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Media, Racial Identity, and Mainstream American Values

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A survey of 499 Black, Asian, and White American college students assessed their endorsement of "mainstream" American values, uncovering a 6-factor values structure, with some notable significant differences between the races. As expected, White respondents' own personal value orientations most closely matched their assessments of mainstream American values, and stronger racial identity (from a social identity perspective) corresponded to an even closer match. A variety of media consumption measures correlated with personal/mainstream American values congruence, with greater media exposure predicting greater endorsement of mainstream values, but most relationships were eclipsed when controlling for demographics, race, and racial identity. Predictors that maintained under controls included music TV and sports programming exposure, pointing to the potential importance of such particular media forms in the process of value-based cultural assimilation and reinforcement.

KEYTERMS identity, media, race

The role of media in people's socialization process seems crucial in today's increasingly heterogeneous American society. To be a fully functional citizen, the individual is expected to socialize into society, and media play a facilitating role in this process (Nathanson, 2008). Socialization includes

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the exposure to and adoption of common core values, and these values are often conveyed through mass mediated messages. Racial and ethnic minorities face particular challenges in this regard, and existing literature on minorities and media has documented their ongoing challenges and opportunities, including maintaining their cultural norms and heritage while functioning in a larger mainstream American society (Allen, 2001; Berry, 2006; Berry & Mitchell-Kernan, 1982; Rios & Gaines, 1998; Subervi-Vélez, 1986). Based on the social identity (SI) perspective in race relations and the literature on media socialization and learning, the current exploratory study examines if and how media use patterns may contribute to a divide between American values held by racial/ethnic minority and majority members. The question of what may contribute to American value endorsement will be examined among Asian, Black, and White young American college students.

Values are fundamental to human existence, influencing every aspect of our lives and conduct (Rokeach, 1968; Schwartz, 1992, 1994), and their acquisition is a central objective of socialization (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). This study uses a college student population as a case example because they are going through one of the dramatic transitional periods of life, moving into and exiting from social statuses and roles (e.g., Gecas, 2000; Waters, 2011). Thus, they are very active in a core socialization process, exploring and reidentifying the self, engaging in value acquisition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines racial differences in perceived importance of cultural values, and how media use may be related to value endorsement. The overarching assumption is media socialization, the idea that media are one of the influential socialization agents that promote common cultural norms and values among members of a given society (Bandura, 2001; Hall, 1981; Nathanson, 2008; Wright, 1959). That is, citizens are expected to socialize themselves into a given culture they live in, and the media help facilitate this process. We also assume racial differences in media socialization experiences because racial minorities live in at least two different societies, a dominant society and an in-group racial community, and because the nature of cultural orientation for each may not necessarily be the same. We will first briefly discuss these contextual issues; we will then discuss the two theoretical frameworks of the SI perspective and social cognitive theory, followed by a discussion of our study's particular application of these frameworks to cultural values, including a consideration of racial differences in value orientation and values emphasized in contemporary American media.

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Media Socialization

Socialization is generally understood as the ongoing process of identity formation via interaction through which "an individual (a novice) acquires the norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and language characteristics of his or her group" (Gecas, 2000, p. 2855). People learn the meanings of the self and salient identities via reflected appraisals—the appraisals and responses of "others" about the self. Two types of different socializing "others" involved in this process include "significant" others who are immediate family and friends who teach basic personal values and orientation, and "generalized" others such as community and media that present societal expectations and views about the members of the society (Gecas, 2000).

This highlights the essential function of media for cultural transmission, widening common cultural experiences and knowledge within a society to build consensus and social bonds among its members (Wright, 1959). In fact, numerous communication researchers have attributed citizens' acquisition of social norms and expectations to their learning from the media (e.g., Bandura, 2001; Gerbner et al., 2002; Hall, 1981; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Sirgy et al., 1998; Shrum & Lee, 2012). Critical and cultural theorists have, however, questioned "whose" cultural expectations and ideas have been transmitted via the media (e.g., Hall, 1981, 1982; hooks, 1994; Kellner, 1978). They articulated the nature of media socialization, pointing out that the media reproduce and convey the ideologies and interests of those in power, the dominant (majority) groups within a society. Media's socialization function can be problematic for racial minorities because socializing into a dominant culture may mean losing some identification with a racial culture, a process often referred to as cultural assimilation (Subervi-Vélez, 1986).

The Function of Media Socialization in the Minority Context: Media Assimilation

Although contemporary notions of cultural assimilation emphasize a neutrality of meaning (Alba & Nee, 2003), and there is an acknowledgement of expanding multiracialism (Perlmann & Waters, 2005), assimilation in the U.S. context generally is understood as promoting the dominant position by "using their cultural characteristics as the basis for American identity" (Levin et al., 2012, p. 208). For ethnic and racial minorities, this typically involves the abandonment of their cultural heritage and practices and the acceptance as members of another, dominant majority group (Alba & Nee, 2003; Subervi-Vélez, 1986). Acquiring and supporting dominant values and norms is thus an inherent part of this process. Media play a role in this process, critical theorists have argued, as being part of the social system that creates and maintains social order serving the dominant or "mainstream" group (e.g., Altschull, 1990; Hall, 1981). In fact, the general national media are referred to

as "produced by and for members of the mainstream of society" (Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2011, p. 11).

Media and Race

In the United States, historically, individuals with European heritage—mostly Whites/Caucasians—have been regarded as members of the dominant/mainstream group (Alba & Nee, 2003; Waters, 2011), controlling every aspect of power. This includes the construction of cultural ideology (Hall, 1981). Race, for example, is not grounded in nature but is a socially and culturally constructed idea that can signal the position of each race in respect to its power (e.g., Gandy, 1998). Racial classification, according to Omi and Winant (2011), is important because it defines what one's own (and others') race is about, which in turn is recognized by social institutions and members of a society. Ideologies become hegemonic, according to Kellner (1978), when these are widely accepted as a norm, "the way things are," by members of the society (p. 49). In the United States, many have suggested Whiteness is a reference group for all (e.g., Lipsitz, 1998; McIntosh, 2004). There are a Black press, Asian media, and Hispanic media, for example, but no denoted "White" press/media. Media are believed to greatly contribute to the process of racial hegemony (Collins, 2005) not only by transmitting shared expectations and beliefs about race, but also by gaining consent among racial minorities (Hall, 1981, 1982).

Existing literature has documented that media consistently stress and reinforce an impermeable boundary between White domination and non-White subordinated roles, with stereotyping and underrepresentation across old and new media (Burgess et al., 2011; Jeffres, Atkin, Lee, & Neuendorf, 2011; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). This is true even in arenas where minority members have achieved equitable participation and success (e.g., Rada & Wulfemeyer, 2005), including professional sports and the entertainment industries, where African Americans and Black culture are highly visible in today's general media. Some scholars have documented that media have depicted athletic excellence in brawn vs. brain terminology, discounting African American achievement by stressing their natural-born athletic ability and physicality, whereas attributing Whites' achievement to their intelligence and hard work (e.g., Behm-Morawitz & Ortiz, 2013; McCarthy & Jones, 1997; Rada, 1996). Rada and Wulfemeyer (2005) further acknowledged this media practice as indicative of racism—contributing to "the development and perpetuation of a system in which Whites dominate Blacks" (Essed, 1991, p. 39). Some work has identified a difference in the portrayal of Black music artists in music videos, when compared to White counterparts, and differences accrue for both male and female artists (with Black performers more sexualized and Black women, specifically, more objectified; e.g., Frisby & Aubrey, 2012; Turner, 2011).

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Theoretical Frameworks: Audience Experiences with Media Socialization and Learning

The current study examines value acquisition patterns via media among three racial groups. It assumes that the extent to which an individual might use general media as sources of value acquisition might very well depend on their ethnicity (i.e., majority or minority), and the extent to which they identify closely with their ethnic status. The current study relies on the SI perspective and social cognitive theory (SCT) to explicate the complexity of media use among racial groups and its implications in value adoption. More specifically, the SI perspective explains the existence of racial differences in value endorsement by introducing the notion that individuals vary in the degree to which they identify with a racial/ethnic group; whereas SCT describes learning processes involved in people's value acquisition from the media.

Racial Identity from an SI Perspective

Racial identity refers to one's sense of membership in a racial group, reflecting values and emotional significance attached to that group (Phinney, 1990). It is part of an SI developed through a series of social experiences, including both personal and mediated interaction with one's own in-group and members of other groups (Allen, 2001; Berry & Mitchell-Kernan, 1982; Gecas, 2000). Each racial and ethnic group establishes its unique value orientation via historical, cultural, and social experiences it has faced in a broader society (e.g., Phinney, 1990).

The SI perspective asserts the importance of people's salient group to themselves and their lives, because it serves as a perceptual framework (in-group vs. out-group) that directs how people perceive their social environment and because SI provides them with group-based esteem (Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002; Harwood & Roy, 2005; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Race is one of the most salient social categories, even chronically salient, for most members of minority groups because of its importance to the self (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Further, members of a racial group share and internalize their in-group attributes and orientations, which affect how they respond to social stimuli including mediated information (e.g., Hornsey, 2008; Reid, 2012). SI suggests that racial norms serve as an anchor to evaluate mediated information, and this can be more prominent among stronger racial identifiers because of the significance of race to self-concept. In fact, level of racial identity is related to one's responses to media messages and sources. For example, high racial identifiers find in-group characters and sources to be more similar to themselves (Appiah, 2001), and view them more favorably (Abrams & Giles, 2007; Appiah,

2004) than do low racial identifiers. In sum, SI suggests racial differences in response to media because racial identification (e.g., Black, Asian, or White) and its strength (i.e., level of racial identity) may operate as filtering mechanisms via which mediated information (e.g., values) are learned and perceived.

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Value Acquisition from the Media: Social Cognitive Learning

That values can be acquired from the "generalized other" of the media is dependent on the mechanism of vicarious learning, a principle explicated by Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; and the earlier social learning theory, Bandura, 1971). A basic tenet of this theoretic approach is that most human learning of any nature (e.g., behavior, beliefs) takes place via observing and modeling others, and that the likelihood of adopting the learned event is contingent upon the nature of perceived outcomes (rewards or punishments) associated with that event. SCT conceptualizes observational learning and adoption of values from the media as highly selective in nature, involving a series of cognitive processes of attention, retention, motor production, and motivation (Bandura, 2001). In general, observational learning is more likely to happen when a modeled behavior/value is performed by an attractive or similar model, recalled easily (e.g., frequently presented), and rewarded (e.g., receiving recognition). In sum, people are more likely to learn and internalize observed values when they are presented in a consistent, frequent, rewarding (or avoiding punishment), and attractive manner. In addition to these internal factors, external social forces affect an observer's acquisition and endorsement of learned behaviors/values. In essence, people are more likely to adopt a learned norm when their social environment and society rewards that norm or when not accepting a social norm may pose negative consequences.

Applying these notions to the current study, it is reasonable that learning and endorsing certain values as a result of general media consumption might occur because general media are expected to represent dominant values (Hall, 1981) and because adopting dominant values may be seen as functional in a larger American society (e.g., Rios & Gaines, 1998; Tan et al., 1997).

Current Study: Media Use and Value Endorsement Among Asian, Black, and White Students

Values, and American Values as "Common"

Rokeach (1968) has defined a value as an abstract ideal that can be positive or negative and is representative of a person's enduring beliefs regarding ideal

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modes of conduct. Similarly, Shalom Schwartz and colleagues have considered basic values as "trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group" (Schwartz et al., 2012, p. 3). According to Schwartz (1992, 1994), there exists a comprehensive set of 10 values that are universal across cultures: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. These values vary across individuals and between cultures in perceived importance (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) and are acquired or learned through socialization and life experiences (Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2012). Based on this value structure, Doran and Littrell (2013, p. 261) found a "cohesive mainstream U.S. culture of the White, generally middle class population" with particularly high endorsement of the values of self-direction, universalism, and benevolence, and low endorsement for power and achievement.

Value Orientations

Values are contextualized, establishing normative expectations for a member of society at large or for a member of a subculture within that society. In fact, most ethnic and racial minority groups in the United States maintain many cultural values and beliefs that are distinctly different from White-dominated "mainstream" culture (e.g., Berry & Mitchell-Kernan, 1982; Boykin, 1986; Subervi-Vélez, 1986). For example, African American values have been found to be oriented toward communalism and group harmony, exhibiting specific communication styles (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003), with a preference for high levels of stimulation, movement, spirituality, and individual expression (e.g., Boykin, 1986; Dixon, 2007; Tyler et al., 2008). Although there are many different Asian American groups in the United States, they share many values, including high regard for the group and the family, group harmony, respect for elders, cooperation, and personal relations (e.g., Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1976; Yum, 1988). In contrast, White-dominated American culture centers on individualism and competition, including autonomy, individual action and responsibility, freedom, self-achievement, striving toward surpassing others' performance, and efficiency. It is also oriented toward change and scientific rationalism (e.g., Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Hofstede, 1980; Samovar et al., 2013).

Values Emphasized in the General Media

Content analyses suggest that American media emphasize materialistic values (e.g., affluence, consumption) by presenting middle-upper class people who have comfortable life styles, possess high status occupations, and have high incomes (e.g., O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Shrum, Burroughs, & Rindfleisch,

2005). Other dominant themes, relevant to young adults, are the concepts of beauty, physical appearance, and achieving ideal body images (e.g., Harrison, 2009; Rubin, Fitts, & Becker, 2003; Saguy & Gruys, 2010). The emphasis on sexual images in popular music, particularly in hip-hop videos, has been another theme (e.g., Perry, 2003), as has been the focus on male dominance (a "hegemonic masculinity") in sport media content (Bernstein & Kian, 2013).

Effects studies confirm the viability of learning values from mediated models (Besley, 2008). Exposure to materialistic images is related to adolescents' desire to have a high status job and to earn considerable money (e.g., Signorielli, 1993), a perception of Americans as enjoying more affluence and a higher standard of living (e.g., among foreign audiences, Weimann, 1984), and a perceived importance of materialistic values in general (Shrum et al., 2011). Preadolescents are found to absorb messages in their media environment regarding fame as a future goal, resulting in fame to be their "number one value" (Uhls & Greenfield, 2012). Exposure to mediated female beauty standards has been found to be related to women's internalization of those standards and body-related beliefs (e.g., Dittmar & Howard, 2004; Harrison, 2000; Holmstrom, 2004). Exposure to media thin ideals, however, has impacted White but not Black women (e.g., Schooler et al., 2004), providing some confirmation that minorities might respond differently to mediated values (Botta, 2000; Frisby, 2004).

Research Questions

This research poses the question of whether the degree of an individual's endorsement of what they consider mainstream American cultural values might be related to their racial identity, and, importantly, whether media exposure patterns might also predict such endorsement. We suggest racial differences in responding to media because the SI perspective suggests that the in-group's specific value orientation serves as an anchor by which to evaluate mediated images of values. Thus, we submit the following research questions:

> RQ1: How are respondents' race and the strength of racial identity related to personal endorsement of mainstream American values?
> RQ2: How are general media exposure patterns related to personal endorsement of American mainstream values?

METHODS

Sample

The current study surveyed 215 African American, 62 Asian American, and 222 White/Caucasian American college students (as self-identified; $n = 499$;

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65.8% female), recruited from a large Southeastern state university. The mean age was 20.6 ($SD = 3.8$; range = 18–49).

Procedure

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to students who read an informed consent form and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study for extra credit. The participants were recruited from various undergraduate courses and majors, including communication, other social science areas, business, and education.

Measures

Media Consumption

Respondents rated how often they use each of the following media types on a scale from 0 (*never*) to 7 (*almost every day*): TV news, TV sitcoms, TV dramas, TV talk shows, music TV, magazines, radio, newspapers, video games, and the Internet.

Perceived Mainstream American Values

Respondents indicated to what extent they perceived that each of 25 cultural values was important in mainstream American society on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*very important*). These 25 value items were adapted from the major value instruments, including the Rokeach Value Survey (Rokeach, 1974) and Schwartz's value inventory (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). In addition, based on the intercultural communication literature (e.g., Samovar et al., 2013) and media socialization research (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984; Harrison, 2009; Levitt, 2003), the following items were added to reflect a contemporary American society value set: appearance, athletic ability, physical strength, fitness, family bond, and science/technology.

Personal Endorsements of Values

Respondents indicated to what extent each of the 25 cultural values was important to them personally on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*very important*).

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Difference Scores for Personal/Mainstream American Values

For each of the 25 values, a difference score was created, subtracting one's personal endorsement from one's assessment of mainstream America's endorsement of the same cultural value, and taking the absolute value of the difference (Edwards, 2001). For each of these 25 personal/mainstream America difference scores, a higher score represented a greater deviation of a respondent's expressed value from their perception of mainstream America's endorsement of that value. Thus, smaller scores represented congruence between personally held values and perceptions of mainstream American values, in other words, greater endorsement of what respondents perceived as mainstream American values (Edwards, 2001; Griffin, Murray, & Gonzalez, 1999; Kristof, 1996).

Race and Racial Identity

Respondents were asked to select a single racial category, that they "primary think of [themselves] as belonging to."[1] Those self-identifying as Black, Asian, or White ($n = 499$) were included in the present analyses, with 61 respondents reporting a variety of other identities excluded (including $n = 32$ indicating "other"). Respondents were further asked to respond to items adapted from the Importance to Identity sub-scale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale developed by Luhtanen and Crocker (1990), indicating to what extent they agreed or disagreed with four statements about the racial group with which they identified—ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The statements included, "In general, belonging to my ethnic group is an important part of my self-image" and "My group memberships have little to do with how I feel about myself" (reverse item) (Cronbach's alpha = .65 for Blacks, .74 for Asians, and .73 for Whites). The four items were summed for a racial identity scale.

Control Variables

The study also included the following control variables: Gender (0 = male; 1 = female), age (measured in years), and political ideology (a 5-point response scale, with 1 [*liberal*] and 5 [*conservative*]).

Analyses

The research questions were addressed with a set of simple bivariate correlational analyses, looking at relationships between media consumption measures and personal/mainstream American value difference

scores. These were followed by hierarchical regression analyses, controlling for selected constructs when examining the prediction of personal/mainstream American value differences from media consumption measures.

RESULTS

Factor Structure

Given the broad and multifaceted origins of the values measures included in this study, with roots in both theoretic (e.g., Rokeach, 1986; Schwartz, 1992, 1994) and contemporary substantive (Harrison, 2009; Levitt, 2003; Samovar et al., 2013) sources, the mainstream American values items were factor analyzed to establish cultural values factors. Using principal components extraction with oblique rotation, six factors emerged, using the latent root criterion: (a) self-direction, with strong loadings by the items of independence, individuality, equity, freedom and peace (variance accounted for [VAF] = 27.4%; eigenvalue = 7.9); (b) power, including wealth and social images associated with it—strong loaders were power, wealth, appearance, thinness, inner beauty (reversed scored), pleasure, and success (VAF = 12.9%; eigenvalue = 3.7); (c) physicality, with strong loadings by physical strength, athletic ability, and fitness (VAF = 5.6%; eigenvalue = 1.6); (d) heritage, with strong loadings by heritage, family bond, spirituality, and religion (VAF = 4.7%; eigenvalue = 1.4); (e) achievement, with strong loadings by work-ethic, intelligence, education, and science (VAF = 4.2%; eigenvalue = 1.2); and (f) happiness, with strong loadings by happiness and love (VAF = 3.7%; eigenvalue = 1.1). Items loading strongly and cleanly on the six factors, as noted above, were used to construct six personal/mainstream American values difference scales. The 12 Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the six values factors, as measured regarding perceived mainstream American values and regarding personal values, ranged from .68 to .85, with mean interitem correlations (MICs) ranging from .21 to .75.[2] For the personal/mainstream American values difference scores, the alphas ranged from .52 to .74, with MICs ranging from .21 to. 56.[3]

Descriptive Analyses

Preliminary descriptive analyses, providing an overall picture of the cultural values identified as "mainstream American" by the three ethnic subgroups, revealed that the means of the 25 individual values items ranged from 4.5 to 6.5 (on the 1–7 response scale), indicating that all items were considered at least somewhat important to mainstream American society. Overall, the most important values for mainstream American culture were identified as wealth, appearance, power, success, pleasure, thinness, freedom, and sexuality. The

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attributes perceived least important included inner beauty, heritage, spirituality, family bond, and religion (all with means below 4.8). Reflecting these results, perceived importance means for each of the values scales (factors) were as follows: power (5.9), physicality (5.7), happiness (5.7), self-direction (5.6), achievement (5.6), and heritage (4.7),[4] contradicting recent work by Doran and Littrell (2013), who found a power dimension as least important for adult White Americans.

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Research Questions

Research Question 1

The first Research Question queried the roles of race and racial identity in relation to the endorsement of mainstream American values. A series of six two-factor analyses of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted, with race (three groups) and racial identity (split at the median, by race) as fixed factors. The dependent variables were the six factor-guided summative cultural value scales, using the difference scores for personal/mainstream American cultural values as described above, a lower score indicating greater congruence between personal values and perceived mainstream American values (i.e., greater endorsement). The analyses showed significant results in four of the six value factors, as follows:

Value #1: Self-Direction. For self-direction, a significant main effect for race was found, $F_{(2,486)} = 3.25$, $p = .04$, with Asians indicating smaller difference scores than Blacks and Whites (Asian $M = 4.30$, Black $M = 5.93$, White $M = 5.50$); via the least significant difference (LSD) post hoc test, the mean for Asians was significantly different from the mean for Blacks ($p = .01$) and near-significantly different from the mean for Whites ($p = .08$). The main effect of racial identity was not significant, $F_{(1,486)} = 2.03$, $p = .16$. A significant race by racial identity interaction was found ($F_{(2,486)} = 3.55$, $p = .03$), which is displayed in Figure 1. Only for Whites did racial identity have a noticeable impact on personal/mainstream American difference for the value of self-direction; for Whites, a higher level of racial identity was associated with greater congruence between their own self-direction value and what they attributed to mainstream America.

Value #2: Power. For the value of power, the main effect of race was not significant, $F_{(2,486)} = 1.07$, $p = .34$, but a significant main effect of racial identity was found, $F_{(1,486)} = 12.68$, $p < .001$, in which a higher level of racial identity was associated with holding a personal power value closer to that of mainstream America (i.e., having a smaller difference score; low racial identity $M = 10.41$, high racial identity $M = 8.45$). A significant Race $\times$Racial Identity interaction effect was found, $F_{(2,486)} = 8.56$, $p < .001$, as displayed in Figure 2. For Whites and Asians, a higher level of racial identity was related to a greater degree of congruence between self and mainstream

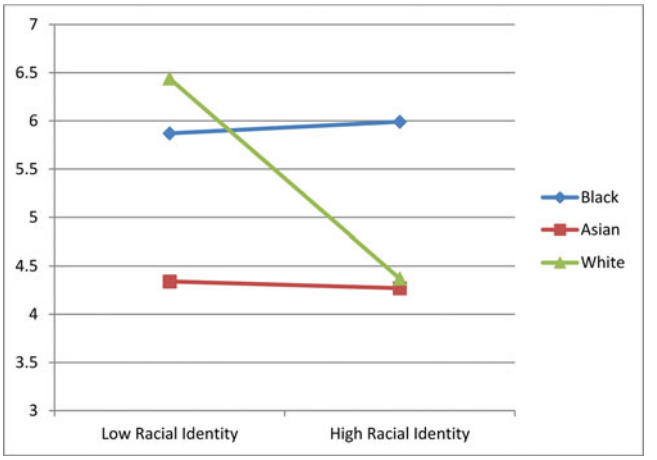

FIGURE 1 Significant interaction for personal/mainstream American Value Difference #1: Self-direction.

America on the value of power, whereas for Blacks, this pattern did not hold.

Value #4: Heritage. For the value of heritage, the only significant effect found was an interaction of race and racial identity, $F_{(2,486)} = 3.07$, $p = .047$, as shown in Figure 3. For Whites, higher racial identity was associated with a closer match between one's personal and one's assessed mainstream American heritage value, whereas for Blacks and Asians, higher racial identity was associated with a greater difference.

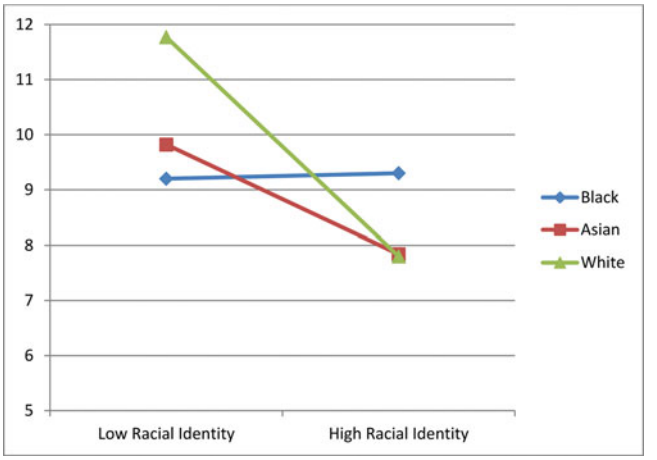

FIGURE 2 Significant Interaction for personal/mainstream American Value Difference #2: Power.

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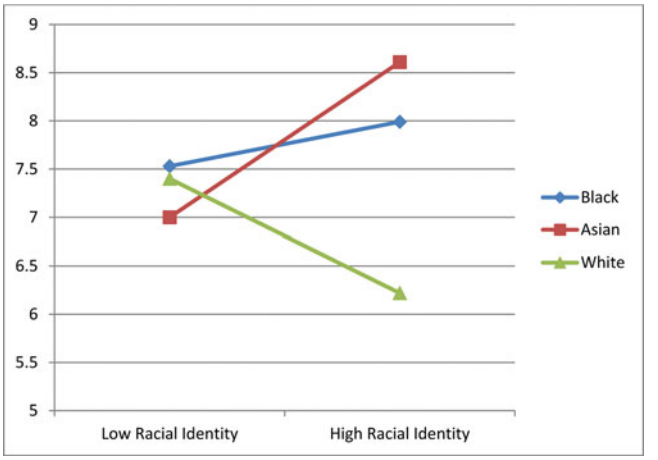

FIGURE 3 Significant interaction for personal/mainstream American Value Difference #4: Heritage.

Value #6: Happiness. For the value of happiness, the only significant effect was that of a main effect for race, $F_{(2,486)} = 3.32$, $p = .04$, demonstrating a closer match between personal and perceived mainstream American happiness value for Asians. Via the LSD post hoc test, the mean for Asians ($M = 1.49$) was significantly different from the means for Blacks ($M = 2.26$) and for Whites ($M = 2.26$; $p = .02$).

In sum, the analyses addressing Research Question 1 found two main effect race differences—Asians holding personal values closer to those of perceived mainstream America for both self-direction and happiness. Racial identity was found to be a significant factor only for the power value, in which higher racial identity was associated with greater congruence between personal and mainstream American values. But interestingly, there were three significant Race × Racial Identity interactions found—for all three dependent variables (self-direction, power, and heritage), a pattern emerged in which for Whites, higher racial identity was related to a greater closeness of personal values to perceived mainstream American values. And for the value of heritage, higher racial identity was related to a greater personal/mainstream American value difference for Black and Asian respondents; an examination of mean difference scores revealed that Black and Asian respondents had a higher regard for heritage than they estimated mainstream America does, and that this difference was significantly larger than that for Whites ($p < .001$ for both Scheffe and LSD post hoc tests). Neither race nor racial identity, individually or interactively, was related to personal endorsement of physicality or achievement factors.

Thus, race and racial identity hold the potential to interact in an impact on endorsement of certain mainstream American values. This interaction was

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therefore included in subsequent analyses examining the role of media in relation to participants' value endorsement.

Research Question 2

The second RQ asked: How are general media exposure patterns related to the personal endorsement of mainstream American values?

Bivariate correlational analyses in brief. Results presenting relationships between media consumption and personal/mainstream American value differences split by race are displayed in Table 1. Across all three races, nearly all significant or near-significant correlations were negative, showing greater media consumption to be associated with lesser difference between personal values and mainstream American values—that is, media exposure was associated with greater endorsement of mainstream American values. Two types of media consumption stood out as strong correlates across multiple values. TV sports consumption was correlated with personal/mainstream American value congruence in the cases of self-direction for Whites; power for Blacks and Whites; physicality for Blacks and Whites; and heritage for Blacks. Music TV consumption was correlated with personal/mainstream American value congruence in the cases of self-direction for Blacks and Whites; power for Blacks; heritage for Blacks; achievement for Blacks and Whites; and happiness for Blacks and Whites. Neither TV sports nor music TV consumption was related to Asian respondents' value endorsement patterns, which might reflect a dearth of Asian American athletes and music performers in U.S. media. That is, unlike their Black and White counterparts, Asian respondents may encounter few Asian role models in these media content types.

Multiple regression analyses. As a more precise and conservative test of the role of media exposure in the prediction of mainstream American value endorsement, a series of hierarchical multiple regressions was conducted, controlling for construct sets important to the prediction of values—(a) demographics: gender (dummy coded as female), age, and political ideology-conservatism; (b) race (dummy coded for Black and Asian identification); (c) racial identity; and (d) and two interaction terms (Racial Identity × Black and Racial Identity × Asian) constructed via multiplication of centered scores. Media consumption measures were included in stepwise fashion in a block after these four control blocks. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

The regression analyses clearly indicated that most of the simple relationships between certain types of media consumption and personal values were reduced to non-significance when controlling for demographics, race, racial identity, and the interaction of race and racial identity. As hinted at in the RQ1 results, the roles of race, racial identity, and their interaction were substantial, eclipsing many of the relationships between media exposure and values endorsement. In the final equations, we see three significant unique predictors: (a) a Black self-identification (related to greater

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TABLE 1 Correlations Between Media Consumption and Personal/Mainstream American Value Differences (VD) by Ethnicity

	VD 1: Self-Direction			VD 2: Power			VD 3: Physicality		
Media consumption	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White
TV news	−.06	.04	−.20**	−.01	−.10	−.16*	.06	.08	−.05
TV sitcoms	−.17*	.13	−.12[a]	−.17*	−.05	−.19**	.02	−.07	−.07
TV drama	−.12[a]	−.08	−.10	−.17*	−.19	−.13[a]	.04	−.23[a]	−.17*
TV talk shows	−.09	−.02	−.26***	−.12[a]	−.07	−.19*	.11	−.08	−.13[a]
TV sports	−.11	−.15	−.16*	−.18**	−.10	−.24**	−.21*	−.05	−.16*
Music TV	−.14*	−.05	−.15*	−.26***	−.06	−.09	−.08	−.13	−.06
Magazines	−.04	−.20	−.12	−.17*	−.09	−.12[a]	.00	−.08	−.14*
Radio	.08	−.08	−.18**	.04	.02	−.18**	.03	.04	−.11
Newspapers	.04	.01	−.02	−.08	−.05	−.02	.02	−.07	−.03
Video games	−.02	.24[a]	−.03	−.16*	−.13	−.05	−.19**	.02	−.08
Internet	−.08	.12	−.05	−.17*	.01	−.01	−.03	.29*	−.01
	VD 4: Heritage			VD 5: Achievement			VD 6: Happiness		
Media consumption	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White
TV news	−.04	−.09	−.02	.03	.00	−.14*	−.07	.00	−.09
TV sitcoms	−.09	.05	−.08	−.18*	.00	−.04	−.05	−.00	−.09
TV drama	−.11	−.05	−.09	−.04	−.05	.01	.01	−.05	−.07
TV talk shows	−.14*	−.04	−.09	−.08	−.10	−.13[a]	−.05	−.10	.01
TV sports	−.19**	.01	−.02	−.09	.09	−.01	−.01	.09	−.08
Music TV	−.20**	−.10	−.01	−.17*	−.11	−.17*	−.15*	−.11	−.15*
Magazines	−.06	−.09	−.02	−.01	−.14	−.06	.03	−.14	−.03
Radio	.01	.02	.01	.00	.02	−.10	−.04	.02	−.04
Newspapers	−.12[a]	.06	−.04	−.02	.04	.04	.05	.04	.06
Video games	−.12[a]	.14	.07	.06	.15	.11	.02	.15	.09
Internet	−.08	.20	.01	.01	.15	.04	−.03	.15	.01

[a].05 < p < .10.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

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TABLE 2 Multiple Regressions Predicting Personal/Mainstream American Value Differences (VDs)

	VD 1: Self-Direction			VD 2: Power			VD 3: Physicality		
	r	Final Beta	R^2 change	*r*	Final Beta	R^2 change	*r*	Final Beta	R^2 change
Forced-entry blocks									
1. Demographics			.03*			.04**			.06***
Female	−.04	−.13*		.15**	.16**		.22***	.23***	
Age	.12*	.10[a]		.06	.01		.00	−.02	
Polit.-Cons.	−.09*	−.06		−.11*	−.11*		−.11*	−.12*	
2. Race			.01			.00			.00
Black	.11*	.19*		.02	.19**		.05	.09	
Asian	−.11*	−.02		−.03	.08		.01	.10	
3. Racial identity	−.06	−.09	.00	−.17**	−.24***	.03**	−.06	−.13*	.01[a]
4. Interaction Terms			.02*			.05***			.00
Racial Ident. × Black	.06	.17**			.26***		−.02	.04	
Racial Ident. × Asian	.03	.10		−.05	.07		.02	.07	
Stepwise block									
5. Media consumption									
TV news	−.07[a]			−.09[a]			.00		
TV sitcoms	−.06			−.14**			−.01		
TV drama	−.09*			−.16**			−.09*		
TV talk shows	−.11*			−.14**			.00		
TV sports	−.13**	−.19**	.03**	−.18***			−.17**		
Music TV	−.13*			−.20***	−.20***	.03***	−.11*		
Magazines	−.12*			−.13**			−.08[a]		
Radio	.02			−.03			−.01		
Newspapers	−.02			−.06			−.07[a]		
Video games	−.02			−.13**			−.13**		
Internet	−.07			−.10*			.00		
Full model	$R^2 = .09$, Adj. $R^2 = .07$			$R^2 = .16$, Adj. $R^2 = .13$			$R^2 = .08$, Adj. $R^2 = .06$		
	$F_{(9,337)} = 3.71$			$F_{(9,337)} = 6.97$			$F_{(8,338)} = 3.57$		
	$p < .001$			$p < .001$			$p = .001$		

An examination of tolerances and condition indexes revealed no problems with multicollinearity for any regressions. Polit.-Cons. = political ideology-conservatism; Ident. = identity.

[a].05 < *p* < .10.

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

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TABLE 3 Multiple Regressions Predicting Personal/Mainstream American Value Differences (VD)

	VD 4: Heritage			VD 5: Achievement			VD 6: Happiness		
	r	Final Beta	R^2 change	*r*	Final Beta	R^2 change	*r*	Final Beta	R^2 change
Forced-entry blocks									
1. Demographics			.01			.02[a]			.06***
Female	.06	.05		−.10*	−.10[a]		−.06	−.09[a]	
Age	.08[a]	.08		.05	.03		.10*	.07	
Polit.-Cons.	−.04	−.05		−.09[a]	−.09[a]		−.09*	−.06	
2. Race			.02*			.01			.00
Black	.07	.19**		−.04	.08		.11*	.14[a]	
Asian	.07	.20**		.09*	.10		−.10*	−.06	
3. Racial identity	.01	−.07	.00	−.04	−.05	.00	.01	.00	.01[a]
4. Interaction Terms		.02[a]			.00				.00
Racial Ident. × Black	−.03	.10		.02	.06		.02	.07	
Racial Ident. × Asian	.08[a]	.14*		.01	.01		.01	.00	
Stepwise block									
5. Media consumption									
TV news	−.04			−.05			−.06		
TV sitcoms	−.03			−.13*			.01		
TV drama	−.09[a]			−.05			−.01		
TV talk shows	−.12*			−.12*			−.02		
TV sports	−.12*			−.07			−.06		
Music TV	−.13**			−.21***	−.19**	.03**	−.13**	−.17**	.03**
Magazines	−.05			−.06			−.03		
Radio	.05			−.03			−.05		
Newspapers	−.09*			−.02			.00		
Video games	−.07[a]			.06			−.04		
Internet	−.03			.02			−.03		
Full model	$R^2 = .05$, Adj. $R^2 = .02$			$R^2 = .07$, Adj. $R^2 = .04$			$R^2 = .06$, Adj. $R^2 = .04$		
	$F_{(8,338)} = 2.00$			$F_{(9,337)} = 2.69$			$F_{(9,337)} = 2.52$		
	$p = .046$			$p = .005$			$p = .008$		

An examination of tolerances and condition indexes revealed no problems with multicollinearity for any regressions. Polit.-Cons. = political ideology-conservatism; Ident. = identity.

[a].05 < *p* < .10.

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

personal/mainstream American value differences for self-direction, power, and heritage); (b) an Asian self-identification (associated with a greater personal/mainstream American value difference for heritage); and (c) a stronger racial identity (associated with a smaller personal/mainstream American value difference for power and physicality).

Using stepwise entry in the final block for media exposure indicators, only TV sports and music TV consumption provided unique, incremental predictions of American/personal value differences: (a) TV sports consumption was associated with lower difference scores between personal and mainstream America for the value of self-direction ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$); and (b) music TV consumption was associated with lower difference scores between personal and mainstream America for three values—power, achievement, and happiness (respectively, $\beta = -.20$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$; $\beta = -.17$, $p < .01$).

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DISCUSSION

Main Findings and Implications

Overall, the study provided some evidence that acceptance of American mainstream values differs depending on one's race, on the strength of one's racial identity, and on the interaction between the two. The importance of racial identity in people's social reality and perceptions, the core tenet of SI, seems evident in that how people perceive and evaluate mainstream American values is reflective of their own cultural orientation, which may serve as an anchor when responding to media images. The study, however, offered limited evidence of media effects on acceptance of mainstream American values, finding a broad range of simple relationships between media exposure and endorsement of mainstream American values that proved to be less important than those involving race and racial identity.

The SI perspective was supported by findings of greater endorsement of several mainstream American values for White respondents with high racial identity, while greater racial identity was related to greater personal/mainstream American value differences among Blacks and Asians for the heritage value. Thus, acculturation may actually involve a reduction in perceived importance of heritage, to bring a minority member's value more in line with the mainstream American value. Overall, the importance of both race and racial identity in the prediction of the endorsement of most of the value dimensions studied here speaks to the centrality of one's racial identity in the process of the adoption of cultural values.

Social cognitive theory received some support, with precise findings indicating the importance of (a) race and racial identity and (b) specific content types for the process of media assimilation with regard to values. Correlational evidence illuminated the importance of a range of news and

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entertainment media for the acquisition by Whites of the mainstream values of self-direction, power, physicality, and achievement. For Blacks, exposure to various general media sources was related to their endorsement of the mainstream-level values of self-direction, power, and heritage. But for Asians, exposure to general media was essentially unrelated to the endorsement of mainstream values, again, hinting at the possibility that Asian Americans may still find fewer race-consonant role models in general U.S. media.

When controlling for demographics and racial variables, the role of media in predicting endorsement of mainstream American values was weakened. The significant demographic and race-related predictors revealed patterns that centered on the values of power and physicality—stronger personal endorsement of mainstream American values for both power and physicality were predicted by being male, being politically conservative, and having a stronger racial identity. Additionally, self-identification as Black was predictive of lesser personal endorsement of several mainstream American values—self-direction, power, and heritage.

After controlling for demographics and race-related constructs, some media sources proved to be resilient predictors. It is noteworthy that TV sports and music TV exposure mattered in particular—perhaps partly because those are so popular among college students. In this study, the emergence of particular content types as more important than more general media consumption (e.g., TV news or dramas, newspaper readership) for the prediction of value endorsements is consonant with a growing literature indicating that "content trumps channel" when it comes to potential media effects. Previous research by a current author and colleagues (e.g., Armstrong, Neuendorf, with Brentar, 1992; Atkin et al., 2008; Jeffres, Bracken, Atkin, & Neuendorf, 2011) has repeatedly confirmed the primacy of specific content over general media exposure, finding that a genre, a content class such as sports, or even a specific episode of a TV program (Lieberman et al., 2009) is a critical factor for the consideration of media exposure outcomes. Holbrook and Hill (2005) identified agenda-setting and priming outcomes specific to TV crime drama exposure. And in a pointed alternative to Gerbner's mainstreaming hypothesis (Gerbner et al., 1980), and a nod to selective exposure, Cohen and Weimann (2000) found differential cultivation effects for different demographic groups, and for different television genres. Although such specificity of outcomes may appear unwieldy, a consideration of this trend is essential to understanding media effects in times of rapidly increasing content options (Jeffres et al., 2004; Neuendorf, Jeffres, & Atkin, 2000). Social cognitive theory would support the notion of impacts of specific media content, particularly when that content presents a consistent set of models and behaviors.

Again, the two specific media content types that emerged as most important to the prediction of mainstream values endorsement among all three races were TV sports and music TV. Exposure to TV sports was related to

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a stronger endorsement of the mainstream value of self-direction. Content analyses of TV sports coverage has focused heavily on gender representations, finding a continuing gender imbalance (e.g., Cooky, Messner, & Hextrum, 2013); however, it seems evident that sports content might well reflect the value of self-direction—that is, independence, individuality, equity, peace, and freedom—and help portray this as mainstream. Exposure to music TV was related to a stronger endorsement of the mainstream values of power, achievement, and happiness. That college-age respondents might locate such common or mainstream values in music TV content is not surprising, given the enduring popularity of music videos among adolescents and young adults (Aubrey, Hopper, & Mbure, 2011; Roberts & Foehr, 2004). Content analyses of the substance of music TV have emphasized gender and sex role portrayals (e.g., Aubrey et al., 2011; Turner, 2011; Wallis, 2011), as well as race-based role portrayals (e.g., Conrad, Dixon, and Zhang (2009) found a tendency toward Eurocentric features among African American female characters in music videos). And Ward (2004) has identified exposure to these very two specific content types—TV sports and music videos—as significantly predictive of lower levels of self-esteem among African American teens. At the same time, it seems apparent that young adults might also find the content to reveal mainstream values that denote success, if in a rather conspicuous, popular-culture fashion. Indeed, the value dimension of "power" includes items measuring wealth, appearance, power, and success, all of which are on prominent display in sports and music programming (e.g., Conrad et al., 2009). It should be noted that the most-studied attributes of this study's most significant media types (sports and music videos) are the demographic factors that contributed most robustly to the study's regressions (gender and African American race).

Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations associated with this study include the use of a convenience sample with substantial representation of only three racial groups. The location of the study, the U.S. Southeast, may also limit the results of this study because of its historical racial climate. Further, we did not measure the length of time respondents or their families have lived in the United States. Given the ongoing emigration of Asians to the United States, this lack of information may be problematic for this group in particular; we do not have a full understanding of their direct exposure to American culture, and therefore are not certain of their acculturation status. This might be an important factor in the "null" findings for Asians in this study.

The study examined personal endorsement of mainstream values as a dependent variable based the literature, but the direction of influence cannot be assured due to the correlational nature of the data. Clearly, people

may selectively attend to certain media and specific media content that are consistent with their views.

Consistent with previous research on values endorsement, this study used difference scores (Edwards, 2001; Kristof, 1996). In particular, this study used an absolute-value scale of differences for personal/mainstream American values comparisons. This decision provides a set of measures that conceptually matches the notion of values congruence, disregarding valence or elevation of said values. However, this type of indicator is therefore insensitive to elevation. Additional analyses using simple, rather than absolute value, measures of difference were conducted with the current data set, and results did not differ substantially. However, other methods of constructing values congruence indicators are feasible.

This study has measured a wide range of types of general media consumption, but did not include measures of specific ethnic media exposure (such as readership of historically Black press outlets, or Asian press publications). Future research should examine more precise types of media consumption for both general media and for ethnic media. Indeed, the superior efficacy of specific content types—that is, music TV and TV sports—over general media indicators in predicting values endorsement indicates that future work should examine much more specific media exposure indicators.

CONCLUSION

This study uncovered a six-factor values structure, with power and physicality endorsed as most important to mainstream American culture, and with some notable significant differences between the races. As expected, White respondents' own personal value orientations most closely matched the assessments of mainstream American values, and greater racial identity (from an SI perspective) corresponded to an even closer match. A number of media consumption measures correlated with personal/mainstream American values congruence, with greater media exposure predicting greater endorsement, but most relationships were eclipsed when controlling for demographics, race, and racial identity. Predictors that maintained under controls included music TV and sports programming exposure, pointing to the potential importance of such particular media forms in the process of value-based cultural assimilation and reinforcement.

NOTES

1. The seven options were African American/Black, Asian/Asian American, Caucasian/White (non-Hispanic), Hispanic/Chicana/o/Latina/o (American), Native American, International student, and Other (please specify).

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2. Additive scales created from these sets of items were moderately intercorrelated; for mainstream American values, correlations ranged from −.034 (for values #2 and #4) to .61 (Values #1 and #5).

3. The alpha and mean interitem correlation (MIC) reliabilities for the perceived mainstream American values were self-direction, .80, .45; power, .75, .38; physicality, .74, .49; heritage, .82, .53; achievement, .71, .38; happiness, .77, .62. For personal values, they were: Self-direction, .85, .55; power, .68, .21; physicality, .80, .57; heritage, .79, .49; achievement, .68, .40; and happiness, .85, .75. For the personal/mainstream American values difference scores, the reliabilities were sself-direction, .73, .35; power, .65, .21; physicality, .60, .33; heritage, .74, .41; achievement, .52, .21; and happiness, .72, .56, These figures exceed the criteria of Clark and Watson (1995), who indicate a rule of thumb of .60 or greater for Cronbach's alpha, but prefer the use of the mean interitem correlation due to the sensitivity of alpha to number of measures (k). Clark and Watson recommend a mean interitem correlation (MIC) of between .15 and .50. Alternatively, Briggs and Cheek (1986, p. 114), hold that the optimal level of homogeneity occurs when the MIC is in the .2 to .4 range.

4. In an ANOVA performed to examine differences among racial groups, significant findings were found for three cultural values factors: Physicality, power and achievement. Post hoc comparison results with the Scheffe and LSD methods indicated that Black participants perceived (a) physical ability (5.9) as significantly more important than did their White counterparts (5.4); (b) power-related attributes (e.g., power, wealth, appearance, success) as significantly more important (6.0) than did Asian Americans (5.7); and (c) achievement (intelligence, work ethics, education, science) as significantly more important (5.7) than did both Asians (5.3) and Whites (5.4) in the mainstream American society. For more details, see Fujioka and Neuendorf (2014).

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