

Chapman University

## Chapman University Digital Commons

---

Communication Faculty Articles and Research

School of Communication

---

2-5-2022

### **Media Users as Allies: Personality Predictors of Dominant Group Members' Support for Racial and Sexual Diversity in Entertainment Media**

Rebecca (Riva) Tukachinsky

Caitlin Neuville

Sixtine Foucaut

Sara Morgan

Angela Poerschke

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/comm\\_articles](https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/comm_articles)

---

---

# Media Users as Allies: Personality Predictors of Dominant Group Members' Support for Racial and Sexual Diversity in Entertainment Media

## Comments

This is an Accepted Manuscript version of the following article, accepted for publication in:

Tukachinsky Forster, R., Neuville, C., Foucaut, S., Morgan, S., Poerschke, A., & Torres, A. (2022). Media users as allies: personality predictors of dominant group members' support for racial and sexual diversity in entertainment media. *The Communication Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2022.2033577>

It is deposited under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

## Copyright

Taylor & Francis

## Authors

Rebecca (Riva) Tukachinsky, Caitlin Neuville, Sixtine Foucaut, Sara Morgan, Angela Poerschke, and Andrea Torres

---

Running head: MEDIA DIVERSITY

**Media Users as Allies: Personality Predictors of Dominant Group Members' Support for  
Racial and Sexual Diversity in Entertainment Media**

Rebecca (Riva) Tukachinsky Forster<sup>1</sup>

Caitlin Neuville

Sixtine Foucaut

Sara Morgan

Angela Poerschke

Andrea Torres

Chapman University

School of Communication

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author. Please send all communication concerning this manuscript to Dr.

Rebecca Tukachinsky Forster, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92766. Email:

[tukachin@chapman.edu](mailto:tukachin@chapman.edu), phone: (714) 516-4685

Acknowledgement: We thank the reviewers for providing thoughtful feedback that helped make the paper much stronger. We thank Dr. Mark Hopson for reading a draft of the manuscript and offering exceptionally helpful suggestions.

Abstract

The study examines psychological characteristics of dominant group allies (White, cisgender heterosexual individuals) in the context of media consumption. A survey of U.S. Americans ( $N = 272$ ) examines the relationship between personality traits (openness and empathy) and support for racial and sexual diversity in the media. Both traits were predictive of (1) endorsing media diversity policies and (2) intention to consume diverse media content. However, these effects were largely mediated by the motivation to expand the boundaries of one's self-concept rather than by social justice views. The findings are discussed in terms of allyship and media psychology.

*Keywords:* Media diversity, race, personality, survey

## **Media Users as Allies: Personality Predictors of Dominant Group Members' Support for Racial and Sexual Diversity in Entertainment Media**

Mainstream television and film in the U.S. have a long history of exclusion and negative depiction of marginalized social groups, including BIPOC and LGBTQA+ individuals<sup>1</sup> (Mastro & Tukachinsky, 2012; Nisbet & Myers, 2012). These problematic representations are a symptom of a deeper, macro-level practices of exclusion embedded in the structure, business model, and hiring practices of the entertainment media industry (Gross, 1991). Media users and entertainment media-industry insiders (e.g., BBC, 2020; Buckley, 2019) have recently joined scholars and social activists (e.g., Mastro, 2015; Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, 2021) in scrutinizing the representation of marginalized groups (MGs) in film and television and calling for a change. The entertainment media industry appears to be sensitive to these public pressures. However, their efforts to improve media diversity have been met with fierce opposition from some dominant group (DG) media users (Newman, 2019; Roffey, 2020; Wilkinson, 2020).

Against this backdrop, the present study is set to examine the psychological processes underlying DG members' (White Americans, cisgender heterosexual individuals) interest in consuming diverse media content and their support for social policies aimed at transforming the entertainment media into a more inclusive space. This is not to undermine the critical importance of examining the living experiences of MG members and how they negotiate excluding media practices and representations. Rather, the present study will shed light on psychological factors that contribute to allyship in the context of entertainment media consumption.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, for brevity and consistency, the term “dominant group” will be used to refer collectively to the privileged racial and sexual groups in the U.S.—Whites and cisgender heterosexual individuals. The term “marginalized group” will be used to refer to BIPOC and LGBTQA+ individuals.

DG members can work alongside MG members to advocate for improving media representations (Spanierman & Smith, 2017). While allyship can be exercised in any social spaces (Tracy et al., 2020), this concept has been discussed most commonly in the context of workplace discrimination (Razzante et al., 2018). The present research extends the notion of allyship to entertainment media consumption, arguing that the current industry structure offers DG members an opportunity to be agents for change in entertainment media by supporting inclusive media policies and consuming diverse media content.

The study is situated in media psychology and examines individual-level variables that promote allyship in the context of entertainment media. Building on media theories of self-expansion and incorporating notions from theorization of allyship (Razzante & Orbe 2018), the present study explores how personality characteristics (openness, empathy) predict DG members' interest in media about MGs' experiences and DGs' support for social policies designed to promote inclusivity in the entertainment media. These questions are examined in relation to two MGs: BIPOC and LGBTQA+.

## **Entertainment Media and MGs**

**Representation of MGs.** Although there are some differences in how different (sexual, ethnic, religious, etc.) MGs are portrayed in the mass media, overall, depictions of these groups follow several overarching patterns:

(1) ***Underrepresentation and Marginalization.*** Historically, both ethnic/racial and sexual MGs have been underrepresented in American film and television and have been limited to certain genres and low-visibility character archetypes (e.g., a subordinate character supporting the DG protagonist; Greenberg et al., 2002). Over the past decades, there has been a steady increase in representation of racial/ethnic and sexual MGs in primetime television and film (for

review, see Mastro & Tukachinsky, 2012; Nisbet & Myers, 2012). The period between 2010 and 2020 was marked by a particularly dramatic shift. Films lacking racial diversity comprised 51% of all movies in 2010 but constituted merely 10% of films in 2020. At the same time, the share of movies with over 50% non-White cast grew to 28.8% (UCLA, 2021). Moreover, by 2020 the share of non-White lead characters came close to matching the percentage of the non-White population in the U.S.. However, this progress is uneven among different MGs, as specific racial/ethnic groups continue to be underrepresented (UCLA, 2021). Similarly, there is a general trend toward greater sexual diversity in cinema, although signs of progress are often followed by phases of regression, and many disparities in media depictions persist (GLAAD, 2017; 2019; 2020).

(2) ***Whitewashing/straightwashing***. Over the years, a common media industry practice denied MG actors the opportunity to portray their group authentically by casting DG group members to play MG characters. Examples span from early in the history of cinema (e.g., *Madame Butterfly* and the *Charlie Chan* film series in 1931-1949) to the 21st century, with Johnny Depp playing a Native American in *Lone Ranger* (2013) and Scarlett Johansson starring in the role of a Japanese woman in *Ghost in the Shell* (2017). Similarly, despite growing awareness of this issue (Rosa, July 7, 2020) and more opportunities being offered to transgender actors to play roles of trans characters, cisgender actors can still be found playing transgender characters (e.g., *Transparent*, 2014). Moreover, activists, actors, and writers censure the practice of heterosexual actors playing gay characters (e.g., Kaiser, 2021).

(3) ***Stereotyping***. When MG characters appear on-screen, they are often limited to a narrow range of stereotypical and derogatory depictions (for review, see Mastro & Tukachinsky, 2012; Nisbet & Myers, 2012). Even programs like *The Cosby Show* and *Will & Grace*, which

revolutionized television by offering sympathetic depictions of Black and gay individuals, have been criticized for incorporating diversity in superficial ways while continuing to implicitly reinforce both heterosexism (Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002) and a subtle form of racism disguised as colorblindness (Jhally & Lewis, 1992). MG actors and filmmakers have lamented that the current rates of representation result in tokenism and burdening few MG members with the responsibility of representing their entire group. Thus, they have argued that there is a need for many more MG storytelling opportunities to represent the diversity of MG experiences and voices (Giorgis, 2021).

**MG Representation as a Systemic Issue.** Problematic media depictions of MGs are rooted in systemic inequalities in the media (Gross, 1991). The construction of media content in general, and entertainment media in particular, is a process situated within media content creators' social identities (Thakore, 2020). It is embedded in the system in ways that appear to be natural and seamless, but ultimately results in media content that reflects the political and economic biases of an elite social group that is “(mostly) White, (mostly) middle-aged, (mostly) male, (mostly) middle and upper-middle class, and entirely heterosexual (at least in public)” (Gross, 1991, p. 21).

Accordingly, critical scholars have called for a systemic shift in the media industry to ensure adequate access to storytelling for MGs (Thakore, 2020). Indeed, data show that diversifying the labor force of the media industry is key to greater cast diversity and opening the door to a range of authentic minority group narratives in both television (Color of Change, 2020) and film (Smith et al., 2014; UCLA, 2021). However, the historic systemic discrimination that excluded certain groups from decision-making positions resulted in shutting down these voices, cementing their continued under/misrepresentation in mainstream media.



These biases are situated within the political economic imperatives of profit-driven media enterprises. Throughout the majority of U.S. mass media history, the business model pushed media executives to appeal to “the moderate center” (Gross, 1991, p. 25) by catering to DG audiences and appeasing advertisers that shy from controversy. Thus, the mainstream media not only shape public perceptions of social issues but also reflect what DG media creators believe to be non-objectionable (Giorgis, 2021). At most, as the argument goes, the mainstream media are willing to challenge the consensus only to the extent of generating publicity or attracting new markets without threatening commercial success among DGs or risking a loss of advertisement deals.

Today, the media market is more fragmented and caters to niche audiences. This new business model offers an opportunity for creating more diverse media on alternative platforms. However, attempts to appeal to the broadest audience are still cited by media executives in mainstream film and broadcast TV as the reason for restricting diverse and authentic storytelling (Giorgis, 2021, p. 44). Thus, by and large, the media industry continues to be very conservative in its attempts to lure audiences with a promise of diversity without alienating less egalitarian DG audiences.

For instance, in recent years, the mainstream entertainment media has engaged in queerbaiting. This practice involves luring LGBTQA+ viewers by making false promises of sexual diversity. To this end, television shows and movies may imply a same-sex relationship without allowing it to fully materialize (e.g., *Supernatural*) or feature just a few, underdeveloped, stereotypical LGBTQA+ characters. In doing so, the media industry is able to market heavily to the MG without upsetting DG viewers, leaving LGBTQA+ media users feeling exploited and deceived (Woods & Hardman, 2021).

Similarly, the filmmaker Mario Van Peebles struggled to find support for a movie about the Black Panther political movement. He recounted his meeting with a studio executive who said: “I dig the script; I was a radical and love the Panthers. But we have to make the lead character white” (Chow & Bates, 2021, p. 86). To be successful, the executive argued, the script must follow the White-savior trope. He suggested “casting ‘a Bridget Fonda type’ who teaches a group of Black men to read, leading to their becoming of the Black Panthers” (p. 86).

**Facilitating Change.** Over the past few years, the media industry has taken several steps toward greater inclusivity. First, major studios have made a conscious effort to curb whitewashing by casting ethnic minority actors to play characters of the appropriate ethnicity (e.g., Disney's live-action *Aladdin*) and replacing White voice actors in animation film and TV series (e.g., *The Simpsons*) with same-ethnicity actors (Romano, 2020). Similarly, growing awareness of straightwashing has led to efforts to cast LGBTQA+ actors to play trans and gay characters (e.g., Rosa, July 7, 2020).

Second, the entertainment media industry has expanded its colorblind and color-conscious casting practices. The former involve casting choices that do not take into consideration the actor's ethnic and sexual identity. For instance, working on the screen adaptation of Dickens's *David Copperfield*, the filmmaker Armando Iannucci strived to maximize the pool of talent available to him by casting non-White actors in roles that have been traditionally reserved for White actors (Erbland, 2020). Colorblind casting has been praised by actors for allowing them to play roles that were previously out of their reach. Dev Patel, an actor of Indian descent, recounted his astonishment when he was offered the role of David Copperfield: “Truthfully, I thought the closest I'd get to being in a period film would be holding a tray or being a waiter” (Agard, 2020). In another interview he praised colorblind casting,

saying, “There’s so much more opportunity out there, and I’m very grateful for that” (Erbland, 2020). Importantly, however, colorblind casting has been criticized for fostering an illusion of a color-neutral reality. Some researchers and activists advocate for replacing it with color-conscious casting. Instead of casting MG actors to retell DG-centered narratives, color-conscious casting involves intentional use of diverse casting to inform the story and incorporate marginalized voices into the narrative (e.g., Sowa, 2020).

To increase diversity both in front of and behind the camera, multiple initiatives have been adopted by the industry. Academics and activist groups have long advocated for setting diversity targets and policies (such as The Inclusion Rider—a provision in a filmmaker contract that guarantees cast diversity; Buckley, 2019). While these calls initially fell on deaf ears, in recent years there has been uptake among media companies implementing such measures. For instance, in 2019, Warner Media adopted diversity requirements for crew hiring (Ramos, 2019). Two years later, when the filmmaker Ava DuVernay launched a database of diverse crew members for TV and film hiring managers, her platform gained massive popularity, with more than 3,000 members and backing from major studios (Erbland, 2021). Similarly, in 2020, in an effort to promote on-screen inclusivity, the Academy Awards issued diversity criteria that movies must meet in order to be considered for the best picture award (Falconer, 2020).

Given the growing awareness of these issues and the proliferation of various diversity initiatives, the current study examines the role of DG members in supporting these systemic changes, including colorblind and color-conscious casting, curbing white/straightwashing, and making diverse hiring a priority.

### **The Role of DG Audiences**

The dominant group theory (DGT) theorizes ways in which DG members communicate in intergroup contexts (Razzante & Orbe, 2018). According to DGT, DG members differ in their desired outcomes (ranging from reinforcement of their privileged status to striving to dismantle oppressive structures) and their assertiveness level (ranging from being subtle to aggressive). For example, a category of responses labeled “nonassertive impediment” includes recognition of one’s privilege and self-reflection, while more assertive impediment involves educating others and confronting oppressive rhetoric. Escalating from a goal of “impediment” to one of “dismantling,” DG members can question discrimination policies and use their own privilege to advance social justice.<sup>2</sup>

The current study applies these notions to the context of entertainment media consumption. Specifically, it is theorized that DG media users vary in their motivation to challenge the status quo and that they can do so in subtle ways (through diverse media consumption) or more assertively (by supporting structural changes in the entertainment media industry).

**DGs’ Exposure to MG-centered Media.** Media consumption is often motivated by a desire to reinforce one’s group status. For example, overall, White moviegoers report lower intention to watch a film that features Black actors compared to movies with an all-White cast (Grier et al., 2006). In fact, White media users tend to consider narratives that center ethnic MGs to be intended for MG audiences (Weaver & Frampton 2019). It appears that DG media consumers’ acceptance of diversity is limited to seeing MG actors in typecast and stereotypical roles. For instance, White viewers prefer to see Black actors in action films (Kuppuswamy &

---

<sup>2</sup> Razzante and Orbe (2018) define nine DG communication orientations (3 goals X 3 levels of assertiveness). However, importantly, these are not distinct categories. Rather, goals and assertiveness are two continuous dimensions creating a gradient of communicative practices. Accordingly, the current study examines the predictors of leaning toward higher levels of assertive challenge to the status quo along this continuum.

Younkinb, 2020; Weaver, 2011) and enjoy comedy that disparages Black characters (Banjo, 2011). In turn, exposure to MG characters that do not actively disprove stereotypes promotes White viewers' self-esteem (Mastro et al., 2008).

In-group favoritism is rooted in overall intergroup sentiments. For instance, in a national poll, support for casting a Black actress as the Little Mermaid in the Disney live-action film fell along the political divide (Shuler, 2019). Experimental research similarly demonstrates that preexisting attitudes toward an MG determine the DG audience's responses to diversity casting initiatives (Gubitz & Avant, 2020). More specifically, feeling that one's own group (White culture) is superior to an MG (Black culture) enhanced enjoyment from comedy derogating that group (Banjo, 2011). On a more fundamental level, authoritarian personality, capitalizing on obedience, submission to authorities, and endorsing the restriction of civil liberties, was found to be associated with Whites' enjoyment of reality crime television shows featuring Black suspects (Oliver, 1996).

However, in line with DGT, not all DG members' entertainment media selection is guided by in-group favoritism and self-enhancement. In fact, some individuals specifically seek media about outgroups in order to promote their understanding of others (Joyce & Harwood, 2020). By exercising their consumer power, DG media users can put pressure on the media industry, pushing for inclusive policies and demanding diverse media content. Indeed, many of the media diversity initiatives described in previous sections can be directly linked to public scrutiny of the media misrepresentation of MGs and social media activism involving both MG and DG media consumers. For example, the Academy Awards of Motion Pictures diversity standards came as a direct response to the #OscarsSoWhite social media campaign (Del Barco, 2021). Furthermore, since media corporations strive to avoid controversy, a public outcry in

response to insensitive media content can stir media organizations to correct their missteps. For example, when HBO released the 1939 movie *Gone With The Wind* on its streaming platform, it faced public criticism for undermining the experiences of Black Americans. The backlash forced the company to respond, first by removing the movie, and then by reposting it alongside information about the film's historical context (BBC, 2020). Thus, without undermining the critical importance of understanding the experiences and psychology of MG members, it is also valuable to examine the psychology of White and heterosexual, cisgender allies and what sets them apart from other DG members.

**What Are Allies Made of?** Tracy et al. (2020) argued that teaching DG members to use their privilege to fight for equality is a multistep process that starts with DG members recognizing their role in the suffering of MGs, then listening to MGs, and ultimately engaging in activism. Each of these steps, Tracy et al. maintained, involves relational empathy and critical self-reflexivity. This process is a form of transformative learning that involves changing one's frame of reference to become more inclusive by "having an open mind, learning to listen empathetically" (Mezirow, 2003, p 60). In psychological terms, these qualities constitute trait empathy and openness.

**Openness.** Openness constitutes one of the five core personality traits (Big-Five). It involves the breadth, depth, and permeability of one's consciousness and the recurrent need to explore, develop, and examine personal experiences. Individuals who are high in openness are sensitive, emotionally differentiated, behaviorally flexible, and intellectually curious (McCrae & Greenberg, 2014). These individuals are willing and eager to experience a wide variety of ideas, feelings, and activities, which, theoretically, can also extend to media preferences. Indeed, Grier et al. (2006) found that general diversity seeking (e.g., interest in ethnic food) also predicts

greater interest in movies with diverse casts. It is therefore hypothesized that among DG users (Whites and cisgender heterosexual individuals):

**H1a:** Openness will be associated with greater interest in exposure to entertainment media centered on racial and sexual MGs.

*Empathy.* Empathy encompasses both cognitive and affective components: the ability to take the other person's perspective by imagining oneself in the position of another person and being emotionally moved by others' experiences and emotions (Davis, 1980; Decety & Cowell, 2015). Empathetic concern serves as a motivational drive to care for others' welfare (Decety & Cowell, 2015). The current study specifically focuses on two dimensions of empathy (Davis, 1983): perspective-taking and empathetic concern (i.e., emotional reactivity to others). Whereas trait openness entails interest in diverse experiences overall, empathy specifically involves other-oriented openness, which is hypothesized to promote greater interest in exposure to other groups' experiences by consuming media that features those groups. Among DG users (Whites and cisgender heterosexual individuals):

**H1b:** Empathy will be associated with greater interest in exposure to entertainment media centered on racial and sexual MGs.

Openness and empathy are integral to understanding others and taking actions that support groups different from one's own. Thus, openness and empathy are robustly associated with more liberal attitudes, support for liberal policies in general, and more favorable attitudes toward diversity in the workplace (e.g., Strauss et al., 2003). Extending these findings to the

media context, it is hypothesized that openness and empathy will promote support for policies promoting inclusivity in the entertainment industry. Specifically, Among DG users:

**H2a and H2b:** (a) Openness and (b) empathy will be associated with greater support for policies that promote racial and sexual inclusivity in the entertainment media industry.

### **Mechanisms of Effects**

While it makes sense that people who are generally more open and empathetic act on these traits in the media context, the psychological mechanisms underlying these effects are largely unexplored. To fill this gap, the current study examines two such mechanisms: reducing colorblindness and promoting self-expansion.

**Colorblindness.** Some well-meaning Americans believe that “not seeing race” is an egalitarian stance that offers equal opportunity based on merit alone (Neville et al., 2014). However, colorblindness fails to acknowledge systemic, structural, and social barriers that disproportionately impact MGs. Disguised as a progressive ideology rooted in the ethos of meritocracy, colorblindness is in fact a form of “ultra-modern prejudice” (Mekaw et al., 2017, p.209) that justifies social disparities, denies the existence of racism, and maintains the oppressive status quo. Thus, recognition of one’s role in oppression is theorized to be the first critical step toward advocacy (Tracy et al., 2002). Only upon renouncing colorblindness can individuals move to the next steps—sincerely listening to MGs and seeking understanding of their experiences (in this context, through exposure to diverse media) and advocating for reforms to rectify inequalities. Past research indeed has shown that openness and empathy are associated with being less colorblind (e.g., Mekawi et al., 2017), leading to the hypothesis that among White media users:



**H3a&b:** The effect of (a) openness and (b) empathy on interest in exposure to MG-centered entertainment media will be mediated by reduced colorblindness.

**H4a&b:** The effect of (a) openness and (b) empathy on support for MG-inclusivity policies in the entertainment media industry will be mediated by reduced colorblindness.

**Self-Expansion.** Although in general, individuals may be predisposed to favor their in-group, openness and empathy can serve as a motivational force for overcoming this bias. This presents another possible mediator of the effect of these personality traits on entertainment media diversity attitudes and exposure.

It has been posited that the need for relatedness, autonomy, agency, and meaning is a core human need that determines individuals' positive sense of self and therefore motivates behavior (Sherrick et al., 2021). This psychological drive also applies to media choices and allows media users to appreciate emotionally complex, moving, inspiring, and thought-provoking media content that evokes tears and the feeling of a lump in the throat (Raney et al., 2018).

Such self-transcending media experiences are theorized to allow media users to look beyond their ego-centered concerns and contemplate bigger questions pertaining to the meaning of life and the human condition (Oliver et al., 2018). Thus, exposure to such media has been hypothesized to foster a feeling of interconnectedness with others and cultivate an outward orientation (Raney et al., 2018).

Building on the notion of self-transcending media and self-determination needs, temporary expansion of the boundaries of the self theory (TEBOTS; Slater et al., 2014) argues that people are drawn toward narratives because they allow audiences to vicariously experience various alternative selves not otherwise possible in their real life. Engaging with characters and

fictional worlds allows media users to mentally simulate what it would be like to be situated in a different time and culture or to engage with people and activities different from the media users' actual lives. Through identification with fictional characters and immersion in fictional worlds, viewers temporarily become those other characters and live through their plights and successes while leaving aside their own.

Notably, this is a relatively new area of research, in which most studies have examined self-expansion as a mechanism for coping with situational threats to one's self (Johnson et al., 2016; Khoo et al., 2021). Specifically, such studies have viewed connecting to other characters and narrative worlds as a means of regaining agency under conditions of excessive demands in real life or feeling belongingness in times of social deprivation. Although TEBOTS does serve these functions in certain situational contexts, the theoretical basis of the theory suggests that media-based self-expansion should not be limited to self-serving coping behaviors. Rather, TEBOTS can be intrinsically gratifying through consumption of media that offers an opportunity for reflexivity, introspection, and achieving an understanding of questions larger-than-oneself.

Combining notions from self-transcending media research and theorization of TEBOTS, the current study offers a unique application of TEBOTS as an alternative approach to examining entertainment media consumption in an intergroup context. Rather than examining psychological factors that promote group distinctiveness (as SIT-guided research does), this study investigates psychological characteristics that open individuals to a greater interest in exposure to more diverse stories told by minority groups about minority group characters.

As discussed earlier, past research on media preferences in intergroup contexts has been rooted primarily in a social identity perspective. This line of research has examined how individuals seek and enjoy negative representations of the outgroup to affirm their own group's

esteem through unflattering group comparisons (e.g., Banjo, 2011; Mastro et al., 2008; Oliver, 1996). However, the novel self-transcendence approach to media enjoyment stresses the psychological drive to connect to others, expanding one's sense of "self" to include others beyond group identity lines (Oliver et al., 2018).

Whereas TEBOTS has been previously studied as satisfying situational ego-centered threats, the present study considers how TEBOTS is guided by stable individual differences (i.e., personality traits) and how these differences ultimately lead to media choices as means to expand oneself and become more connected to others. Although no published research has examined personality predictors of TEBOTS, Raney et al. (2018) found that higher emotional empathy (empathetic concern), albeit not cognitive empathy (perspective taking), predicts media users' reports of media self-transcendent experiences. Thus, it is hypothesized that for DG audiences:

**H5a&b:** The effect of (a) openness and (b) empathy on interest in exposure to MG-centered entertainment media will be mediated by greater self-expansion motivation.

The present study takes this theorization further, arguing that TEBOTS not only fosters interest in consuming diverse media, but also channels openness and empathy into allyship by supporting policies that transform the media industry to be more diverse and inclusive.

Perspective-taking, emotional empathy, and openness to other people's experiences enable and motivate media users to understand others (through self-expansion). In turn, these experiences are posited to translate into actions that support groups different from one's own.

While these assertions were not tested directly in the context of media diversity, indirect evidence of the potential of empathy and openness in seeking self-expansion and support for media inclusivity policies can be observed in Scharrer and Ramasubramanian's (2015)

qualitative assessment of a media literacy program for sixth-grade students. Some interviewees appreciated the potential of media inclusivity to “[show] you people’s point of view. Knowing different experiences. Understanding them as a person,” to “help us to understand others, other places,” and to “help us understand people’s point of view by displaying experiences and reactions in a different way” (Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015, p. 180). These students appear to have been motivated by empathy (understanding other people’s perspectives and feelings) and openness to explore novel and different experiences, which could increase their ability to overcome the limitations of their group identity and experience a MG’s perspective. In turn, it is reasonable to expect that such sentiments will translate to greater support for media inclusivity initiatives and the consumption of more diverse media. Thus, it is therefore hypothesized that for DG members:

**H6a&b:** The effect of (a) openness and (b) empathy on support for policies that promote racial and sexual inclusivity in the entertainment media industry will be mediated by self-expansion motivation.

## Methods

### Participants and Procedures

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Only participants aged 18 years or older who reside in the U.S. were invited to participate for \$0.25. Several measures have been used to ensure data quality, including the use of CAPTCHA, attention check questions, and enforcing the respondents’ location in the U.S. (see Winter et al., 2019). After the removal of ineligible responses, the final sample included 272 participants. Of them, 64.3% were women, 34.6% were men, and 0.7% identified as non-binary and 0.4% as "other". Most (73.5%) of the

participants identified as White of European descent, and the remaining identified as African American (7.7%), Asian (8.8%), Hispanic/Latinx (5.5%), Native American (1.8%), Middle Eastern (0.7%), and Other (1.8%). Their age ranged from 21 to 85 years old ( $M=42.30$  and  $SD=14.7$ ). Most (89%) of the respondents identified as heterosexual, and the rest identified as gay or lesbian (2.6%) or bisexual (6.6%). Most of the participants were Protestant (26.1%) or Roman Catholic (26.5%) while others identified as Atheist (12.5%), Agnostic (12.5%), Hindu (2.9%), Muslim (2.6%), Jewish (2.2%), Buddhist (1.8%), Russian Orthodox (1.1%), Mormon (0.7%), or something else (11.4%).

### Measures

All the variables were measured as agreement with items on a seven-point Likert scale. Scales were coded such that higher scores indicate a higher ranking on a given variable.

**Openness.** Openness was measured with five questions from a big-five inventory questionnaire (John & Srivastava, 1999), such as: "I see myself as someone who is curious about many different things," Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $M=5.60$ , and  $SD=1.06$ ).

**Empathy.** A short version of Davis' (1980) interpersonal reactivity index scale was used to assess two dimensions of empathy: empathetic concern (e.g., "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me," Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$ ,  $M=5.64$ ,  $SD= 1.05$ ) and perspective-taking (e.g., "When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while," Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $M=5.41$ ,  $SD=1.10$ ).

**Support for Media MG Inclusivity Policies.** Participants were asked to indicate their support for eight policies aiming to make the entertainment media more inclusive. The items were created by the authors based on actual policies that have been either implemented or suggested by various advocacy groups and address specific systemic issues discussed in the

introduction section of the manuscript, such as curbing white/straightwashing and diversifying the media industry labor force. (see Appendix A for a complete list of the items). A principal components analysis (ML, Varimax rotation) identified the scale for support for racial diversity policies as unidimensional with all items loading strongly on a single factor (Cronbach  $\alpha = .94$ ,  $M=4.65$ ,  $SD=1.55$ ). Two of these statements were reworded to address straightwashing and queerbating and were used to measure support for LGBTQA+ inclusivity policies (Cronbach  $\alpha = .85$ ,  $M=4.28$ , and  $SD=1.80$ ).

**Interest in Exposure to MG-inclusive Entertainment Media Content.** Participants were asked how likely they are to watch a movie or a TV show that: features a Black/Asian/Latinx lead character; has a Black/Asian/Latinx cast; was created by Black/Asian/Latinx individuals; and deals with Black/Asian/Latinx issues. A principal components analysis (ML, Varimax rotation) revealed that all the items load on the same factor creating a unidimensional scale with high internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .96$ ). Thus, all the items were averaged together as a measure of overall interest in exposure to diversity without distinguishing between exposure to different MGs ( $M=5.60$ ,  $SD =1.28$ ). The same items were reworded and used to ask about participants' interest in movies and television shows featuring, created by, or discussing issues related to gay/lesbian/transgender/queer individuals (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ,  $M =5.07$ ,  $SD =1.85$ ).

**Temporarily Expanding Boundaries of the Self.** The participants' motivation to temporarily expand boundaries of the self were examined using eight items from Johnson et al. (2016). While the original scale examined audiences' TEBOTS reactions to a particular stimulus, in this study, respondents were asked the same questions to indicate how often they consume media to experience TEBOTS (e.g., "How often do you watch TV shows or movies in order to

feel what it might be like to relate to others in ways different than you normally do yourself?"

Cronbach's  $\alpha = .96$ ,  $M = 4.80$ , and  $SD = 1.41$ ).

**Colorblindness.** Colorblindness is composed of three dimensions. The present study specifically examined the racial privilege component that examines denial of discrimination (Neville, 2000). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with six items such as "Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich," "It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$ ,  $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ).

**Control Variables.** In addition to other demographics variables, two commonly used single-item measures (e.g., Mooijman, et al., 2018) were used to assess conservatism on a seven-point scale ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ) and the importance of religion on a four-point scale ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ).

## Analysis

Hayes' PROCESS model 4 in SPSS was used to examine the total (H1, H2), direct and indirect effects (H3, H4, H5, H6). Direct and indirect effects were estimated with a 10,000-bootstrap method with a confidence interval of 95%. Effects are deemed to be significant if the confidence intervals do not overlap with 0. Each set of predictors (openness, empathetic concern, and perspective-taking) and outcomes (support for diversity policy and interest in exposure to diverse media content) were estimated in a separate model.

Only members of the dominant social group were included in each set of analyses. In other words, only White respondents of European descent ( $n = 199$ ) were included in analyses pertaining to racial diversity policies and exposure, whereas only individuals who identify as heterosexual and cisgender ( $n = 242$ ) were included in models predicting support for sexual

diversity policies and media consumption. All the analyses controlled for demographics: sex (dummy coded with 1 = male), age, income, educational attainment, religiosity, and conservatism. Models predicting sexual diversity exposure and policy support also controlled for the respondent's race (dummy coded White =1).

## Results

### Overall Effects of Personality

#### Exposure Intention.

**Racial Diversity.** As predicted in H1, openness ( $B = .473, S.E. = .082, p < .001, F(7, 185) = 109.538, R^2 = .265$ ), empathetic concern ( $B = .439, S.E. = .098, p < .001, F(7, 185) = 7.341, p < .001, R^2 = .217$ ), and perspective taking ( $B = .458, S.E. = .079, p < .001, F(7, 185) = 9.602, p < .001, R^2 = .267$ ) were positively associated with interest in exposure to *racial diversity* in the media.

**Sexual Diversity.** As predicted in H1, openness ( $B = .342, S.E. = .101, p = .001, F(8, 229) = 12.057, R^2 = .296$ ) and perspective taking ( $B = .447, S.E. = .097, p < .001, F(8, 229) = 12.934, p < .001, R^2 = .311$ ) were positively associated with interest in watching sexual diverse media content. However, empathetic concern was only marginally significant predictor of diverse sexual media exposure ( $B = .197, S.E. = .112, p = .079, F(8, 229) = 9.946, p < .001, R^2 = .258$ ). Apart from this one association, H1 was fully supported for both sexual and racial diversity.

#### Support for Policies.

**Racial Diversity.** in line with H2, openness ( $B = .278, S.E. = .098, p = .005, F(7, 185) = 10.368, R^2 = .281$ ),  $F(7, 185) = 11.359, p < .001, R^2 = .301$ ), empathetic concern ( $B = .512, S.E. = .110, p < .001, F(7, 185) = 12.964, p < .001, R^2 = .281$ ), and perspective taking ( $B = .540, S.E. =$



.088,  $p < .001$ ,  $F(7, 185) = 16.077$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .378$ ) were positively associated with support for racial diversity policies.

**Sexual Diversity.** In line with H1a, openness ( $B = .508$ ,  $S.E. = .101$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $F(8, 230) = 13.417$ ,  $R^2 = .318$ ), empathetic concern ( $B = .344$ ,  $S.E. = .104$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $F(8, 229) = 11.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .295$ ), and perspective taking ( $B = .456$ ,  $S.E. = .091$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $F(8, 229) = 14.343$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .334$ ) were positively associated with support for sexual diversity policies. Thus, H2 were fully supported for both sexual and racial diversity.

### Mediators

Next, the role of color blindness (H3, H4) and TEBOTS (H5, H6) as mediators of the effects in H1 and H2 were examined. Table 1 presents the direct and mediated effects of personality traits on support for racial diversity policies and interest in consuming diverse media.

#### Exposure Intention.

**Racial Diversity.** As seen in Table 1, all the personality traits had a significant direct effect on racial diversity policies. The effects of openness, empathetic concern, and perspective-taking on racial diversity exposure were only mediated by TEBOTS ( $B = .097$ ,  $C.I. [.025, .192]$ ,  $B = .110$ ,  $C.I. [.037, .216]$ ,  $B = .096$ ,  $C.I. [.031, .187]$ , respectively) but not by color blindness ( $B = -.0095$ ,  $C.I. [-.053, .013]$ ,  $B = -.0001$ ,  $C.I. [.018, .017]$ ,  $B = -.001$ ,  $C.I. [-.024, .011]$ , respectively).

**Sexual Diversity.** The effects of openness ( $B = .152$ ,  $C.I. [.056, .2735]$ ) and perspective taking ( $B = .126$ ,  $C.I. [.044, .250]$ ) were partially mediated through TEBOTS. Empathetic concern had only indirect effect on sexual diversity exposure ( $B = .164$ ,  $C.I. [.078, .278]$ ). Thus, H5 was largely supported.

#### Support for Policies.

**Racial Diversity.** As can be seen from Table 1, openness did not have a significant direct effect on racial diversity policies. The effect was fully mediated by color blindness ( $B = .070$ ,  $C.I. [.014, .159]$ ) and TEBOTS ( $B = .144$ ,  $C.I. [.073, .423]$ ). Empathetic concern and perspective-taking had a direct effect on support for racial diversity policies. The effect was partially mediated by TEBOTS (empathetic concern:  $B = .119$ ,  $C.I. [.044, .234]$ ; perspective-taking:  $B = .101$ ,  $C.I. [.038, .206]$ ). Color blindness did not mediate the effect of empathetic concern ( $B = .013$ ,  $C.I. [-.059, .096]$ ) or perspective-taking ( $B = .024$ ,  $C.I. [-.034, .092]$ ).

**Sexual Diversity.** Table 2 presents the direct and mediated effects of personality traits through TEBOTS on support for sexual diversity policies and interest in sexually diverse media exposure. TEBOTS fully mediated the effect of openness on support for sexual diversity ( $B = .142$ ,  $C.I. [.063, .248]$ ) and partially mediated the effect of perspective-taking ( $B = .107$ ,  $C.I. [.037, .221]$ ). H6a (perspective-taking) is therefore fully supported but H6b (empathetic concern) is only partially supported.

## Discussion

The current study uniquely demonstrates that openness and empathy (both empathetic concern and perspective taking) promote support for media diversity initiatives and MG audiences' preference for consuming media with sexually and racially/ethnically diverse casts and themes. All the personality variables examined in this study had a significant total effect on both outcomes (exposure and policy support) in both contexts (sexual and racial/ethnic diversity). Importantly these associations between personality and media diversity attitudes remain significant when controlling for demographic factors such as conservatism, age, and education.

While personality seems to be an important predictor of exposure to diverse media and support for inclusion-promoting policies, these effects occur through different paths. The study considered two potential mediators – motivation for self-expansion through media consumption and colorblindness. The study results follow an exceptionally consistent pattern: Across all the analyses self-expansion motivation predicts interest in exposure to both racially and sexually diverse media and support for initiatives to increase diversity and inclusion in both sexual and racial representations.

Conversely, colorblindness did not fully operate as expected. In line with the hypothesis, it was associated with lower support for both race and sexual diversity media policies. However, contrary to our predictions, there was no relationship between colorblindness and interest in watching movies or television shows featuring diverse casts or dealing with marginalized groups' issues. These results follow the theoretical suppositions guiding this investigation. While colorblindness involves downplaying MG's privileged status and thus leads to dismissal of the need for policies to rectify inequalities, negating the importance of race in society means that race is not a factor in these media consumers' selective exposure or avoidance of media. Moreover, for individuals who deny systemic racism, exposure to diversity in the media (or at least claiming to be interested in doing so) may affirm their belief that media are already sufficiently diverse and therefore, there is no need for taking social action. Thus, although colorblindness and TEBOTS are negatively correlated, the correlation between them is not very strong ( $r=-.22$ ). This pattern of results indicates that other-oriented motivations to promote social justice and ego-centered (pursuing self-growth and satisfying one's curiosity) are not mutually exclusive or zero-sum experiences, but can operate independently and simultaneously.

Another unique aspect of the current study is that it examines two social contexts – sexual and racial marginalization. Overall, the same pattern of results emerged in both contexts. The one exception is that empathetic concern appears to play a somewhat lesser role in sexual diversity exposure and support for policies than racial diversity. Rather, more cognitive processes – perspective-taking and openness – derive the effect through self-expansion. In other words, cisgender heterosexual viewers are not as compelled to live through LGBTQA+ group members’ experiences out of compassion for these individuals, but they are interested in understanding and curious to learn more about this group’s perspective.

### **Implications and Further Directions**

**Theoretical Implications.** The present study combined notions of media psychology and DG Theory to examine media consumption as a site of allyship, thereby expanding both fields. First, the results echo findings in other domains (e.g., workplace Razzante et al., 2018) while demonstrating that the concept of allyship can be meaningfully studied in the context of media consumption. The findings paint a psychological profile of DG members who use media for self-reflection (TEBOT), and, consequently, support advocacy efforts to advance a more inclusive and diverse entertainment media landscape. Further research can continue examining specific DG’s communicative strategies varying in motivation and assertiveness in the context of media use.

Second, the study advances media psychology theorization of TEBOTS. The notion of self-expansion through media is relatively recent. To this date, research focused on situational factors that trigger TEBOTS as an ego-protective mechanism (e.g., self-affirmation) and the relationship between TEBOTS and hedonic media enjoyment and involvement overall (Johnson, et al., 2016). The current study takes a step in a different direction, going back to TEBOTS’

theoretical origins pertaining to motivation for connectedness and meaningfulness, rather than ego-driven self-soothing. These findings resonate with evidence of self-transcending media promoting compassion towards strangers (Janicke & Oliver, 2015) and destigmatization (Krämer et al., 2017). However, self-transcending media research focused on the effects of exposure to so-called “elevating” films that portray human sacrifice and kindness, rather than the motivation to seek self-expansion through inclusive and diverse media. Moreover, while research identified individual differences in the propensity for experiencing media self-transcendence (Raney et al., 2018), to our knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate the association between TEBOTS as a general media use preference and relatively stable personality traits, which in turn result in particular media use patterns. Thereby, the current study offers an important theoretical extension and a deeper understanding of how TEBOTS operates and its fit within the larger family of positive media psychology.

**Social Implications.** The study offers preliminary results from a relatively small non-probability sample. Although these findings cannot be readily generalized to the population at large, they present an interesting narrative of how DG members can, at least in some cases, become allies in the context of media consumption. These findings point in a potential direction for future research that, ultimately, may (1) inform advocacy efforts to improve media representations, but also (2) identify ways in which more reluctant DG media users can benefit from exposure to diverse media content.

First, future research can establishing causality between the variables that the current study examined correlational. This could serve as a basis for interventions that advance DG media users’ reduction of colorblindness, promote self-reflectivity, and thereby increase exposure to MG-centered media and support a transformation of the media industry.

Second, increasing DG media users' interest in consuming MG-centered media is important end in itself. Ample research has shown that exposure to positive representations of MGs in entertainment media promotes DG members' more sympathetic and less stereotyped perceptions of the MG (e.g., Nisbet & Myers, 2012; Tukachinsky et al., 2015), and leads to support for socially just policies (e.g., affirmative action, Ramasubramanian, 2010). From this standpoint, it is actually encouraging to see that colorblindness is not associated with interest in exposure to diverse media. This suggests that although some colorblind White media users do not value media diversity and do not understand systemic oppression, these individuals can still be interested in consuming MG-centered media content. While these DG members are not motivated by social justice causes but by their ego-centered goals (e.g., self-growth), ultimately, this creates an opportunity for an intergroup dialogue. Conceivably, marketing diverse media content as speaking to media users' TEBOOTS motivation can increase some DG members' interest in that media content. In other words, the fact that TBOTS can operate independently of colorblindness presents an opportunity that can be used to reach DG members who otherwise would not be exposed to MG-centered media. Exposure which, in turn, could lead to more intergroup understanding and positive intergroup attitudes.

### **Limitations**

The major limitation of the study is that it relies on a relatively small, non-random sample recruited from a crowdsourcing platform. Although encouragingly, the study's results exhibited a very consistent, significant pattern, suggestive of the robustness of these effects, a replication of the study with a larger and more representative sample is needed.

Second, as with any survey, reliance on self-report makes the study vulnerable to various social desirability biases. In the current social climate, individuals may have felt pressure to

report greater support for diversity than they actually feel. Nonetheless, there was a substantial distribution on these measures and there was no evidence of ceiling effects that could be attributed to social desirability. Even if the self-reported interest in diversity was exaggerated, some individuals still reported lower levels of support than others. Thus, even if there was a bias in the report and the mean level of support is attenuated, the correlations between support and other variables remain valid. Experimental and longitudinal research could reveal the extent to which openness, empathy, and TEBOOTS predict actual media choices rather than relying on self-reported intentions.

Taken together, the current study offers a first, preliminary look at theoretical and social questions. Although, these results need to be replicated and examined in other samples, these exploratory findings provide an important datapoint contributing to our emerging understanding how DG members perceive media diversity and the importance of self-expansion as a major motivating factor in this process.

References

- Agard, C. (August 25, 2020). Modern history: Dev Patel dives into the personal history of David Copperfield. *Movies*, <https://ew.com/movies/dev-patel-personal-history-of-david-copperfield/>
- Banjo, O. (2011) What are you laughing at? Examining White identity and enjoyment of black entertainment, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 55(2), 137-159, doi: 10.1080/08838151.2011.570822
- Battles, K., & Hilton-Morrow, W. (2002). Gay characters in conventional spaces: Will and Grace and the situation comedy genre. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(1), 87-105.
- BBC News. (2020). Gone with the Wind removed from HBO Max. *BBC News*.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-52990714>
- Buckley, C. (June 19, 2019). Inclusion Rider? What Inclusion Rider? *The New York Times*,  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/19/movies/inclusion-rider.html>
- Chow, A. R., & Bates, J. (February 2, 2021). Hollywood so often gets black history wrong. Black filmmakers are setting the record straight. *Time*, 84-87.
- Color of Change (2020). *Writers' room report*. <https://hollywood.colorofchange.org/writers-room-report/>
- Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology*, 10, 85.
- Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44(1), 113-126.



Decety, J., & Cowell, J. (2015). Empathy, justice, and moral behavior. *AJOB Neuroscience*, 6(3), 3-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21507740.2015.1047055>

Erbland, K. (August 25, 2020). Dev Patel on the colorblind casting of ‘David Copperfield’ and why he’s not chasing the chance to play Bond. *Indie Wire*, <https://www.indiewire.com/2020/08/david-copperfield-dev-patel-armando-iannucci-colorblind-casting-1234582001/>

Erbland, K. (March 19, 2021). Ava DuVernay: True success for inclusive ARRAY crew database will be when it’s no longer needed. *Indie Wire*. <https://www.indiewire.com/2021/03/ava-duvernay-array-crew-database-1234624854/>

Falconer, R. (September 9, 2020). Oscars details new diversity requirements for best picture nominees. *Axios*. <https://www.axios.com/oscars-diversity-requirement-best-picture-nominee-1629d567-30a2-4807-beec-3bf5d43f52e5.html>

Fisher, D. A., Hill, D. L., Grube, J. W., & Gruber, E. L. (2007). Gay, lesbian, and bisexual content on television: A quantitative analysis across two seasons. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 3&4, 167-188.

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (August 3, 2021). *I am not a fetish or model minority: Redefining what it means to be API in the entertainment industry*. <https://seejane.org/gender-in-media-news-release/pr-api-study-i-am-not-a-fetish-or-model-minority/>

Gross, L. (1991). Out of the mainstream: Sexual minorities and the mass media. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1-2), 19-46.

Giorgis, H. (October, 2021). The unwritten rules of Black TV. *The Atlantic*, pp, 33-44.

GLADD. (2017). Where are we on TV: GLADD's annual report on LGBTQAQ inclusion.

<https://www.glaad.org/whereweareontv19>

GLADD. (2019). Where are we on TV: GLADD's annual report on LGBTQAQ inclusion.

<https://www.glaad.org/whereweareontv19>

GLADD. (2020). Where are we on TV: GLADD's annual report on LGBTQAQ inclusion.

<https://www.glaad.org/whereweareontv20>

Greenberg, B. S., Mastro, D., & Brand, J. E. (2002). Minorities and the mass media: Television into the 21st century. In: *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*, (pp. 333-351).

Grier, S. A., Brumbaugh, A. M., & Thornton, C. G. (2006). Crossover dreams: Consumer responses to ethnic-oriented products. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(2), 35-51.

Gubitz, S. R., & Avant, D. (2020). Racializing Captain America: How racial attitudes affect perceptions of affirmative action and diversity initiatives in media. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(3), 683-703.

Janicke, S. H., & Oliver, M. B. (2017). The relationship between elevation, connectedness, and compassionate love in meaningful films. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 6(3), 274. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000105>

Jhally, S., & Lewis, J. (1992). *Enlightened racism: The Cosby show, audiences, and the myth of the American dream*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429034343>

John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big-Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (Vol. 2, pp. 102–138). New York: Guilford Press.

- Johnson, B. K., Slater, M. D., Silver, N. A., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (2016). Entertainment and expanding boundaries of the self: Relief from the constraints of the everyday. *Journal of Communication, 66*(3), 386-408.
- Joyce, N., & Harwood, J. (2020). Social identity motivations and intergroup media attractiveness. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 23*(1), 71-90.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1368430217751629>
- Kaiser, C. (2021, February 24). Should straight actors play gay roles? A star TV writer says no. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/24/arts/television/russell-t-davies-gay-characters.html>
- Krämer, N., Eimler, S. C., Neubaum, G., Winter, S., Rösner, L., & Oliver, M. B. (2017). Broadcasting one world: How watching online videos can elicit elevation and reduce stereotypes. *New Media & Society, 19*(9), 1349-1368.
- Khoo, G. S., Oh, J., & Nah, S. (2021). Staying-at-home with tragedy: Self-expansion through narratives promotes positive coping with identity threat. *Human Communication Research*, advance online publication, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqab005>
- Kuppuswamy, V., & Younkin, P. (2020). Testing the theory of consumer discrimination as an explanation for the lack of minority hiring in Hollywood films. *Management Science, 66*(3), 1227-1247.
- Mastro, D. (2015). Why the media's role in issues of race and ethnicity should be in the spotlight. *Journal of Social Issues, 71*(1), 1-16. <https://doi-org.libproxy.chapman.edu/10.1111/josi.12093>

- Mastro, D. E., Behm-Morawitz, E., & Kopacz, M. A. (2008). Exposure to television portrayals of Latinos: The implications of aversive racism and social identity theory. *Human Communication Research, 34*(1), 1-27.
- Mastro, D., & Tukachinsky, R. H. (2012). Cultivation of perceptions of marginalized communities. *Living with television now: Advances in cultivation theory and research, 38-60*.
- McCrae, R. R., & Greenberg, D. M. (2014). Openness to experience. *The Wiley handbook of genius, 222–243*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118367377.ch12>
- Mekawi, Y., Bresin, K., & Hunter, C. D. (2017). Who is more likely to “not see race”? Individual differences in racial colorblindness. *Race and Social Problems, 9*(3), 207-217.
- Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education, 1*(1), 58-63.
- Mooijman, M., Meindl, P., Oyserman, D., Monterosso, J., Dehghani, M., Doris, J. M., & Graham, J. (2018). Resisting temptation for the good of the group: Binding moral values and the moralization of self-control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 115*(3), 585.
- Neville, H. A., Lilly, R. L, Duran, G., Lee, R. M., & Browne, L. (2000). Construction and initial validation of the colorblind racial attitudes scale (CoBRAS). *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47, 59-70*.
- Neville, H. A., Poteat, V. P., Lewis, J. A., & Spanierman, L. B. (2014). Changes in White college students' colorblind racial ideology over four years: Do diversity experiences make a difference?. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 61*(2), 179.

Newman, B. (2019, July 9). The white nostalgia fueling the ‘Little Mermaid’ backlash.”

*Washington Post*. [www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/07/09/white-nostalgia-fueling-little-mermaid-backlash](http://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/07/09/white-nostalgia-fueling-little-mermaid-backlash).

Nisbet, E. C., & Myers, T. A. (2012). Cultivating tolerance of homosexuals. In Morgan, M., Shanahan, J., & Signorielli, N. (Eds.), *Living with television now: Advances in cultivation theory & research*, (pp. 61-80). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Oliver, M. B. (1996). Influences of authoritarianism and portrayals of race on Caucasian viewers’ responses to reality-based crime dramas. *Communication Reports*, 9(2), 141-150.

Oliver, M. B., Raney, A. A., Slater, M. D., Appel, M., Hartmann, T., Bartsch, A., et al. (2018). Self-transcendent media experiences: Taking meaningful media to a higher level. *Journal of Communication*, 68(2), 380-389. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx020>

Ramos, D. (2019, September 26). Warner Media diversity and inclusion interim report reveals workforce close to gender parity, representation for people of color in film & TV needs improvement. *Deadline*. <https://deadline.com/2019/09/warnermedia-diversity-and-inclusion-report-women-people-of-color-representation-1202745057/>.

Ramasubramanian, S. (2010). Television viewing, racial attitudes, and policy preferences: Exploring the role of social identity and intergroup emotions in influencing support for affirmative action. *Communication Monographs*, 77(1), 102-120.

Razzante, R. J., & Orbe, M. P. (2018). Two sides of the same coin: Conceptualizing dominant group theory in the context of co-cultural theory. *Communication Theory*, 28(3), 354-375.

- Razzante, R., Tracy, S., Orbe, M. (2018). How dominant group members can transform workplace bullying. In R. West & C. Beck (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of communication and bullying*. (pp. 46-56). New York, NY: Rutledge.
- Roffey, M. (2020, March 16). #Notmymermaid: The Disney row is ridiculous – Who knows what mermaids look like?. *The Guardian*.  
[www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/16/disney-notmymermaid-row-ridiculous](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/16/disney-notmymermaid-row-ridiculous).
- Sánchez-Soriano, J. J., & García-Jiménez, L. (2020). The media construction of LGBTQA+ characters in Hollywood blockbuster movies. The use of pinkwashing and queerbaiting. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 77, 95-115.
- Scharrer, E., & Ramasubramanian, S. (2015). Intervening in the media's influence on stereotypes of race and ethnicity: The role of media literacy education. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71, 171-185. doi:10.1111/josi.12103
- Sherrick, B., Hoewe, J., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (2021). Using narrative media to satisfy intrinsic needs. *Psychology of Popular Media*. Advance online publication.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000358>
- Shuler, S. (2019, July 15). New poll suggests Halle Bailey casting as Ariel in ‘the Little Mermaid’ is well-received. *The DisInsider*. <https://thedisinsider.com/2019/07/15/new-poll-suggests-halle-bailey-casting-as-ariel-in-the-little-mermaid-is-well-received/>
- Slater, M. D., Johnson, B. K., Cohen, J., Comello, M. L. G., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (2014). Temporarily expanding the boundaries of the self: Motivations for entering the story world and implications for narrative effects. *Journal of Communication*, 64(3), 439-455.
- Smith, S. L., Choueiti, M., & Pieper, K. (2014). *Race/ethnicity in 600 popular films: Examining on-screen portrayals and behind-the-camera diversity*. Media, diversity, & social change

initiative, Available from:

[https://annenbergl.usc.edu/sites/default/files/MDSCI\\_Race\\_Ethnicity\\_in\\_600\\_Popular\\_Films.pdf](https://annenbergl.usc.edu/sites/default/files/MDSCI_Race_Ethnicity_in_600_Popular_Films.pdf)

Sowa, A. (July 11, 2020). Hamilton: The musical's color-conscious casting should be a model.

*CBR*, <https://www.cbr.com/hamilton-color-conscious-casting-should-be-model/>

Spanierman, L. B., & Smith, L. (2017). Roles and responsibilities of White allies: Implications for research, teaching, and practice. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 45(5), 606-617.

Strauss, J. P., Connerley, M. L., & Ammermann, P. A. (2003). The “threat hypothesis,” personality, and attitudes toward diversity. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 39(1), 32-52.

Thakore, B. K. (2020). On the Origin of White Hollywood: The Racialized Space of the US Film Industry. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 64(14), 2016-2027.

Tracy, S. J., Razzante, R., & Hanna, K. (2020). Creating the being of inclusion in organizations. In M. Doerfel, & J. Gibbs. (Eds.), *Organizing inclusion: Moving diversity from demographics to communication processes* (pp. 113-132). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tukachinsky, R., Mastro, D., & Yarchi, M. (2015). Documenting portrayals of race/ethnicity on primetime television over a 20-year span and their association with national-level racial/ethnic attitudes. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(1), 17–38.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12094>

UCLA (2021). *Hollywood diversity report 2020*. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2020-Film-2-6-2020.pdf>

Weaver, A. J. (2011). The role of actors' race in white audiences' selective exposure to movies. *Journal of Communication*, 61(2), 369-385.

Weaver, A. J., & Frampton, J. R. (2019). Crossing the color line: An examination of mediators and a social media intervention for racial bias in selective exposure to movies.

*Communication Monographs*, 86(4), 399-415.

Wilkinson, A. (2020, September 9). The Oscars' new diversity and inclusion rules for best picture nominees. *Vox*.[www.vox.com/culture/2020/9/9/21429083/oscars-best-picture-rules-diversity-inclusion](http://www.vox.com/culture/2020/9/9/21429083/oscars-best-picture-rules-diversity-inclusion)

Winter, N. J. G., Burleigh, T., Kennedy, R., & Clifford, S. (2019). *A simplified protocol to screen out VPS and international respondents using Qualtrics*.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331075868>

Woods, N., & Hardman, D. (2021). 'It's just absolutely everywhere: understanding LGBTQ experiences of queerbaiting. *Psychology & Sexuality*, advance online publication, doi:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2021.1892808>