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# **Gender & Race/Ethnicity: Media Images and Effects**

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# Research Interests

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- Document depictions of gender and race/ethnicity on television
- Effects of exposure on audiences
  - Test and advance theoretical models to explain the influence of exposure

# Theoretical Frameworks

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- Social cognitive theory
- Cultivation theory
- Social identity theory

# Three Research Studies

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1. Content analysis of race and gender representations on primetime TV
2. Effects of media exposure and real world contact on social perceptions of Latinos
3. Effects of sexualized videogame play on gender role beliefs, self-esteem, and body image

# Content Analysis

Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005) *JMCQ*

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- Race/ethnicity and gender representations on primetime TV
- Quantity and nature of portrayals
  - Stereotypes
    - Race/ethnicity - Latinos
    - Gender

# Latino Portrayals

- Criminal
- Law Enforcer
- Comic/Buffoon
- Latin Lover/Harlot



*Cops*



*Will and Grace*



*Good Morning, Miami*



*NYPD Blue*



*Jesse*

# Hypotheses

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**H1:** Latinos will appear in primetime TV programming significantly less frequently than Blacks and Whites.

**H2:** Status-based characteristics associated with Latinos will be significantly less favorable than those associated with their on-air counterparts.

# Research Questions

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- **RQ1:** Do the physical attributes of characters vary by race?
- **RQ2:** Do the character traits associated with primetime characters vary by race?

# Method

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## ■ The Sample

- Two-week random sample of Fall 2002 primetime TV
  - 8-11 p.m. EST, Mondays - Saturdays and 7 -10 p.m. EST, Sundays
  - 5 broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, and WB)
- Special events (e.g., *The Oscars*), sports, news, reality-based programs, and Hollywood films were excluded
- 67 programs
- 2,107 interactions

# Method (cont.)

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- **Coding**

- Reliabilities of .75 or greater for all variables
  - Scott's Pi for nominal level data and Krippendorff's alpha for Likert items

- **Units of analyses**

- Program level – genre
- Interaction level – social interaction including 2 or more characters

# Variables

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## ■ Status

- character role
- occupation
- job authority
- social authority
- SES
- conversation topic

## ■ Physical Attributes

- race
- age
- accent
- physical attractiveness
- body type
- dress/attire

## ■ Character Traits

- motivation
- work ethic
- respect
- intelligence
- articulation
- temperament
- physical aggression
- verbal aggression
- sexual aggression

# Results

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>U.S. Pop.</b>	<b>TV Pop.</b>	<b>TV Male</b>	<b>TV Female</b>
<b>White</b>	69.1%	80%	58%	42%
<b>Black</b>	12.3%	15%	62%	38%
<b>Latino</b>	12.5%	3.9%	59%	41%
<b>Asian</b>	3.6%	1.25%	50%	50%
<b>Native American</b>	0.9%	0.4%	67%	33%

# Results for Genre

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## ■ Genre

$$\chi^2 (8, 1460) = 38.57, p < .01$$

- Whites – crime dramas and family dramas
- Blacks – crime dramas
- Latinos – crime dramas and sitcoms

# Results for Status

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- **Male Role**

$\chi^2 (4, 1,146) = 104.40, p < .01$

- **Female Role**

$\chi^2 (4, 728) = 23.84, p < .01$

- **Male Occupation**

$\chi^2 (16, 1,206) = 148.12, p < .01$

- **Female Social Authority**

$\chi^2 (4, 756) = 19.54, p < .01$

- **Male Job Authority**

$\chi^2 (6, 1,206) = 18.50, p < .01$

# Results for Physical Attributes

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- **Male Attractiveness**

$\chi^2 (8, 1,206) = 25.32, p < .01$

- **Female Attractiveness**

$\chi^2 (8, 756) = 35.57, p < .01$

- **Male Accent**

$\chi^2 (4, 1,205) = 326.92, p < .01$

- **Female Accent**

$\chi^2 (4, 756) = 88.02, p < .01$

# Results for Physical Attributes

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- **Male Attire**

$\chi^2 (6, 1,206) = 22.90, p < .01$

- **Female Attire**

$\chi^2 (6, 756) = 31.67, p < .01$

- **Male Body Type**

$\chi^2 (4, 1,204) = 22.15, p < .01$

- **Female Body Type**

$\chi^2 (4, 753) = 48.37, p < .01$

# Results for Character Traits

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- **Male Intelligence**

$\chi^2 (8, 1,206) = 36.24, p < .01$

- **Female Intelligence**

$\chi^2 (6, 756) = 13.59, p < .05$

- **Female Work Ethic**

$\chi^2 (6, 755) = 24.41, p < .01$

- **Male Articulation**

$\chi^2 (6, 1,205) = 50.54, p < .01$

- **Male Temperament**

$\chi^2 (6, 1,205) = 50.54, p < .01$

- **Female Temperament**

$\chi^2 (4, 756) = 11.84, p < .05$

- **Female Verbal Aggression**

$\chi^2 (4, 756) = 11.84, p < .05$

# Discussion

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- Intersection of gender and race
- Some improvement in quantity of Latino portrayals
- Improvement in quantity of minority members playing major roles
- Continued stereotyping and underrepresentation

# Stereotyping

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## ■ **Comic**

- least articulate, laziest, worst work ethic, least intelligent, heaviest accent.

## ■ **Cops and Criminals**

- most often discuss topics related to crime and violence, objects of excessive force

## ■ **Sex Objects**

- hot-tempered, inappropriately dressed, most attractive.

# The Cultivation of the Perceptions of Latinos

Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz (*Media Psychology* 2007)

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- Quantity of media exposure, perception of nature of portrayals, and real-world contact predict Whites' social perceptions of Latinos
- Cultivation theory and mental models
- Contact hypothesis

# Hypotheses

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**H1:** The influence of perceptions of TV portrayals of Latinos on real world evaluations will increase as television consumption rates rise.

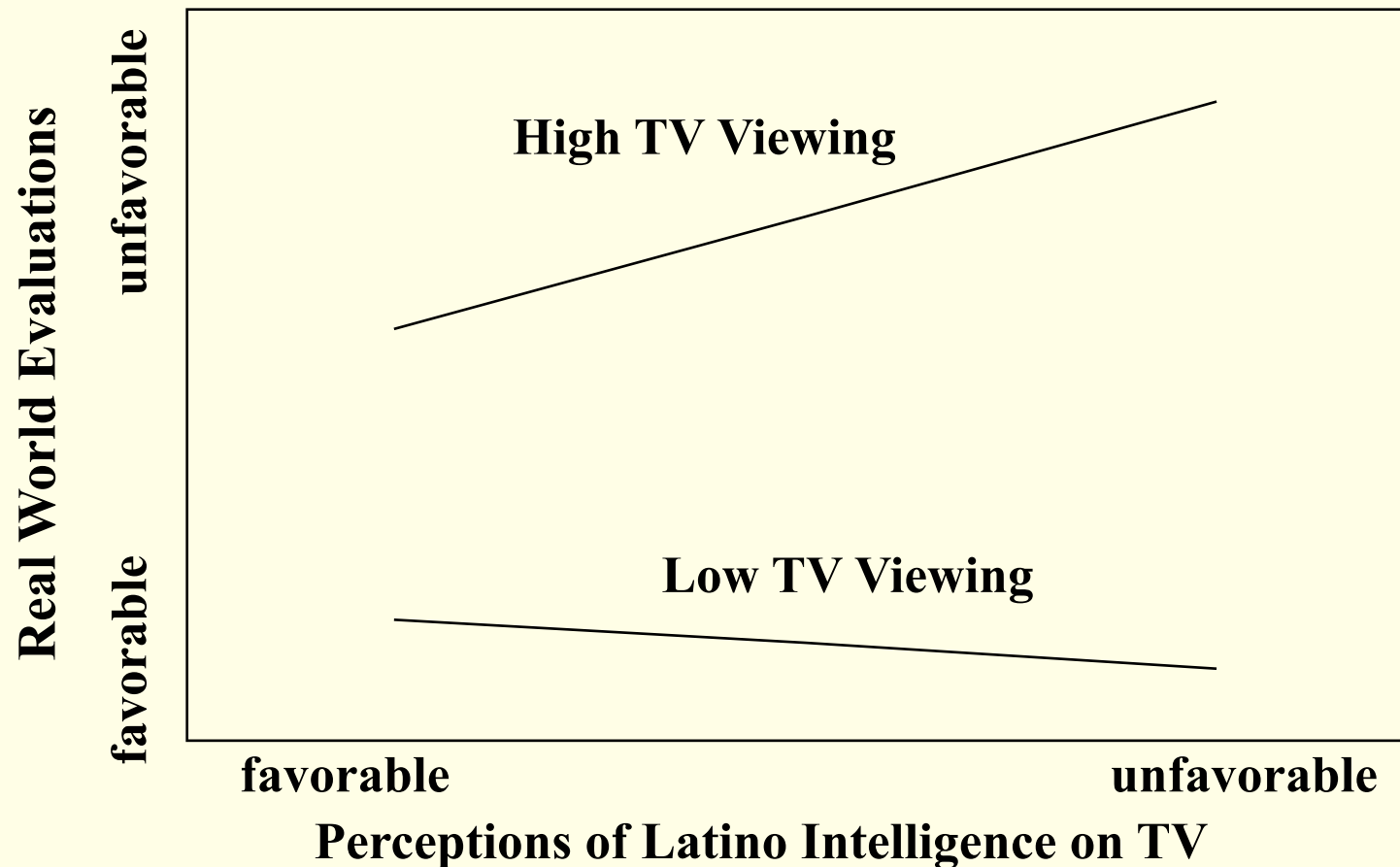
**H2:** The influence of TV perceptions and consumption on evaluations of real world Latino criminality, intelligence, and work ethic will be greater among viewers with lower levels of contact.

# Method

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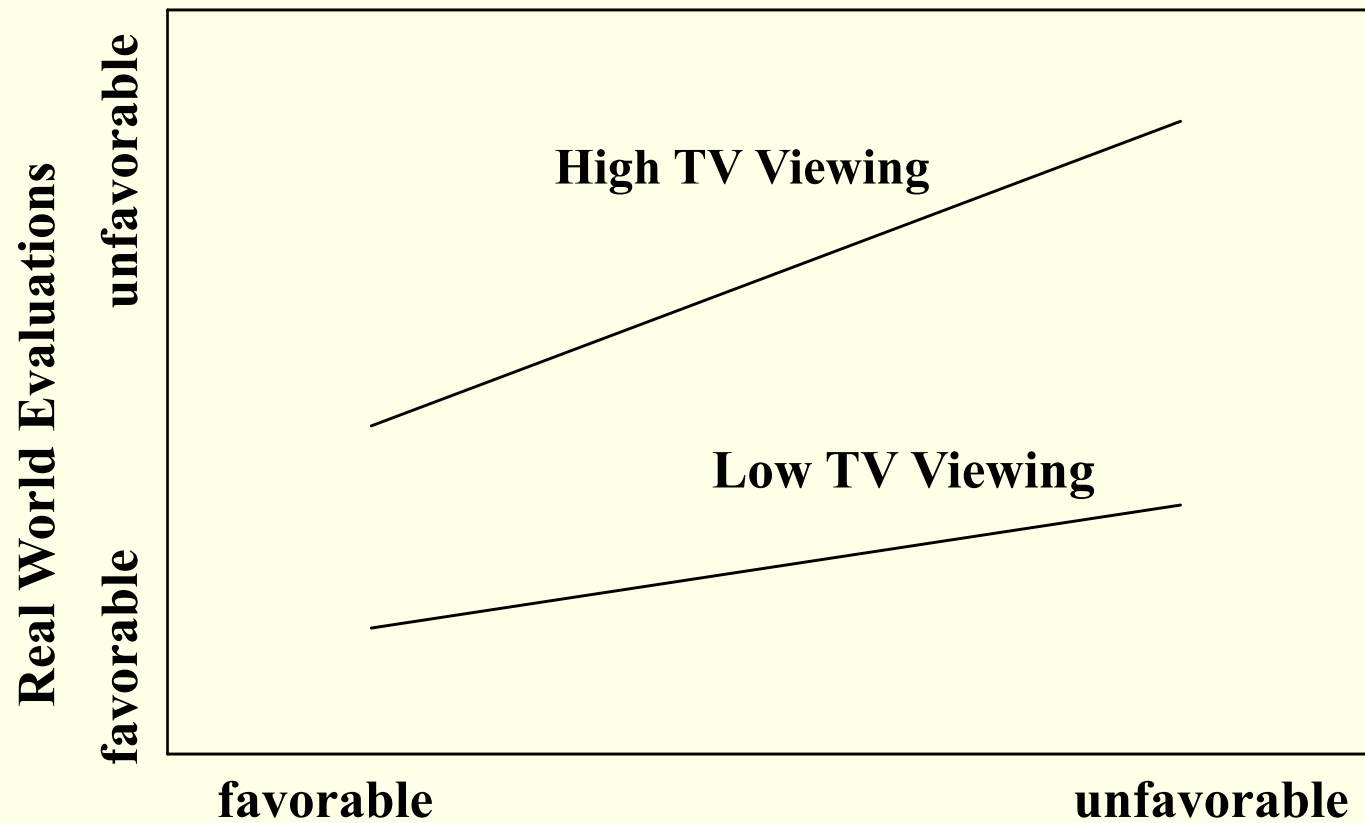
- 2-Phase Survey (N=362)
- White participants
- IVs: Media consumption, perceptions of Latino TV portrayals, real-world contact
- DVs: Perceptions of Latinos in the U.S. (intelligence, work ethic, & criminality)

# Regression Lines for Median Split of TV Viewing on Intelligence



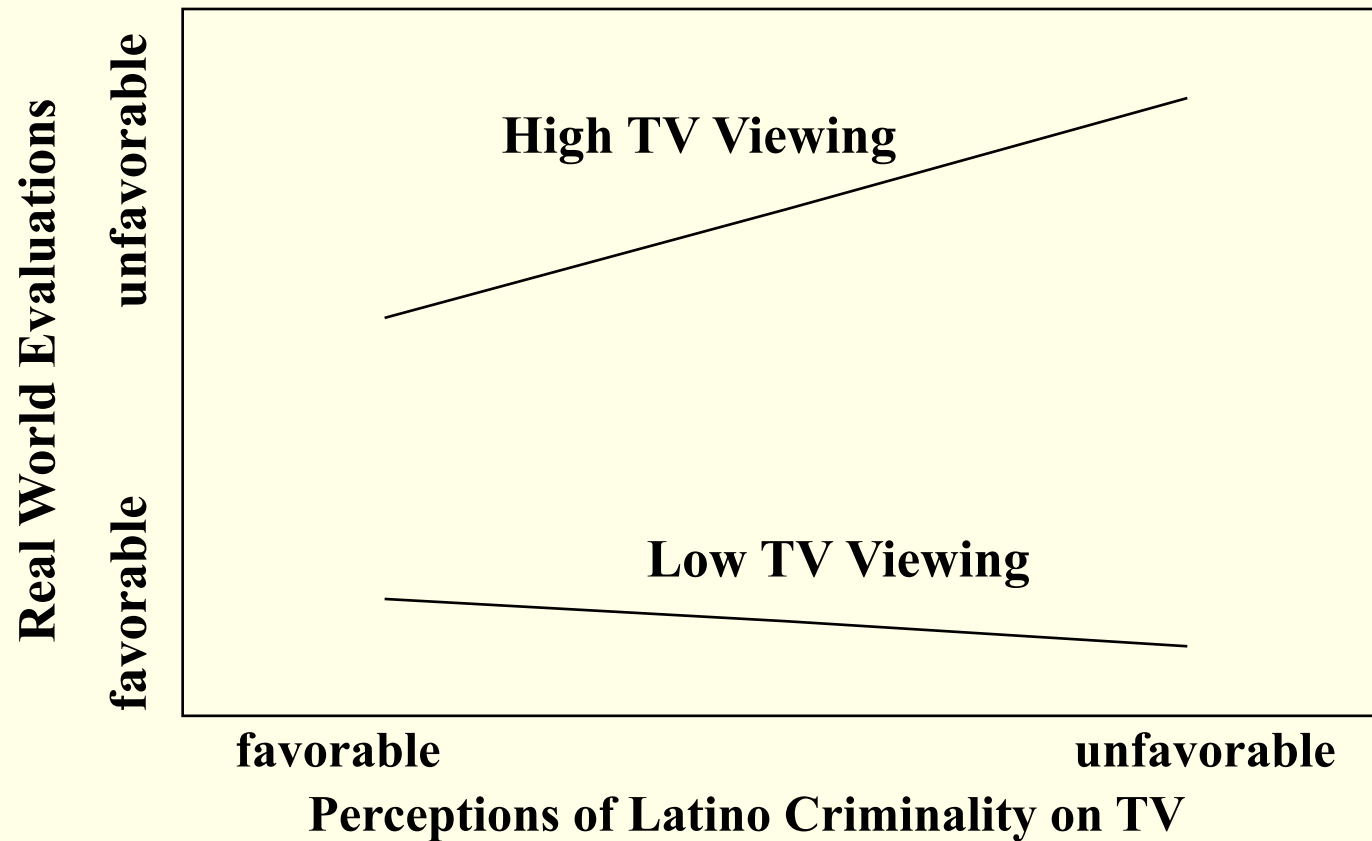
$(\Delta R^2 = .02, \Delta F = 4.56, p < .05)$

# Regression Lines for Median Split of TV Viewing on Work Ethic



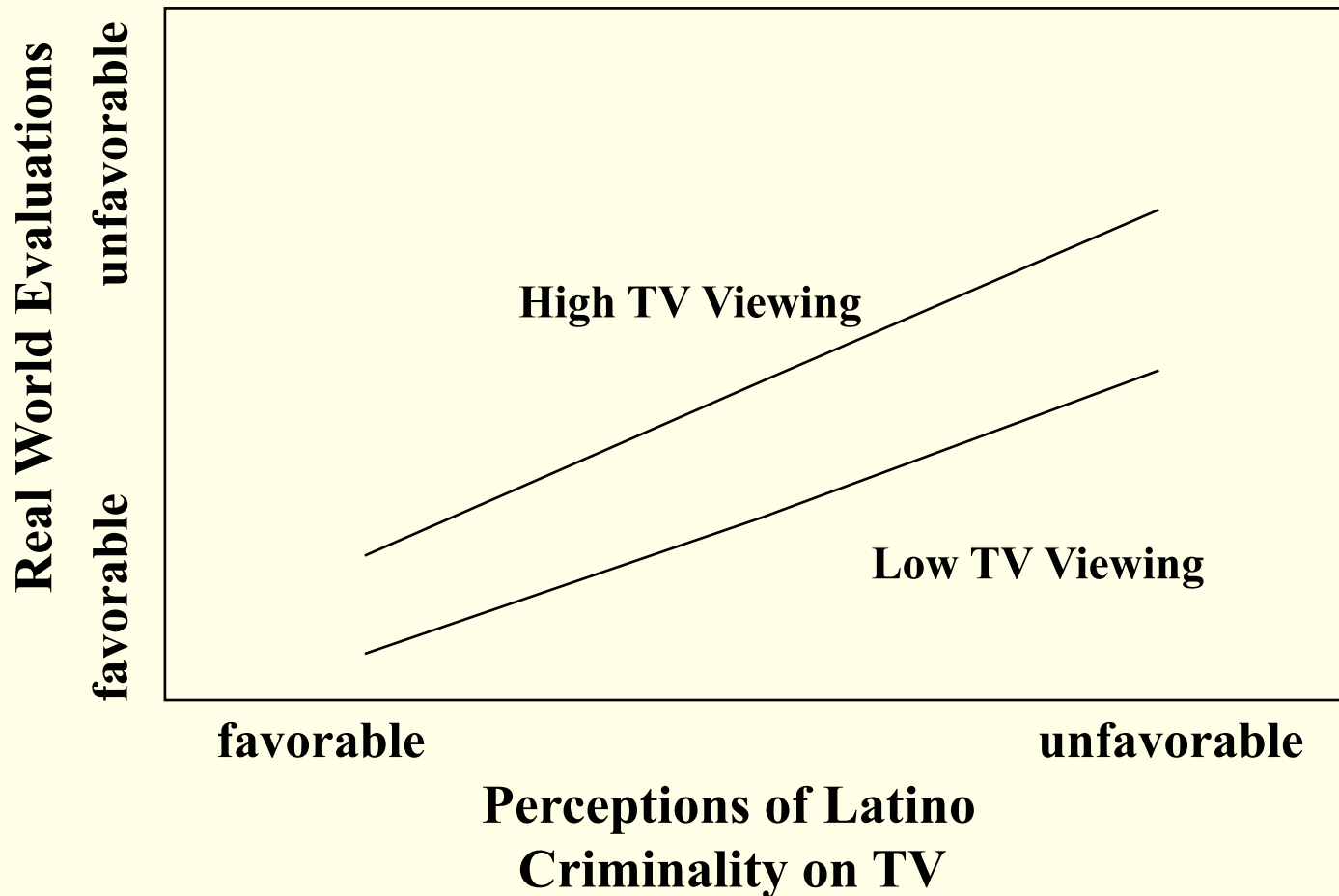
Perceptions of Latino  
Work Ethic on TV  
( $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $\Delta F = 6.26$ ,  $p < .01$ )

# Regression Lines for Median Split of TV Viewing on Criminology at Low Contact



( $\Delta R^2 = .13$ ,  $\Delta F = 14.68$ ,  $p < .01$ )

# Regression Lines for Median Split of TV Viewing on Criminality at High Contact



$(\Delta R^2 = .00, \Delta F = .13, p = .72)$

# Discussion

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- Points to the role of media exposure in shaping social perceptions regarding race/ethnicity
- Demonstrates the importance of real world contact in this process

# Effects of Sexualized Images of Females in Video Games

Behm-Morawitz

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- Effects of playing sexualized vs. non-sexualized heroines
- Social cognitive theory and presence
  - Observational learning from media
    - Unique features of video games -- interactivity

# Female Representations

- Content analytic findings:

(Beasley & Strandley, 2002; Dietz, 1998; Glaubke et al., 2001; Ivory, 2006)

- Females account for 17% of all characters
- Females are featured in limited roles
  - Victim
  - Prize
  - Sexualized heroine



# Hypotheses

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- H1:** Playing the sexualized heroine will result in decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy in female participants, compared to playing the non-sexualized character or no video game.
- H2:** Playing the sexualized heroine will result in decreased body esteem and increased self-objectification in female participants, compared to playing the non-sexualized character or no video game.
- H3:** Video game character and player's level of presence will interact in predicting subsequent self-esteem, self-efficacy, body esteem, and self-objectification among female players, such that higher levels of presence will enhance the effects described in hypotheses one and two.

# Hypotheses (cont'd)

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**H4:** Playing a sexualized female character will result in greater belief in traditional gender roles for all participants, in comparison to playing a non-sexualized female character or no video game.

**H5:** Video game character and player's level of presence will interact in predicting subsequent gender role beliefs, such that higher levels of presence will enhance the effects described in hypothesis four.

# Research Questions

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**RQ1:** Will sex of the participant affect gender role beliefs and expectations of the female body, and will the sex of the participant interact with condition to determine these gender-related outcomes?

**RQ2:** Will there be differences in self-esteem and self-efficacy for male participants based on the type of female character they play?

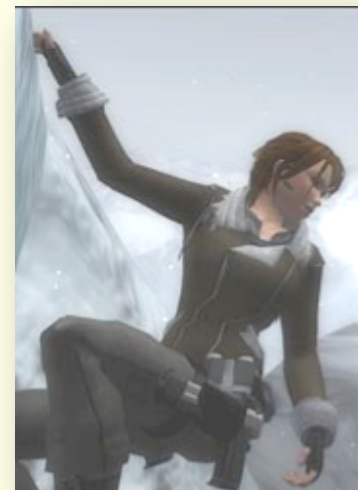
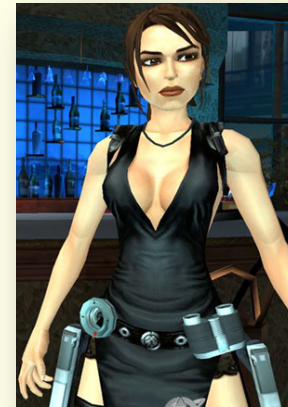
**RQ3:** Will there be differences in body esteem and self-objectification for male participants based on game play of either or both sexualized and non-sexualized characters?

**RQ4:** Will the relationship between character and male self-esteem, self-efficacy, body esteem, and self-objectification be moderated by presence?

# Method

## ■ Pilot study- Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider: Legend*

- Game
  - Difficulty
  - Violence
  - Enjoyment/involvement
  - Quality of graphics
- Character
  - Strength
  - Attractiveness
  - Aggression
  - Race
  - Age
  - Attire, sexualization



# Method (cont.)

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- Experimental design
  - 2 (sex) x 2 (presence) x 3 (condition)
- Approx. 300 participants randomly assigned to condition
  - “Sexualized” heroine
  - “Non-sexualized” heroine
  - No video game

# Method (cont'd)

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- Procedure (for video game conditions)
  - 5-minute training period followed by 30-minute game play.
    - Participants had an instruction sheet on how to play the game, including “walkthrough” instructions on how to progress in the game if they wanted help during game play.
    - Participants were also told their game play would not be recorded and that they would not be judged on how well they did in the game.
  - Online survey followed game play.

# Variables

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- **IVs:**

- Participant sex
- Condition
- Presence

- **DVs:**

- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Body esteem and self-objectification
- Gender role beliefs

# Significant Results

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- **H1:** Playing the sexualized character resulted in decreased self-efficacy in female players.
- **H4:** Playing the sexualized character resulted in more unfavorable beliefs about women's mental capabilities.
- **RQ1:** Overall, male participants had more negative beliefs about women than did female participants. Additionally, condition did have an influence on female participants, such that playing the sexualized character resulted in more negative beliefs about women's physical capabilities than did playing the non-sexualized character or no video game.

# Significant Results (cont'd)

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- **RQ4:** Male participants who experienced a high level of presence reported higher body esteem compared to males who experienced a low level of presence during game play. No significant interaction was found between presence and condition for male body esteem.

# Discussion

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- Some support for negative effect of playing sexualized female character on beliefs about women's real world capabilities.
- Need to test additional types of portrayals, as well as long term effects
- Need for further theoretical development to account for unique features of video game play, in comparison to traditional media (e.g., TV)

# Implications of Research Program

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- Insight into the importance of the quantity and nature of gender, race/ethnicity, and cultural media portrayals
- Role of media in intergroup relations; identity formation and maintenance