

# Does a self-protection goal change women's memory for neutral and smiling Black male faces?

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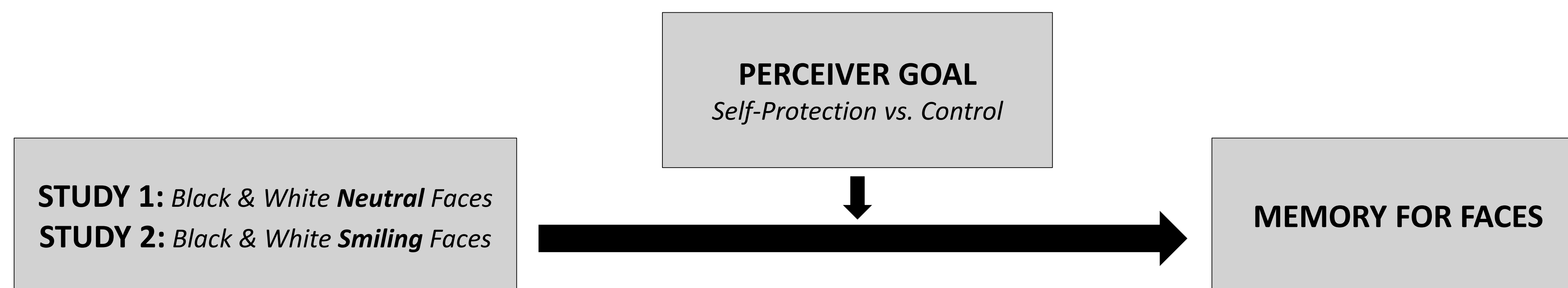
## SUMMARY

- Does thinking about self-protection lead White women to *better* remember Black men's faces?
- In two studies, White women were primed with either a self-protection motivation or a control motivation
- Memory for either neutral or smiling Black and White faces was measured
- Contrary to hypotheses, White women concerned with self-protection remembered smiling Black men's faces *worse* than those in a control condition

## INTRODUCTION

- We pay attention to and remember people who are relevant to our goals.
- The cross-race effect shows that Whites remember other race faces more poorly than own race faces (Hugenberg et al., 2010; 2013)
- Memory for outgroups can be made better when the faces are made relevant (Baldwin et al., 2012; Wilson et al., 2014)
- Outgroup facial recognition can be improved with emotional facial expressions, e.g. angry faces or happy faces (Ackerman et al., 2006; Corneille et al., 2007; Gwinn et al., 2015)

Does a self-protection motivation increase Whites memory for Black faces? Does this differ across facial expressions?

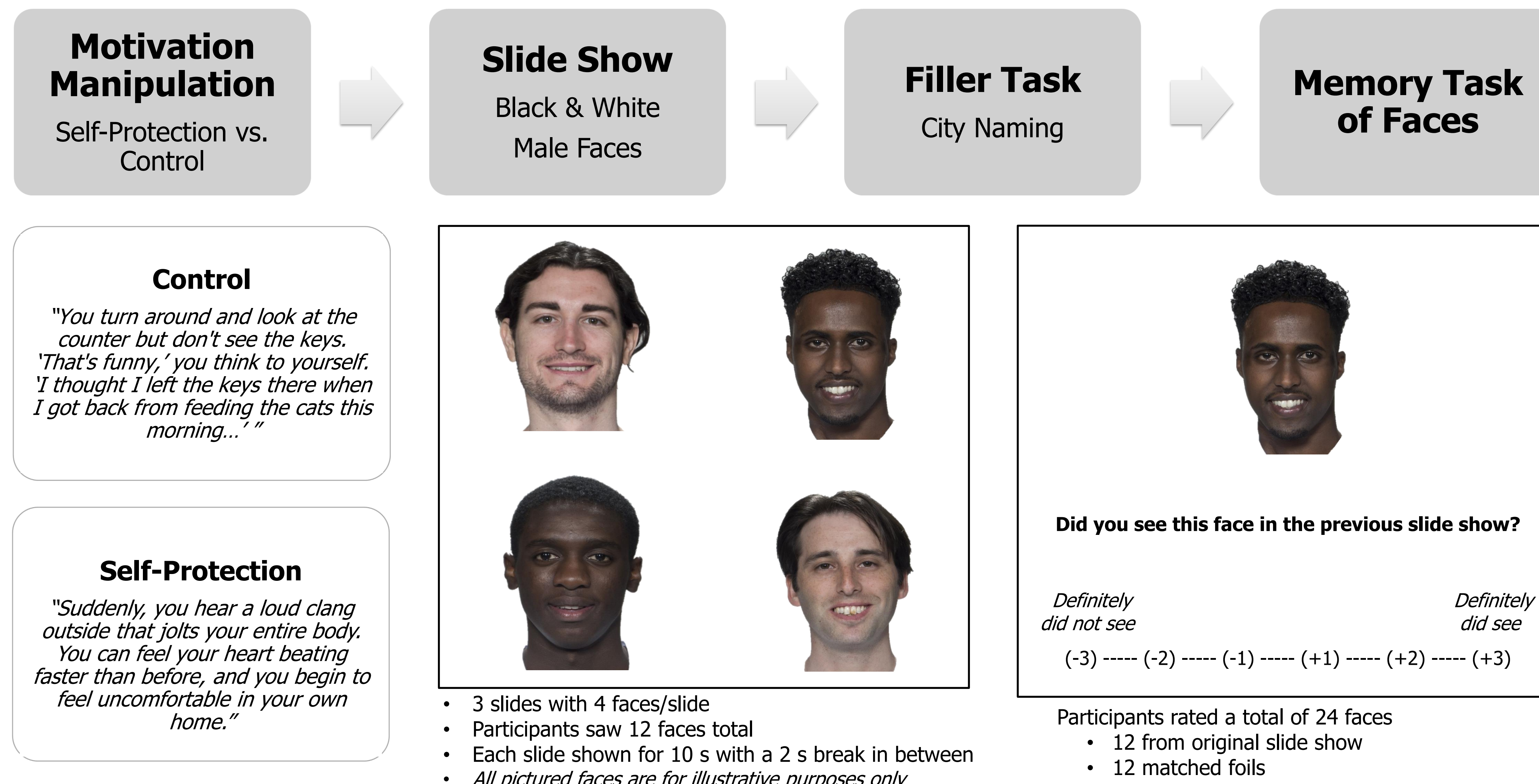


## Predictions

1. Across both studies, **White women - when concerned with self-protection motivation**, compared to a control motivation - **will better remember the faces of Black men** because Black men are stereotyped as aggressive and therefore may be more relevant to a self-protection motivation (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Devine, 1989).
2. This pattern will **be more strongly seen in Study 1 (neutral faces) than in Study 2 (smiling faces)** because a smiling face may attenuate perceived threat and a neutral face amplifies perceived threat, given that neutral facial expressions may resemble angry expressions (Zebrowitz et al., 2010).

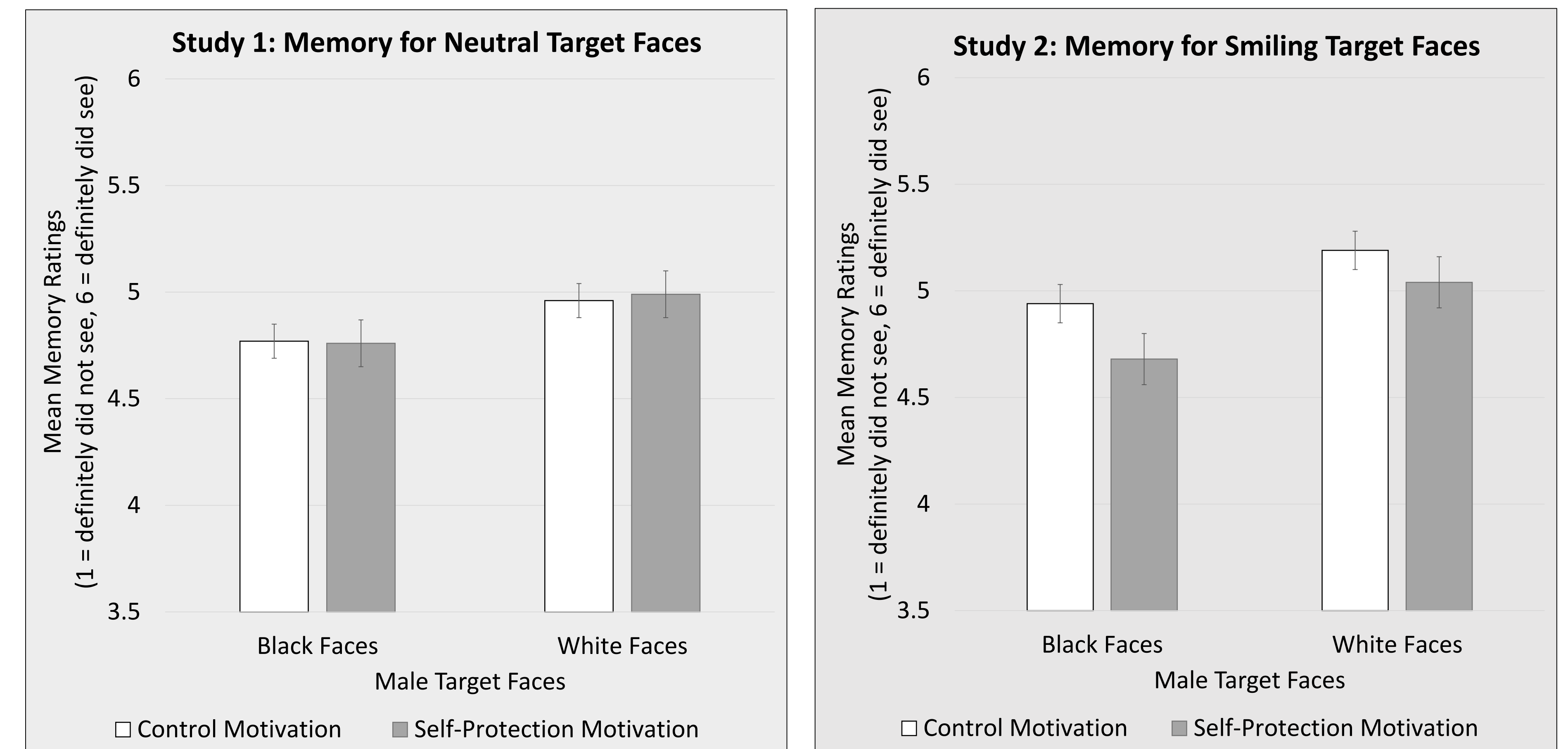
## METHOD

**Study 1 (Neutral Faces):** 169 White female undergraduate students from the University of Iowa ( $M_{age} = 18.99$  years,  $SD_{age} = 1.57$  years) participated in the experiment  
**Study 2 (Smiling Faces):** 243 White female undergraduate students from the University of Iowa ( $M_{age} = 18.70$  years,  $SD_{age} = 1.06$  years) participated in the experiment



## RESULTS

### White Women's Memory for Previously Seen Black Male Faces



### STUDY 1

White women's memory for neutral faces did not differ by **Motivation** ( $B = 0.003$ ,  $p = .98$ ) or by **Face Race** ( $B = -0.21$ ,  $p = .24$ )

There was no **Motivation x Face Race** interaction ( $B = -0.05$ ,  $p = .77$ )

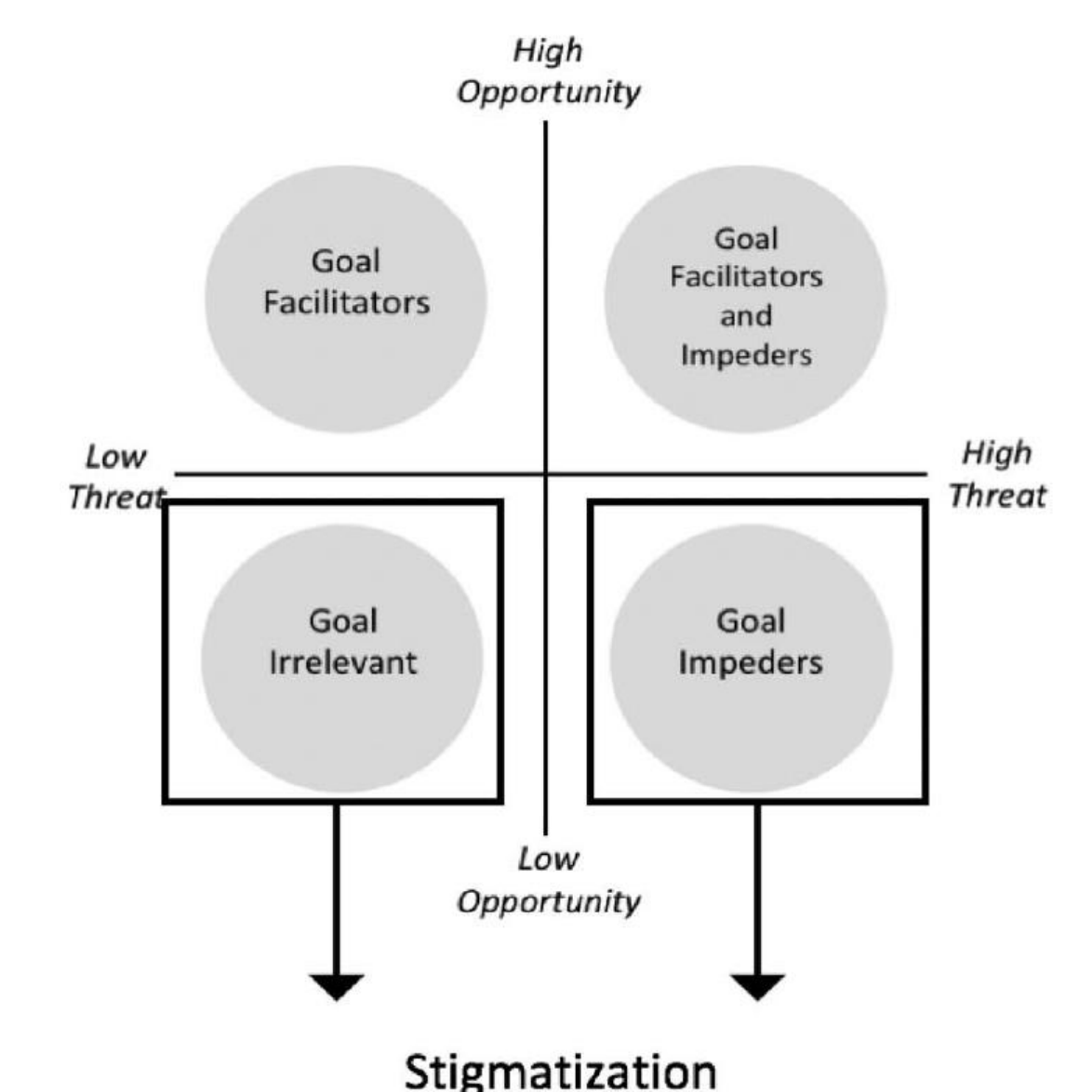
### STUDY 2

White women had **worse memory for faces in the self-protection condition** ( $B = -0.20$ ,  $p = .02$ ) but did not differ by **Face Race** ( $B = -0.30$ ,  $p = .14$ )

There was no **Motivation x Face Race** interaction ( $B = -0.13$ ,  $p = .34$ )

## DISCUSSION

- We examined whether a self-protection motivation changed White women's memory for Black men's neutral and smiling faces.
- In Study 1 (neutral faces) White women **remembered Black and White male faces equally well** across motivation conditions.
- In Study 2 (smiling faces) participants had **worse memory in the self-protection condition vs. control condition**.
- **Why?**
  - Smiling faces are not threatening therefore may be comparatively less relevant when one is concerned about physical safety.
- **Future studies can:**
  - Use different types of motivation manipulations (e.g. audio-visual)



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