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In discussions about children's use of media, and particularly the risks associated with their engagement with media, the role of parental mediation becomes important. For very young children, decisions regarding what kinds of digital gadgets, platforms or content, and when or where they may be accessed, rest with the parents. However, in the Caribbean, where households often include family members spanning several generations, the management of children's use of media of necessity takes a different form. This paper advances the view that conceptualizing 'the family' as a significant aspect of the mediation process is intrinsic to understanding and researching this phenomenon in the Caribbean region. The family-as-mediation idea is explored by reviewing literature that intersects family demographics with mediation, by discussing the importance of parenting styles, and in relation to sociocultural norms of the Caribbean family. I conclude by positing that family mediation of children's engagement with media tools may be as much an outcome as strategy, and argue that research is needed in the region to better understand the dynamics in households that are becoming increasingly media rich.

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Ironically, 'family' may be perceived as the missing element in some lay discussions about children and media use. This researcher was met with howls of dismay when she, quite recently, asked third year media students to conduct some ethnographic research with families of young children. The general consensus, though not necessarily scientific, was that it would be hard to find 'families'. Using the Caribbean island of Jamaica as a context, this paper aims to make explicit what is often an understated, and sometimes an

and facilitate what Livingstone and Bober (2004) refer to as the "diversification of tastes and habits at home which frees young people from following the lifestyle decisions of their parents" (p. 134).

Together, these factors make it imperative to review the older notions of the role of media in family life, as they can now play an integrative and educational function within the family (Clark, 2011), and can be inscribed usefully into family practices that are unique to the household (Livingstone and Bober, 2004). However new media also present with influences not unconnected to their enhanced interactivity, miniaturization, and mobility and the effects of this media-rich environment are not always positive. For parents with young children, the

demonstrates a robust adoption of the medium in ways that enact their cultural and national practices. Forbes' (2012) qualitative research among social media users in Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and the US unearths the contours of youth culture mediated by platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

The focus of contemporary Caribbean media and ICT discourse is itself an indication of the rapid development of the sectors over the last thirty years. Earlier discussions concentrated on issues of north-

transmit larger values of media preference. Surveying the early literature Clark (2011) summarizes the term as pertaining to the "active role in managing and regulating their children's experiences with television" (p. 323), thus putting into the foreground the medium for which early studies and theorizing became necessary.

Mediation is often discussed in relation to specific techniques or strategies of oversight that parents may employ to protect children from nefarious effects of media exposure , such as engaging with media along with children, disallowing certain kinds of media engagement, using filters and blocks to censor programming content, and surveillance (Kundanis, 2003; Livingstone and Helsper, 2008). Studies have indicated that parental guidance can play a significant role in modulating the potentially harmful aspects of certain kinds of media content. For example, one study has found that for children who watch particular kinds of aggressive content on television and in movies, high levels of parental monitoring has a significant bearing on whether children will approve of those aggressive behaviours themselves (Linder and Werner, 2012). On the other hand, parents whose engagement with media is low or non-existent tend to have children whose risks of exposure are higher, as discovered regarding exposure to television, as well as the use of the Internet (Nathanson, 1999; Livingstone and Helsper, 2008). These findings suggest that parental mediation is essential, if children are to engage in media in responsible, meaningful and empowering ways. But all mediation strategies are not the same, and the literature specifies types of parental intervention in children's media use, with some being more effective for children of particular ages, or for kinds of media (Livingstone and Helsper, 2008; Kundanis, 2003; Nathanson, 1999). Citing Nathanson and Cantor (2000), Kundanis (2003) identifies three distinct approaches towards parental mediation – active, in which parents talk about media,

then they must not allow them to "roam the Internet and do what they want to do", as that kind of neglect would be the same as sending them on the streets to fend for themselves.

Clark (2011) points out that there is a correspondence between the findings about — active and restrictive — and interpersonal theories of communication, suggesting that the broader context in which family dialogue occurs may be linked in approach and outcome to narrower concerns about mediation. How members of family relate   , is connected to how they approach the values and rules regarding media use. For example, Padilla-Walker, et al. (2012) remind us that parents and teens often use media together, as a consequence of the daily practices within the home. The converse is also true: Linder and Werner (2012) suggest that parent-child discussions about media may not immediately affect children's broader relational norms, but over time, these discussions may be integrated into the children's developing normative frameworks. Additionally, the study by Appel, et al. (2012) suggests that parental communication regarding particular media — in this case the Internet use — is an important indicator of whether adolescent online engagement will be satisfying.

Perspectives vary on the matter of the impact of digital media on the institution of family. There are concerns about the pervasive, multimodal, "always-on" quality of contemporary digital media, and the changes in media habits that are being unleashed, particularly on young people, as well as issues with exposure to violent and graphic sexual content, and the perceived and real threats to parental authority that digital tools can contribute to (Azzam, 2006; Rideout, et al., 2010; Clark, 2011). Importantly, research seems to refute the idea that increased mediation of children's use of the Internet will necessarily lower their exposure to online danger (Livingstone and Helsper, 2008). However a broader picture of the impact of media on the family must also consider the productive ways in which media is included in the process of "being and doing" family. For example, research by Gentile and Walsh (2002) shows that families that tend to pursue positive med

socioeconomic brackets of upper, middle and working/peasant class and are still found in various permutations across the entire region.

The literature varies in perspective on the nature and implications of Caribbean societal formation, with some writers, such as Sherlock and Bennett (1998), emphasizing the oppressive, dysfunctional, alienating features of emerging societies, which speak to the Caribbean's "split social heritage" (p. 390), and Beckford (2001), who describes Caribbean society as retaining features — such as rigid stratification and political organization — that originated in the plantation era. On the other hand, sociologists like Smith (2001) have argued that Caribbean societies are pluralistic configurations, in that people of varied ethnicities live together in shared geographical spaces, but remain distinct, thus emphasizing the capacities of discrete groups to stay intact ethnically and culturally, while living in a context of diversity.   Smith's perspective had suggested that there is less "melting" — or   (Brathwaite, 2001) - in the proverbial melting pot than had usually been assumed.   However the plural society thesis has been sharply dismissed as simplistic and unrepresentative of the complexity of the Caribbean situation. [2]

These theoretical distinctions may seem arcane to intellectual outsiders, and I would argue that Caribbean society exemplifies aspects of each of these features. However, the germane point is that the role of race in societal formation is understood in different and sometimes contradictory ways by Caribbean thinkers. Yet it is this te(e) -11 (r)b382.5686 (b) O992 441.21cm BT13:

to provide labour opportunities for skilled, highly skilled and managerial-level workers, which has allowed f███████████cation, and less rigid class divisions, than were common forty or fift██████████; Alleyne, 2005).

Arising from the fl████████mic and social developments, a Caribbean "ethos" definitely exists (Ne██████ Miller and Slater (2000) note as regards "being Trini", a regional identity ██████ted as having a particular monolithic expression. There are any number of ████ spectives and values which in cluster or part represent aspects of what it ████ e Caribbean, and which are embraced, enacted and even rejected, depending ██████umstance (Alleyne, 2005; Nettleford, 2004). Notwithstanding, within discrete soci██████ Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana and Barbados as examples) there remain some comm████ that retain sufficient difference in respect of ethnicity, social class, lifestyle, and even ██████n to research them as such.   Along these lines, investigating the Caribbean family be████es important. And importantly, from Smith's (2004) perspective, in any discussion of th██aribbean family, the race issue becomes a major theme.

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In many modern families, finding the 'family' either as a unit of analysis in research, or as a discursive construct, has been become a complicated endeavour. Some have observed that many studies that investigate children's media use in the context of the home do not directly use family as a variable, or if they do, they collapse home, family and household to mean the same thing in research (Padilla-Walker, et al., 2012; Livingstone, 2002). In the account given above, my students were eventually able to find groups of relatives, including parent-child groupings, for each major socioeconomic bracket of the area under review in or around the urban center of Jamaica's capital, Kingston. But their success was preceded by anxious moments, and even as they processed data, there was a sense that perhaps this or that group did not adequately reflect the category.

The Caribbean as a region offers some additional complexities in any discussion of family, and by extension, parental mediation. In the Caribbean, family and household are definitely not identical. Caribbean family studies have tended to investigate the household, rather than the relational dynamics within the home (Moses, 2001). Also, research in the region has tended to concentrate on the Afro-Caribbean, working class family, and Barrow (2001) and Chevannes (2000) argue that this preoccupation has generated a largely judgmental and misunderstood account of family life in the region. More recent Caribbean sociology

t you have met the minimum age requirement, you may

FaceBook account. The #1 rule is that you must friend your

r and me, and I must have your password

h yes! Friending daddy will definitely "up my cool!"

(   ): Hmmmmm. I guess that makes me chopped liver.

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An exploratory, preliminary investigation conducted in Jamaica was done using focus groups of parents from the Kingston and St Andrew areas to find out the answers to two questions:

1. What drives your media programming choices?
2. How do you monitor what your children are watching or listening to (Henderson, 2013)?

Five focus groups were conducted – three at various locations on the campus of a leading university in the capital city, and two in nearby working class, residential communities. Each focus group session had between five and six participants, with a parent (either mother or father) in attendance. The parents had between one and four children.

From the study it was evident that Jamaican households have a range of information devices including televisions, laptops, personal computers, video-games consoles, landline and mobile phones, and tablets. This finding corroborates with nationally representative research which indicates a diverse ownership of media tools (Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica,

Based on the discussions, several strategies of mediation were being used by the parents. These were not mutually exclusive categories, but rather a variety of measures on a continuum, from intermittent and easy-going approaches, to rigid and less flexible practices. Broadly their approaches involved combinations of the following:

-        parents talked about being vigilant and attentive regarding the kinds of content their children were being exposed to. Sometimes this had to do with placing the screen in a location within sight of the parent, ensuring that the children's recreational viewing was occurring during the band designated for them, and a range of other surveillance related measures.

-        some parents used technological blocks and filters to eliminate their children's exposure to offensive content. For example, one parent's ingenuity had her

dating. However, Forbes' (2012) research also indicates some patterns of adolescent online engagement that reflect socio-demographic variables. Whereas male teenagers from the Jamaican inner-city tended to use social media as a platform to attract the opposite sex, boys from the upper classes seemed to combine social media interactions into a number of other Internet driven activities, including research for school, or gaming. The early indication is that ██████████ characteristics within the home appear to influence children's mobile me███████████ ne ways (Forbes, 2012, Henderson, 2013[3]). Nevertheless, media pr████████ eople also reflect new forms of communication and interaction due to █████████ bile and individual nature of digital media tools, and Forbes (2012) m████████ t some kinds of behavior, such as online "tracing"[4] sessions, were i███████████ people across all social strata.

M████████ er's (2000) observation regarding the adoption of Internet in Trinidad is ge██████ spect of the impact and interaction with media generally, and the way in which va███████ are incorporated into daily use: media have been embraced in the Caribbean as a ██████ w 'alignments' requiring integrations in terms of life as it is usually lived. What re████████ s the setting of a research agenda which explores aspects of these new alignments, pa█████arly in the ways in which those processes have influenced the activities within fa███ es and homes.

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It has already been established that parental mediation of tools and content is related to

is implicitly a discussion about "what family means", and "who we are".   By consequence, several notions of "what ought to b

relationships between members will incorporate media into those already-existing patterns of interaction. This suggests that the dilemma about mediation may actually be a dilemma about something else.

Of note, is that family as mediation may in part be a 'mediation as outcome' idea, as much as it is 'mediation as strategy', as it is through the natural processes of being family that forms of mediation take place. This notion provides an occasion both for review of the state of family in the Caribbean region, as well as a platform for investigating through research, the ways in which particular strategies of mediation may be more effectively incorporated into existing family systems.

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