

Effects of Stereotyped Representation in Television on Female
and People of Color Viewers' Self-Esteem

by

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Abstract

Previous research has indicated a negative correlation between hours spent watching television and viewer self-esteem, particularly for women and people of color. Drawing theoretical support from cultivation theory and research on stereotype threat, this study hypothesizes that this negative relationship is due to negative or stereotyped portrayals of these groups. Seventy-eight undergraduate students at Wesleyan University participated in one of three conditions featuring positive, neutral, or negative representation of women in television. After viewing the television content, participants filled out a measure of self-esteem and also answered open-ended questions about their gender and racial identities. Quantitative results were nonsignificant for self-esteem scores. However, self-esteem means varied by gender, race, and condition in the hypothesized, although not statistically significant, direction. Qualitative evaluation of the responses to open-ended questions revealed several different themes for participant discussion of their gender and racial identities. The frequencies of these themes also varied by gender, race, and condition, although they were not tested for significance. Based on these results, it is likely that the limitations of the study prevented significant self-esteem results.

Effects of Stereotyped Representation in Television on Female and People of Color
Viewers' Self-Esteem

Social psychology research has documented for decades that television serves many more purposes than merely entertaining its viewers. Television (TV) programming can function as an escape from painful reality (Greenwood, 2008) or can become the source of more problems, such as when the entertaining activity transitions into an addiction (Greenberg, Lewis, & Dodd, 1999). One of the most robust findings regarding TV's influence has been its effect on viewer self-esteem. While various studies may dispute the initial point of downturn (e.g. Tin, Ho, Mak, Wan, & Lam, 2012; Martins & Harrison, 2012), nearly all come to the same conclusion: the more TV viewed, especially past the two hour mark, the lower viewer self-esteem. Examining these effects is important for many different pre-adult age groups; younger viewers tend to watch more than any other age group (Roberts, Foehr, Rideout, & Brodie, 1999), while college students are prone to television addiction (Greenberg et al., 1999). Although much research has been done on the effect of the media on body self-esteem of adolescents, especially adolescent girls (e.g. Tiggeman, 2001; Dohnt & Tiggeman, 2006), research is only recently starting to explore the effect of media on global self-esteem and other mental health factors (Hammermeister, Brock, Winterstein & Page, 2005; Martins & Harrison, 2012). Even fewer studies have examined the differences in self-esteem produced by television viewership between different genders and races.

There is strong theoretical and research-based evidence that people who watch more television are likely to internalize the views and morals of the television

programs they consume. Children with higher levels of television viewership were more likely to believe gender stereotypes as their viewership of gender stereotyped shows increased (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997). Women who watch gender stereotype conforming, as compared to gender stereotype breaking, commercials are more likely to conform and less likely to show confidence in public speaking than those shown commercials defying gender stereotypes (Jennings-Walstedt, Geis, & Brown, 1980). Therefore, it is important to understand what exactly television programs are teaching adolescents with regards to how they should view themselves, as they are at a pivotal stage of self-definition.

Understanding these messages put forward by the media is especially important when it comes to television representation of race and gender. Although the sheer number of female and people of color characters has increased in recent decades, there is considerable question as to whether the quality of these representations has increased substantially, or even broken away from past gender and racial stereotypes (Eschholz, Bufkin, & Long, 2002). These stereotyped representations of female characters and characters of color could be the reason that television viewing affects its viewers unevenly; the negative effects of TV viewing on White individuals are limited to females; this is not the case for people of color, particularly Black viewers (Martins & Harrison, 2012). While there have been mixed results regarding the impact of increased television viewership on the self-esteem of young Black viewers, there seems to be some support for the idea that increased television viewership leads to a drop in self-esteem, depending on the genre of program (Ward, 2004). Additionally, when compared with White viewers, Black

viewer's decrease in self-esteem is statistically significant (Martins & Harrison, 2012).

This act of comparison is particularly important and often overlooked. While there are studies examining participants of only one race (Cheung & Chan, 1996; Ward, 2004; Rivadeneyre, Ward, & Gordon, 2007), or studies that contain participants of a variety of racial backgrounds without comparing results across groups (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997), the literature on directly comparing media impacts between races is thin; these types of study are especially limited for races other than Black and White participants. Despite this scarcity, studies that do have group sizes significant enough to test for differences often come away with quite discrete results by racial group (e.g. Martins & Harrison, 2012).

Gender is a less frequently ignored differentiating variable than race. In a large number of studies on the effects of television viewership, girls almost exclusively have lower self-esteem with increased media exposure compared to boys. Whether it be body self-esteem (Tiggeman, 2001; Dohnt & Tiggeman, 2006), global self-esteem (Martins & Harrison, 2012), or mental health overall (Hammermeister et al., 2005), girls seem far more susceptible to the harmful elements in television.

However, it is unclear what type of media exposure exactly impacts viewers' self-esteem. Most studies focus solely on volume of television viewed (e.g. Cheung & Chan, 1996; Hammermeister et al., 2005; Martins & Harrison, 2012; Tin, et al., 2012). Studies that have attempted to differentiate between types of content have regularly shown significant differences in effect by group. Some have broken viewership down by genres, such as sports shows, music videos, comedies, dramas in

Ward, (2004), and others have chosen within-genres groupings, such as “chase-and-pratfall,” “teachy-preachy”, or “continuing adventure” cartoons as in Thompson & Zerbino, (1997). However, the diversity among even these categories is still huge, and up to this point, almost no research focuses specifically on the effect of stereotyped representations on viewer self-esteem, and whether it varies by gender or race.

There has also been a dearth of studies in which variables were actually manipulated. Across the board, studies have largely focused on filling out questionnaires to determine correlations between TV viewership and self-esteem. Despite the significant weight of evidence indicating that increased TV viewership predicts decreased self-esteem for women and viewers of color, all theorizing thus far must be limited entirely to correlational suggestions. Without a manipulation based experimental design, another possible explanation is merely that more depressed, self-loathing girls are attracted to more television viewership (Hammermeister et al., 2005), or that spending more time watching television deprives girls of other opportunities, such as social interaction or skill building activities that would otherwise raise their self-esteem (Martins & Harrison, 2012).

Therefore, the present study will attempt to support causality between viewing stereotyped representation of female characters and the resulting self-esteem of the viewers. Specifically, this study will screen 2 sitcom episodes selected for either stereotyped (negative), nonstereotyped (positive), or neutral (i.e. none; control) representation of women. I hypothesize that participants in the negative condition will have lower self-esteem after the screenings than participants in either other condition,

and that participants in the positive condition will have higher self-esteem afterward than either other condition. I will also be examining as a research questions whether self-esteem changes are affected by the race of the participant. Additionally, participants will be asked to share personal reflections on their gender and racial identity after the screenings. These responses are a more exploratory research venture, and so no hypotheses will be made as to their contents.

Literature Review

“First we tell tales to children...and surely they are, as a whole, false, though there are true things in them too. We make use of tales with children before exercises.”

“That’s so.”

“...for at that stage [children] are at their most plastic, and each thing assimilates itself to the model whose stamp anyone wishes to give it.”

“Quite so.”

“Then shall we so easily let the children hear just any tales fashioned by just anyone and take into their souls opinions for the most part opposite to those we’ll suppose they must have when they are grown up?”

“In no event will we permit it.” (Plato, 1992).

The human race has been vitally interested in the messages we impart through the stories we tell for millennia, but concentrated study of its psychological effects did not take off in the US until the early 1960s. Initially, the effects of most interest were those with the most observable and undesirable consequences; early media research was most focused on depictions of violence and their relationship to viewer violence. Some of the earliest large scale research undertakings in the field were centered on the topic of violence, as it was one compelling enough to garner government grants from sources like the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995). The Cultural Indicator Project

was one of the first large scale media study projects and continues to this day. Out of this project, Gerbner and Gross' cultivation theory was born.

Social Modeling and Bandura

Before cultivation theory, there was social learning theory. Albert Bandura's work with social modeling and social learning theory was important theoretical groundwork for the cultivation theory and much of the psychological research done in the area of media effects, particularly those interested in studying the effects of violent media on violent behavior. In his now famous "Bobo doll" study, Bandura (1961) had one group of children play in a room with a nonaggressive model confederate, or an aggressive confederate who attacked the Bobo doll for ten minutes. Afterward, children were given the opportunity to play with the same toy, and those who had witnessed the aggressive interaction were significantly more likely to interact with the doll violently. Particularly interesting for the present study, a significant difference in aggression was found between participants who had same-gender versus other-gender models. Girls who watched female models assault the Bobo doll were significantly more violent to the doll than boys who watched a female model. Similarly, boys who watched male models assault the Bobo doll were more aggressive with the Bobo doll than girls who had watched a male model (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961).

This experiment and the many more like it that followed helped Bandura to develop and refine his social learning theory. This theory put forward the idea that behavior is primarily a consequence of having observed others exhibit similar behaviors and replicated their actions (Bandura, 1977). A key facet of social learning

theory is that an individual need not experience any personal reinforcement of the socially learned behaviors; it can certainly strengthen the behaviors, but it is not strictly necessary (Bandura, 1977). Another important element of social learning theory and whether or not observers are likely to learn and replicate behaviors is their evaluation of their own self-efficacy related to the target behavior. Past performance accomplishments, or, what the individual has actually accomplished before, are by far the most important to self-efficacy evaluations. However, one of the next most important considerations is vicarious experience (Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977), or witnessing someone else achieve the desired goal. Furthermore, since the effectiveness of this factor is social comparison (Bandura et al., 1977), the more similar the observer and performer, the more likely they are to believe in their own self-efficacy. This interpretation can be used to explain the increase of aggression in gender-matched conditions in the Bobo doll study. Of particular interest to this body of research is the finding that these effects are not confined to behaviors witnessed in person; watching a video of the target behavior can increase viewers' performance of the target behavior, particularly if the behavior is observed being performed by multiple people on video (Bandura & Menlove, 1968).

Cultivation Theory

The present body of research draws inspiration and support from the theoretical framework of cultivation theory. Beginning in the late 1960s, this theory argues that increased exposure to television leads viewers to believe that what they watch on TV is an accurate reflection of reality (Gerbner & Gross, 1967). Gerbner and Gross's theory grew out of the Cultural Indicators Project, started by a grant from

the US government under the auspices of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, but has continued on through the financial support of many other organizations throughout the years (Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995). Over time, the Cultural Indicators Project has continued to study trends in television violence alongside a cultivation analysis of the degree to which these trends are internalized as actual facts by those who watch them on television (Gerbner, 1978). Since its original proposal, cultivation theory has been hugely researched, found to be a viable theory across genres of television, and extended to other beliefs and behaviors than violence alone (e.g. Cheung & Chan, 1996; Hammermeister, Brock, Winterstein, & Page, 2005; Thomson & Zerbinos, 1997). Knowledge learned from television can be concrete facts, like the how much of the population is older than 65 or the gender divide between K-12 teachers (McCauley, Thangavelu, & Rozin, 1988).

The area of cultivation theory of most interest to the present study is these more generalized beliefs learned through television. When, for example, television viewers see that women make up around a third of characters on their favorite programs, the argument is not necessarily that viewers will think that women are only one third of the population. These are called “first-order effects”—basic facts that can be unintentionally learned through watching television. These effects are much easier to confront and disprove, and so of more interest to the present study is what are referred to as “second-order effects.” These include more general assumptions that people make about the state of the world because of what they watch on television (Van Mierlo & Van 2004), or more generalized beliefs, like that women are happiest in the home (Morgan, 1982). Some researchers have had more difficulty consistently

proving the existence of second-order effects, and in some cases finding that they might require a higher level of intellectual engagement with television (Hawkins, Pingree, & Adler, 1987). However, many other researchers have found second-order effects of television cultivation, some of whose results will be discussed later on.

Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat is another important area of research from which this project draws inspiration. The term “stereotype threat” was first used by Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson, in a series of experiments showing that activating stereotypes of a stigmatized group could impair the performance of members of that group on tasks related to the stereotype. Hand in hand with the concept of stereotype threat is the possibility of disidentification. Disidentification happens when an individual adapts their behavior in order to avoid the domains in which individuals might conform to a negative stereotype about their group. Furthermore, an individual does not need to believe the stereotype applies to them, only to be aware that such a stereotype exists (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

In this first work of Steele and Aronson’s, a series of four studies, the focus was on African Americans and their performance on academic tests, particularly ones advertised as being diagnostic of scholastic ability. In the first two of their series of studies, participants were assigned to one of three conditions: in one, the impending test was phrased as diagnostic of scholastic ability; in one it was phrased as a mental challenge but not diagnostic; and in the final, it was merely presented as a test of the “psychological factors involved in solving verbal problems,” (Steele & Aronson, 1995). All three conditions used the same test materials—a collection of challenging

questions from the GRE—completed with paper and pen. Performance on the test problems was predicted using participant verbal SAT scores. The only differences between the first and second study were the use of an additional three anagram problems on the test and additional five minutes of time (30 compared to 25) in the first study, completion of the test on a computer in the second study, and an assessment of test-induced anxiety after the test in the second study.

The results of these two studies revealed that Black participants in the diagnostic condition performed significantly worse than Black participants in the nondiagnostic condition and the challenge-but-nondiagnostic condition. However, in the first experiment, there was no significant interaction between condition and race. However, in the second study, there was a significant interaction of race and condition; Black participants in the diagnostic condition performed significantly worse than both Black and white participants in either other condition. Differences, not reaching significance, were found in how long participants spent on individual problems by race and condition. Additionally, no gender differences in performance were found.

The third study in the series did not actually have participants take the test, but merely prepped them for it, using the same diagnostic vs. nondiagnostic introductions. In this study, the researchers wanted to examine more closely the psychological state of participants going into the test, to seek explanations for the differences in ultimate performance. Participants took two different word completion tasks to test activation of stereotypes and levels of self-doubt brought on by the looming prospect of a diagnostic or nondiagnostic test. The authors predicted that

Black participants in the diagnostic condition would show more stereotype activation and self-doubt as evidenced by more word completions related to these two themes. Participants also filled out a questionnaire about their personal interests, with some answer options previously evaluated as more stereotypically African American. This measure was included with the assumption that if participants had stereotype activation related to their academic ability on to the diagnostic test, Black participants would respond by distancing themselves from these stereotypes so as to not be associated with the academic underachievement stereotypes. At the end of the test, participants were given the choice of whether or not they wanted to volunteer their racial identity information; the authors predicted that participants worried about race stereotypes about academic performance would be less likely to offer this race information. Finally, participants were asked to share how stressed, tired, and focused they felt, with the assumption that Black participants facing the diagnostic condition would report higher levels of stress and tiredness and lower levels of focus as a sort of self-handicapping. The authors' reasoning was that these answers would be provided defensively, so that if participants did poorly, it would be because of these explanations and not stereotypes about their race on academic tests.

All measures had a significant interaction between race and condition in the hypothesized direction; Black participants in the diagnostic condition were more likely than Black participant in other conditions and white participants in all conditions to show stereotype activation and self-doubt activation, and less likely to associate with stereotypically Black activities and interests and to volunteer their race.

The fourth study was nearly identical, with one main change; there was only one, nondiagnostic introduction of the test. The conditions were instead divided by whether or not participants were instructed to report their race on a demographic form before beginning the test. Participants were also asked after the test to share through a self-report questionnaire how often they guessed, face difficulty, persisted, moved quickly, or reread test items, as well as how often they gave up on a problem or felt the test was biased. A significant interaction between condition and race was found in the test results; Black participants in the race-report condition performed worse than participants in other conditions, but Blacks and whites performed equally in the no-race-report condition. Additionally, on the self-report measure of test performance, these participants did not significantly report giving up or skipping through problems more frequently. Overall, they worked as hard and persisted as often as participants in other conditions. The one significant interaction found was that Black participants indicated they reread questions more often than White participants. So, lower scores for Black participants in the race-report condition could not be attributed to less effort or giving up.

From this collection of four studies and their results, the field of stereotype threat research was born, all largely confirming Steele and Aronson's original findings. Increasing the salience of a stigmatized identity group, be it race or gender, before an activity in a field with a related stereotype decreases performance of members of the stigmatized group. These effects have been found for white men taking diagnostic tests of athletic ability as well as Black men taking diagnostic test of "sports intelligence" (Stone et al., 1999), women taking math tests (Davies et al.,

2002), and men taking tests based in emotional processing (Leyens et al., 2000), among many others. This theory's particular relevance to the present body of research will be discussed within the behavioral effects section.

More recently, research is beginning to investigate the relationship between stereotype threat and television, and the possible implications of television as a source for stereotype threat (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). This area of research brings us back to the idea of disidentification, or avoiding tasks for which a stereotype related to one's identity exists in order to avoid being reduced to that stereotype. On an everyday scale, we can look to Steele and Aronson's seminal work, where African Americans avoided associating with rap music or basketball. In other works, to be discussed later, more serious ramifications are possible, such as inhibiting women's aspirations for leadership roles. If, for example, women are bombarded with stereotypes about being bad at math or being unsuccessful in the business world, or if people of color are only shown characters of their race as largely unsuccessful at middle class endeavors, then it could be possible that these stigmatized groups would learn naturally to set their sights and aspirations lower than white males, who are shown in many roles and successful at a whole host of important and respectable activities.

If, through cultivation theory, we are to understand that the stories and people on television influence how viewers understand the world, it would then seem important to know what exactly these forms of media are telling us about the world. Of particular interest to this researcher is what television teaches us it means to be a woman or person of color in the United States.

Representation

Quantity. While the position of women and people of color on screen appears to have improved over the years, it is still not a particularly encouraging one.

Although women make up roughly 50.8% of the population and White Americans are 77.4% of the population (US Census Bureau), the average American movie or television show consistently does not reflect this reality, regularly overrepresenting men and white characters.

Content analyses over the past 25 years have revealed fairly consistent themes in representation of women and people of color in both television and film. Four particularly representative studies will be examined here, as their results coincide well with the rest of the literature.

Katy Gilpatric (2010) designed a content analysis of specifically violent female action characters (VFAC) that is nonetheless largely reflective of trends in female characters across genres. This analysis was particularly interesting because of an increased societal interest in female action heroes with the commercial success of films such as *The Hunger Games* and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* with violent female action characters as the main character. This study is also still relevant to overall representation of women because the definition of a violent female action character was still quite broad, in that a female character need only commit “at least one act of physical violence...defined as physical force exerted (with or without weaponry) in an attempt to cause bodily injury, death, or damage to property,” (Gilpatric, 2010). Her research analyzed the 20 highest grossing films each year from 1991 to 2005, for a total of 300 films. Ultimately, only 112 films contained a VFAC,

and these remaining films were analyzed more in depth by VFAC love interest, heroine status, age, marital status, race, education level, occupation, and realism.

Sarah Eschholtz, Jana Bufkin, and Jenny Long (2002) conducted a content analysis of the fifty most popular films in 1996 to investigate the roles of women and people of color. They focused on the four actors receiving top billing in each film, for a total of 147 lead characters analyzed. To analyze personality traits of leading men and women, the authors adapted two measures normally administered in a self-report form that focused primarily on character traits rather than attitudes or emotions, so that external coders could apply them to these characters. Characters were coded for sex, race, age, employment status, occupational prestige, and masculine/feminine character traits.

Jack Glascock (2001) carried out a content analysis of primetime television during the 1996-1997 season on four major networks. A total of 94 shows were analyzed, selected for their fictional and entertainment (as opposed to news or informational) content. Any character with a speaking role was coded, for a total of 1,269 characters. Each character was coded for gender, age, marital status, parental status, occupation, race, dress, and hair color. Characters were additionally coded by a separate pair of raters with a specially designed coding instrument for verbal aggression, physical aggression, altruism, showing affection, concern for others, and making plans.

Children Now is “the leading non-partisan national, state and local research, policy development, and advocacy organization dedicated to improving children's overall well-being,” (ChildrenNow, n.d.). One such interest is child television

viewing habits, which has inspired a series of investigations of race and gender representation in prime time television. In the 2003-2004 television season report, Katherine Heintz-Knowles and Jennifer Henderson (2004) coded two episodes of every primetime show airing during the fall 2003 show line up across the six national broadcast channels. Each show was coded for character role, age, gender, race, marital status, parental status, occupation, disability, sexual orientation, and family structure.

Some of the results from these studies are discussed below. While some gains have been made in both types of media over the past twenty five years, depending on the type and popularity of films examined, women are cast in speaking roles between 30-40% of the time (e.g. Zurko 2013; Gilpatric, 2010), fare the best comedies, then dramas, then action/adventure films (Eschholz et al., 2002). This is additionally troubling when the prestige of these film genres are taken into consideration. Action movies are the highest grossing and most popular genre of American box office film (Gilpatric, 2010), and so women's relatively low representation in this genre is particularly relevant. While differences in representation might be understandable in niche interests of the film world, in the types of media consumed most often—and most profitably—by the American public, such a considerable absence of such a large portion of American society communicates a message to a much larger audience, a message that women are of less overall significance than men. Action movies and other blockbuster type films are the ones that most significantly form pop culture, which, with the present representation quantity and quality, creates a culture that devalues women.

On the surface, people of color (POC) may seem to have better on-screen representation in terms of quantity. During the years 1991-2005, between 74.5-80% of main characters in top films were White, which is about or a little higher than their representation within the population. However, the actual distribution of this representation leaves much to be desired. First of all, African Americans tend to be the token characters of color at the expense of other racial groups; that is, African Americans are represented at the expense of other racial groups, in cases where scripts and casting calls can only tolerate including one character of color. In 1996, for example, in an examination of the 50 highest grossing films from that year, all but one of the main characters of color were African American (Eschholz et al., 2002). Action movies do tend to have a more even racial distribution compared to other genres, however, with comparable percentages of African American and Hispanic characters (still well below their representation in the population at large—both around 9.5% compared to 13.5% and 15.1% respectively) and even an overrepresentation of Asian leads (Gilpatric, 2010). However, action tends to be the genre with closest to equal representation; in dramas, white characters are nine times more frequent than characters of color (Eschholz et al., 2002). Family units fare much worse. Only 1% of television families were found to be Latino (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007).

The more even representation, quantitatively, in action films is also not necessarily a total victory; dramatic films tend to allow for deeper character development, so the presence of POC in action films may be closer to simple tokenism (Eschholz et al., 2002). This idea is supported by the fact that roughly 25%

of action roles for women of color were played by the same actress (Halle Berry) between 1991 and 2005 (Gilpatric, 2010), suggesting a lack of variety in Hollywood opportunities for actresses of color. Additionally, when movies with a predominantly POC cast are separated out, only 12% of the top films examined in this study had at least one POC lead character, which is just at or below African American representation in the population (roughly 13% for this time period), and well below that of every other US racial minority.

Quality. Once the mere quantity of roles has been established, the question then becomes what is the actual quality of these roles? For the purposes of this project, the most frequent stereotypes for two genders and six racial groups will be examined.

While not all aspects of female stereotypes are negative, that there are so few female characters, comparable to male, means that these stereotypes make up a greater proportion of female characters in general. Positive traits such as being affectionate, nurturing, kind, and gentle are significantly more often attributed to women (Glascock, 2001; Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). However, these potentially positive stereotypes exist alongside corresponding stereotypes of dependence, rule following, and passivity (e.g. Glascock, 2001; Eschholz, Bufkin, & Long, 2002). Additionally, women pay a price for foregoing these sometimes desirable traits; female characters that are more independent and competent are significantly less likely to end up with a romantic partner, whereas men who display prosocial traits such as these do not lose their chance at love (Gilpatric, 2010).

Additionally, femininity carries with it many other negative stereotypes, such as gullibility, irrationality, inferiority, emotionality, indecisiveness, weakness, and uncertainty (e.g. Eschholtz et al., 2002; Davies et al., 2005). Finally, women are consistently depicted as younger than their male counterparts, and are more likely to be dressed in sexually revealing clothing or partially naked. Close to 29% of women in the top 500 films between 2007 and 2012 were dressed in sexually revealing clothing, compared to 7% of men, and 26.2% of female characters were show partially undressed, compared to 9.4% of men (Zurko, 2013).

Men certainly have stereotypes in television and film as well; they are more often problem solvers, goal oriented, autonomous, and rule breakers (Eschholz et al., 2002), more likely to give orders (Glascock, 2001), and more likely to be competitive, independent, ambitious, self-confident, adventurous, and decisive (Gilpatric, 2010). Almost universally, men are found to be older than their female counterparts on screen, (Children Now, 2004), more physically aggressive, violent, and dominant (Eschholz et al., 2002; Glascock, 2001; Gilpatric, 2010). However, the context in which these stereotypes appear is important to take into consideration. First, like white people, the sheer number of men on television guarantees a more varied representation than these stereotypes alone. Second, many of these stereotypes are interpreted positively within our society.

Third, and perhaps most importantly for this body of research, intersectionality here is incredibly important. While men are portrayed as more violent and aggressive than women universally, men of color are far more likely to be portrayed as criminals than white men (e.g. Eschholz et al., 2002; Children Now

2004; Rivadeneyra et al., 2007). That is to say, when white men are aggressive or violent, it is more likely to be on the side of the law or to protect others (Gilpatric, 2010), whereas men of color are more likely to be violent to innocent people. On the flip side, men of color are also more likely to be cast as comedic relief, and not to be taken seriously (Eschholz et al., 2002). Specific stereotypes about white people are not particularly prevalent in television and film, largely because they make up too broad a segment of on-screen characters to stereotype. However, white people are on the whole more likely to be portrayed as financially stable, middle class, employed, etc. (Glascock, 2001).

More specifically, African American and Latino men are often stereotyped as criminal, lazy, violent, uneducated, or impoverished in film and television (e.g. Steele and Aronson, 1995; Ramasubramanian, 2010; Rivadeneyra et al., 2007).

Additionally, Latinos are four times more likely to be represented as domestic workers, and least likely across all racial groups to hold high status jobs (Children Now, 2004). African American women are commonly stereotyped as mean and loud (Ramasubramanian, 2010) as well as sexually promiscuous and tough (Greer, 2011), often in a way that undermines their femininity (Gilpatric, 2010). Similar stereotypes exist for Latina women, particularly the seductress (Ramasubramanian, 2010). There is a scarcity of research analyzing stereotypes of other ethnic groups, but some general stereotypes can be summed up for Arabs and Native Americans. The most common representation of Arabs is without a doubt the criminal or terrorist, with nearly half of all Arab characters filling a role like this (Children Now, 2004). In discussing representation of Native Americans, it should always be kept in mind that

there is huge variety in culture among the 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States (National Congress of American Indians); however, few representations of American Indians in television capture this diversity. These representations most often portray American Indians as existing primarily in the past, where they portrayed as noble, civilized, or blood-thirsty variations of a “savage.” If they do live in modern times, they are often simple, lazy, and humorless (Merskin, 1998).

Asian Americans are the final major racial group to examine in the context of the media and stereotypes. They are discussed separately because the Asian American frequently touted “model minority” status tends to separate them from other discussion of people of color, particularly Blacks and Latinos. Common stereotypes of Asian Americans sound positive, such as serious about education, high economic achievers, disciplined, law-abiding (Kawai, 2005), as well as skilled at math and technology, hard-working, serious, and self-disciplined (Taylor & Stern, 1997). However, these apparently positive stereotypes come at a cost. First, Asian success has been historically used as a means to highlight other races’ struggles at succeeding economically, particularly African Americans (Kawai, 2005). Additionally, the economic and business success stereotype has been shown to eclipse representation of Asians in social or domestic contexts in television commercials, limiting and reducing their identities to economic automatons (Taylor & Stern, 1997). Furthermore, Asian American success is only praised so long as it is in superiority to other people of color; when Asian success threatens white superiority, this narrative has historically been walked back, and the media returns to the idea of “yellow peril,” or Asian threat of domination over white culture (Kawai, 2005). Overall, although Asian Americans

are represented far more positively than other people of color, this should not be interpreted as a purely beneficial state of affairs or a genuine respect for Asian Americans and culture.

As we move on to discuss the behavioral and cognitive effects of television viewing, the quantity and quality of female and people of color representation should be kept in mind, especially when differences in television's effect by gender or race is examined. First, possible behavioral effects will be discussed, followed by cognitive effects with a focus on different types of self-esteem, the primary research focus of this study.

Television's Behavioral Effects

Aggression and Violence. Aggressive behavior and its relation to television viewing is one of the earliest subjects systematically studied by social psychologists in the realm of media studies. For example, although the Cultural Indicators Project has since branched out from its original focus, to include other constructs such as aging, anger, substance use, marriage, its original focus was violence, and the researchers associated with it have analyzed over 3,000 shows and 35,000 characters for this purpose (Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995; Cultural Indicators Project, Special Topics, 2009). However, the focus of this project is to measure instances of violence and measure its effect on viewers' beliefs about violence, not their actual violent behavior related to consumption of violent media. That was a subject left to other researchers, which has been taken up with enthusiasm.

There is still quite a bit of contention about the direction of the relationship between violent media and violent behavior, as it is quite difficult to ethically design

an experimental and control condition to test it. However, it is well supported that a strong positive correlation exists between consuming violent media and aggressive behavior, and that this can predict future aggressive behavior (e.g. Gentile & Walsh, 2011; Boxer, Huesmann, Bushman, O'Brien, & Mocerri, 2009).

In one particularly strong example, Huesmann and colleagues (2003) conducted a study tracking violent television consumption and real-world violent behavior for 329 participants across fifteen years. When the original 557 participants were first interviewed, in first and second or third and fourth grade, they were asked about their frequency of viewing 80 different shows previously coded by the authors for violent content, as well as their identification with aggressive characters. The then-children were also asked about their opinions of real-world violence. Their peers at school were asked to rate them for violent behavior, and data on their intellectual ability were gathered from standardized test scores. Finally, their parents' educational attainment was obtained from parental interviews, and used as a measure of socioeconomic status (SES). Fifteen years later, the authors reached out to the original sample and were able to reestablish contact with the ultimate 329. These now young adults were asked about their three favorite television shows, about their own violent behavior, and about their arrest and traffic violation record. They were also asked to provide a list of people closest to them, the closest of whom was interviewed by the authors to corroborate reported violent behavior. Additionally, the authors conducted a search of public records to locate any arrests for violent behavior or traffic violations.

Ultimately, statistical analyses found that there was significant small, positive correlation for both men and women between childhood violent television viewing, as well as identification with aggressive male characters, and adult aggressive behaviors; that is, the more violent television participants watched as a child, and the more they identified with violent male characters as a child, the more likely they were to be violent as an adult. This significant relationship held even when childhood SES and academic achievement were controlled for, whereas a relationship between childhood aggression and adult violent television viewing was not significant.

Studies like this lend strong support to the idea that watching aggressive media increases aggressive behavior. Still, much of this research cannot make causal statements about the relationship between violence in the media and in behavior, even when conducted longitudinally. However, creative researchers have found ways to test the relationship in a causal way while still keeping participants and confederates safe. Participants have been given such aggressive options as delivering a painfully loud blast of noise, administering shocks, and slipping hot sauce into someone's food in experiments, and have been found to do so significantly more often after viewing aggressive media content (Prot, 2015). Violent media have also been shown to increase desensitization to violence, with corresponding decreases in helping behavior, like in a pair of studies conducted by Brad Bushman and Craig Anderson (2009).

In the first of the two studies, participants were assigned to play either a violent or nonviolent video game. After twenty minutes of gameplay, the researcher entered the room, gave them a boring questionnaire to fill out, and told them not to

leave the room until he returned. While he was gone, a staged recording of a physical fight was played outside of the participant's room with accompanying violent sound effects. Directly after, the "victim" was heard asking for help and moaning in pain, and the "aggressor" was heard leaving. Then, participants were timed for how long it took them to help the "victim." While no significant effect was found in whether or not participants helped, a significant difference was found in the time it took them to help, by violent or nonviolent game condition. Participants in the violent game condition took almost a full minute longer than participants in the nonviolent condition to leave the room to offer help.

In the second experiment staged by Bushman and Anderson, a naturalistic approach was taken. The authors had a female confederate with a bandaged ankle and crutches drop one of her crutches and struggle to pick it back up in front of movie theaters playing either violent or nonviolent pictures. This struggle was timed either as the film ended and viewers were exiting, or just before the film, as people were entering. A covert experimenter was nearby to time how long it took for passersby to offer assistance. No significant difference was found between moviegoers attending violent and nonviolent films before the film, but a small, significant time difference was found after the movies let out. Moviegoers who attended a violent movie were significantly slower to offer assistance to the struggling injured woman than viewers of a nonviolent movie.

Together, these results fit in with the larger body of research about violent media not only increasing aggressive behavior and thoughts, but also decreasing empathy and prosocial behavior in a causal relationship (Prot, 2015). Additionally,

this research can be seen as a direct descendant of Bandura's work with social learning theory, which specifically focused on the learning of violent behavior from models.

Confidence, Conformity, and Leadership. Calling to mind stereotype threat research once more, some interesting studies have examined the effect of watching stereotyped media content on participant behavior. Early research has demonstrated causally that being exposed to stereotyped versus reverse-stereotyped commercials has an effect on female viewers' confidence and conformity. In a study conducted by Jennings-Walstedt, Geis, and Brown in 1980, female participants were shown commercials with stereotyped behavior from actual television ads, or experimenter-reproduced copies of the commercials in which everything was the same except that the genders of the characters were swapped. Afterward, participants were asked to give an impromptu speech, where their public speaking confidence was covertly measured, and asked to participate in a joke-rating activity where their compliance was assessed by exposing them to past ratings of the jokes before they offered their own ratings.

Participants in the stereotyped commercial condition were rated as having significantly less public speaking confidence and conforming significantly more often than participants in the nonstereotyped commercial condition. The nature of the experiment does not allow for a clear verdict about whether the stereotyped commercials decreased confidence and increased conformity, or if the nonstereotyped commercials increased confidence and decreased conformity, since they did not have

a control condition, but this study lays important groundwork for future studies that bring together the effects of television stereotypes and stereotype threat.

Specifically related to stereotype threat research, Davies, Spencer, and Steele (2005) conducted a study to examine media as a source of stereotypes from which stereotype threat might be activated. This experiment builds off of the work of Jennings-Walstedt, Geis, and Brown. Moving beyond mere measures of performance, Davies, Spencer, and Steele sought to investigate whether stereotype threat can affect aspirations of individuals belonging to stigmatized groups. Specifically, they examined whether being exposed to female stereotypes would decrease female interest in leadership roles across two studies.

In the first, the researchers collected six commercials aired on major networks for participants to view, four without any gendered products or people present, and two with women either excited over an acne treatment or daydreaming about winning homecoming queen. In one condition, participants viewed only the four gender neutral commercials, and in the other, all six commercials. To test participant interest in leadership roles, the researchers told participants they would be taking part in an activity after viewing the commercials in which they would need to either choose a leadership position or a “problem solver” position. Independent rating of the two positions revealed that the description of the leadership position made it sound higher status than the problem solver position, and neither role seemed stereotypically masculine or feminine. Therefore, participant interest in one position or the other would ostensibly be motivated by the status of the role, and not for any gender bias in the position. After viewing the commercials, participants were asked to indicate

which role they preferred to take in the subsequent activity. However, the study ended there; the dependent variable of role preference was all the researchers needed.

Analyses revealed a significant effect by gender, condition, and role preference; men expressed similar levels of interest in both roles in both conditions, but women expressed significantly less interest in the leadership role and significantly more interest in the problem solver role in the stereotypical commercial condition compared to the neutral commercial condition.

In a subsequent experiment, the authors were interested in investigating the role of stereotype activation in creating these differences in leadership role interest. Stereotype activation was measured by a word recognition task after viewing the stereotyped or neutral commercials. Participants were supposed to confirm if a word on a computer screen was a word or nonword as quickly as possible, with the idea that words related to female stereotypes would be responded to more quickly than neutral words or nonwords if female stereotypes had been activated by the commercials.

Additionally, in this experiment, the authors were interested in testing whether or not it was possible to create an “identity-safe” situation. Identity safety, in the context of stereotype research, is the idea that it is possible to “cancel out” stereotype threat that is present in a situation, with such reassuring phrases such as “although results on these types of diagnostic tests often reveal deficits in African American performance in comparison to white performance, this particular test does not.” In this case, the researchers put together three conditions; one was identical to the neutral commercial condition in the first experiment, one was identical to the

stereotyped commercial condition (identity vulnerable), and the third was almost identical to the stereotyped condition, except for the addition of an identity-safe phrase in the descriptions of the leader and problem-solving role, reassuring the participants that there were no gender differences in ability to take on either role (identity-safe).

Results followed the same pattern as in the first study. A significant interaction was found between gender, condition, and role preferences, with men preferring both roles relatively equally across conditions, and women in the identity-vulnerable phrase seeking out the problem solver role significantly more than the leadership role compared to women in the neutral commercial condition. Interestingly, there was also a significant difference between women in the identity-vulnerable condition compared to women in the identity-safe condition, with the former group of women seeking out problem solver over leadership roles significantly more than the latter women. Finally, when taking into account stereotype activation, stereotype activation significantly predicted role interest across all three conditions, but reading the identity-safe phrase eliminated that relationship. That is to say, women who had activated female stereotypes from the commercials were significantly more likely to avoid the leadership role, unless they also read the identity-safe phrase, in which case they were no longer significantly more likely to prefer one role to another.

Together, these studies conducted by Jennings-Walstedt, Geis, and Brown and Davies, Spencer, and Steele lend support to the idea that stereotypes in the media can affect not only one-shot performance scores, but also long term aspirations and

positions that individuals take on. Most importantly for this body of work, they showed that commercials can be a source of this stereotype threat, and have at least a temporary causal effect on ambitions. Their work should be extended to examine television shows and movies as well, but the potential implications for such a national and culturally imbedded transmission of stereotype threat is huge, making the extension of this work a priority for any psychologist interested in the subject.

Television's Cognitive Effects

The vast majority of research on the cognitive effects of television has been done on the effect of frequent viewing on body image or appearance self-esteem. There is sparser research done on other types of effects, such as sexist and racist beliefs, and global self-esteem. These results are summarized broadly below.

Racism, Sexism, and Television Viewership. Television can aid in the continuation of sexist and racist beliefs in American society. In this body of literature, sexism tends to be operationalized as espousing a traditional view of gender role stereotypes in which the female is subordinate to the male (e.g. Morgan, 1982). Racism tends to be studied in the context of whites against people of color, and operationalized as the belief in the inferiority of ethnic and racial groups other than whites, indicated by a belief in a higher concentration of negative traits in other racial groups or a lack of support for issues that affect these groups (e.g. Ramasubramanian, 2010). It should be noted that these types of beliefs, if learned from television, could be counted as second-order effects under cultivation theory.

Sexism. Across the literature, there is evidence that viewing stereotyped representations of women increases viewer belief in stereotype accuracy (Prot, 2015).

Additionally, men who watch television which sexually objectifies women show increased support for sexually coercion and sexual harassment (Galdi, Maass, & Cadinu, 2014). These effects, however, differ by genre. A growing body of television research has taken an interest in the effects of television by genre and found that some types of media affect viewers differently than others; this differential effect shows up with regards to sexism. Studies have shown that viewers of primetime programming differ in their view of women's rights by type of programming (e.g. Holbert et al., 2003); viewers of traditional dramas tend to be less supportive of women's rights than viewers of situational comedies. However, the argument still might be made that sexist people simply tend to gravitate toward more sexist content.

While most research in this category is largely correlational, which does not allow for refuting this argument or predicting the direction of the relationship between TV viewing and sexism, some longitudinal research has shown that television viewership can predict increased sexism. Morgan (1982) designed a study in which participants in fifth through eighth grade filled out self-report questionnaires about television viewing habits and endorsement of sex role stereotypes (such as being asked to choose "true" or "false" to the question "men are born with more drive to be ambitious and successful than women"). The questionnaire was completed twice more in two consecutive years. Information was also collected from participants' schools about their standardized test scores, race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Results showed that amount of television watched predicted girls' sexism scores one year later, even when controlling for original sexism scores and demographics. However, for boys in this sample, the opposite tendency appeared; sexism in one year

predicts television viewership the next, and not the other way around. Overall, participants of lower SES status and lower academic achievement tended to have higher sexism scores, and girls tended to have lower sexism scores than boys. However, this trend is disrupted by television viewership; the more television female participants of comparably high SES status or academic achievement watched, the more sexist views they espoused. These results for girls challenge the idea that it is simply sexist people gravitating toward sexist media; increased television viewership here tends to predict increased sexism, regardless of initial sexism scores.

Racism. Increased viewing of stereotyped portrayals of ethnic minorities has been shown to increase a belief in the accuracy of these stereotypes (Prot, 2015). Furthermore, perceptions of television Blacks and Latinos as criminal and violent weakly to moderately correlate with real life evaluation of Blacks and Latinos. These perceptions of Black characters and people weakly negatively predicted support for Affirmative Action programs (Ramasubramanian 2010). Additionally, even when isolated cases of positive representation of one person of color occurs in a show (tokenism), it is often not enough to counteract these effects; instead, these singular characters are more likely to be counted as an “exception to the rule” (Tukachinsky, 2015).

While overt racism on television is less common in modern times, subtle nonverbal racial biases may be responsible for these effects. In a study of nonverbal behavior toward characters of different races on primetime programming, a significant difference in positive nonverbal treatment by race was found (Weisbuch, Pauker, & Ambady, 2009). White characters tended to be treated in nonverbal ways

that indicated liking and positive affect more frequently than Black characters. Weisbuch, Pauker, and Ambady established this difference with a rather ingenious use of technology; video editing software was used to remove an individual character from a television scene, so that the rest of the scene progressed normally around them, but where the actor had once been was an empty space. Then, sound was removed from the clips, and a group of raters evaluated body language alone of the remaining characters in relation to the missing actor. This evaluation led to the previously stated findings: nonverbal behavior toward Blacks was significantly more negative than toward whites. This effect held true across 11 different primetime shows analyzed. No significant difference was found in the positivity of the verbal interactions, nor the attractiveness, sociability, kindness, or intelligence of these characters; nonverbal treatment was the only significant difference found.

After establishing this discrepancy in nonverbal treatment through an independent study, the authors ran several experiments showing participants these edited clips with various follow up tests. They found that viewing nonverbal interactions biased toward white characters and against Black characters increased participants' reactive scores on an IAT in favor of white characters and against Black characters. It was easier for participants to group positive words with white faces and negative words with Black faces when they had watched clips with nonverbal interactions biased toward white people and against Black people. Importantly, the opposite effect was found when participants viewed clips nonverbally biased toward Black people and against white people. However, as previously reported, nonverbal behavior was consistently biased against Black characters and toward white

characters across 11 different shows, so there is reason to believe that overall, the effect of watching these shows would be a bias against Black characters.

Taken together, along with the original discovery that whites are treated overall significantly more positively nonverbally in primetime television, this series of studies demonstrates that viewing nonverbal racially biased shows can increase racial bias against people of color. This is a rather bleak finding, given that this nonverbal bias is not written in to the show, and could stem from any number of background variables, such as director cues or actor interactions and bias outside of the script (Weisbuch et al., 2009). However, this explanation could help account for the increased belief in negative racial and ethnic stereotypes overall witnessed among frequent viewers of television.

Appearance Self-esteem. One of the most consistent relationships with television viewership is a negative correlation with appearance self-esteem. This relationship is strongest and most consistent for female viewers. Findings for male viewers are relatively inconsistent, but depending on age and race, similar effects appear. While not all of these studies are exclusively white, a majority of them are done without addressing racial differences within the sample, and samples tend to be at least predominantly white. Effects for these types of studies will be examined here, and racial differences examined below.

While the negative correlation between television viewership and appearance or body self-esteem has been a well-established effect for adult and adolescent women, a study by Dohnt and Tiggemann in 2006 examined this effect in girls as young as 5-8. In addition to measuring global self-esteem, the authors collected

information through interviews with the young girls on their desire for thinness, appearance satisfaction, perceived peer desire for thinness, discussion of appearances with friends, imitation of others, magazine readership, and television viewership. Their weight and height was also collected at the end of the interviews. Follow up interviews on the same subject were conducted approximately one year later, to track changes over time. Ultimately, television viewing was moderately negatively correlated with appearance satisfaction and predicted lowered appearance satisfaction at the second interview date. The more television young girls watched, particularly television that was focused on appearances, the less satisfied they were with their appearances. Tiggemann in particular has done wide-ranging research on the relationship between media exposure and body self-esteem of girls and women, and has found the effect to be consistent across television, movies, and magazines (e.g. Dohnt & Tiggeman, 2004, 2005; Tiggeman, 2001).

One possible factor leading to this negative self-esteem effect is viewer identification with television characters. Studies have shown that increased identification with characters correlates weakly to moderately negatively with appearance self-esteem for college students; this effect appears for both men and women (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007). Conceptually, this makes sense; recalling the research done on female representation in the media, identifying with the media's undue focus on female attractiveness and youth could understandably increase frustration with being unable to attain an unreasonable standard and eventually lower self-esteem in comparison. In one study conducted by Dara Greenwood (2009), female college students filled out self-report questionnaires assessing their self-

esteem, weight, height, favorite male and female television characters, body shame (feeling ashamed as a person when one's appearance does not match conventional standards of attractiveness), and body surveillance (tendency to chronically monitor appearance). They then answered a series of questions about their identification with their favorite characters, including their desire to look like their favorite character, their perceived similarity to the character, their attraction to their chosen characters, and their expectation that, if the character was a real person, they would be friends (parasocial identification).

Results found that wanting to look like one's favorite female character significantly positively correlated with body shame and body surveillance, and that attraction to a male character was positively correlated with body surveillance. However, perceived similarity with a favorite character was negatively correlated with body surveillance, and parasocial identification had no relationship to either body shame or body surveillance. All of these effects were found while controlling for BMI and global self-esteem. In sum, not all identification with television characters has negative outcomes for viewers; it is only wishing to look more like their favorite characters—portrayed by professional actors with their own staff of makeup, hair, and clothing designers on staff—that tends to lead to problems with body appraisals. In previous research conducted by the same author, parasocial identification with a character (feeling like one could strike up a friendship with that character) was even found to be significantly positively correlated with self-esteem for both men and women in college (Greenwood, 2008).

While most studies currently find women's body self-esteem (as well as global self-esteem) more strongly affected by television than men's, there is cause for concern that this trend could increase among men. Since the 1970s, the gap between the weight of average woman in the media versus reality has been growing; the average model in 1975 weighed 8% less than the average woman, compared to 23% less in 1995 (Jhally, 1995). This difference, along with the oversexualization of women in the media (Zurko, 2013) and the undue focus on youth and attractiveness (Eschholz et al., 2002) has been hypothesized by many to contribute to the problems with appearance self-esteem women develop in relation to media consumption. However, representation of men seems now to be following the same trend. Fowler and Thomas (2015) examined 907 commercials from 2003 and 961 commercials from 2008 to examine how portrayal of men in advertising has shifted over the years. Commercials were coded for character role, setting, paternal role, sexual objectification of women, and male body type. Body type was coded in one of four ways: one category was created for body types not easily fitting into one of the other codes, and the remaining male bodies were coded as "endomorph" (soft, spherical, minimal muscle definition); "mesomorph" (hard, rectangular, strong, well-muscled); and "ectomorph" (skinny, fragile, delicate).

Despite the fact that during this time period, men in the USA were trending toward more obesity, results showed a significant decrease in representation of "endomorph" (soft and spherical) body types and a significant increase in "mesomorph" (hard and rectangular) body types. There was a nonsignificant decrease in "ectomorph" (skinny and fragile) body types. This pattern follows the previously

established pattern for women in the media compared to women in reality; considering this shift for women has been linked to a resulting increase in body self-esteem problems and eating disorders, this change has worrisome implications for American men. One bright note in this study was a finding that sexual objectification of women did significantly decrease in the commercials studied.

The negative relationship between body self-esteem and television viewership also extends to ethnic groups in the US other than whites. While the research on people of color is limited compared to white Americans, and comparison studies between different groups are few and far between, a few common themes crop up. As with white Americans, the self-esteem effects tend to be more strongly negative for Latina teenagers and young adults (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007) and, in some cases, female African Americans (Ward, 2004). In particular, these effects tend to be stronger with stronger ethnic identification. In a pair of studies on Latino high schoolers and college students, Rivadeneyra, Ward, and Gordon (2007) examined the relationship between appearance self-esteem and television viewing. Based on findings that cognitive effects can vary based on television genre (e.g. Thomas & Zerbinos, 1997), they asked 40 Latino high schoolers to report their television viewing by category (primetime shows, soap operas, music videos, and movies). The researchers also asked about participant involvement in their reported shows (e.g. "I often think about particulars of an episode a day or two later"), identification with characters of their choosing, self-esteem, and body satisfaction. Identification with favorite characters was measured similarly to Greenwood (2008, 2009) but expanded to also include a desire to act similarly to these characters, whereas Greenwood

primarily asked about desire to look the same as the chosen character. This study did not ask how similar participants thought they actually were to these characters, but how much they desired to be like them. A significant moderately strong positive relationship was found between number of hours of soap operas watched, active engagement with shows, identification with favorite character and a desire to change appearances. That is, male and female participants who reported watching more soap operas, who engaged more with their television content, and who identified more strongly with their favorite characters were more likely to want to change something about the way they looked.

These results were replicated and expanded upon in a second study conducted by Rivadeneyra and colleagues (2007) on 150 Latino college students. In this study, participants were asked to report their current media consumption, levels of involvement, and previous media exposure across the four previous categories (primetime, soap operas, music videos, and movies) as well as magazines. The same evaluative measures were used for identification with characters, but this time, a predetermined set of characters was provided for participants to respond to. Self-esteem was assessed once again with the same measure, but this time, a more in-depth body satisfaction scale was used. Finally, participant identification with and positive affect toward their ethnicity was measured through another self-report questionnaire.

Overall, significant moderately negative correlations were found between body size satisfaction for women and current, past primetime hours and active viewership, as well as satisfaction with physical condition for men and women and soap opera viewing and past primetime viewing, respectively. That is, women who

watched more primetime television, past or present, or who reported more active media consumption were more likely to report less body size satisfaction. Women who reported more primetime viewing and men who reported more soap opera viewing were less likely to report satisfaction with their current physical condition. Finally, more identification with a same-sex character was significantly negatively related to lower appearance self-esteem for women.

Due to smaller numbers of male participants, only female results were examined in the context of ethnic identification. Results show far more negative outcomes in terms of appearance self-esteem and body satisfaction for women with high levels of ethnic identification compared to low. Women with low ethnic identification showed a moderate negative relationship between past primetime viewing, active viewership and physical condition satisfaction. Additionally, female participants with low ethnic identification were moderately less likely to report satisfaction with their body size with increased active viewership. Overall, responses of women with high ethnic identification yielded nine significant negative relationships on some body measure, compared to these three for women of low ethnic identification. Appearance self-esteem was weakly to moderately significantly negatively related to past and present primetime viewing, movie watching, active viewership, and same-sex character identification. Body size satisfaction was moderately negatively correlated with past and present primetime viewership, active viewership, and same-sex character identification.

These two studies together demonstrate the importance of examining the relationship between television viewership and self-esteem measures by racial group.

Of particular interest and value is the difference in results by ethnic identification level. A connection can be seen here to Bandura's work with social learning theory and vicarious experience, as well as Steele's work with stereotype threat. Bandura's research showed that through social comparison, people can make judgements about themselves and their own self-efficacy. Because of the social comparison aspect, belief in self-efficacy derived from watching someone else perform a behavior was enhanced by more similarity between the observer and observed (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2014). Steele's work indicated that the more a person identifies with a stereotyped group, and the more exposure a person has to that stereotype, the more a person is likely to be affected by stereotype threat in that domain. Considering that representations of Latina females have undue focus on their sexual desirability and physical appearance (e.g. Ramasubramanian, 2010), these low quality, appearance focused representations in conjunction with Bandura's and Steele's work could potentially explain the findings relative to Latina women body self-esteem found here.

Global Self-Esteem. Global self-esteem has been investigated more recently than body self-esteem, and fewer studies overall focus on this more holistic measure, but those that do yield similar results to those found for appearance self-esteem. Individuals, particularly girls and women, who watch more TV tend to have lower self-esteem. This effect has been replicated across age groups (Dohnt, & Tiggeman, 2006; Tiggeman, 2001; Hammermeister et al., 2005), racial and ethnic groups (Martins & Harrison, 2012; Ward 2004), and nationalities (Tin et al., 2012). Body self-esteem is particularly relevant in television because of the visual nature of the

medium, but global self-esteem has more implications for storytelling in general.

Measures of self-esteem that take into account the various components of global self-esteem (e.g. performance, social, and appearance, Heatherton and Polivy, 1991) are also important and reflect similar trends to single factor global self-esteem measures.

The negative relationship between television consumption and global self-esteem appears to be relatively consistent for Latino adolescents and adults; the findings are more mixed for Black Americans. In some cases, it seems that identifying with Black culture and seeking out Black-targeted media (e.g. BET channel) protects Black adolescents from this negative self-esteem effect (Ward 2004). They do not see majority white, mainstream media as being applicable to their lives, and so it may lose the power to negatively affect them. However, in cases where Black teens do engage with mainstream television programming, the negative results are similar to those of Latino and white viewers in other studies (Martins & Harrison, 2012).

This study, conducted by Nicole Martins and Kristen Harrison (2012) was a primary source of inspiration for the present research undertaking. Unlike much of the literature on self-esteem and television's cognitive effects in general, the authors included and compared male, female, Black, and white participant data in their longitudinal study testing the relationship between television viewing and global self-esteem. The 429 students, aged 7 to 12, were interviewed by research assistants to obtain self-report information about their weekday and weekend television watching habits, global self-esteem, satisfaction with perceived body shape, and racial or ethnic identity. The same procedure was repeated with the students one year later. Results

revealed a weak to moderate negative relationship between initial television viewing and final self-esteem for Black participants and white girls, predicting this decrease. However, the opposite result was found for white boys; television viewing at the initial interview was a weak to moderate predictor of increased global self-esteem by the final interview. These results lends support to the idea that television affects people in different demographic groups in different ways—however, given that this research was correlational and did not examine content or genre of television watched, there is no way to prove causality, although the longitudinal nature of the study suggests at least a direction of the relationship.

Conclusion

Overall, the above research paints a fairly bleak picture of the effects television has on its viewers. However, it is important to note that the amount of television viewed is key to many of these findings. It is not simply that there is small, medium, or large harm with small, medium, or large amounts of television exposure. In fact, some research indicates that negative effects do not begin to appear until viewers pass roughly the two hour a day mark (Hammermeister et al., 2005). Below that, there are not significant differences in, for example, self-esteem between groups of people that watch 0-2 hours of television and people who are television free. Additionally, in some cases, it seems that rather than a linear relationship between television viewership and self-esteem, the relationship may be more inverted-J shaped (Tin et al. 2012). General, social, and parent related self-esteem have actually been found to increase from 1-2 hours of television per day before declining to fit the expected negative relationship in male and female Chinese 4th graders. This self-

esteem increase may also be moderated by race and gender, as found in the Martins and Harrison study (2012).

These studies together suggest that something more complex is going on than “television is bad for you.” This confluence of factors also undermines the idea that the negative relationship between viewership and self-esteem exists because simply TV prevents individuals from engaging in more self-esteem building activities. This suggestion has been put forward by some researchers, partly on the basis that increased television viewership correlates with a decreased perception of the self as complex (Harrison, 2006); however, other factors, like content or genre, were not taken fully into account.

In sum, the literature indicates that:

- 1) Television tends to underrepresent women and people of color (e.g. Glascock, 2001).
- 2) These representations tend to be stereotyped in nature (e.g. Eschholz et al., 2002).
- 3) Increased exposure to stereotyped representations of women and minorities increases belief that these stereotypes are accurate (e.g. Prot, 2015).
- 4) Women and people of color tend to have larger decreases in self-esteem with increased television viewership compared to men and whites (e.g. Martins & Harrison, 2012)
- 5) These effects differ by genre and type of media (e.g. Rivadeneyra et al., 2007).

Based on these findings together, the following experiment examines the idea that it is specifically stereotyped representations of women that causes the decrease in female self-esteem.

Methods

Participants

78 undergraduate students at a small northeastern liberal arts university participated in this study for credit as a part of an introductory psychology course. Overall, the sample was 39.7% White, 26.9% Asian, 12.8% Black, 10.3% Black, 6.4% multiracial, and 3.8% Arab/Middle Eastern. Using stratified random sampling to ensure a representative distribution of each racial group, 28 student were assigned to the first condition (positive representation), 29 to the second (neutral representation), and 21 to the third (negative condition).

Design

The three conditions differed only in the television episodes presented. The first condition is referred to as the positive or non-stereotyped condition interchangeably; the second is the neutral or control condition; and the third is the negative or stereotyped condition. All episodes for the positive and negative conditions were sitcom selected from non-cable networks that receive high public traffic. To select which two episodes would be screened for each condition, a selection of five episodes from popular sitcoms that have aired in the past ten years was compiled by the researcher. Then, a panel of two independent raters as well as the lead researcher watched the episodes and rated them for their representation of women on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “very negative” and 5 being “very positive.”

These three scores were averaged together, and the episodes selected were those with the highest, for the positive condition, and lowest, for the negative condition, ratings. Coincidentally, both episodes in the positive condition were from the same show; the stereotyped condition's ratings resulted in the same outcome for a different show. The nonstereotyped condition's episodes had a combined rating of 4.22 (indicating a strong positive representation of women). The negative condition's episodes had a combined rating of 1.37 (indicating a strong negative representation of women). For the neutral, or control, condition, a nature documentary was selected that included no depiction of human beings, so as to ensure as neutral a representation of both genders as possible. It is important to note, however, that the narrator of the documentary was a male. Sitcoms were chosen because past research has shown that primetime television (sitcoms included) tend to have a more pronounced effect on self-esteem than other forms of television (Rivadeneyra, Ward, & Gordon, 2007), and because adolescents and younger adults tend to watch more sitcoms compared to other types of media (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007) and compared to older generations (Holbert, Shah, & Kwak, 2003).

It is important to note that the episodes screened were not selected for representation of people of color, but only women. Both episodes in the positive condition did feature relatively well-rounded characters of color; in one episode, a minor plot line is an Indian character struggling to learn the rules of basketball to appeal to a wider client base for his growing clothing business. In the other, the secondary plot line features the same Indian character and his Black female colleague trying to cheer up their White male colleague; both are represented as compassionate

and relatively insightful friends. Of the two negative representation episodes, only one featured a character of color. A British Iranian woman manages to outsmart a sleezy White male character who is trying to trick her into sleeping with him, although eventually, having brought out his decent side with her superior intelligence, she agrees to go out with him. While she is still relatively treated as a sex object throughout the duration of the episode, the fact that she is able to evade the leading man and push him to self-improvement elevates her to slightly more human than object.

Materials

Directly after viewing television, information regarding participants' feelings considering their race and gender was gathered with a qualitative measure designed for this study (see Appendix A). Since the results of cultivation theory and stereotype threat are not developed over the course of an hour of programming, this questionnaire was placed before the self-esteem questionnaire in order to increase the salience of the selected representations by having participants think more deeply about gender and race (Jennings-Walstedt et al., 1980). The first question relates to the cover story of this experiment, that we are trying to ascertain whether viewers can tell which gender wrote an episode of a television show. This deception was deemed necessary to counteract social desirability effects. A manipulation check was included in question three, with regards to gender, and question four, with regards to race. Participants were asked if they thought the episode watched was a positive, negative, or neutral representation of women or people of color, respectively, and asked to score each episode on a scale from 1 ("Very negative") to 5 ("Very positive").

Questions five through seven investigate participant television viewing habits. In questions five and six, participants were asked “on an average weekday/weekend, I normally watch TV for:” with the options “less than one hour per day,” “between one and two hours per day,” “between 2 and 4 hours per day,” and “more than 4 hours per day.” The seventh question asked about participant binge-watching habits.

Participants were provided a definition of binge-watching and then asked “when I do watch TV, I binge-watch:” and offered a Likert scale from 1 to 5 with guidance text such as “1: most of the time, I only watch one episode of a show,” “3: I watch single episodes about as often as I binge-watch,” and “5: most of the time, I binge-watch.”

Questions eight and nine ask participants to rate the importance of their gender and racial identity on a four point scale with corresponding descriptions of “very unimportant,” “unimportant,” “important,” and “very important.” A four point scale was chosen in order to eliminate a neutral option. They were also asked to write briefly about their answer if they responded 2 or above. The final four questions asked participants to rate how they believe women, men, white people, and people of color are viewed by most people in the US on a five point Likert scale from “very negatively” to “very positively” with a middle “neutrally” option.

After finishing the above questionnaire, participants continued on The State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) which has been demonstrated to be appropriate for this age group and to produce results independent of affect (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). The SSES contains items focusing on three different types of self-esteem: items such as “I feel confident about my abilities” test for performance self-esteem; items such as “I feel self-conscious” test for social self-esteem; and items such as “I feel satisfied with

the way my body looks right now” test for appearance self-esteem. Participants rate these phrases on a 5 point Likert scale with 1-5 labeled with the phrases “not at all,” “a little bit,” “somewhat,” “very much,” and “extremely.” Some items are reversed scored. The SSES was chosen because of its subscales; much of the research surrounding self-esteem and television viewership in the past has focused on appearance self-esteem, especially for young women (e.g. Tiggeman, 2001), and the current study seeks to both include and expand beyond that area of research to include global self-esteem. The SSES allows for measures of multiple types of self-esteem within one scale, decreasing participant fatigue while still yielding different types of results of interest.

Procedure

Participants were assigned to one of three conditions and invited to attend a session on one of two possible days of the week to accommodate different schedules. Upon arrival, participants were given consent forms to sign and offered the opportunity to ask questions. They were told that the study was about gender and media creators. Once the consent forms were completed and turned in, the appropriate episodes were aired for participants. Talking or cell phone use was prohibited during the screening. Directly afterward, questionnaire packets were distributed containing the questionnaire created for this study (see Appendix A) and the SSES. Once all questionnaires were turned in, participants were debriefed, given the opportunity to ask questions, and invited to contact the researcher if they had any further questions or concerns.

Results

Quantitative Results

A one-way ANOVA was computed comparing participant rating of the representation of women rating for each condition. A significant difference was found across conditions ($F(2,75) = 8.06, p < .01$). Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between the conditions. This analysis revealed that participants in the positive condition ($m=3.27, sd=.74$) and 2 ($m=3.07, sd=.53$) rated the representation of women in their episodes significantly higher participants in the negative condition ($m=2.45, sd=.91$). However, participants in the positive and neutral conditions did not differ significantly in their rating of those conditions' episodes.

A one-way ANOVA was computed comparing the representations of race rating for each condition. No significant differences were found ($F(2,74) = .714, p > .05$). The positive condition had a mean rating of 3.00 ($sd=.5$). The neutral condition had a mean rating of 3.03 ($sd=.32$). The negative condition had a mean rating of 2.88 ($sd=.57$).

A 3 (condition) X 2 (gender) X 6 (race) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the global self-esteem scores for participants in the three different conditions by race and gender. No significant results were found. The main effects for condition ($F(2,49) = .21, p > .05$), for gender ($F(1,49) = .54, p > .05$), and for race ($F(5,49) = .31, p > .05$) were not significant. None of the interactions between these variables were significant, either (condition x gender: $F(2, 49) = .06, p > .05$;

condition x race: $F(8,49) = .37, p > .05$; gender x race: $F(4,49) = 1.74, p > .05$;
condition x gender x race: $F(4,49) = .44, p > .05$).

A 3 (condition) X 2 (gender) X 6 (race) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the performance self-esteem scores for participants in the three different conditions by race and gender. In keeping with the previous pattern of results, no significant results were found for condition ($F(2,49) = .57, p > .05$), gender, ($F(1,49) = .08, p > .05$), or race ($F(5,49) = 1.1, p > .05$), or for the interaction between any of the variables (condition x gender: $F(2, 49) = .11, p > .05$; condition x race: $F(8,49) = .28, p > .05$; gender x race: $F(4,49) = 1.08, p > .05$; condition x gender x race: $F(4,49) = .58, p > .05$).

A 3 (condition) X 2 (gender) X 6 (race) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the social self-esteem scores for participants in the three different conditions by race and gender. In keeping with the previous pattern of results, no significant results were found for condition ($F(2,49) = .4, p > .05$), gender, ($F(1,49) = 2.62, p > .05$), or race ($F(5,49) = .88, p > .05$), or for the interaction between any of the variables (condition x gender: $F(2, 49) = .46, p > .05$; condition x race: $F(8,49) = .97, p > .05$; gender x race: $F(4,49) = .87, p > .05$; condition x gender x race: $F(4,49) = .58, p > .05$).

A 3 (condition) X 2 (gender) X 6 (race) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was calculated comparing the appearance self-esteem scores for participants in the three different conditions by race and gender. In keeping with the previous pattern of results, no significant results were found for condition ($F(2,49) = .11, p > .05$), gender, ($F(1,49) = .31, p > .05$), or race ($F(5,49) = .5, p > .05$), or for the interaction between

any of the variables (condition x gender: $F(2, 49) = .08, p > .05$; condition x race: $F(8, 49) = .5, p > .05$; gender x race: $F(4, 49) = 1.72, p > .05$; condition x gender x race: $F(4, 49) = .74, p > .05$).

Thus, the results from this study do not suggest that stereotyped representation, gender of the viewer, or race of the viewer significantly affect the global, performance, social, or appearance self-esteem of the viewer.

However, examining the means of each group by condition, gender, and race, may suggest that limitations to this study, rather than a truly null hypothesis, might explain this lack of significance. More research should be done to establish whether these trends can reach significance when the limitations are improved upon. While overall, the means by condition, gender, and race are relatively similar, the means for the interaction of all three show an interesting potential pattern. In all three conditions, white females (c1: $M=3.38, sd=.47$; c2: $M=2.44, sd=.47$; c3: $M=2.7, sd=.52$) had lower self-esteem than white males (c1: $M=3.64, sd=.47$; c2: $M=3.33, sd=.4$; c3: $M=3.96, sd=.47$). Of particular interest is the increasing gap between self-esteem scores by condition. While white male and female self-esteem scores are within one standard deviation of each other in the non-stereotyped representation condition, they are more than a standard deviation apart in the stereotyped representation condition.

For other racial groups, the pattern of means differs. Like white female viewers, Black female and male viewers' self-esteem means decrease across conditions (female, c1: $M=3.85, sd=1.05$; c2: $M=2.44, sd=.47$; c3: $M=2.55, sd=.74$; male, c1: $M=2.88, sd=.74$; c2: $M=2.00, sd=1.05$; c3: not enough data), although

Black females consistently have higher self-esteem scores than Black males, when data are available.

Latina females also have higher self-esteem means than Latino males, where there were enough data to generate means (female, c1: $M=4.00$, $sd=1.05$; c2: $M=3.85$, $sd=1.05$; c3: not enough data; males, c1: $M=3.17$, $sd=.74$; c2: $M=2.52$, $sd=.61$; c3: $M=3.35$, $sd=1.05$). While self-esteem means decreased between the non-stereotyped and neutral conditions, Latino males' self-esteem means were highest by a small margin for the stereotyped condition. Not enough data existed to indicate whether Latina women's trends might follow their male counterparts or Black and white women.

Asian and Asian-American men and women self-esteem means remained relatively consistent across conditions and between genders (female, c1: $M=3.2$, $sd=.47$; c2: $M=3.57$, $sd=.74$; c3: $M=3.4$, $sd=.53$; male, c1: $M=3.5$, $sd=.47$; c2: $M=3.3$, $sd=.74$; c3: $M=3.03$, $sd=.61$).

Qualitative Results and Discussion

Participants were asked to rate the importance of their gender or racial/ethnic identity on a 1-4 scale with guiding text "Very Unimportant," "Unimportant," "Important," and "Very Important." Directly afterward, participants were asked "If you circled Unimportant, Important, or Very Important please write a few sentences (two or more) on the next page explaining your feelings regarding this part of your identity. [This would also be a good time to differentiate between your race and ethnicity, if you have differing feelings and/or relationships with these elements of your identity.]" (brackets included following race/ethnicity item but not gender). No

additional prompt or suggestion for content was given, and although participants were encouraged to ask questions if confused, none asked for further instruction on this portion. Altogether, 35 unique codes were generated and used to help categorize participants' written feedback into themes. Each sentence in a participant response was given at least one code.

Additionally, every sentence was coded for either "personal" or "general" content, i.e. if participants discussed a factor's relevance to their own life or described more global effects. Examples of personal content are "I feel as though gender is an important and a central part about how I think about myself," "I don't always do what is stereotypically masculine," and "my cultural background was a big part of my upbringing." Examples of general content are "gender helps people conform to society," "being a man means responsibility and being masculine," and "everyone is human before they are anything else." For both gender and race responses, personal commentary was offered around 4.5 times more frequently than general commentary, but did not vary in any meaningful way between the gender and race responses, or by condition, gender, or race within the gender and race responses.

All codes were used at least once between the gender and race prompts. Below are discussed the most salient themes that emerged. Differences between gender and race responses, as well as differences between conditions, are outlined below. For the purposes of this discussion, a major theme is considered one that is brought up by more than 25% of participants. A minor theme is one that appeared in 10-25% of cases. For a complete code book, see Appendix B; for complete gender qualitative data, see Appendix C; for complete race qualitative data, see Appendix D.

Gender. *General themes.* The following responses were provided by participants in answer to the prompt “If you circled Unimportant, Important, or Very Important please write a few sentences (two or more) on the next page explaining your feelings regarding this part of your identity” after they had indicated the importance of their gender identity on a previous item. Participants brought up a wide range of topics from this general prompt, with three main themes emerging, and several minor themes.

The most salient major theme in the gender responses was mentioning an effect of gender on thought or perception, with a total of 62.7% of participants mentioning some aspect of thought or perception. These responses centered around the idea that a person’s gender identity impacts the way they think. Most often (42.3%), participants discussed how their own gender identity affected the way they thought, about themselves, about other people, or about the world in general. For instance, participant 5 shared that she “believe[s] identifying as female has shaped the way I see the world, because from the time I was young I was taught about the world through the lens of what society perceives “females” should act like.” Not all participants believed that their gender had such a large effect on their thinking, however. Participant 73 suggested that “it’s good to consider but not important because when I make decisions or do homework, I do them as a person, not as a female (if that makes any sense).” When people weren’t talking about their own thought process and cognition, they were talking about how gender affected other people’s thinking (15.5%). As you can see in participant 5’s response, often the two were intertwined. Participant 89 shared a common example of discussing other’s

thoughts, saying “I sometimes consider how [my gender] affects how others view me and be conscious on who others perceive me.”

The next most apparent major theme was responses that related to gender affecting behavior, actions, and presentation. Around 46% of participants talked about how their gender identity affected how they personally acted or how they chose to present themselves. Participant 37 shared that “I think my gender identity will shape how I interact with other people. I will adopt different methods when interact with male and female.” As with the responses about personal thoughts and perceptions, many of the behavior related comments participants offered were tied back to the way a participant thought about themselves, much like participant 36, who said “the way I act, dress, carry myself is all with the idea that I’m a guy’s guy.” However, given that overall people talking about their own thinking process more than their behavior as being influenced by behavior, it was more common for participants to link the root of a behavior in cognition than for a thought to be expressed in a behavior. Similarly to the higher frequency of discussion about personal thoughts over other’s thoughts, more participants (28.2%) brought up their personal behavior than others’ (7%). Participant 22 brought up a common theme in the discussion of gender’s effect on other people’s behavior: a difference in treatment between men and women. “I also feel that people look at me and treat me differently than they would if I did not identify as female.” While discrimination was also a major theme and will be discussed shortly, many times participants, like 22, simply mentioned a difference in treatment without explicitly defining it as beneficial or harmful. However, as with cognition, not everyone who mentioned behavior was

certain that their gender had significant impact. Participant 16 shared that “I haven’t really thought about it but I suppose being a male does affect some of my actions.” More frequently, participants would acknowledge an effect of their gender identity on their thoughts, but not on their actions, like participant 88 who said “I guess I do “male” activities, but I just think of those as who I am, and not as male appearances or activities.” Overall, behavior tended to appear more as a secondary category or afterthought of cognition; while most participants recognized the influence of their gender identity on their thoughts, they were less likely to admit that their identity and cognition would definitively lead to differences in behavior.

The final major theme for the gender responses was discussion of gender stereotypes. This ranged from simply mentioned that stereotypes existed, to describing explicit ones, to denying the importance of a stereotype, resisting or rising above it, or agreeing or submitting to it. A total of 66.5% of participants engaged in some type of the above discussion. Thirty-two percent of participants mentioned stereotypes or described at least one stereotype in their written responses, from activities, like participant 77’s “putting on makeup,” to traits or deficiencies, like participant 89’s worry that she was “too sensitive...[and] not mentally strong enough compared to...males” or an expectation that “being a man means responsibility and being masculine” from participant 86. Aside from simply mentioning stereotypes, the next most common theme in participant responses (14.1%) was resisting or rejecting a stereotype, often expressed in defiance, like expressing a penchant for “breaking those stereotypes and proving certain men wrong,” like participant 46. Close in frequency (12.8%) was agreeing with or submitting to a stereotype. Participants who

brought up an experience along these lines normally referenced a stereotype as more akin to a fact about one gender or another, or referred to negative repercussions such as “I know that *as a female* I have a tendency to be more passive,” (emphasis added; participant 45), and “gender stereotyping force[s] me to match the so-called ‘male standard,’ otherwise, exclusion and isolation happens,” (participant 7). Denying a stereotype was least frequent (7.8%), and typically took the form of a denial of its power, such as participant 1’s adamant response: “well I know that I am female but it doesn’t control how I think about myself. If I want to become a doctor, I’ll do that. If I want to wear makeup or don’t want to wear it, all of it is fine.”

Minor themes within the gender responses were differences between men and women (23%; “there is a clear difference between men and women,” participant 9), disadvantages based on gender identity (19.7%; “both hostile and benevolent sexism is apparent today,” participant 17), the importance of participants’ gender identity (17.9%; “gender is important and a central part of how I think about myself,” participant 12), expectations or responsibilities based on gender identity (15.3%; “as a man, I believe that there are certain things that are expected of me,” participant 2), and positive affect toward their gender identity (15.3%; “I am proud to be a woman,” participant 39).

Differences in Themes by Participant Gender. Major Themes. Men and women had different levels of discussion for each of the three major themes: how their gender affected thoughts and perceptions (cognition), how their gender affected behavior and presentation (behavior), and the existence of stereotypes and how they reacted to them (stereotypes). These were not necessarily qualitative differences in

how they talked about these themes, although sometimes they were, but in how often these themes were brought up. There were also differences in discussion of minor themes, to be discussed afterward.

Almost 70% of women mentioned some sort of cognition, whereas 42.5% of male participants did. However, the types of cognition mentioned also varied. Men were much more likely to discuss personal cognition (35%) than either others' or general cognition. Women were more evenly split, with 50% discussing personal cognition and 30% discussing others' cognition (with some overlap).

Men and women discussed behavior overall at comparable levels (42.5% vs. 41.6%), but followed a similar pattern as to what types of behavior were discussed. Men were more likely to discuss their own behavior (35%) than others' (5%) or generally (2.5%) compared to women, of whom 22% discussed their own behavior, 11% mentioned others', and 8% brought up behavior in general (with some overlap).

Overall, the difference between male and female consideration of how gender affects cognition and behavior, as well as their different levels of discussion about fundamental differences between men and women fit into the established research about high and low power groups. High power groups tend to be less likely to be aware of discrepancies in power between them and low power groups, less likely to be aware of the systems that hold these differences in place, and more likely to believe in their own personal competence above that of low power groups (Coleman, 2014). Additionally, individuals in high power groups, like individuals belonging to high socioeconomic status brackets (SES), are more likely to believe that personal agency is more responsible for negative outcomes, compared to low power groups,

like low SES individuals, who are more likely to make contextual attributions for results (Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, & Keltner 2012). In America, the historical and institutional privilege that men have places them in a high power group over women (Coleman, 2014), and so their comparably decreased acknowledgement of gender's impact on cognition and behavior can be understood through this lens.

Discussion of the final major theme, stereotypes, actually was fairly evenly split between men and women, both in overall acknowledgement and in reactions to stereotypes. Overall, 52.7% of female participants and 45% of male participants brought up stereotypes in some capacity. Thirty-six percent of women and 30% of men discussed stereotypes without their explicit reaction to them. Women rejected stereotypes (13.9%) only mildly more than they agreed with them (11.1%), while just as many male participants rejected stereotypes as agreed with them (15%). The least common reaction to stereotype was to deny their importance, with 8.3% of women and 7.5% of men dismissing them. Overall, men and women had very similar levels of discussion about stereotypes, both generally and within the different categories. The similarities of these response levels are particularly interesting and perhaps surprising considering the differences in other categories to be discussed below. One interpretation could be that since men and women were exposed to the same television programming, and therefore the same stereotypes, this shared and temporally relevant supply of stereotypes might level out female-male differences found elsewhere.

Minor Themes. While female and male discussion of stereotypes was relatively similar, the frequency with which they mentioned negative repercussions of stereotypes and gender-based discrimination was not. One third of female participants mentioned some sort of negative repercussion of gender-based discrimination, while only 7.5% of males did. Furthermore, responses in this category include not only personally experiences with discrimination, like participant 32 who “occasionally experience[s] catcalling on the streets or discrimination about my abilities because of my gender identity” but also generalized instances of discrimination or disadvantage that participant 21 brought up: “there are harsher, more severe, and often inaccurate stereotypes [for women].” Because both types of responses were considered within this theme, men could still have given responses addressing sexism in society as a whole without needing to pull from their own personal experience.

These results are consistent with research done by the Pew Research Center, which found that “Nearly two-thirds of women (65%) say there is a lot of (15%) or some (50%) discrimination against women in our society today. Men, however, are nearly evenly divided: 48% say women face at least some discrimination, while 51% believe there is only a little or no bias against women. A double-digit gender gap on perceptions of gender discrimination is evident across all generations as well as across partisan groups.” While part of the difference between male and female discussion of discrimination can be attributed to personal experience, yet again, theories about the interaction and awareness between high and low power groups can be informative in understanding these results. In addition to being less aware of the different ways that gender affects men and women, males, members of a high

powered group, may be particularly unaware of the negative side effects of belonging to a low power group that women experience, which would explain the difference in discussion of discrimination in the present study.

The minor theme of mentioning that men and women are different fits in interestingly here. While men were less likely to mention gender having an effect on cognition or to mention discrimination along gender lines, they were more likely to discuss men and women being fundamentally different (32.5%) compared to women (19.4%). These answers often but not always mentioned biological differences as a basis for these fundamental differences between genders, like participant 13 who said that “at the very least, [gender] causes many differences on the biological level,” or participant 76 who suggested that “my gender biologically has programmed my body to feel & act in a certain way.” Many participants, however, simply mentioned that different expectations existed for men and women, for better or worse like participant 32 who shared “as I identify as female and others see me as female, I am treated differently, whether that be positively or negatively or neutral.” Viewed along with the other results outlined above, and with high and low power groups, one explanation for these differences could be that by identifying men and women as simply fundamentally different more often, an idea is created that different treatment and outcomes are natural and to be expected. If, instead, men and women are not that different, then an alternate, contextual explanation like discrimination would need to be provided.

While men were far less likely to discuss negative consequences of gender role differences and discrimination overall, another minor theme was decidedly more

discussed by men than women: expectations or responsibilities based on gender identity. While female gender roles tended to be discussed in terms of restriction, limitation, or discrimination, male gender role expectations were discussed in the form of a not-always-embraced pressure, and high expectations for behavior. As such, the two (5.6%) female responses discussing an expectation did so in a style very similar to other discussion of gender discrimination. Participant 22 expressed that she feels “that I’m expected to wear certain things/styles and not others,” whereas participant 77 mentioned that “in my background, there are certain stereotypes and social expectations toward women.”

The male responses using themes of expectation or responsibility have a distinctly different tone. Some particularly illuminating responses were participant 62’s suggestion that “[gender] also plays a role in defining my place in the society and what my responsibilities are,”; participant 27’s insistence that “there are expectations of men that I strive to live up to, whether people will say that they denounce the expectations or not,”; participant 78’s explanation that “I have certain social pressures placed on me to act, “manly,” if not I’m seen as less of a man if I do,”; and participant 2’s feeling that “as a man, I believe that there are certain things that are expected of me... I just feel like I have the responsibility of setting a good example for different people in my life.” While it is almost indisputable that women experience more overt gender-based discrimination, it is important for future research to also examine the high pressure, unattainable, and unhealthy expectations often set for men in television (Fowler & Thomas, 2015) and society at large. It is often harder for men to receive help when confronted with stress and discouragement regarding

failing to meet standards of masculinity (Newsom, Congdon, & Anthony, 2015), which can make these groups of men particularly vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, it is imperative for all men for society to begin to develop a sense of masculinity in positive terms, not in superiority to women, nor in terms of unreachable expectations of productivity and stability, for male “self-esteem and other aspects of psychological wellbeing,” (DuBois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale, & Hardesty, 2002).

Differences in Themes by Condition. Major themes. It is important to consider along with these results that a one way ANOVA in the quantitative results section revealed that the positive and neutral condition were rated as significantly more positive representations of women than the negative condition. There was not a significant difference in the representation of women between the positive and neutral conditions.

Across the three conditions, participants discussed the three major themes at different frequencies: how their gender affected thoughts and perceptions (cognition), how their gender affected behavior and presentation (behavior), and the existence of stereotypes and how they reacted to them (stereotypes). These were not necessarily qualitative differences in how they talked about these themes, although sometimes they were, but in how often these themes were brought up. There were also differences in discussion of minor themes, to be discussed afterward.

Relative to the number of participants in each condition, around 64% of participants in the control/neutral condition mentioned some form of cognition effect of gender, while 57% did so in the positive condition, and 40% in the negative

condition. In contrast, frequency of discussion about gender's effect on behavior remained relatively constant across conditions (between 30-40%). Given that overall, participants were more likely to admit gender's effects on cognition than behavior, combined with these differences, discussing gender identity's influence over actions seems to be a more rigid concept, whereas thoughts are more fluid and perhaps easier to admit outside influence on when presented with different visions of gender.

Participants could be seeking to preserve a unique sense of self, with their actions more independent of societal influence. Differences between condition on the subject of condition are interesting to consider in terms of the social desirability of the different manifestations of gender and gendered thinking between the conditions.

While the neutral condition did have moderately more discussion of cognition than the positive condition, both are much higher than the negative condition. In the neutral condition, no real representation of gender occurred; while the positive condition was selected for its positive representation of women, it did also include examples of sexism that women then overcame. The negative condition included much more explicit sexism and sexual objectification of women. Exposure to this discrimination could explain a difference between the control and positive condition, as well as the drop in the negative condition rates of discussion about cognition. If discussion of and thoughts about gender differences are perceived as more often leading to sexism, and if the heroes and heroines of the television content espouse an equal vision of men and women, it could potentially decrease the desirability of mentioning a belief in gender identity's effect on cognition.

Interestingly, discussion of stereotypes was nearly identical in the positive and negative conditions, with 60.7% and 60% of responses discussing stereotypes, compared to only 42.9% in the neutral condition. With regards to agreeing with stereotypes, the positive and negative condition were yet again nearly identical (10.7% and 10%) with more (17.9%) of the neutral condition agreeing. However, rejection of stereotypes was present in 25% of the positive condition's participant responses, while the neutral condition only had 10.7% rejecting responses, and the negative condition had the smallest amount of stereotype rejection of all (5%). Disadvantages based on gender differences were also differently distributed across conditions. Fifty-five percent of negative condition participants mentioned a gender based disadvantage or discrimination, while only 25% of participants in the positive condition and 3% of the neutral condition mentioned any such setbacks.

This could very well relate to the difficulty, explained more in depth in the discussion, of finding positive representation of women in television that did not involve women overcoming explicit displays of sexism. Therefore, participants were still exposed to these stereotypes in both the positive and negative condition, but in the positive condition were given a model for rejecting or overcoming these stereotypes. While it is encouraging to see that defiance of sexism appears to increase with positive role models, within these participant responses, as evidenced by the increase from negative to neutral to positive conditions, it is also important to note that harmful anti-woman stereotypes are still clearly being activated. Within the framework of stereotype threat research, then, these shows could still pose a threat to female achievement and self-esteem if viewed too frequently. However, being given

examples of women overcoming these barriers to success could also function as a way of creating an identity-safe television environment (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). More focused research on stereotype activation and identity-safe plot lines should be done to establish which factor ultimately has more effect on viewer cognition and later behavior.

Minor themes. Conversely, discussion of the minor theme of positive affect toward gender identity was highest in the positive condition (28.6%) and lowest in the negative condition (10%), with the control condition falling in the middle (21.4%). Interestingly, the importance of participants' gender identity followed a similar pattern with a decrease from the positive (32.1%) to the neutral (17.9%) to the negative (15%) condition. Both of these patterns fit in with the concept of avoidance and disidentification within the domain of stereotype threat, whereby individuals "avoid...the domain where one risks being personally reduced to a negative stereotype" (Davies, et al., 2005). While this phenomenon has primarily been discussed in terms of avoiding specific domains that are targeted by stereotypes (i.e. leadership positions for women, math tests for African American students), the overall principle can apply here. Decreasing explicit identification with and positive feelings toward gender identity, in this case, could be seen as a viable strategy to avoid self-esteem threatening situations, such as being linked with women who are only valuable for their physical appearance, or men who degrade women. Alternately, for positive affect toward gender identity, participants could simply have been responding to the more positive attitude of television characters toward all gender identities compared to the neutral and negative condition.

Race. *General themes.* The following responses were provided by participants in answer to the prompt “If you circled Unimportant, Important, or Very Important please write a few sentences (two or more) on the next page explaining your feelings regarding this part of your identity. This would also be a good time to differentiate between your race and ethnicity, if you have differing feelings and/or relationships with these elements of your identity,” after they had indicated the importance of their racial or ethnic identity on a previous item. Participants brought up a wide range of topics from this general prompt, with five main themes emerging, and several minor themes.

As in the gender responses, participant responses addressing race had a major theme of thought and perception being affected by racial identity. Fifty-one percent of participants overall brought up this idea; by far the most common type of thinking references was their own. Around 42% of participants talked about how their racial identity affected their personal thoughts, with some focusing on their own self perceptions, like participant 75’s comment that “my race is a very important part of how I think about myself.” Other participants in this same category talked instead about how their racial identity affected the way they outwardly perceive things, like participant 83 who feels that “my race is how I understand the world based on experiences from my family.” An additional 11.5% of participants brought up how race instead impacts other people’s thinking or perceptions, like participant 76 sharing his belief that “my race is how others view me.” However, like with the gender responses, not everyone who discussed cognition thought that this part of their identity should have as much of an effect. There were still plenty of participants like

participant 1, who believes that “I don’t think race should impact how I think about myself. It’s just a color and I am as different from someone from another race as I am from someone of the same race.”

In another similarity to the gender responses, the effect that racial identity can have on behavior was yet again a major theme, and yet again less common than cognition. A total of 26.9% of participants mentioned either personal (20.5%) or others’ behavior influenced by racial identity. Many times, participant discussion of behavior centered around people of color having to adopt certain behaviors in order to compensate or stay safe or accepted in a society with harsher standards for them than white people. Within this group of responses, participant 73 shared that “especially now, I have to be careful about the things I say, how I act, or who I am around because racism is very much alive and thriving in our society,” and participant 87 expressed that “as a Haitian American, I know that I have to work hard to show my worth in America.” Often, these comments on adapting personal behavior went hand in hand with other people’s behavior, like participant 32 who started off her passage by saying “like gender, my race also majorly affects how *I experience* the world and how *I am treated*,” (emphasis added). Behavior in the race-related responses seemed much more linked to other themes, like discrimination or disadvantage, than the behavior discussion in the gender-related responses.

Understandably, then, disadvantages based on racial differences were a major theme as well. Participants mentioned negative experiences or disadvantages across 30.7% of responses. As with the gender responses, discussion was not limited to personal experience only, although many did mention some instance from their own

life, like participant 4 who shared that “I have to stay true to who I am esp[ecially] w[ith] all the hate toward Arabs today and find myself defending myself a lot more than I should be.” Many participants also or only mentioned discrimination at large, like participant 83 explaining that “race has become such a big thing in society because there is often injustices [sic] regarding race especially in America. Race makes people secure in the world and the infraction of race creates an imbalance that makes us question our identity.” Often, however, the two were not so easily separable, and participants would reference both their own experience and discrimination at large in the same passage, like participant 46: “I feel that skin color has caused so many issues in our society’s [sic] past, so yes I identify as black but by no means is that going to limit me. I should not be profiled as acting or being a certain way b/c of the color of my skin.”

The importance of racial identity was also major theme in these responses at a comparable level. A little more than 29% percent of participants discussed the importance of their race to their personal identity. Like participant 26, who said “[my race] is important to me because it defines who I am and I can never change it since it is part of my identity,” most of the responses centered around the idea that their racial identity was a core and immutable part of who they were as a person. Other participants mentioned different reasons for their racial identity’s importance, such as its influence in their upbringing, like participant 74 who shared that “being a Filipino-American really influenced how I was raised,” or participant 71 who said “my identity as an Indian has been a huge part of my life since birth.”

However, around 23% of other participants said that their racial identity was unimportant to their overall identity, that they had never really considered it, or that it didn't have any effect in their interactions with others. Participant 12 mentions nearly all of these points in his response, saying "I feel as though my race is not central to how I think about myself...I have been around people of many races and felt no differently toward any of them or of myself in relation to them. Race almost never comes up in my everyday life." Racial differences in these types of responses will be discussed below, but it is relevant to note at this point that many participants mentioned being white as an influence on their lack of consideration of racial differences, like participant 64 who shared "in terms of being white, I do not generally think about the topic until I am prompted to by some stimuli."

Positive feelings about participant racial identity was also discussed often enough in the race-related responses, compared to the gender-related responses, to be considered a major theme in this section. Twenty-five percent of participants mentioned their positive feelings about their race or ethnicity, most often centering around feelings of love or pride, like participant 47 sharing that "I love the culture I was raised in in the environment/energy that is associated with it. I believe it is central to who I am as a person and wouldn't have been wanted to be raised any other way." Sometimes, like with participant 57, this pride was phrased in a way that also acknowledged the stigmas or disadvantages that might ordinarily undermine such pride; she explained that "I am proud to be a person of color and I wish everyone saw us the way we see each other." Many participants also gave specific examples of

elements of their culture that they loved, such as participant 59 sharing that “I love my ethnicity because it defines the music & food I eat which are fantastic.”

Minor themes within the race and ethnicity part of the questionnaire included difference between different racial groups (20.5%; “being a minority, 100% places me in a different light than those who are not,” participant 75) and feeling closer to people of the same racial or ethnic background (16.6%; “[my race] helps me make connections with people who are like me,” participant 59).

Differences in Themes by Race. Major themes. While different races did seem to have varying levels of discussion on the major themes, and will be discussed, these differences should not be overstated. While, comparable to their makeup in the entire student body, white students were under represented and all other demographics were at least slightly overrepresented, the numbers for other racial groups are still quite small. For discussions of gender, results for mixed race and Arab student will be discussed, but it should be taken into account that there were only five mixed race students and three Arab/Middle Eastern students in the sample.

For three of the main themes, cognition, behavior, and importance of racial identity, interesting distinctions appear when the results are broken up by racial group. Although not every theme has a strict white vs. non-white divide (some do), White participants consistently discussed race the least when it comes to these three themes. Overall, 60% of Black and mixed race participants, 52.3% of Asian participants, 50% of Latino participants, 38.7% of White participants, and 33% of Middle Eastern participants discussed race having an effect on thoughts and perceptions. A sharper divide between participants of color and white participants

appeared on the subject of personal cognition; a little less than one third of white participants discussed race playing a part in their own thoughts and perceptions, whereas around half of all Black, Latino, and Asian participants (from 50-52.4%) did, along with 40% of mixed race participants and 33% of Middle Eastern participants. White participants were also least likely to report an effect of race on behavior (9.7%) compared to Asian (19%), mixed race (20%), Latino (25%), Black (60%), and Middle Eastern (66%) participants. Finally, White participants were least likely to talk about their racial identity as important or central to who they were, compared to Asian (23.8%), Black (30%), mixed race (40%), Latino (62.5%), and Middle Eastern (66%) participants.

These results are even more interesting when viewed along with two other themes. Participant discussion of racial identity as unimportant was only a minor theme overall, and just barely 10% of participants overall mentioned having not considered their racial identity, but these two themes look very different by racial group. Altogether, 45% of white participants mentioned one of these two themes, whereas not one Black, Latino, Asian or Middle Eastern participant mentioned not thinking about their racial identity, and extremely few viewed it as unimportant. The only other participant to say they had never considered race in their identity was one mixed race participant. Together, these results can be viewed once again, as in the gender responses, through the lens power and of high and low powered groups. White privilege positions white participants in a high power group (Cabrera, 2012) which isolates them from the negative effects of racial discrimination as well as awareness

of racial differences experienced by most other races in historically low power groups (Coleman, 2014).

Some perhaps unexpected differences between racial groups appeared when discussing negative repercussions of racial differences and racism. Potentially unsurprising, based on previous results, only 16.1% of White participants reported negative experiences based in race, but an even smaller percentage of Latino participants (12.5%) did. One third of Asian participants and 40% of Black participants did as well. That Asian participants would report the second highest experiences with racism is important to note in modern dialogue about race in America. Asians are often perceived as the “model minority” and stereotypes about Asians tend to be far more favorable (e.g. hard working, intelligent; Kawai, 2005; Taylor & Stern, 1997) than those about Blacks or Latinos (e.g. lazy, criminal, poor; Ramasubramanian, 2010; Eschholz et al., 2002). However, as these results suggest, that does not mean that Asian Americans do not also experience a great deal of racism, especially when they deviate from model minority status (Zhou, 2004).

Also similarly to the gender results, the racial groups traditionally more stereotyped tended to have the highest expressed positive affect toward their racial identities. Black (30%) and Latino (37.5%) participants talked positively about their racial identities more often than Asian (19%) and White (19.4%) participants. Feeling positively about one’s racial identity is particularly important for stigmatized groups; as one participant put it, “it is important that all African-American men and women take pride in who we are as a race because if we don’t people will feel that they have control over us.” However, given that positive affect toward one’s racial group can

have an important effect on self-esteem and other psychological health measures (DuBois et al., 2002), it is important moving forward for people to find a way of promoting racial pride for privileged groups (particularly whites) that do not depend on racial superiority, or at the very least a value-neutral feeling toward one's race. In particular, developing "White guilt" can be particularly unproductive for white individuals seeking to cause positive change in race relations, because that guilt, and assuaging it, can unnecessarily detract from a focus on the struggles of people of color (Cabrera 2012).

Differences in Themes by Condition. Major themes. Discussion of all major themes differed by condition: racial identity's effect on cognition and on behavior, the importance or lack thereof of racial identity to participants, participant positive affect toward their racial identity, and disadvantage or discrimination experienced because of racial identity.

When discussing both cognition and behavior, the neutral condition had the highest percentage of participants who brought up either, with 62% of participants discussing cognition and 27.5% mentioning behavior, compared to 46.4% and 21.4% in the positive condition, and 38% and 23.8% in the negative. The difference between conditions is particularly striking when viewing personal cognition alone; 51.7% of neutral condition participants mentioned race having an effect on their thoughts and perceptions, compared to 39.3% in the positive condition and 33.3% in the negative condition. The neutral and negative conditions had relatively similar levels of discussion of personal behavior (24.1% and 23.8%) compared to the lower levels in the positive condition (14.3%).

The difference in levels of discussion about personal cognition and behavior compared to others' cognition and behavior across conditions is interesting in the context of the personal agency exhibited by characters of color in the respective conditions. In the positive condition, both characters of color are independent, successful, and thoughtful individuals. While the one woman of color in the negative condition is intelligent and outsmarts the conniving male lead, most of her actions within the episode are tied to someone else's decisions—she comes to the bar that evening at the behest of her white female colleague, and ends up going on a date with the man she had so consistently proved herself more intelligent than by the suggestion of the same colleague. As characters of color show more agency and success, participants who would otherwise assume race simply affects personal thoughts and actions might be more likely to consider the fact that other people's thoughts and actions—and also biases—might be more likely to explain differences in outcomes between racial groups in America.

While the importance of participants' racial identities followed a similar pattern to the importance of gender identity across conditions, both negative experiences related to racial differences and positive affect toward racial identity varied compared to their gender identity equivalents.

Importance of racial identity was highest in the positive condition, with 39.3% of participants in the condition discussing the importance of their race to their identity, compared to 24.1% in the neutral condition and 23.8% in the negative condition. While the neutral condition and negative condition are nearly identical, this is still an interesting result considering the negative condition did have one character

of color while the neutral condition had no human representation whatsoever. While the conditions were not found to be statistically significantly different from each other in their representations of people of color, a difference of around 15% in responses between the positive and other conditions suggests that perhaps a different measure might have revealed different results, as participants seem to be responding differently to some content in terms of race.

Interestingly, the percentage of participants who mentioned having not considered their racial identity, that their racial identity was not important, or that they felt no particular connection to other people through their race or culture did differ in what might be the expected way across conditions. While the positive and negative condition very similar rates (17.8% and 19%) 37.9% of participants in the neutral condition brought up one of these two points in their responses. It would seem that participants who otherwise might not think about race, or otherwise think it was unimportant, might be prompted to deeper consideration by seeing people of different races together on the same show.

Surprisingly, discussion of racism and negative outcomes from racial differences were highest in the positive condition. Almost a third of positive condition participants discussed an experience or observation within this category, compared to a fairly similar 28.5% in the negative condition and 17.2% in the neutral condition. Representation of more people of color might call to mind more race related life experiences, thereby increasing negative experiences as a subset of those overall, which could explain the gap between the neutral condition and the other two. However, the difference between the negative and positive condition does not seem

small enough to be entirely negligible. While there are of course many domains in which stereotypes exist for people of color, perhaps the fact that the two people of color in the positive condition were shown across a broad range of domains, including a professional one, brought up more considerations of discrimination in terms of economic opportunity than the negative representation episode with the one woman of color, as a bar does not necessarily evoke any particular racial stereotypes.

The final major theme for race responses, positive affect toward racial identity, was fairly consistent across conditions, with participants in the positive condition bringing up these feelings moderately less frequently. The negative and neutral conditions were relatively similar, at 28.6% and 27.6% of participants expressing contentment or pride with their racial identity, while 21.4% of the positive condition participants did. This is the opposite pattern from discussion of positive affect in relation to gender identity, where participants were most likely to discuss positive affect toward their gender in the positive condition and least likely to in the negative condition. Here, it seems more likely that respondents were defensively speaking highly of their racial identities, if anything.

Overall, the qualitative data yielded valuable information about how people relate to their gender and racial identity, and what common themes appear across individuals' personal reflections on these aspects of their identity. Across both subjects, the most consistent themes were participants believing gender and racial identity have an impact on cognition and behavior. Additionally, some quite interesting patterns by gender, race, and condition were revealed upon further examination. The different results by condition are particularly worthy of further

study, as they indicate that how people think about and relate to their gender and racial identity can be shaped by the television they watch. Ultimately, the extremely small sample size of certain groups within the overall sample made it impractical to attempt to analyze these data quantitatively for either hypothesis or research question, but the interesting patterns of these data could hopefully prompt further research.

Limitations and Future Directions

One major limitation to this study is the discrepancy between participant-evaluated quality of representation and that of the independent raters. First, it is important to note that there was still a statistically significant difference in participant ratings of the positive and negative representation conditions, while yielding no statistically significant differences in self-esteem by condition. However, there did seem to be a disconnect between rater and experimenter expectations, and participant results that is worth discussing. While all episodes for this study were evaluated by three separate raters for their positive (nonstereotyped) and negative (stereotyped) representation of women with an average score of 4.22 for the positive episodes and 1.38 for the negative episodes, participants did not seem to agree. While the negative episodes were rated relatively negatively ($m=2.45$, $sd=.91$), the positive episodes only achieved a total rating of 3.27 ($sd=.74$), which is only slightly better than neutral. While somewhat surprising, given the pre-rater's scores for these episodes, these results are reflective of a larger issue the researcher became aware of while constructing this experiment: what counts as positive representation?

In this study, negative representation was operationalized as stereotyped representation, and positive representation, accordingly, was nonstereotyped. Much of

the literature would support this operationalization with respect to negative representation. The traits most often viewed as stereotypic female traits, such as passivity, dependence, and weakness (Eschholtz et al., 2002) are almost inarguably negative. However, positive representation is much harder to define, and definitions are much rarer in the literature. For this study, I chose to operationalize it as non-stereotypic female characters; the episodes that the raters watched had female leads that were in positions of power, who would be nearly impossible to categorize as passive, dependent, or weak. However, these strong women existed within a context of misogyny that they rose above. In searching for episodes to use for this study, this generated a more refined version of the above question: is positive representation depictions of women rising above explicit examples of misogyny and expectations of stereotyped behavior, or is it women existing competently in a context free of gendered expectations? The former was far more prevalent than the latter in prime-time sitcoms, and also relates far more to the actual world that female viewers live in, and so it was selected. However, it does result in viewers hearing stereotyped expectations of women (which are then subverted by our heroines). It seems that this exposure may affect viewers' perceptions of the representation of women, even when the women in these contexts rise above the negativity.

While the question of positive representation is one worthy of more investigation, the hypothesis could also be posed that positive representation simply has no more effect than neutral representation. The psychological study of television has primarily focused on the negative self-esteem consequences of television viewership; it could be possible that television is a medium that only has the

possibility to harm at high viewing levels. While this study reveals no statistically significant results to counter this hypothesis, there is research to show that television can increase prosocial behavior and weaken stereotypes, depending on the content type (e.g. Tukachinsky, 2015). Additionally, while this study did not yield any significant differences in self-esteem means across conditions, there was a trend for the self-esteem of black women and men, white women, and Latino men to be higher in the nonstereotyped condition than the neutral condition. Since the nature documentary used for the neutral condition made no mention of humans, there seems little reason for self-esteem to be affected either way. If this study could be replicated, improving on its limitations, it seems possible that the trends in the means could obtain significance, especially since for the most part, they show the hypothesized differences.

While sample size is an extremely common limitation of psychological studies, it is particularly relevant to this one because of the diverse subject pool and the importance of that diversity to the hypothesis and research question. Because of a conscious attempt to include participants of varying and representative racial backgrounds in each condition, the overall number of some racial groups in each condition was extremely small, in some cases only two or three participants of a particular racial category. While the means of global self-esteem scores for these groups seem to fit within the hypothesized pattern, it is possible that the extremely small number of participants across conditions may have prevented them from obtaining significance.

The nature of the sample itself also may have limited the results found. Wesleyan University attracts a student body that is largely quite liberal and well educated on racial and gender disparities in the media. The campus climate of Wesleyan may have created a sample that was not representative of the population at large in terms of comfort and confidence in more universally stereotyped identities.

This study chose to focus on race and gender exclusively, but similar research can and should be undertaken for sexual orientation, as well as genders other than cis male and female. There is some evidence that, in characters overall, LGBT individuals may technically overrepresented; some estimates put LGBT representation as high as 7% of characters, compared to the purported 2.4-3.5% of the US population that identifies as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Center for Disease Control, 2014; the Williams Institute, 2011). However, these are not necessarily main characters, and all too often are present for comedic relief with little in depth character development (Raley & Lucas, 2006). There is also reason to believe the current estimates of LGBT individuals in the US population is underreported, given stigma against identifying as anything other than straight and cis. Although a smaller percentage of the population than other LGBT identities (estimated at .3%, the Williams Institute, 2011), transgender individuals are still underrepresented, despite a recent increase in highly visible celebrities coming out as trans; particularly absent are representations of young trans individuals, or trans individuals whose stories do not involve tragedy (Kelso, 2015). Increasing research on quantity and quality of representation of LGBT communities, as well as how television exposure to these representations or their lack thereof affects members of these communities, is vital.

One motivating reason to increase research on these groups, aside from mere scientific interest, is that in the most recent survey done by the Pew Research Center (2014) on the subject, gays and lesbians were viewed as experiencing the most discrimination, with 74% of participants saying gays and lesbians experience some to a lot of discrimination. This was compared to 68% of participants who said African Americans experienced some to a lot of discrimination, and 65% for Latinos and 57% for women. If representation of women and people of color are worth investigating because of limited and low quality representation along with real world representation, then the LGBT certainly qualifies as well.

Although the null hypothesis must be retained for the present study, future research should be done to eliminate or at least alleviate some of the limitations outlined here. The different discussions of themes across the qualitative data by condition, as well as the differences in means from the self-esteem questionnaire—although not significant—certainly garner attention for further study. Future research should continue to attempt to isolate the specific factors in television—such as stereotyped representation—that are responsible for the negative cognitive and behavioral effects documented across the literature. Otherwise, the only natural conclusion would be to assume TV is unqualifiedly bad for its viewers, and the only natural course of action to throw out our televisions.

Appendices

Appendix A. *Experiment form.* Annotations for increased understanding added in italics inside brackets.

Reactions and Opinions

Part I

1. Based on the episode you viewed, do you believe the writer and director were men, women, or both? Why? [*distractor question*]

2. Based on the episode you viewed, do you believe the writer and director were White, people of color, or both? Why? [*distractor question*]

3. Do you believe this episode was a positive, negative, or neutral representation of women? [*in the positive and negative conditions, where two episodes were screened, this question was duplicated, and the starting text read “Do you believe episode 1 was...” and “Do you believe episode 2 was....”The two episode ratings were averaged together to form one number to be more easily compared.*]

1	2	3	4	5
Very negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive

4. Do you believe this episode was a positive, negative, or neutral representation of POC? [*in the positive and negative conditions, where two episodes were screened, this question was duplicated, and the starting text read “Do you believe episode 1 was...” and “Do you believe episode 2 was....” The two episode ratings were averaged together to form one number to be more easily compared.*]

1	2	3	4	5
Very negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive

5. On an average weekday, I normally watch TV for:

1 Less than one hour per day	2 Between one and two hours per day	3 Between 2 and 4 hours per day	4 More than 4 hours per day
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6. On an average weekend, I normally watch TV for:

1 Less than one hour per day	2 Between one and two hours per day	3 Between 2 and 4 hours per day	4 More than 4 hours per day
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7. **Binge-watching** has been defined as “watching between 2-6 episodes of the same TV show in one sitting.” When I do watch TV, I binge-watch:

1 Rarely or almost never (most of the time, I only watch one episode of a show)	2 Occasionally (I watch single episodes more often than I binge-watch)	3 Sometimes (I watch single episodes about as often as I binge-watch)	4 Often (I binge-watch more often than I watch single episodes)	5 Almost always (most of the time, I binge-watch)
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For question 8, part a) please fill in the term(s) most accurate to describe yourself. For part b) of the following questions, please circle the answer that sounds most like you. For part c) follow the instructions listed below.

8. a) With regards to gender, I identify as

8. b) My gender is an important part of how I think about myself.

1 Very unimportant	2 Unimportant	3 Important	4 Very important
I've never really thought about it	I've thought about it, but it's not a central part of how I think about myself	I've thought about it, and it's a central part of how I think about myself	I've thought about it quite a bit, and it's a very central part of how I think about myself

8. c) If you circled **Unimportant**, **Important**, or **Very Important** please write a few sentences (two or more) explaining your feelings regarding this part of your identity.

For question 9, part a) of the question, please fill in the term(s) most accurate to describe yourself. For part b) of the following questions, please circle the answer that sounds most like you. For part c) follow the instructions listed below.

9. a) With regards to race and ethnicity, I identify as

9. b) My race and/or ethnicity is an important part of how I think about myself.

1 Very unimportant	2 Unimportant	3 Important	4 Very important
I've never really thought about it	I've thought about it, but it's not a central part of how I think about myself	I've thought about it, and it's a central part of how I think about myself	I've thought about it quite a bit, and it's a very central part of how I think about myself

9. c) If you circled **Unimportant**, **Important**, or **Very Important** please write a few sentences (two or more) on the next page explaining your feelings regarding this part of your identity. This would also be a good time to differentiate between your race and ethnicity, if you have differing feelings and/or relationships with these elements of your identity.

For the following questions, please circle the most appropriate answer for you.

10. How do you think women are viewed by most people in the US?

1 Very negatively	2 Negatively	3 Neutrally	4 Positively	5 Very positively
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11. How do you think men are viewed by most people in the US?

1 Very negatively	2 Negatively	3 Neutrally	4 Positively	5 Very positively
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12. How do you think White people are viewed by most people in the US?

1 Very negatively	2 Negatively	3 Neutrally	4 Positively	5 Very positively
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13. How do you think People of Color are viewed by most people in the US?

1 Very negatively	2 Negatively	3 Neutrally	4 Positively	5 Very positively
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Appendix B. Code Book.

Abbreviation	Meaning
AD	Acknowledges, but denies the power of the label/stereotype ("I don't think it affects me")
Ap	Appearance; external presentation, cultivating looks, etc.
AR	Acknowledges, but resists or rises above the stereotype
AS	Acknowledges, and submits to or accepts the stereotype
B	Behavior; discusses an effect of r/g in general on behavior OR actions; includes choice in presentation
BO	Behavior, other; discusses an effect of r/g on other people's behavior OR actions; includes choice in presentation
BP	Behavior, personal; discusses an effect of r/g on personal behavior OR actions; includes choice in presentation
C	Cognition; discusses an effect of race/gender on thought OR perception in general ("people think that...because of X")
Cm	Compensation; discusses having to work harder or do something to compensate for r/g
Cn	Cohesion; discusses benefits of fitting in/connection with a group/increased ability to relate to people through r/g, connection to culture
CO	Cognition, other; discusses an effect of r/g on other people's thought process OR perceptions
CP	Cognition, personal; discusses an effect of r/g on their own thoughts OR perceptions
D	Difference; mentions that men and women/whites and POC/etc. are different, have different experiences, etc.
DD	Defensive difference; mentions difference but denies its importance, or denies a difference
Dv	Disadvantage, decreased opportunities, bars to success mentioned, limitations; as opposed to generalized or specific instances of discrimination or oppression; patriarchy counts here
E	Expectation; can also apply for responsibilities, a sense of duty; discusses an expectation of personal behavior or presentation because of r/g
G	General; comments on the relevance of r/g on society in general ("people act differently because..." "people think that...")
I	Important; r/g is cited as important to their character/identity/who they are
IA	Identify as
IW	Identify with
M	Mentions r/g without any further information to code ("I'm female" "I'm white")
N	Negative; mentions negative repercussions attached to identity or related stereotypes; mentions oppression, degradation, violence;

	stronger code than Dv; cat calling counts here
NCn	No cohesion; does not feel necessarily any more part of group they belong to than any other
ND	Not defining; a little weaker than not important; can still be recognized as important, but not central
NI	Not important; r/g is cited as not important or not a large/significant part of their character/identity/who they are
NT	No thought; have not thought about r/g
O	Outcome; mentions outcome/life trajectory without referencing personal or other actions
P	Personal; comments on relevance of r/g to their personal life (gives examples from real life or discusses impact on their personal life)
Pr	Privilege, advantage, additional opportunities mentioned
Pv	Positive; discusses positive affect toward r/g ("I enjoy being a man" "I'm proud of my heritage")
Q	Qualifying language; not quite the same as defensive; acknowledges potential for feeling bad but doesn't; can also be phrased the opposite way "I wouldn't say I'm proud..." "I would say I'm ashamed"
R	Responsibility; specifically uses the word responsibility re: r/g roles
RI	Rejects identity; appear to be one r/g but do not identify with that r/g
S	Stereotype; explicitly mentions a stereotype; code for each stereotype mentioned
SC	Social Construct; also social norm; discusses the socially constructed nature of r/g or a stereotype

When analyzing and discussing data for qualitative section, some codes were combined into larger themes. AD, AR, AS, and S were combined for discussion under the theme of "stereotypes." Ap, B, BO, and BP were combined into the theme "behavior." C, CO, and CP were combined into the theme "cognition." Dv and N were combined for discussions of "discrimination." E and R were combined to form "expectations." NI, NT, and NCn were discussed together in the theme "not important." D and DD were combined into the theme "differences." All remaining codes were discussed independently, when relevant. Not all codes comprised a major or minor theme, and so not all codes were discussed.

Appendix C. Gender Qualitative Data. If cell is empty except for “1,” this indicates that the participant did not respond because they had circled “1. Very unimportant. I’ve never really thought about it,” and were not asked to elaborate further. Participants were randomly assigned a number based on the original expected number of participants; because of no-shows after numbers had already been generated, some numbers may be missing in the ID column; this does not indicate missing data, simply that no participant existed corresponding to that number.

ID	Response
1	Well I know that I am female but it doesn't control how I think about myself. If I want to become a doctor, I'll do that. If I want to wear makeup or don't want to wear it, all of it is fine. [I don't think] My gender doesn't impact my thinking.
2	As a man, I believe that there are certain things that are expected of me. Not saying that there are things that women cannot do that I can, but I just feel like I have the responsibility of setting a good example for different people in my life.
3	1
4	I sometimes think about my gender when comparing to women and opportunities I have and they may not. Although I am a man, I can be a feminist.
5	I believe identifying as female has shaped the way I see the world, because from the time I was young I was taught about the world through the lens of what society perceives “females” should act like. At this point of my life, I can recognize this and accept the way I've been taught to see the world as well as modify some of my views to better align with me as an individual rather than me as a female.
6	Gender stereotypes did affect the way I think and act in the past. However, nowadays I don't think about myself with regards to if my behavior seemed masculine or feminine anymore.
7	Actually, I don't want gender to be a big portion of my identity, but gender stereotyping force me to match the so-called 'male standard', otherwise, exclusion and isolation happens.
8	I definitely think it is important, but it does not completely define my central identity. Things like music and hobbies are not something a specific gender designates.
9	I think that which gender you are is one of if not the most important part of your character. That is not to say that there ought to be discrepancies in education or the workplace at all, but there is a clear difference b/w men and women, and it is an extremely defining factor in one's life for obvious reasons.
10	I know that I am a male. I let it shape some of the activities I undertake and how I perceive and express myself.
11	Sexuality is an integral part of my life. It's not only because I enjoy having sex, but also because it's one of the lenses I use to view myself and others. Plus I believe that being born male and gay played a major role in forming who I am.
12	I feel as though gender is important and a central part about how I think about myself. Gender helps people conform to society, which can be both beneficial and limiting. I believe that it helps me define who I am and how I comport myself.

13	Well, biologically, I'm very different from a large portion of the population. At the very least, this causes many differences on the biological level. However, there are times when this behavior can and should be pushed aside in terms of ideas and thought.
15	I think it's important to know and to feel comfortable in your own skin as any gender so I think it is very important to think about it. I'm not saying that all decisions need to be based on your identity however.
16	I haven't really thought about it but I suppose being a male does affect some of my actions. I see myself as different from females in some regards however inherently most of the differences I see aren't due to gender. As Identity is concerned however, I am a male and that all that I really think about
17	I feel that being a woman, especially now, where degradation still occurs in more covert forms, it is important to fully embrace that this is part of my identity and that I should still be entitled to equal pay, and being viewed as smart and independent, regardless of my gender. Both hostile and benevolent sexism is apparent today, and I do not believe women should have to deal with those stigma's solely because of their genders.
18	I'm consciously aware that I'm a woman in my clothes and accessories. I pay more attention to my body shape.
20	I have always been comfortable with my gender identity
21	I believe that there are more limitations on the behaviors that society considers acceptable for women as compared to men. There are harsher, more severe and often inaccurate stereotypes etc. and I believe that as a woman living in this century it is important to value your personal identity regardless of harmful actions/words of others.
22	I don't think about my gender as the key defining factor of who I am, however I am very aware of my gender in society. Mainly w/ clothing and shoes b/c I feel that I'm expected to wear certain things/styles and not others, based on my gender. I also feel that people look at me and treat me differently than they would if I did not identify as female.
23	I conform to a lot of "male" things. I enjoy being a man, and it is definitely not something that doesn't factor into my thinking. I feel uncomfortable at times when I wonder if I'm coming off as male stereotypes—like walking behind someone might seem like following them, being friendly might come off as trying to sleep with them.
24	My gender affects the way I'm treated, and growing up it has affected my feelings about myself. I must be aware of that.
25	Because in the current condition where gender determines how successful/accepted/seen in the society, disregarding my gender from my identity is not going to be beneficial for me nor for female in general
26	When I think about my gender, I think about the restrictions that exist because I am a female. It also worries me that many people can easily lable me as emotionally unstable just because of my gender. It is important for me because even though it is easy to be labeled as emotionally unstable, it really affects what I think about myself.
27	There are expectations of men that I strive to live up to, whether people will say

	that they denounce the expectations or not. Father's have important roles.
28	I identify as female and think about it often because it affects my career trajectory and anticipated roles as a parent. I am proud to be female, but must acknowledge how it is perceived in the world.
29	My gender affects my self-esteem, the way I present myself, how I think & express ideas. I also very much identify with being feminine.
31	I have never thought about it.
32	My identity as female is an integral factor in how I experience & navigate the world. As I identify as female and others see me as female, I am treated differently, whether that be positively or negatively or neutral. For instance, as a female, I occasionally experience catcalling on the streets or discrimination about my abilities because of my gender identity.
33	I haven't thought of it much, but I have been [raised] in a family of four boys where we all played sports. So it was a very one sided upbringing and I was [never] exposed to or sought out feminine attributes.
34	I have a predominantly male family (brothers, cousins, etc.), and so I spent a lot of my young life being distinguished by my gender. I've always been friends mostly with girls, had long hair, showed my legs, etc.—in that manner conforming to societal notions of “womanhood.” That being said, I am very concerned with all issues related to feminism, consider myself a strong feminist, and think about issues of gender often.
35	In my relationship I think about how the boyfriend is supposed to treat his girl. The stereotypes I have to follow in order to be the man in my relationship.
36	I define myself as a guy. The way I act, dress, carry myself is all with the idea that I'm a guy's guy.
37	I think my gender identity will shape how I interact with other people. I will adopt different methods when interact with male and female.
38	Yes it is a part of me, but it doesn't dominate how I think about myself.
39	It colors my experiences and therefore also the way I view fictional experiences as well. I am proud to be a woman and though I do not place into many gender stereotypes (I wear “boyish” clothes, am a lesbian) I still regard it as central.
41	1
42	I am and was born male-bodied, and do not feel body dysmorphia to a degree that I would at all consider myself a trans* woman. However, I have little to no interest in most common definitions of masculinity, and find myself perfectly comfortable fulfilling “feminine” roles. This year I became far more distrustful of men, especially white men, due to negative experiences endured by myself and, moreover, worse experiences endured by my close female friends, even at the hands of my close male friends. Recently I have felt far more distant from male identifiers, and have occasionally chosen to use female and non-binary identifiers. My significant other has started addressing me with more fluid pronouns, which I find more resonant than I had anticipated. It's a very new part of my identity, but I see it as a logical step.
43	1
44	Gender is a social construct. But I am male, so I just accept that.

45	I know that as a female I have a tendency to be more passive and to be more emotional. I know that female are also more concerned with body image and the tags that society places on them. Understanding all these things about who I am allows me to be more thoughtful about my responses and think about why I do certain things. Acknowledging that I tend to be emotional helps me deal with things in a less emotional more logical way.
46	I am proud to be a woman despite the patriarchal society + world we live in. I love that I am a woman b/c I like breaking those stereotypes and proving certain men wrong (very empowering)
47	The way I identify helps me understand certain aspects of society. I feel like I was made male for a reason thus I should encompass everything that society regards me as. I love being a male, but I feel like if I were a female I would feel the same way. Gender doesn't shape my personal beliefs but it does shape how others act around me (I believe)
48	Almost everything I do relates back to my gender and female stereotypes. This impacts how I look (dress up, hair, make-up, shoes...) as well as how I act.
49	Feels like a central part of who I am and dictates many of the choices I make and how I see myself in relation to other men. Also, as a gay man, I feel very aware of how many of my interest differ from the classic "male" gender stereotype, and therefore it's become more important in how I see myself.
50	Based on societal norms & the background that I come from as a man I am supposed to do certain or it isn't natural for me to do other things, so in keeping up "traditions" I often think a lot about what I can & can't do.
51	I feel male (probably cause I am male...:P) and can't think about living as not a male whether that's female, intersex, nonbinary, etc. While I'm sure it defines my thinking in ways I can't consciously articulate, I'd hope that, when thinking about myself, I'd define myself in other ways (ex: I love music) instead of in such a general way.
52	I believe that there are certain stereotypes as a male that I like to express and show, and there are others that are dumb and old fashioned. This is an idea I apply to myself only, If other people wish to express their gender differently, then it is their choice and no one should shun them for it.
54	I constantly think how should girls behave properly. I also [concentrate] on how should girls interact with boys.
55	I believe its important because it is a part of who I am. I am happy with who I am so being male is important to me.
56	I don't always do what is stereotypically masculine per se, but my gender does affect how I and my environment [interact], which in turn affects how I develop and my personality.
57	Important—I am a female and I am proud to be one. I believe that everyone is equal in the world but I don't like when people are Sexist and it bothers me.
58	I would argue most people consider gender as part of their identity, otherwise they wouldn't feel the need to emphasize their particular categorization of themselves/assign a gender identity. Obviously, from a female perspective I consider my gender identification in relation to feminist, and other female empowering movements/beliefs.

59	I think about my gender when it comes to taking care of my health because I know of health predispositions. I also [observe] it when it comes to social normal such as knowing I shouldn't hurt a woman.
61	1
62	It is important as it guides the way I am supposed to act and how I acquired my interests. It also plays a role in defining my place in the society and what my responsibilities are. However, it is not VERY important as I don't really think about masculinity consciously, all the time, those are passive traits most of the time.
64	I feel that my identity as a male coupled with societal culturing has been a large part of my development. Both biologically and sociologically I feel that gender plays a large role in identity given desires, hormones, etc...
66	I feel that a lot of what defines me is from my gender, such as future expectations for my career. However, I feel that it shouldn't dictate everything and performing perhaps slightly less traditional activities for males is not wrong at all.
67	I have always been represented as a traditional male. I never did this because society told me I had to, I simply always gravitated towards sports/other primary male activities.
68	There's a certain kind of hypermasculine mindset/attitude that is very pervasive and frankly, repulsive, but when you become indoctrinated into it it's hard to shake. I tend to think "if being a man entails the reduction of women to meat, then I don't want to be a man anymore." Maybe that's oversimplification but it's good to question even if asking the wrong questions. Anyway, nobody is born with a gender, gender is slapped on to one and people can choose to accept it or reject it.
69	It's a part of who I am and what I am stereotyped as in society, I feel strongly for women struggles movement in the past and just recently am I as a woman able to do things I take for granted every day
70	I feel that there is a [shaded] view of me because my action/behavior can be attributed to defining a woman/being exempt from typical female behavior. I also am sensitive to how men behave around me and assume many things/thoughts are sexist (either conclusion or unconsciously)
71	I do regard myself as female and that contributes to my personal image. As I've gotten older, my appearance has matter less however I still compare my outer image to others. In that sense my appearance is key to my identity. I was also raised in a household that did not educate me on gender and identity in that my only knowledge was of gender roles taught by my peers.
73	It's good to consider but not important because when I make decisions or do homework, I do them as a person, not as a female (if that makes any sense).
74	I have always considered myself male, but enjoyed stereotypically feminine things which is probably why I do not think of gender much. For example, I enjoyed performance and putting on make up.
75	With almost everything, there is a bias/stereotype associated with it. Therefore, being a female, I do have to be aware of inequalities and discrimination alone solely because I am a female.

76	My gender biologically has programmed my body to feel & act in a certain way. Being a male I long for confidence and strength.
77	I'm feeling great to be a woman. In my background, there are certain stereotypes and social expectations toward women. But things are getting better right now and people don't view women as they did before.
78	I have certain social pressures placed on me to act, "manly," if not I'm seen as less of a man if I do. Plus I identify as a male, biology, I would say has nothing to do with it, or little.
80	My gender usually makes me think of situations or emotions in a certain way. But I would say it's more subconscious than present in the way I view myself. It's already built in.
81	I find that I encounter certain societal/cultural issues due to my gender. Overcoming those boundaries has helped me develop my identity, not the gender itself necessarily.
82	I am female but I regard it unimportant b/c I don't think that that constitutes a certain way of life. I don't have to be a "stereotypical" girl which is why I try to not think about my gender to hold me back
83	Gender is how we feel comfortable in our surroundings. Although there are stereotypes for both men and women, those stereotypes in a sense becomes who we are today.
85	I think a lot of the ways in which I act are very stereotypical in terms of male behavior.
86	Because being a man means responsibility and being masculine. It's who I am.
87	Since I grew up gender has always played a role in how I act, dress, and even think
88	I've thought about it, but I don't really think of my actions and activities as having much gender association. I dress myself myself under male classifications and I guess I do "male" activities, but I just think of those as who I am, and not as male appearances or activities.
89	Societal views of me depends on my gender. I sometimes consider how that affects how others view me and be conscious on who others perceive me. Societal views definitely affects how I think about myself. Sometimes I wonder if I'm too sensitive or if I'm not mentally strong enough compared to other males.

Appendix D. Race Qualitative Data. If cell is empty except for “1,” this indicates that the participant did not respond because they had circled “1. Very unimportant. I’ve never really thought about it,” and were not asked to elaborate further. Participants were randomly assigned a number based on the original expected number of participants; because of no-shows after numbers had already been generated, some numbers may be missing in the ID column; this does not indicate missing data, simply that no participant existed corresponding to that number.

ID	
1	I don’t think race should impact how I think about myself. It’s just a color and I am as different from someone from another race as I am from someone of the same race.
2	Being an African-American man or women in this day and age can be overbearing. It is important that all African-American men and women take pride in who we are as a race because if we don’t people will feel that they have control over us
3	1
4	I am considered “white” in America, but I don’t identify as such. I’ve wanted to “reclaim my identity” ever since I found out. Also, I have to stay true to who I am esp. w/ all the hate toward Arabs today and find myself defending myself a lot more than I should be.
5	I grew up in a Latin American country, and therefore consider the Latino culture a very important part of who I am. However, several aspects of my personality and my way of viewing things do not always conform to those traditional to Latino people I grew up around. I understand that it is an important part of who I am, but it does not fully shape me by any means.
6	I self-consciously identify myself as Asian, even if I don’t necessarily conform to any stereotypes.
7	1
8	I’ve always distanced myself from the heritage, and often had friends who were not the same ethnicity as me.
9	Although to a lesser degree than gender, one’s race and ethnicity is also a fairly defining factor in their life. I do not necessarily take great pride in being white, however I think that if I were not white my life could be slightly different.
10	I know I am white and that it shapes some of the ways I am perceived but I don’t feel it strongly impacts my life or interactions.
11	I was born and raised in South Asia so there is no distinction between my race and ethnicity Whereas previously (when I was in my country), I would have rated this Unimportant, coming to the US has made me pay more attention to my race. I have to be mindful about what I do/say in certain situations, and there are instances where I feel like my race was the reason for people’s negative attitude about me.
12	I feel as though my race is not central to how I think about myself. I pick up on my personality and characteristics of myself through the environment behind me. I have been around people of many races and felt no differently toward any of them or of myself in relation to them. Race almost never comes up in my everyday life.

13	The color of my skin is perhaps the most easily observable factor, so again it's not something I can just ignore. However, I don't really feel that it impacts my personality.
15	For me, it's not a central part of who I am but for others it may cause them to make diff. choices based on their background/culture.
16	I think this is more important than my gender based off of cultural ideals. I am white but also a quarter Asian and this is important to me because I am proud of my heritage and I think honor is something I have adopted from my ethnicity that is very important to me
17	Being Chinese and growing up in Hong Kong made me realize how [covert] forms of racism still exist [amongst] the white expatriots and Chinese locals living there. Being faced with this and [equally, interesting] my parents being faced with this, made me realized that I have to stand up for where I come from, and my race.
18	I wouldn't say that my race & ethnicity are so separable. I'm conscious aware & proud of both of them, especially I will demonstrate myself as multicultural.
20	I grew up in a very understanding and diverse atmosphere. My race & ethnicity doesn't really affect me.
21	I believe that being Caucasian often gives people an advantage in America. Even though I do not believe race is a privilege, racism and prejudices against people of color are still rampant in America & around the globe.
22	I am a Hispanic Jew. I think that it plays a role in who I am b/c I'm Hispanic and Caucasian, which are often not available together as ways I identify—especially on standardized tests and forms. That always makes me hyper-aware of my race/ethnicity. I don't, however, define myself and who I am based off of these.
23	It is sometime I forget at times—and that is why I remember I can forget it. I can be “just me,” and that is something I ought to bear in mind.
24	Same thing—being white has had an affect on where I stand in life, so it would be ignorant not to acknowledge that and remain aware.
25	I have a physically distinct look that would define me as brown Asian. And it's important because I am proud of what I look, of what my look signifies in terms of the culture I identify as, and how I would be perceived as. Ethnicity is more of habit, culture, and tradition, whereas race plays more role in physical appearance (though in culture, too, but some people w/ same race might have different ethnic background)
26	I belong to an ethnicity that many people around the world are opposed to it. It is important to me because it defines who I am and I can never change it since it is part of my identity Therefore, people have to accept me and accept my background.
27	I'm not racist. I don't have a lot of money. The more people say I'm racist the more I understand how racist they actually are.
28	I must acknowledge that I'm white because it is closely tied with my advantages and opportunities. While I'm not proud to be white, I appreciate my European heritage and the characteristics associated with it.
29	My race privileges me in almost everything I do & is most definitely a core part of my identity. I don't particularly identify with my ethnicity (if I'm defining it

	correctly) since I'm just a blend of European. But I definitely think a lot about (how I don't have to think about) my race.
31	Not many people at this school are Mexican so I am proud of being Mexican
32	Like gender, my race also majorly affects how I experience the world and how I am treated. In fact, both these facets of my identity intersect in my experiences. As an Asian American female, I am often expected to be subservient and soft spoken as opposed to assertive and exhibiting qualities of leadership. I consider my race Asian American and my ethnicity to be Chinese.
33	1
34	I often think about the privilege connected with being white. I would like to think that I am aware of it and that I am a good ally to POC. I feel even more connected to my Jewishness because it connects me to my family.
35	It is on the news and social network everyday. The majority of my friends are white, and I am sometimes referred to as their black friend. I don't know if that offends me. It is just a little unnecessary.
36	I acknowledge that I'm white, and that I might be a little different if I wasn't—but I don't think about it a lot.
37	I think my identity of race and ethnicity will also shape my view to other people. I will have a sense of familiarity with other Asians.
38	I think of race as just a social construct, but I know it effects everyday life. Technically I'm of European ethnicity (same as most white Americans) but that does not impact my life.
39	Part of my privilege of being white is not really having to think about it. I have only thought about it in discussions explicitly involving race. However, it does play a large part on the course of my life.
41	As a minority I often think about my race. I'm not ashamed of it, but it does shape the way I view certain things.
42	My dad grew up as a white-passing mixed-race man in Apartheid South Africa, meaning although I am visibly not 100% white, I have no other concrete family history to trace other than vague leads to India and Mauritius. Because of the "one drop" type thinking about race in the US, I do not consider myself white, but having been raised in a mostly white community, middle-class and light-skinned, I also don't identify as a POC.
43	As an Arab American I find that a lot of my time is spent embracing my race/ethnicity and the rest avoiding it. My race puts me at a disadvantage in this country which is difficult not to think about. The way I think, speak and act is, in many times, based on my race and the problems I face from it.
44	I'm white—ever since I was young I felt that society placed white as superior. And that's just not right.
45	My ethnicity is a big part of who I am. Even bigger than gender. This is because I love my culture and my heritage and they both influence how I think and react to things. I have certain viewpoints because I am Egyptian and I've had certain conversations that many other people have not. I am more religious because I am a part of a very religious culture.
46	I feel that skin color has caused so many issues in our society's past, so yes I identify as black but by no means is that going to limit me. I should not be

	profiled as acting or being a certain way b/c of the color of my skin.
47	I love the culture I was raised in an the environment/energy that is associated with it. I believe it is central to who I am as a person and wouldn't have been wanted to be raised any other way.
48	I often understand that being a part of the white society has given me advantages. While this is beginning to change, I can still imagine how my life would be different if I were a different race.
49	Don't often think of myself in terms of whiteness—unless I'm in a room with only POC. Also, feel very American, however, still not necessarily a driving factor of my identity.
50	As a person who grew up in a Afro-Caribbean household I have always enjoyed that part of my identity. I had no trouble seeing myself as black. However, as I moved onto independent, "ivy prep schools" for middle & high school I developed in a way that exposed me to "white" characteristics as people from my neighborhood called it. That is why I see myself as having sort of a dual personality so I marked important to highlight the fact that my black culture is still very important to me even though I don't exhibit stereotypical black qualities.
51	I've lived my life with white privilege, but my Native American background is still a very important component of me. It's definitely something you think about.
52	I am Hispanic. This puts me at a disadvantage in the USA. Despite this I do all I can to excel and be better than anyone. Being a disadvantaged Hispanic is key to my identity, it fuels my hunger to be better.
54	I tend to compare my race to other races.
55	This is important because it is a part of where I came from and is a part of who I am. I don't see any race as more important but I'm glad with who I am.
56	I grew up mostly in the United States, [so] my race and ethnicity affected how my environment saw me and to a certain extent how I saw myself. Also, I was mostly comfortable making friends of the same race.
57	People have stereotypes which bothers me. I am proud to be a person of color and I wish everyone saw us the way we see each other. But like I said earlier, everyone is human before they are anything else.
58	I find this question problematic because I don't so much find it an important part of my identity, as much so as a categorization of what someone would view me as in terms of ethnicity/race.
59	I love my ethnicity because it defines the music & food I eat which are fantastic. In addition, it helps me make connections with people who are like me.
61	1
62	Again, race played a big part in my life as I must recognize how to act in certain situations. I like having this as part of my identity as I tend to become friends with people of the same race rather than others (maybe just cultural differences) just because they seem more familiar.
64	I rarely think of my ethnicity given the ambiguous nature and [youth] of the United States. In terms of being white, I do not generally think about the topic

	until I am prompted to by some stimuli.
66	My cultural background was a big part of my upbringing, but at the same time the fact that I am American as well plays a big role in my identity. I have thought about the balance between these two aspects of my life a great deal.
67	Never really crossed my mind. Other than growing up in a primarily white area. Only way that I could see my race having an impact on how I think of myself.
68	I always tell people my mom is white and my dad is black. I also reserve pride for things I did, rather than pride for the body I was born into. That said I would better frame pride in terms of achievements given the situation of heritage and history.
69	Physically I am white but I do not like to be associated w/ white people. Most of them do shitty things.
70	I understand my whiteness is only “unimportant” to me b/c I’m accustomed to the immense privilege and easy lifestyle I have because of my race. I understand how I’m given advantages on the basis of a surface level attribute.
71	My identity as an Indian has been a huge part of my life since birth. It has effected how I look at other POC and given me a unique identity as an Indian American. I do consider Indian to be an ethnicity. I don’t really acknowledge race as a person’s identity and as more of a negative grouping.
73	Especially now, I have to be careful about the things I say, how I act, or who I am around because racism is very much alive and thriving in our society.
74	Being a Filipino-American really influenced how I was raised. My city was very diverse, and it was clear how different cultures affect upbringing. The Asian-American race I believe represents a core value set, whereas ethnicity identifies with culture.
75	Similarly to my gender, my race is a very important part of how I think about myself. Being a minority, 100% places me in a different light than those who are not.
76	My race is how others view me and can create biases or presumptions.
77	I’ve confronted some problems when staying in other countries than my home country. But usually those problems are culturally but not about race or ethnicity.
78	I didn’t grow up where race was something that defined you. Your abilities and personality, have a lot to do with someone’s identity.
80	This part of my identity is important because it lets me understand the power of heritage. I don’t really believe in race, we’re all human. I do believe in ethnicity because it’s a cultural heritage to me.
81	The hardship/racism/microaggressions that come with my ethnicity and my way of overcoming those is more part of my identity than the ethnicity itself
82	I do know that there is white privilege which important to understand but again it doesn’t define who I am and what I can do.
83	More than my gender, my race is how I understand the world based on experiences from my family. Race has become such a big thing in society because there is often injustices regarding race especially in America. Race makes people secure in the world and the infraction of race creates an imbalance that makes us question our identity.

85	I think I act like a white [X] because I conform to the ways white people act. I think my background & homelife is very similar to many experiences other white people have.
86	1
87	My parents are Haitian and raised me in there culture. As a Haitian American, I know that I have to work hard to show my worth in America.
88	I try to have a neutral outlook on the world, but I guess my “whiteness” could skew things. I recognize the issues faced by POC, and I stand for equality, but I never really take time to ponder how anything would affect me if I were a different race.
89	Culture affects thoughts and as an individual who has been surrounded by two cultures, I realized how my ethnicity guides my actions. But at the same time, I view myself in more of an individualistic manner which might contrast how an Asian culture might think.

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