that the issue affects me The issue is directly relevant to my life The issue has an impact on values that I care about My opinion on the issue relates to values that I care about My attitude on the issue relates to values that I care about I tend to base my attitudes on my general principles about how life should be lived The issue affects people close to me The issue is important to people close to me The issue affects social groups I identify with The issue is important to social groups I identify with
Boycott	I will stop purchasing from the company I am tempted to boycott from the company I will not boycott the company
Brand Loyalty	I would consider myself to be loyal to the company The company would be my first choice
Commodification	The company is addressing racism through this activity. The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity. The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity. The company is using Black culture to make profits through this activity. The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness through this activity. The company is ignoring the struggle and resiliency associated with the history of Black people in the U.S. through this activity. The company is altering the cultural meanings associated with the struggle and resiliency of Black people in the U.S. through this activity. The company is using Black culture for its own benefit through this activity. The company is attempting to maintain Black consumership through this activity.
Fit	The company's CSR action is in accordance with the company's values and beliefs How do you think the company's race-centered CSR initiatives fit with the firm (For example: relative to how it aligns with what the firm sells, who it sells to, the company's identity, or the interests of its customers). Low fit/strong fit Dissimilar/similar Inconsistent/consistent Not complementary/complementary

Reconciliation	The company is making a real or symbolic apology for past wrongdoings through this CSR activity. The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings through this CSR activity. The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings through this CSR activity. The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings through this CSR activity. The company is making amends for past wrongdoings through this CSR activity. The company is creating racial and social justice change through this CSR activity. The company is remedying racial economic inequality through this CSR activity.
Instructions: We want to ask you a few questions related to how you identify with being Black. Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. (only appeared if respondents selected Black in the race category at the beginning of the survey)	
Black identity scale	Being Black is an important reflection of who I am I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people I have a strong attachment to other Black people I feel good about Black people I am happy that I am Black I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society
Age	**What is your age in years?** For example, 35
Gender	**Can you please identify your gender?** Male Female Non-binary / third gender Prefer to self-describe Prefer not to say
Education	**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Less than high school High school graduate (including GED) Some college or technical training Bachelor's Degree (4-year degree) Post-graduate work or degree
Purchase Frequency	**How often do you purchase from the company?** Never Rarely Sometimes Always

	Often
Purchase intent	Please rate the likelihood that you continue to shop with the company in the future Very unlikely/very likely Very improbable/very probable Impossible/very possible No chance/certain
Marital Status	**What is your marital status?** Single Married
Employment Status	**What is your current employment status?** Student Employed full-time Employed part-time Not employed, actively looking for a job Not employed, NOT actively looking for a job Permanently sick or disabled Community or military service Other
Political Leaning	**We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Would you say that you are . . .** Extremely conservative Conservative Slightly conservative Moderate Slightly liberal Liberal Extremely liberal
Religiosity	**How often do you attend religious events?** More than once per week Once per week Once or twice a month A few times a year Never

Shareholder/ Investor Status	**Are you a shareholder/investor of a publicly traded company?** **Yes** **No**

Appendix 6. Commodification Scale Iterations

Original Scale	Revised scale after expert feedback and for pilot				Revised scale after pilot and for main study
	Authentic CSR *M* = 3.25 SD = .65 α = .71	*Inauthentic CSR* *M* = 2.39 SD = .59 α = .59	*Authentic CSR/Blk* *M* = 3.34 SD = .53 α = .50	*Inauthentic CSR/BLK* *M* = 2.52 SD = .66 α = .70	***M* = 3.24, SD = .71, α = .80**
The company is addressing racism and the effects of racism. The company is selling Black culture to the masses. The company is using Black cultural life to make profits. The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness. The company is ignoring the sentimental value of Black culture. The company is altering the meaning of Black culture.	The company is addressing racism through this activity. The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity. The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity. The company is using Black culture to make profits through this activity. The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness through this activity. The company is ignoring the struggle and resiliency associated with the history of Black people in the U.S. through this activity. The company is altering the cultural meanings associated with the struggle and resiliency of Black people in the U.S. through this activity. The company is using Black culture for its own benefit through this activity. The company is attempting to maintain Black consumership through this activity.				The company is addressing racism through this activity. The company is addressing the effects of racism through this activity. The company is selling Black culture to the general public through this activity. The company is using Black culture to make profits through this activity. The company is offering a limited representation of Blackness through this activity. The company is ignoring the struggle and resiliency associated with the history of Black people in the U.S. through this activity. The company is altering the cultural meanings associated with the struggle and resiliency of Black people in the U.S. through this activity. The company is using Black culture for its own benefit through this activity. The company is attempting to maintain Black consumership through this activity.

Appendix 7. Reconciliation Scale Iteration

Original Scale	Revised scale after expert feedback and for pilot				Revised scale after pilot and for main study
	Authentic CSR *M* = 3.10 SD = .81 α = .83	*Inauthentic CSR* *M* = 2.38 SD = .64 α = .78	*Authentic CSR/Blk* *M* = 3.02 SD = .66 α = .72	*Inauthentic CSR/Blk* *M* = 2.40 SD = .65 α = .76	***M* = 2.85, SD = .98, α = .93**
The company is making a real or symbolic apology for past wrongdoings.	The company is making an apology for past wrongdoings.				The company is making an apology for past wrongdoings.
The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings.	The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings.				The company is seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoings.
The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings.	The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings.				The company is taking responsibility for past wrongdoings.
The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings.	The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings.				The company is making a public acknowledgement for past wrongdoings.
The company is making amends for past wrongdoings.	The company is making amends for past wrongdoings.				The company is making amends for past wrongdoings.
The company is creating racial and social justice change.	The company is attempting to create racial justice change.				The company is attempting to create racial justice change.
The company is remedying racial economic inequality.	The company is attempting to create social justice change.				The company is attempting to create social justice change.
	The company is trying to address racial economic inequality.				The company is trying to address racial economic inequality.