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TV Series Exposure and Its Influence on American People's Social Judgments toward Asian Americans

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Abstract

As television plays a crucial part in people's social life and ethnicity on the screen both reflects and influences the minds of the audience, this research focuses on the TV representation of Asian Americans and tries to explore how TV series exposure influences American people's social judgments toward Asian Americans. The status quo of Asian Americans on TV is discussed and cultivation theory is utilized to explain how television influences the audience's perceptions and judgments. The Asian group is faced with a low representation and a highly stereotypical image on the TV screen thus this study hypothesizes that more television exposure leads to more negative social judgments toward Asian Americans. Based on cultivation theory, this study applies survey method to test the Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects and introduces accessibility as the mediator, motivation, ability and interracial contact as the moderators into the model. Findings have shown that Asian character exposure has a negative impact on audience's social judgments toward Asian Americans and self-perceived motivation partially moderates this process. Hierarchical linear regressions are applied to analyze the data and an overall cultivation effect of television is also found.

TV Series Exposure and Its Influence on American People's Social Judgments toward Asian

Americans

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

TV consumption plays a significant role in modern American culture and social life. In the fourth quarter of 2016, the gross minutes spent on TV, TV-connected devices, PC videos, smartphone videos and tablet videos reached nearly 620 billion in the US (Nielsen, 2017). In 2018, U.S. providers of cable and other subscription programming created estimated revenue of $85.5 billion (Watson, 2019). Television programming was one of the most heavily consumed products in the past in the U.S. (Shrum, Wyre & O'Guinn, 1998) and nowadays, no matter what the platform, TV watching is still the dominant and primary way of storytelling in this culture and society even with the media environment changing so fast (Advertising Age, 2013). Moreover, even looking into the traditional way of TV watching alone, it still maintains the most important role in the audience's life. As Nielsen's (2015) report for Q4 of 2014 shows, people are watching about 150 hours of live TV per month, which still dwarfs other alternatives such as time-shifted TV, DVD, online video and content on a smartphone although these alternative ways to traditional TV are thriving. Last but not least, primetime programs continue to dominate the media "menu" of American people and TV shows have also made their way to the most watched shows on video streaming platforms such as Netflix (Nielsen, 2012; The Top Ten Shows, 2015)

"TV is a part of the cultural fabric, where series can hold great cultural significance." (Kellner 1995; Russell, Schau & Crockett 2013). Television has its unique role and it plays a important part in people's life. In the 2017/2018 season, the top 10 TV shows combined attracted more than 168 million viewers, with *Roseanne* produced by ABC ranking as the first (Statista, 2018). There are plenty of choices of shows and new technology makes them much more accessible than ever before. And with the advent of content streaming, online watching, cable

TV and all sorts of new technology, one can watch either TV shows or films on any device, which eliminates the necessity to distinguish between TV and film but to see them as "televisual content" as a whole.

This study only focuses on the story-based scripted TV and only programs like TV dramas and sitcoms are discussed as televisual content or simply referred as TV series in this research. These TV shows have a great cultural importance in society.

Cultivation

As a centralized system of storytelling (Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2009), television has formed its own ecosystem and keeps exerting constant influence on its viewers. When Gerbner (1967, 1969a, 1969b, 1973) first introduced the concept of "cultivation," he was more interested in presenting it in a macro-systems approach instead of looking at selected messages or effects of particular information (Potter, 2014). It was described as a process when a broader scope of messages gradually influenced the audience as they were exposed to media in their day-to-day lives (Potter, 2014). He also noted that TV consumed a large amount of time and it should be considered as a "totality" of messages without any separate story-systems within TV (Gerbner, 1977; Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2015). Ever since the introduction of cultivation, researchers have been constantly studying the cultural influence of television.

As cultivation theory points out, heavy viewers of TV series will gradually lose the ability to distinguish "objective reality" and "television reality" (Raman & Harwood, 2008). As a result, audiences of TV series will be more likely to perceive and interact with the world in the way that they believe it should be. In other words, they tend to trust the perceived reality that television builds for them. Furthermore, because television always acts as a "natural prime" for information acquiring, some constructs provided by TV are more accessible for heavy viewers in

the process of social cognition and social judgement (Shrum et al., 1998, p.448). For example, heavy viewers may see more examples of violence and perceive their neighborhood as a more dangerous place because these constructs are retrieved from their memories at the time of the judgment (Busselle, 2001). This indicates that there might be a close relationship between TV exposure and some social judgments (Hawkins, Pingree & Adler, 1987; Morgan, Shanahan & Stenbjerre, 1997). It gives further evidence of TV series' effects on audiences' social perception and cognition.

This paper is based on cultivation theory and it applies the theory to the topic of ethnicity representation on screen and broadens its range of application. It also calls attention to the media portrayal of Asian Americans and studies the problem of minority stereotypes.

Asian American Representation

There is a long history of ethnic representation on TV but white faces prevailed in the mainstream media for a long time and minority groups are faced with a difficult situation. Among all the ethnicities in the U.S., Asians are relatively underrepresented in broadcast television compared to their actual population size (Atkin, Morson & Cuzick, 1992; Glascock, 2001; Greenberg & Collette, 1997; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Moreover, for those Asian faces that appear on the screen, they are to a large extent stereotypical (Mok, 1998). There's one kind of stereotype that depicts Asian Americans as the "model minority" with attributes such as commitment to family, determination and the necessity of hard work (Sue & Morishima, 1982; Uba, 1994) and there are also other stereotypes that depict Asian Americans as academically successful, technology-oriented etc. (Paek and Shah, 2003). Although these stereotypes seem positive and favorable for Asian Americans, as Jackson and Ho (2001) pointed out that positive stereotypic instrumental attributes are also likely to lead to negative attitudes toward Asian

Americans for the reasons that 1) it's more possible for them to be perceived as competitive and threatening; b) it may trigger feelings of group-based relative deprivation, making white people feel bad about themselves; 3) it may cause envy and make people feel their in-group as less successful in comparison. Even when Asian Americans have a chance to be on the screen, they tend to serve as the "background color" instead of making a significant difference to the diversity of the primary cast (Mok, 1998). Therefore, with the inadequate and stereotypical representation of Asian Americans on TV, there is a need to study what influence there is on the audience and how the representation of Asian Americans affects intergroup evaluations.

Thus, this thesis explores the portrayals of Asian American characters in TV series and how these portrayals affect American people's perception and attitudes towards Asian Americans, and their social judgements of Asian Americans. This paper is based on cultivation theory and it analyzes the effects of TV consumption.

Therefore, the research question of this paper is presented as followed:

RQ: To what extent does American TV series exposure influence American people's social judgments toward Asian Americans?

In 2010, the Asian population in the United States reached 17,320,856, consisting of 5.6% of the total population of the country, and this number has grown faster than any other races in the US between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Apart from the relatively low representation on TV, Asian Americans are sometimes described as "hard work, no fun" type of people by the Americans (see also Paek & Shah, 2003; Taylor & Lee, 1994; Taylor, Lee, & Stern, 1995; Yim, 1989), or nerdy with traits like unsociability and awkwardness, or even "the yellow peril" (Ramasubramanian, 2011) and some of the stereotypical images in the media are disturbing and they have influence on viewers' real-world attitudes toward them

(Ramasubramanian, 2011). Since Asian Americans are growing fast and becoming an increasingly important part of American society, it is worth studying what the images of Asian Americans are in the media and how these images potentially have an impact on American audience's perceptions and attitudes of this racial group. It is also worthwhile to have a better understanding of how the cultivation effect plays a role in this process.

In the following chapters, the research topic is further developed. Chapter 2 will review previous literature of cultivation theory and Asian American representation and will develop hypotheses based on what's discussed in the chapter before. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology of this research and further states the key concepts. Chapter 4 will discuss the data analysis and present the results. Chapter 5 will talk about implications of this study as well as limitations and hints for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will provide the framework for this research. The first part introduces cultivation theory. The second section delves into Asian representation on the screen. The third part talks about cultivation in the new media era and cultivation with specific TV genres. The fourth part is about the Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects and key variables in the model. The last section talks about interracial contact as another moderating variable in the research.

Cultivation Theory

Since the advent of television and the social phenomenon of millions of viewers sitting in front of the screen, people started to find out that there is a long-lasting effect that television content has on audiences. As Shanahan and Morgan (1999, p.4) pointed out, "that those who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurrent messages of the television world, compared to people who watch less television." In other words, audiences who acquire information a lot from TV are more likely to use the informational pieces from television programming to build the world in their mind; however, television content does not always reflect the reality with accuracy (Gerbner et al., 2002).

When the concept of cultivation was brought up, Gerbner (1969b, p.123) claimed that there were mass-produced messages from a common culture that spread widely through the media environment and cultivated public beliefs (Potter, 2014). Cultivation was described as a cumulative, gradual effect that TV had on viewers, and television was portrayed to provide a ubiquitous, unified and undifferentiated stream of messages (Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2015). As a totality, a system, TV told its story to all people at the same time (Gerbner, 1977,

p.148). When cable TV and VCRs came out, there were challenges posed on cultivation theory. However, early studies showed that the "new technologies" actually amplified cultivation than attenuating it, acting as "delivery vehicles" for pretty much the same content for heavy viewers (see, e.g., Morgan & Rothschild, 1983; Morgan & Shanahan, 1991; Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2015). However, when entering the new era, with the advent of numerous channels, platforms and new devices, the much more fragmented audiences rarely watch TV in the traditional way; but cultivation has survived because of its simplicity and parsimony (Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2015). Television is still the dominant storyteller of the culture (Advertising Age, 2013).

There are two sets of cultivation effects (Shrum, 1995) that television has on its viewers. First-order beliefs are about estimates of concrete demographics of the society and the world while second-order beliefs refer to more abstract beliefs which would make empirical data collecting difficult or even impossible and researchers have much less understanding of the processes these beliefs are produced from (Hawkins & Pingree, 1990). Second-order beliefs are the ongoing beliefs that people have about the meanness of society, their own fearfulness, sex role stereotypes and many more; and these beliefs may lead to results of certain social behavior (Hawkins & Pingree, 1990). Moreover, although there are correlations between television viewing and first- as well as second-order beliefs, they are stronger for first-order beliefs than second. It is an important question whether the construction of the beliefs happens spontaneously when watching TV or if they actually come into existence only to respond to demands for such estimates by researchers (Hawkins & Pingree, 1990). In the aspect of social cognition which focuses on the cognitive processes about how the relations between social information and judgment are mediated (Wyer, 1980; Wyer & Srull, 1989; Shrum, 2009), there is the similar

concern that the cognitive process model to explain television viewing on prevalence judgments is based on an important assumption; the assumption states that these judgments are formed on request through recalling of information instead of being formed on-line when information is encoded; and then TV viewing makes these relevant exemplars more accessible for heavy viewers to extract (Shrum, 2001; Shrum, Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2005; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). In a word, cultivation might be a by-product of heavy viewing.

However, a large amount of evidence has accumulated to support the existence of at least a small-sized cultivation effect (Morgan & Shanahan, 1996). Gerbner (1998) claimed that viewers gradually internalize messages after being exposed to TV and are more likely to accept portrayals as valid and authentic. Furthermore, several theories about mass communication tried to explain the relationship between stereotypes and media portrayals (Lee et al., 2009). For people with limited contact with other racial groups, they tend to use television as the tool to observe minority groups and subsequently form opinions (Tan et al., 1997) and TV may lead to the forming of ethnic stereotypes in this way (Lee et al., 2009). These effects provide a clue in the exploration of people's perception of Asian Americans in the U.S., because they illustrate the possibility that television has the potential to shape audiences' minds. It is not only about how people think about Asian Americans' status quo, but also what kind of feelings they have toward them.

Moreover, as Gerbner and his fellow researchers (1980) pointed out, television has a mainstreaming ("the dynamics of the cultivation of general concepts of social reality") effect on heavy viewers compared to light viewers; moreover, resonance ("the amplification of issues particularly salient to certain groups of viewers") will occur when viewers find their real-life experiences are in accordance with what they see on television. These two additional hypotheses

show that it will be easier for people who bathe themselves in TV content a lot to fall under the influence of television and use their personal experiences to reinforce this effect. Apart from that, mobile technology in the new era has enabled TV content to be accessed with greater convenience. In 2017, an increasing number of Americans now use smartphones as their primary way to access the Internet at home (Pew Research Center, 2019) and more people are using their smartphones or tablets to watch TV series. People are spending more time and energy on television content and there is the possible cultivation effect involved in it. Even in an era with all these new technologies, cultivation is still playing an important role. TV is likely to make people "passive," reducing their time to do more energetic activities (Tucker, 1986, p. 799; Bulck, 2000), like socializing with other people, which as a consequence also leads to the possibility that the chance of meeting Asian Americans in person is reduced and a more stereotypical opinion towards this ethnic group might be formed. The more they watch TV, the more firmly they will believe in what TV series tell them. Sometimes people are just not aware of the persuasion intentions of television; therefore they will not activate the cognitive defenses, lower their shield of cognition and embrace as well as accept what they're told (Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007; Van Reijmersdal et al. 2012a).

Asian American Representation on Screen

It has been repeatedly discussed and emphasized in the field of mass communication that media exposure is capable of constructing and maintaining the audience's social perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and actions (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). There are also significant associations found between watching media portrayals of certain ethnicities and consequences of intergroup attitudes and behaviors as well as social judgments as to various attributions and stereotypes of different races (Dixon, 2006; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Ford, 1997;

Mastro, 2003; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz & Ortiz, 2007; Mastro & Kopacz, 2006; Mastro, Tamborini & Hullett, 2005; Oliver, Jackson, Moses & Dangerfield, 2004). Thus, it is of great importance to talk about how this process applies to Asian American representations.

Media effects rely much on the specific images and messages in the content (Mastro, 2009). To start with, there is necessity to look into Asian American representation in the modern TV industries in the U.S.. Asian Americans constituted from 1% to 3% of the characters on primetime television in the first decade of 2000 (Children Now, 2001a; Children Now, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). According to another report, Asian Americans only got 3% of all characters in network shows and 1% of opening-credit characters, having the slimmest chance to play a primary role in an episode among all ethnicities (Children Now, 2004). A more recent report also indicates that Asian's share of all film roles in 2017 was as low as 3.4%, the share of roles in broadcast scripted shows in the 2016 to 2017 season was 4.6%, the share of roles in cable scripted shows in 2016 to 2017 season was 3.0%, the share of roles in digital scripted shows in the same season was 4.9%, all lower than Latino's and Black's shares while white Americans still occupied the most (Hunt, Ramón & Tran, 2019). Mastro and Behm-Morawitz's report (2005) also pointed out that Asian Americans only occupy 1.5% of the total 1,488 characters in their prime-time programming content analysis. Very few Asian faces are on the screen, and Asian American characters have been increasingly marginalized in network television during these years (Narasaki, 2005).

Asian Americans also have a disadvantageous situation when it comes to on-air news reporters' appearances. Asian Americans together with Latino Americans make up only 1% of all newsmakers (Gant & Dimmick, 2000). Representing over 5% of the US population, yet Asian Americans are still nearly invisible in the mainstream media (Aoki & Takeda, 2011). The

situation is far from good, let alone they are the fastest growing racial group in America and their number has increased by 43% in the last decade (United States Census Bureau, 2012). The first challenge for Asian Americans is that they are almost invisible in mainstream media (Aoki & Takeda, 2011) and it is interesting to look at whether the amount of Asian American exposure significantly influences American audiences' perceptions of this ethnicity.

Apart from low representation on screen, Asian Americans are also highly stereotyped and these situations "nonetheless have a significant impact on racial perceptions of the self and others over time" (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002; Huntemann & Morgan, 2001). Asian men are described as "sexless wimp" (Takeuchi, 2003) and Asian American women are considered submissive (Sun et al., 2015). As Hamamoto (1994) pointed out, Asian American characters in American popular media have always been depicted as one-dimensional and peripheral.

As far as gender is concerned, Asian American men were facing portrayals of themselves in popular media as being feminine, infantile and lacking masculinity in various publications including cartoons, song sheet covers and novels (Lee, 1999). The consequence of stereotypical depictions of Asian American men is that they are often considered to be incapable of doing "man things" while other minority males, such as Black Americans, are depicted as aggressive (Tyree, 2011). However, since Bruce Lee's films went popular in which his screen presence invoked a violent masculinity, a totally opposite stereotypical image of the masculine hard body of Asian martial master came into being; and this "new image" was in contrast to the previous yet still dominant image of the ambiguously gendered body of Asian males (Ono & Pham, 2009; Nishime, 2017). No matter how the Asian American men are portrayed or perceived, they barely have the chance to become the leading characters in a romantic relationship and attract women

until recently when a few films and shows contributed to it (e.g. *Fast & Furious*). In other words, they are not portrayed as potentially sexy. In accordance with and also resulting from their on-screen depictions, Asian Americans are deemed to be sexually unattractive and don't seem to have much of a chance to win American women's hearts (Takeuchi, 2003).

Furthermore, no matter women or men, Asian Americans are prone to be described as "foreign" and then deviant (Takaki, 1989). This may have something to do with their personalities of gentleness, politeness and tendency to remain introverted as well as silent in front of the crowd, which leads to perception of estrangement. The fact that they often speak another language and they have an inclination to live together with their own people may create the impression that they are unwilling to talk to other ethnicities and to some extent reject blending into U.S. society. However, in addition to these shared stereotypes of both genders of Asian Americans, Asian American females have to deal with a totally different situation in which they are hypersexualized while the opposite gender of their group is being depraved of sexuality (Sun et al., 2015). This traces back to the history when Asian women were involved in prostitution in the U.S. as well as near U.S. military bases in Asia (Cao & Novas, 1996, p. 29; Espiritu, 2000; Villapando, 1989). Among all the hypersexualized images of Asian American women, Lotus Blossom and the Dragon Lady are two of the most well-known archetypes who were depicted as quite feminine, sexually attractive and even seductive (Sun et al, 2015; Tajima, 1989, p. 309). There's no doubt that such female characters were built to meet the fantasies of male audiences but meanwhile racial inequality was shown in that white males played the dominant role in the process of the production of this kind of media content (Hamamoto, 1994, p. 39).

Apart from the problematic sexuality issue, there is also the "model minority" myth that has long existed when people sketch the image of Asian American group. They are described to be self-sufficient and work their own way to success without relying on governmental aid, and this sets them apart from other minorities in the U.S. (Zia, 2000). Asian Americans are depicted as financially achieved, technology-skilled and academically successful in magazine advertisements (Paek and Shah, 2003) and they leave impressions on people that they are highly educated, in relatively higher position in career (Ho & Jackson, 2001) and their numbers are growing as well. This directly leads to the consequences that producers want to "implant" Asian faces into high-tech or academically related media content and make those characters "look smart" by using Asian American actors/actresses. According to the assimilation perspective, exposure to negative TV-mediated depictions leads to negative stereotyping of racial groups, and exposure to positive portrayals lead to positive stereotyping; it is also found that the "model minority" stereotype produces positive perceptions of Asians (Dalisay & Tan, 2009). However, some literature also indicates that "model minority" stereotype may cause negative perceptions of the Asian group (Allport, Clark & Pettigrew, 1954). Dalisay and Tan (2009) also found in their study that exposure to TV-mediated messages that reinforced the "model minority" stereotype resulted in less endorsement of affirmative action.

Despite of all the stereotypes discussed above, there are diverse representations of Asian Americans on screen but unfortunately they only happen occasionally (Sun et al., 2015). Some researchers like Eguchi and Ding (2017) found that the TV show Dr. Ken tries to avoid stereotypes and depicts Asian Americans in an un-cultural way (taking away their cultural and racial characteristics and definitions) almost as white people. By emphasizing the "un-cultural," we can mitigate or mask the "Cultural Otherness" of Asian American characters so that they can

simply be seen as the U.S. American which is a hegemonic mode of U.S. American citizenship as whiteness (Eguchi and Ding, 2017). It guides the audience's focus onto characters themselves by trying to eliminating the ethnical and cultural attributes attached to them. This un-cultural way helps the audience recognize these characters as ones with certain racial characteristics, white, Asian or other, instead of "Asian Americans" that define them too aggressively. By doing this, it tries to prevent people from getting to know Asian Americans via their racial definitions and helps people get to know the characters as human beings. This brings a unique perspective of comparing Asian Americans and White Americans when exploring their representation and perceived image.

However, the mainstream media hasn't really changed in the past 10 years in terms of the way it depicts Asian Americans (Sun et al., 2015). As media play a role in the American society as one of the important driving forces to social life and they justify the status quo as well as educate people to survive in a dominant culture in which the ideology of the superiority is perpetrated (Kellner, 2003; Hall, 1980; Lull, 2011), the stereotypes of Asian Americans will to an extent cast influence on the audience and guide them to perceive this group in a certain way. Additionally, prime time TV also provides recurring characters to which the audience forms a para-social bond and therefore facilitates persuasion as well as promotes stereotypes (Tukachinsky & Tokunaga, 2013). However, in spite of the rare existence of diverse representations of Asian Americans, the stubborn stereotypes have caused some negative social judgments toward this ethnic group. A study found that heavy viewers perceived Asians as less conscientious, less extroverted, less agreeable, less warm and more nervous compared to other races (Lee et al., 2009). There is the possibility that their shy and soft spoken personalities (Niemann et al., 1994) are misunderstood as a sense of distance and estrangement. The study

concludes that Asian Americans together with Native Americans are only associated with negative stereotypes in the eyes of heavy viewers while Caucasian Americans gained the most positive traits (Lee et al., 2009).

Thus, the first hypothesis and first research question are presented:

H1: TV series consumption is negatively related to people's social judgments toward Asian Americans.

RQ1: To what extent does exposure to Asian American characters on screen influence people's social judgments of this ethnicity?

Cultivation Theory in New Media Era

In order to attain an accurate and appropriate theoretical model based on cultivation theory for this study, there is a crucial question that needs to be answered: How can it be justified to apply cultivation theory, which was born in the relatively monolithic and predominant television era, to this multi-sourced and multi-platform era of new media?

With only three major networks offering TV programs, audiences used to watch pretty much the same content, and it was not unfair to consider TV consumption as a shared ritual and a relatively nonselective activity (Morgan et al., 2015). In such an environment, cultivation theory based its measurement on observations of television viewing as a whole by asking self-reported time of TV consumption instead of more specific items such as genres (Morgan et al., 2015; Gerbner 1977). The effect is more apparent to notice when it comes to heavy consumption and long term viewing. The way of watching TV as a shared "daily ritual" on actual TV sets and the fact that not too many choices were available at that time altogether bring challenges to the validity of applying cultivation theory to a study that resides in the new media era.

However, as it will soon be discussed, cultivation theory as one of the many foundation theories in mass communications developed in the 20th century has the ability to be wielded by researchers of various and new fields.

"New media" is not a new topic in research. In the 1980s and 1990s, studies noticed the emergence of new media at that time such as VCRs and cable TV and began to think about how these new technologies transformed the way TV influences people (see e.g., Morgan & Rothschild, 1983; Morgan & Shanahan, 1991). The results showed the effect of cultivation was strengthened instead of weakened in the circumstances when new media was spreading (Morgan et al., 2015). These technologies scattered the shared ritual of all people watching the same content and provided audiences with more freedom to choose what and when to watch. They were supposed to impair the cultivation effect yet it survived the new condition. It's the same for the 21st century media environment. Furthermore, despite all the new-born media phenomena, watching programs is still considered as fundamentally "watching TV" (Morgan et al., 2015) and TV watching still occupies the place as the dominant storyteller of the culture, the society and the people who live in it (Advertising Age, 2013). Thus, it is not true that cultivation theory has been forced out of the soil from which it sprouted.

It seems reasonable to point out that it may do harm to the validity of cultivation theory when there is vast variety and diversity in the content that TV offers. However, no matter how the capacity of TV programs has expanded and extended, some key aspects of stories are getting even more formulaic and homogeneous and the common messages and lessons regarding violence, victimization, gender, power, class, race and many more are still being discussed (Morgan et al., 2015). As Shanahan and Morgan (1999) pointed out, "the content of messages is more germane than the technology with which they are delivered" (p. 201). While we are

amazed by how the development of media technology and the TV industry changes both what we watch and how we watch, the televisual content stays a relatively persistent and complete context. This leaves room for cultivation to continue to stay in effect.

Cultivation in General vs. on Specific

Gerbner claimed that "It makes no sense to study the content or impact of one type of program in isolation from the others. The same viewers watch them all; the total system as a whole is absorbed into the mainstream of common consciousness" (Gerbner, 1977, p. 147). Gerbner described TV viewing as the "totality" and thought it would only work when we see it as a whole. Meanwhile, some researchers find it meaningful to look at specific genres of TV programs in that they believe different programs cultivate different conceptions in the audiences' minds (Cohen & Weimann, 2000; Grabe & Drew, 2007). It has been found that viewing specific genres of content does predict certain outcomes of cultivation (e.g., Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004; Cohen & Weimann, 2000). Moreover, there will be a viable genre-based explanation for cultivation if the viewers have expectations of certain experience from a TV genre as well as this genre holds a rather steady set of themes (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2012). In fact, the digital era has brought an extraordinary diversity into televisual content. People can have easy access to all sorts of programs and they have different appetites as well as a large freedom when choosing what they want to watch. As a result, fans of different genres will have inclination and preferences of televised content consumption and it's meaningful to look at this important variable when studying the cultivation process of TV viewing. Genres comply with the original notions of cultivation theory that TV serves as a role to provide consistent ideological messages and cultural stories and it is suggested that exploring genres together with overall viewing may become a better approach to study cultivation (Morgan et al., 2015).

Race and racial representation have been a persistent topic in TV program studies and they are being discussed and presented in a variety of TV genres too. Since genres provide another approach as opposed to overall viewing in cultivation studies, hence it's worthy to look at this issue again in this perspective, especially in this new age of greater and more specifically categorized TV programs. In order to get a better understanding of cultivation theory and its effect on this matter, below is the second research question:

RQ2: To what extent do specific genres of TV programs (with Asians as leading actors) influence people's social judgments towards Asian Americans?

Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects

Tversky and Kahneman's (1973) availability heuristic points out that the magnitude of a judgement of estimate is affected by how easily the related information is retrieved from memories (see also Higgins & King, 1981; Manis, Shedler, Jonides, & Nelson, 1993). For example, if a person lives in a neighborhood full of violence and many violent incidents are easily accessible in one's memory, one may perceive the world as more dangerous when one tries to make judgments about regional security. The use of this strategy is probably due to lack of motivation and ability when processing information, and as a result the person fails to deeply get involved in the judgment (Chen & Chaiken, 1999). If one neither feels motivated enough nor possesses corresponding qualities to think it through, it will be easier for this person to fall into heuristic processing path and the possibility of a poor judgment will rise.

Based on availability heuristic, Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects was developed to try to explain the relationship between TV exposure and social judgements (Shrum, 1996; Shrum 1999; Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993; Shrum, Wyer, & O'Guinn, 1998). Because of the special role of television as a "natural prime," some constructs are much more prominent and

therefore more accessible than others (Shrum et al., 1998, p. 448), and it's much easier and faster

for viewers to retrieve those constructs from memory. For example, if Asian American students

in TV series are always portrayed as good at mathematics, the audiences will be prone to retrieve

those examples of "Asian American students are math talents" from their memories because they

are much more accessible than constructs of "Asian American students may hate math as well".

By doing so, TV content will have a great influence on heavy viewers' attitudes and social

judgments, therefore a relationship between TV exposure and social judgments will be built.

Accessibility. Heavy viewers who are affected by television content in a higher level not

only make more extreme and unrealistic judgments than light viewers do, they are also faster

when making judgments (Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993). Being provided with plenty of constructs

and exemplars of certain types by television, heavy viewers tend to retrieve these memories that

are more accessible because it's easier to form a judgment based on them. As a consequence, it's

also faster for them to make a judgment. This response time is important, because later Shrum

(1996) found that controlling for judgment latency (the time interval between being asked a

question and answering it) will reduce or even eliminate the relationship between TV exposure

and social judgments, which means latency mediates this relationship. Shapiro and Lang (1991)

found that the process also has something to do with whether heuristic or systematic strategy is

applied. If a person is told that his answer really matters or if he is asked to recall specific

exemplars, the differences between heavy and light viewers will reduce.

There are several determinants of accessibility. The more frequently a construct is

activated, the more easily and accessible it is when recalled (Higgins & King, 1981).

Furthermore, the more recent a construct is activated, the higher level of accessibility it possesses

(Higgins, Rholes & Jones, 1977; Wyer & Srull, 1980). If a heavy viewer constantly watches TV

series with certain content or constructs in recent few weeks or over and over, these constructs will have greater influence on him and he will recall these constructs more easily when making social judgments. On the other hand, however, if Asian Americans are always absent in TV series, there will probably be a perception among heavy viewers that Asian Americans only make a small portion of total population and they are not important.

Vividness is also another determinant of accessibility (Higgins & King, 1981; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Paivio, 1971). Researchers have found that vivid content is more available cognitively than its non-vivid counterpart (Busselle & Shrum, 2003; Shedler & Manis, 1986) and vividness is one important factor that influences accessibility of related constructs in people's memories (Busselle & Shrum, 2003; Shrum, 1999). If a TV series includes fierce fights, confrontations, and bloody scenes etc. the constructs that come along with these scenes will be more easily remembered and recalled, and social judgments will be made based on them.

Apart from frequency, recency and vividness, the relations with accessible constructs also affect accessibility. The other constructs will to different extents be activated as well if they are related to a construct that has already been activated (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, p.53). Once a construct gets activated, there might be a certain pattern that provides "scripts" (Schank & Abelson, 1977) or "situation models" (Wyer, 2004) to show people how to react to it. The closer these relations are, the more constructs and potential constructs will be activated.

Therefore, the third research question is as followed:

H2: The accessibility of portrayals of Asian American characters in TV series is negatively related to people's social judgments toward Asian Americans.

Motivation and ability. When it's important to determine the validity of information, systematic processing will be used and effects of heuristics will be reduced (Chaiken et al., 1989).

Similar to the process of Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion, if a viewer has adequate motivation and ability to process information after TV viewing, and intentionally enters a systematic path of information processing when being asked questions by researchers about their thoughts on their TV viewing experience, the effects of heuristics and cultivation will be reduced or even wiped out. In Shrum's (2001) experiment, participants who were induced to process information heuristically by being asked to give out the first answer that popped up in mind and those in the control group without any manipulations all showed signs of significant cultivation effect while people who were driven by accuracy motivation/task importance manipulation (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994) showed no cultivation effect because they processed the information in a systematic way. If there is a strong motivation, whether determined by level of issue involvement or level of task involvement, the systematic processing strategy will be adopted while processing information and as a result cultivation effect will be weakened (Sherman & Corty, 1984; Petty & Cacioppo, 1990; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). Similar to motivation, ability is also related to processing strategies (Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and therefore plays a role in the cultivation effect of TV viewing. Shrum (2007b) found that participants doing phone surveys were under larger influence of cultivation effect than those who did mail surveys, concluding that time pressure as one factor of ability drives people into the path of heuristic processing. Thus viewers with greater ability will be more capable of resisting cultivation effect while being asked questions about their TV watching experience.

In this case, motivation and ability serve as moderators between TV exposure and social judgments. The cultivation effect will also be moderated accordingly.

Thus, Hypotheses 3 are presented as followed:

H3a: The interaction of TV viewing and people's perceived motivation to process TV viewing related questions is positively related to people's social judgments toward Asian Americans.

H3b: The interaction of TV viewing and people's perceived ability to process TV viewing related questions is positively related to people's social judgments toward Asian Americans.

Interracial Contact

In the Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects, direct experience is also a variable that may exert influence on memory search and therefore affects the whole process of cultivation (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, p.64). When making social judgments about Asian Americans, people not only tend to search for constructs that are stored in their memories provided by TV, they will also refer to their own personal experiences in real life.

Research shows that intergroup contact has an influence on both real-life evaluations of racial minorities (Masson & Verkuyten, 1993) as well as how media depictions of ethnicities are interpreted (Armstrong et al., 1992; Fujioka, 1999; Mastro & Tropp, 2004). Studies of racial stereotypical depictions showed that people with less interracial contact are more likely to be influenced by media effects (Armstrong, Neuendorf & Brentar, 1992; Fujioka, 1999). Real-life experiences with people from other racial groups will probably effectively reduce the cultivation effect and these experiences will also prevent accessible constructs from being retrieved and taken into consideration when making social judgments. Mears and Stewart (2010) claimed that interracial contact should reduce stereotypes and a meta-analysis of hundreds of contact studies also indicated that there is a significant relationship between interracial contact and positive attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), although consequences may vary because it also depends on

what kind of contact it is. Fischer's (2011) study on college students also found that interracial contact has positive effects on changes in interracial attitudes and both formal and informal interracial contact on campus can lead to reduced feelings of social distance toward racial minorities. Moreover, research also shows that the effect on attitude strength of direct contact is significantly stronger than indirect one (Christ et al., 2008) which brings more power to interracial contact when influencing people's social judgments toward a racial group. Therefore, interracial contact would be treated as another variable that moderates the cultivation process.

Thus, the third hypothesis is:

H4: The interaction of TV viewing and interracial contact is positively related to people's social judgments toward Asian Americans.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Procedures and Instruments

In this study, a questionnaire was administered via Qualtrics and a cross-sectional online survey was conducted on the MTurk platform to gather data (the complete survey is included in Appendix A). Survey designs can help researchers answer the questions about relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p.173), thus a well-formatted survey is able to provide adequate data for variables for later analysis. Furthermore, there are many variables in this research and a survey method can provide as many items as possible to cover measurement of all variables whereas it's also worth noticing that longer surveys should expect lower completion rates. Last but not least, online surveys can also reach a larger population within a relatively shorter time period, to get a better sample. In this study, a 50-respondent pilot test and another 100-respondent pilot test were conducted to obtain a grasp of how the sample population would react to the questions and help improve the questionnaire. In the main test, 500 surveys were distributed and 442 of them returned valid and were retained for data analysis after eliminating those with missing values, straight checkers, speeders as well as those from Asian respondents (this study only tested the outgroup's attitudes toward Asians). The survey methodology was approved by the IRB.

However, the cultivation effect is a long-term media effect that can also be tested through long-term experiments which have advantages of diachronic research. The disadvantage of using a survey is that it is quite difficult to establish a time order through a one-time measurement and it often fails to reveal a cause-and-effect relationship. Moreover, due to the online form, this survey method cannot guarantee the authenticity and reliability of information gathered which may cause deviation in data analysis and results.

The survey was distributed through MTurk platform in December and on average the respondents took about eight and a half minutes to complete the questionnaire ($M_{\text{Duration in seconds}}$=504.16, SD=560.36). The participation in this study required the respondents to be located in the U.S. in order to collect data from American audience. Each respondent who has fully completed the survey was provided an incentive of 50 cents.

At the beginning of the questionnaire right after the informed consent, the respondents were asked to report their daily television viewing by answering how many hours they watch TV per weekday/weekend and how many days they watch TV in a 5-day working days period/at a weekend. Afterwards, they were provided with 20 American TV series one after another and were asked to report how often they watched these shows based on a 7-point Likert scale from "1-Never" to "7-Always." Then a notice was presented at this point after the respondents completed the TV viewing questions to prevent priming effects while they were answering TV viewing questions. The notice informed the respondents of the definitions of "Asian/Asian American" and "TV series" in this study in order to prevent misunderstanding and confusion:

1) In this survey, "Asian/Asian American" refers to anyone in the US who is from Asia or has an Asian origin with or without an American citizenship. They may have origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam etc. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; The Pew Research Center, 2013).

2) In this survey, "TV series" refer to story-based entertainment shows including dramas, comedies, thrillers etc. and NOT including sports shows, game shows, talk shows, reality TV and news etc.

Then, the survey went on with questions about TV viewing platforms, scales to test variables of accessibility, interracial contact, ability and motivation, followed by first-order and second-order questions to test the dependent variables and ended with demographic questions and an additional informed consent to make sure the respondents agree to let the researcher use their data in the study.

After the data collection was completed, all the data from the respondents who reported their ethnicity as Asians was excluded for the purpose of measuring only outgroup's social judgments toward Asian Americans.

Respondents

All 442 respondents were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and they were all supposed to be located in the United States as a participating qualification. An incentive of $0.50 was granted to each respondent who has completed the questionnaire thoroughly and no incentive was available if respondents quit halfway. MTurk is selected as the way of recruiting not only because it applies the convenient strategy, but it also provides respondents who are more careful and reliable than student or panel samples (Kees, Berry, Burton, & Sheehan, 2017). In order to obtain access to populations with largely various experiences of TV viewing and attitudes towards Asians/Asian Americans, MTurk is a good choice of data gathering. Although it is also worth noticing that MTurk sample may not perfectly reflect the characteristics of the actual population. Furthermore, the process of data collecting is fast with MTurk and questionnaire returning rate can be guaranteed.

Among the 442 respondents that were recruited, 53.8% were male (N=238) and 45.9% were female (N=203) while one would rather not say about his/her gender. The majority of the

respondents were white. Caucasian Americans took up to 80.8% (N=357) of the sample, African American constituted 9.0% (N=40) and the rest of the respondents were 20% Latino Americans (N=20), 12% Native Americans (N=12) and 13% others (N=13). About half of the respondents held a Bachelor's Degree (N=210), 27.8% attended some college (N=73) or had an Associate's Degree (N=50), 10.2% went to high school or had less education (N=45) and 14.4% had a Master's Degree or higher (N=64). The average age of the respondents was 38 years old ranging from 20 to 81. Roughly half of the sample had an annual personal income lower than $40,000 (N=66) and 8.3% earned more than $90,000 a year (N=37). On average, the respondents in this study had an annual personal income level from $40,000 to $49,000.

[Table 1 here]

Independent Variables

General daily TV exposure & Asian character exposure. Based on what has been discussed in the literature review about cultivation theory, the independent variables are general daily TV exposure and Asian character exposure of American people. The general daily TV exposure was measured by collecting data from the respondents about the number of the hours in a day (weekday or weekend) as well as the number of days in a week (weekday or weekend) they watch television. The value of this variable was calculated by summing up the total hours American audience watch TV a week and dividing it by seven days. When it comes to the Asian character exposure, however, this survey did not adopt the same method as the general daily TV exposure for two reasons. First, the low representation of Asians/Asian Americans on TV expects American audience's low exposure to televisual content of the Asian group which may cause failure in eliciting effects. Second, this study also focuses on the possible effect of genres in the cultivation process and as a result there is the need not to treat TV viewing as a whole.

Thus, in order to accomplish the goals of this study, a list of 20 popular TV series were provided to the respondents and they were asked "How often do you watch the TV series listed below?" and required to choose from a 7-point scale from "1-Never" to "7-Always" for each one of the shows listed (Custers, 2010). The list was made based on ranking data of top TV series from ComScore TV Essentials data (2019) and TV/film related websites (Ranker TV, 2019; Davis, 2019; Schneider, 2019). Half of the 20 listed TV series included significant Asian/Asian American characters (at least one Asian/Asian American character appeared in about more than 2/3 of the total episodes) while half didn't. The selected TV series also covered a wide range of categories of comedy, crime, adventure, family, romance, action, war, mystery and thriller. Each show was labeled with one or more categories. All 20 shows were mixed up in case the respondents were able to notice the difference.

The shows without Asian characters on the list included *NCIS*, *Game of Thrones*, *This is Us* etc. and the shows with Asian character(s) included *The Big Bang Theory*, *I Feel Bad* and *All Rise* etc. For most cases in these shows, the Asian characters could be important but not the most prominent roles in the stories. For example, Dr. Alex Park played by Korean American actor Will Yun Lee in The Good Doctor was a surgical resident who was always rational and logical, but he was also a kind person who had a soft heart. He was a police officer before he became a surgeon and he was portrayed to possess a tough personality. He appeared in 42 episodes out of the total 56 episodes. Another example would be the astrophysicist Raj Koothrappali in The Big Bang Theory played by British-Indian actor Kunal Nayyar. Raj was a good friend in the nerdy group but he was often sensitive and even a bit feminine which set him apart with other characters. He was very shy and couldn't talk to women for a very long time. He was also depicted to have a wealthy family and rely financially on it. Other Asian characters included

Ethan Choi played by Brian Tee in *Chicago Med*, Dr. Cristina Yang played by Sandra Oh in

Grey's Anatomy, Emet played by Sarayu Blue in *I Feel Bad* etc.

By doing this, the survey was able to collect data of exposure time to television in general

as well as televisual content with Asian/Asian American characters. The genre was also

controlled by the researcher picking shows for the respondents. While there is concern of

priming the respondents of certain shows, the ranking data of top shows made sure the shows on

the list were as popular and well-known as possible.

Mediating Variable

Accessibility. Many studies have pointed out that when making a judgment about others,

people tend to use the constructs which are most readily accessible from memory and trait

concepts that are primed into their minds which not only influence how they judge but also how

much they like the target population (Shrum 2002; Higgins et al., 1977; Srull & Wyer, 1979;

Higgins, 1996). There were four determinants to measure accessibility of the heuristic process,

including frequency, recency, vividness and relations with other accessible constructs (Bryant &

Oliver, 2009). To measure these determinants of accessibility, a scale that consisted of five

questions was designed. For frequency, respondents were asked to rate the statement "I **always**

saw Asian/Asian American characters when I am watching TV series/films." with the key word

in bold. Similar statements were presented for the measurement of other determinants like "I

recently saw Asian/Asian American characters when I am watching TV series/films."

"Asian/Asian American characters are portrayed **vividly** in TV series/films**.**" "Asian/Asian

American characters are **closely related to the plotline** in TV series/films**.**" And there was a 7-

point scale for respondents to rate from "1-Strongly Disagree" to "7-Strongly Agree" for each

statement. Moreover, in order to further measure the accessibility, there was one more question at the end asking "I can easily come up with an Asian/Asian American character from any TV series/films in my mind" and it was scaled from "1-very hard" to "7-very easily".

Moderating Variables

There were three moderators in this study. Two of them, motivation and ability, are from the Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects and they influence which path the audience would take to process information when they are asked about TV related questions. According to what's been discussed in the literature section, higher level of motivation and ability drive the audience into systematic path and cultivation effect of TV will be reduced. The third moderator was interracial contact. Audience with more interracial contact would rely less on the memory constructs from television and cultivation effect will also be reduced.

Motivation. Motivation as a moderator was measured by four statements adapted from Bolkan, Goodboy & Kelsey's (2016) subset. The respondents were required to read them all and decide how much they agreed on these statements on a 7-point Likert scale from "1-Strongly Disagree" to "7-Strongly Agree." The statements included "I am motivated to think deeply about it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans." "I am motivated to think thoroughly about it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans." "I am interested in concentrating meaningfully on it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans." "I really care about it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans."

Ability. As another important moderating variable, ability was assessed by the measurement adapted from Hung, Grunert, Hoefkens, Hieke and Verbeke's (2017) instrument.

The statements included "I feel more knowledgeable about making a fair assessment toward Asians/Asian Americans compared to other people." "I feel confident in making a fair assessment toward Asians/Asian Americans compared to other people." "I will be more rational when making a fair assessment toward Asians/Asian Americans compared to other people." They were measured on a 7-point scale from "1-Strongly Disagree" to "7-Strongly Agree."

Interracial contact. Interracial contact is one of the key variables that moderate the cultivation effect. To measure this variable, firstly there was a question asking "How frequently do you come into contact with Asians/Asian Americans?" A 7-point scale from "Never" to "Every day" was available for respondents to choose from. Those who answered "Never" were directed to the next block and skipped the rest of the interracial contact questions. Adapted from Behm-Morawitz and Ta's (2014) items, the respondents next were asked about their: (a) perceived importance of relationship with closest Asian(s)/Asian American(s), (b) liking of closest Asian(s)/Asian American(s), (c) quality of relationship with closest Asian(s)/Asian American(s), and (d) general rating of quality of interaction with Asian/Asian American group as a whole. All these items were rated on a 7-point scale, from 1-"Mostly Unfavorable" to 7-"Mostly Favorable."

Dependent Variables

Estimates of demographics . As the outcome of influence of cultivation process, social judgment toward Asian Americans is the dependent variable. In this study, social judgments refer to first- as well as second-order beliefs (e.g. attitudes) that American people hold toward Asian Americans. The first-order beliefs were measured by a scale asking about estimates of demographics. The instrument to measure estimates of demographics is adapted from Busselle's

(2001) research. There were a series of items asking about the respondents' estimates of the demographic facts of Asian Americans. Respondents were asked to use a sliding button to answer the questions that asked about percentage. The questions were "What is the estimated percentage of Asian residents in the US?" "What is the percentage of Asians age 25 and older with a Bachelor's degree or higher education level in the US?" "What is the percentage of Asian military veterans in the US?" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019)

ATA positive & ATA negative. The second-order beliefs were measured by a scale asking about attitudes. The measurement of the second-order beliefs was adapted from the ATA (Attitude Toward Asians) scale developed by Ho and Jackson (2001). Twelve out of the 28-item ATA scale that possess relatively strong validity were used to measure the positive factor and the negative factor. The positive factor and the negative factor of the ATA scale formed two different scales and measured different aspects of the second-order effect, therefore they should be considered as two separate variables. There were six questions for each factor and they were all mixed up in the survey. The respondents were asked to choose from a 7-point Likert scale from "1-Strongly Disagree" to "7-Strongly Agree" (See Appendix). After the ATA scale, there were five bipolar semantic differential items asking the general attitudes toward Asian Americans with a 7-point Likert scale (Ho & Jackson, 2001).

At the end of the questionnaire, the demographic information of respondents was also collected. After data collection is completed, several hierarchical linear regressions were run on SPSS to test the hypotheses and research questions.

Ethical Concerns and Validity

This study did not involve any sensitive topics or stimuli that may do harm to the respondents. Therefore, an exempt IRB application form was filed and permission to carry on was granted. A consent form which included a notification about the incentive and potential risk was put at the very beginning of the survey, and every respondent who fully completed the questionnaire received the incentive. The money for the incentives was put on MTurk and respondents received the incentive online from MTurk. All survey instruments were distributed online and all of the respondents did the survey online as well. The whole process was kept anonymous and no personal information was divulged.

In terms of the threats to validity, because of the nature of surveys instead of experiments, the effect of cultivation may not be effectively tested through a cross-sectional research. There were more than one mediating or moderating variables in the research, so it's possible that not all variables were well measured due to potential flaw of the instrument, and some of the relationships may be not strong enough to support hypotheses. Furthermore, Asian American characters are not as much frequently seen and remembered as characters of other races, so the validity may be harmed due to American audience's low exposure to Asian characters caused by low representation of Asians/Asian Americans on TV. This research studies the Asian American characters in American TV series and the social judgments of Asian Americans. The characters on the screen with Asian faces may be either Asian Americans or just non-American figures from Asia, which may cause confusion as well. But it was consistent to use the term "Asian/Asian American" with a clear definition at the beginning of the questionnaire to eliminate potential confusion for respondents.

Chapter 4: Results

Descriptive statistics. Table 2 shows the Alpha values from the reliability test, Means,

Standard Deviations of the independent variables, the dependent variables, the mediator and the

moderators along with the interactions between the independent variables and moderators. As the

correlations present, ATA positive was significantly positively related to all the independent

variables, the mediator, the moderators and the moderating interactions. Meanwhile, ATA

negative was positively related to all the variables with the exceptions that it was negatively

related to motivation and not significantly related to ATA positive and interracial contact.

Besides, the two independent variables were positively correlated with all other variables, and

they had a significantly positive correlation with each other as well. Table 2 also showed that the

respondents watched 5.59 hours of television per day in a week on average with a good variance

(M=5.59, SD=4.84) which matches the situation of U.S. population in real life (Nielsen, 2015).

Except for the general daily TV viewing, all of the other scale items were measured on a 7-point

Likert scale (e.g. 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree). Therefore, they could be

categorized as "Very Low (1.00-2.50)," "Low (2.51-3.99)," "Average (4)," "High (4.01-5.49)"

and "Very High (5.50-7.00)." According to this categorization, the respondents' Asian character

exposure was on the edge between the "Very Low" and "Low" categories (M=2.49, SD=1.68).

They also had a high ATA positive score (M=5.39, SD=0.92) and on the other hand, a low ATA

negative score (M=3.06, SD=1.6) which altogether indicates that the population in this study had

a relatively positive attitude toward Asians. Moreover, the means of accessibility (M=4.09,

SD=1.33), motivation (M=5.11, SD=1.29), ability (M=4.2, SD=1.43) and interracial contact

(M=4.85, SD=1.23) were all high and above the average of the 7-point scale.

[Table 2 here]

Test of hypotheses and research questions. In order to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions, four hierarchical linear regressions were performed. They were named Model 1 through Model 4 for the purpose of presentation. The reasons why there were four models were that 1) the moderators are neither the predictors nor the outcomes of the mediator, meaning that they cannot be put in one model for hierarchical linear regression; 2) according to the literature, the positive as well as the negative factors are two very different elements and should be treated as two different dependent variables. The first two models tested the direct effects of the two independent variables on the dependent variables along with the indirect effects of the mediator. Demographic variables on the first step, the two independent variables (general daily TV exposure and Asian character exposure) on the second, the mediator (accessibility) on the third were entered one after another in the models (i.e. the blocks of the hierarchical linear regression). Model 1 had ATA positive as the dependent variable and the Model 2 put ATA negative in the spot for the dependent variable. The third and fourth models tested the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables as well as the moderating effect of the moderators (motivation, ability and interracial contact). Demographic variables on the first step, the two independent variables (general daily TV exposure and Asian character exposure), the three moderators (motivation, ability and interracial contact) as well as the interactions between the two independent variables and the three moderators on the second step were entered orderly in the models. Like the first two models, Model 3 had ATA positive and Model 4 had ATA negative as the dependent variables respectively. Table 3 and 4 shows the details of the steps of the four models and the outcomes of each one. Demographic variables (age, race, gender, education and income) acted as the control variables in all four models.

Tests on control variables. Age, race, gender, education and income acted as the control variables and were entered in the first block of the hierarchical linear regressions in all four models. As shown in Table 3, in the first block of Model 1, the demographic variables failed to significantly explain the variance of ATA positive. However, gender always had a significantly positive impact on ATA positive (β=.10, p<.05 in M_{1a}; β=.11, p<.05 in M_{1b}; β=.11, p<.05 in M_{1c}). In the first block of the second model before other variables were entered, the demographic variables were able to account for 8% of the total variance explained when the dependent variable was ATA negative (ΔR^2=.08, p<.001). Four of the five demographic variables including age (β=-.16, p<.001), race (β=.12, p<.05), gender (β=-.10, p<.05) and education (β=.14, p<.01) had a significant impact on the dependent variable in the first block but once again only gender had a negative effect on ATA negative in all three blocks (β=-.10, p<.05 in M_{2a}; β=-.08, p<.05 in M_{2b}; β=-.07, p<.05 in M_{2c}). In the first block of Model 3, the demographics once again couldn't significantly explain the variance of ATA positive. Gender had a positive effect on the dependent variable (β=.11, p<.05) but it was only in the first block before other variables were entered. In the first block of the fourth model, the demographics significantly accounted for 8% of the variance explained of ATA negative (ΔR^2=.08, p<.001) and age (β=-.16, p<.01), race (β=.13, p<.01), gender (β=-.12, p<.05) as well as education (β=-.15, p<.01) all had a significant impact on the dependent variable in the first block. But there were no significant impacts after other variables were entered.

Two independent t tests were also run to test the gender difference in the effects. When ATA positive was the dependent variable, there was no statistically significant difference between males (N=238, M=5.32, SD=.96) and females (N=203, M=5.48, SD=.86) in the effects. However, when ATA negative was the dependent variable, there was a significant difference

(t(439)=2.47, p<.05) between males (N=238, M=3.24, SD=1.63) and females (N=203, M=2.86, SD=1.53).

ATA positive as the dependent variable and accessibility as the mediator (Model 1).

In this model, demographic variables were put in the first block, and then the two independent variables (general daily TV exposure and Asian character exposure) were entered in the second block, at last accessibility as the mediator was entered in the third block. This model was designed to test both the direct effects (H1, RQ1) and the indirect effects (H2) of the independent variables on the positive factor of the dependent variable (ATA positive). As is seen from M1b of Table 3, the two independent variables in the second block only accounted for 2% of the total variance explained (ΔR^2=.02, p<.01). Although significant, the two exposure variables were only able to predict a very minor part of the dependent variable, ATA positive in this case. General daily TV exposure had a positive impact on ATA positive (β=.12, p<.05) while Asian character exposure had no significant impact on the dependent variable when accessibility was entered. According to the results, H1 was not supported and the answer to RQ1 was that there was no significant relationship between Asian character exposure and people's social judgment toward Asian Americans. In the third block, accessibility accounted for 1% of the total variance explained (ΔR^2=.01, p<.05) and had a significantly positive effect on ATA positive (β=.13, p<.05). The results led to the rejection of H2. Furthermore, in that the coefficients between the independent variables, the mediator as well as the dependent variable were not all significant, the mediation effect did not hold.

ATA negative as the dependent variable and accessibility as the mediator (Model 2).

To test this model, the hierarchical linear regression was done in the following order: the demographic variables in the first block, the independent variables (general daily TV exposure

and Asian character exposure) in the second block and the mediator (accessibility) in the third

block. This model also aimed to test the direct effects (H1, RQ1) and the indirect effects (H2) of

the independent variables, but on ATA negative instead of the positive factor. In this model,

when ATA negative was the dependent variable, the independent variables had a much stronger

ability to predict the variance of the dependent variable. The second block when the two

independent variables were entered was able to explain 41% of the total variance of ATA

negative (ΔR^2=.41, p<.001), controlling for the demographic variables. General daily TV

exposure had no significant impact on the dependent variable while Asian character exposure

could make a significantly positive impact on ATA negative (β=.63, p<.001). When the negative

factor was brought into consideration, H1 was not supported and the answer to RQ1 was that

there was a significantly negative relationship between exposure to Asian characters and

people's social judgments toward the Asian ethnicity. When entering accessibility and going into

the third block, accessibility had no significant effect on the dependent variable and this block

predicted 0% of the variance in ATA negative. Thus, H2 was not supported.

ATA positive as the dependent variable and motivation, ability and interracial

contact as the moderators (Model 3). The hierarchical linear regression of this model consisted

of two blocks. The demographic variables including age, race, gender, education and income

were put in the first block. In the second block, the independent variables, the moderators and the

interactions between the independent variables and the moderators were entered (i.e. general

daily TV exposure, Asian character exposure, motivation, ability, interracial contact, Asian

character exposure*motivation, Asian character exposure*ability, Asian character

exposure*interracial contact, general TV exposure*motivation, general TV exposure*ability,

general TV exposure*interracial contact). This model tested the moderating effects (H3a, H3b

and H4) in the cultivation process with ATA positive as the dependent variable. When controlling for the demographic variables and entering the two independent variables, the three moderators as well as the interactions between them, the model obtained the improved ability to explain 28% more of the total variance of the dependent variable, ATA positive (ΔR^2=.28, p<.001). In the second block, general daily TV exposure showed no significant predicting effect on the dependent variable, however, Asian character exposure was found to exert a significantly negative impact on ATA positive (β=-1.37, p<.001). This result put additional proof and support to the answer to RQ1 discussed in Model 2 that there was a significantly negative relationship between exposure to Asian characters and people's social judgments toward the Asian group. Besides, the interaction between Asian character exposure and motivation was reported to be positively associated with the dependent variable, ATA positive (β=1.25, p<.01). Therefore, the interactive effect between Asian character exposure and motivation was proved to be a significant predictor of ATA positive and the moderation effect in H3a was partially supported. Besides, interracial contact alone was also positively correlated with the dependent variable (β=.25, p<.05) but there was no interactive effect found and its moderating effect did not stand. Thus, H3b and H4 were not supported.

ATA negative as the dependent variable and motivation, ability and interracial contact as the moderators (Model 4). Similar to Model 3, Model 4 also had two steps. In the first step, the demographic variables as the control variables were entered. In the second step, two independent variables, the moderators and the moderating interactions between them were entered as the second block. This model also tested the moderating effects (H3a, H3b and H4) in the cultivation process but with the negative factor of ATA as the dependent variable. It was indicated from the results shown in Table 3 that a great increase in the variance explained in the

dependent variable occurred after controlling for the demographic variables and adding the two independent variables, the moderators and the interactions between them in the second step of the regression. All the factors in the second block accounted for more than half of the total variance explained (ΔR^2=.55, p<.001). Among the factors, neither general daily TV exposure nor Asian character exposure had any significant effect on the dependent variable. Motivation itself (β=-.29, p<.001) and interracial contact itself (β=-.28, p<.001) both had a negative association with the dependent variable which accorded with the predictions from the literature but there were no significant interactive effects reported. The only interaction between the independent variables and the moderators that was significantly correlated with the dependent variable was the interactive effect between Asian character exposure and ability (β=.82, p<.01). This interaction was a significant predictor. According to these results, none of H3a, H3b and H4 was supported.

Limitations. There were two scales that failed to be tested. First, the data of the three first-order items that asked about perception of Asian population in the US appeared to be invalid. The means were too high (M_{EOD1}=31.20, SD=25.02; M_{EOD2}=51.60, SD=27.17; M_{EOD3}=28.13, SD=26.33) compared to real situations and there were respondents answered over 90% or even 100% of the US populations are Asian. Therefore, the first-order effect was not tested in the study. Second, due to the possible reason that the data of the genre exposure variables and the Asian character exposure variable were all from the same scale items as well as the genre exposure variables had overlapped definitions, the VIF values of the genre exposure variables in the regressions were too high (over 10) and there were concerns over multicollinearity (Genre Action, Tolerance=.01, VIF=145.19; Genre Crime, Tolerance=.02, VIF=68.00; Genre Adventure, Tolerance=.04, VIF=26.53; Asian Character Exposure,

Tolerance=.03, VIF=31.43). Moreover, according the statistics of condition index and variance proportions in the collinearity diagnostics, the variables of genre action and genre crime were linearly dependent to a large extent. Therefore, RQ2 failed to be tested. But according to the correlations, only comedy (r=.13, p<.01) and romance (r=.15, p<.01) were significantly related to ATA positive while all the genre exposure variables including comedy (r=.58, p<.001), romance (r=.49, p<.001), drama (r=.65, p<.001), action (r=.69, p<.001), crime (r=.68, p<.001), adventure (r=.68, p<.001) and thriller (r=.55, p<.001) were significantly related with ATA negative. Besides, one of the scales to measure motivation, Motivation 2 failed. It put different notes in three different conditions in order to stimulate the respondents but no significant results were yielded.

[Table 3 here]

Chapter 5: Discussion

Early studies of television cultivation mostly focused on the aspect of violence, but later they were extended to how television viewing contributed to the conceptions as well as actions of audience in fields like gender, minority stereotypes, age-role stereotypes and so on; some of them having serious implications for social control and the confirmation as well as perpetuation of minority status, demonstrating the power in the television world (Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2009; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan & Jackson-Beeck, 1979; Morgan, 1983). Thus, under this structure, this study aimed to find out how cultivation effect of television may change interracial attitudes and social judgments, and in this case, the Asians/Asian Americans. This was accomplished by not only looking at the TV series viewing of American audience, but also taking several factors that may exert influence on this information-processing process into consideration.

According to the findings of this study, the cultivation effect TV exposure has on attitudes is not always consistent. No matter it is the general TV exposure or exposure to Asian characters, the association is not always significant and some of the results are not in accordance with the predictions based on the literature. On one hand, general daily TV exposure is found to have a positive effect on ATA positive (a weak one though), indicating that the more television American people watch, the more positive their attitudes of Asians/Asian Americans will be. On the contrary, the literature points out that due to the reliance media effect has on the image (Mastro, 2009), the more people are exposed to televisual content with stereotypes of Asians, the more negative attitudes they should hold toward them. The potential reason might be the wrong judgment of TV content nowadays in the literature section. With the increasingly diverse cast and topics, it is possible that TV series are progressively passing on a positive message to the

audience about the Asian group. On the other hand, general daily TV exposure has no significant impact on the negative factor of ATA scale. It approves in a way that ATA positive and ATA negative are quite different as two subscales of measuring attitudes toward Asians. One is not simply the reversed version of the other. Both situations lead to the rejection of H1. However, Asian character exposure comes to play a very strong role in predicting the variance of ATA negative. This result perfectly matches the literature and demonstrates the possible existence of negative portrayals of Asians/Asian Americans on TV as the reason why the American audience is constantly told to hold negative opinions toward Asians and this gives answer to RQ1. But when it comes to the positive factor of ATA, Asian character exposure no longer has any significant effect. Despite all these above, TV exposure as a whole including general daily TV exposure and Asian character exposure shows significant ability in predicting people's attitudes of Asians/Asian Americans. This result gives the hint that the cultivation effect may be ubiquitous and underlying. In addition, television is capable of doing a much better job at strengthening people's negative thoughts than positive ones.

The similar situation happens to the mediator as well. Accessibility was introduced to this study in order to build the information-processing path and evaluate how TV viewing influences social judgments through people recalling constructs from memories (Shrum, 2009). However, accessibility shows significant effect on the positive factor but no significant impact on the negative factor of ATA. Besides, the positive correlation between accessibility and ATA positive also rejects H2 and therefore no mediating effect is found. Because media coverage can create an accessibility bias and it is supposed to yield influence on people's judgments (Iyengar, 1990), the audience should have had different levels of ability to extract accessible constructs and made judgments accordingly. The potential reason that accessibility made a slight and even no

difference may be that the representation of Asians on TV is too low (Narasaki, 2005; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005) to yield any significant variances among the audience. When people can't rely on their memories of Asian characters from any televisual content and fail to extract related constructs, accessibility no longer functions as a mediator.

Shrum (2009) mentions that motivation and ability moderate the cultivation effect and high level of motivation as well as ability pushes the audience into the systematic processing strategy and therefore they would be competent to resist the cultivation effect brought by the television and have a relatively positive attitude toward Asians. However, as the results of the study indicate, only motivation is proved to successfully moderate the cultivation effect Asian character exposure has on ATA positive. Higher motivation level helps people resist the negative impression brought by TV content with Asian characters and form a more positive attitude toward Asians/Asian Americans. Contrary to the hypothesis, ability moderates the cultivation process of Asian character exposure in the opposite way and creates an even more negative outcome. This might be caused by the defect of the measurement which only was able to measure the perceived ability of the audience instead of the real ability they possess. As a consequence, H3a is partially supported while H3b is rejected.

There are studies showing that interracial contact can influence people's evaluations toward minorities (Masson & Verkuyten, 1993; Armstrong et al., 1992; Fujioka, 1999; Mastro & Tropp, 2004). This study points out that although interracial contact itself has significant relationships with both factors of the attitudes, contributing in building up positive attitudes and eliminating negative ones, it fails to moderate the cultivation process and H4 is not supported. This result may shed light on the idea that there is the possibility that interracial contact helps people get rid of negative racial stereotypes not through information-processing path but directly

influencing the attitude change in mind. This might also mean that the interracial contact variable doesn't fit in the cultivation model.

Implications for the Field and Future Research

This study provides support for the existence of the cultivation effect in the field of interracial social judgments. Although sometimes the results are not quite consistent with the literature and not able to fully support the hypotheses, there is evidence that television, no matter in general or with a specific kind of content, is exerting effect on the American audience and imperceptibly changing their minds. The cultivation effect may not be that strong, and how well it works depends on various situations and factors, but it is still an effect that is worth noticing and studying. Especially when different forms of media begin to blend and merge, the context of television will be broader, more subtle and more unidentifiable which grants the cultivation effect more power.

Moreover, the results of this study indicate that TV is able to make an impact on how people think of the Asians. It is to say that television will not only influence how we perceive the world, the society and a variety of social issues, it will also influence how people perceive minorities and consequently, how people might potentially treat them. Thus, if television fails to show diversity as well as a rational way of evaluating others, the minorities who are already in a disadvantageous status will likely fall into a more stereotypical and tough situation.

For Asians specifically, the dilemma is largely caused by the under-representation on TV screens and lack of opportunities to become the leading actors/actresses and lack of opportunities to tell their own stories. This study has already shown that the television has an effect on an outgroup's attitudes and social judgments toward Asians/Asian Americans, however, it still remains unknown how the low representation may influence the cultivation process. Thus, it

might be a great chance as well as topic for future research to dig into the cultivation effect under low representation and study the Asian group who has always been on the relatively marginal area of media exposure.

This study also shows that it might not work to use self-rating items to ask about people's perceived motivation and ability to process TV viewing related questions. It is possible that the audience's perceived motivation as well as ability of themselves is not in accordance with the real situation due to the inclination that they tend to consider themselves as unbiased, smart and objective under the third person effect. Future studies can choose to design experiments instead of surveys to acquire more accurate and spontaneous answers from the subjects. This method also applies to the measurement of the variable of accessibility. The subscales of frequency, recency, vividness and relations with other accessible constructs will be better measured using an experimental environment. Meanwhile, it's also worth noticing that correlational survey has its own advantages when studying the cultivation effect. If the future researchers are able to have access to the data from streaming platforms which know exactly which shows people are watching and how often they watch them, together with surveys asking about attitudinal questions, the studies will have a more accurate understanding of what the respondents watch and think.

Last but not least, the dependent variable in this study is divided into the positive and negative factors and it proves to be a valid action. The results of this study have shown that the independent variables, the moderators and the mediator all have very different outcomes when exposed to either factor. It indicates that the negative factor is not simply the opposite of the positive factor and either one of them may have different influence on the cultivation process. Furthermore, the correlations seem to be stronger and more significant when it comes to the

negative attitude. It demonstrates the possibility that the audience is more likely to be cultivated to have negative thoughts than positive ones. This is worth a special attention in the field of social cognition and future research can do even more detailed factor analysis on attitudes, instead of just positive and negative.

Limitations

This study attempts to test the cultivation effect on the interracial social judgments. But several aspects of this study are not good enough. First of all, the data collected for the first-order effect was not usable (the questions asked about percentage of Asian Americans in the US population and some of the answers to them were against common sense) and the data for TV genre has a too high VIF value (the data of TV genre exposure variables and the Asian character exposure variable were taken from the same set of items) therefore neither of them were tested. Second, the theoretical model failed to fit in the path analysis, and several hierarchical linear regressions were done instead. The model in this study was built upon the Heuristic Processing Model of Television Effects and Shrum's (2009) study which provided support for the mediating effect of accessibility and moderating effects of motivation and ability in the cultivation process. The Heuristic Processing Model together with other studies (e.g. Mears & Stewart, 2010) also showed evidence of the effect of interracial contact in cultivation. The possible reasons for the failure in the path analysis include: 1) the choice of shows on the show list may not be comprehensive and good enough. There might be better choices of shows to measure the general TV viewing as well as Asian character exposure. 2) There is still room for the improvement of some measurements in the survey. This study used self-reported TV viewing data, which is a risk for any cultivation studies. The TV viewing scale also cannot guarantee to accurately measure the respondents' Asian exposure in real situations. In the future, more accurate data can be

obtained with access to streaming platforms database like Netflix. Self-reported data of accessibility, motivation, ability and interracial contact may not be accurate as well. An experimental design may help reach better results in future studies. 3) There might be some errors or limitations during the data-collecting process and there might be some problems with the participants in this study. There are 442 respondents in this study but all of them were recruited on MTurk in relatively short time. It does not guarantee the quality of the responses. Some research has shown that a large portion of the respondents recruited via MTurk seem to be inattentive (Fleischer, Mead & Huang, 2015). MTurk participants are also reported to crosstalk through forums or participate in similar studies multiple times and these behaviors can adversely influence effect sizes (Necka, Cacioppo, Norman & Cacioppo, 2016). Consequently, these limitations of MTurk can possibly lead to deviations in the results. There is also the possibility that the sample size is not big enough or this study fails to reach the proper population of TV viewing via Mturk. Third, it still remains unclear and not discussed how the low representation of Asians on TV may influence the cultivation process. Without enough variance, the analysis may not be able to yield valid results. Last but not least, there are many insignificant results in this study and many hypotheses are rejected. It may be the result of the data that were not collected in a good way.

Conclusion

The cultivation effect that television has on people's attitudes toward Asians is supported in this study. It also reveals the low and potentially negative representation of the Asian group. However, more exposure does not necessarily mean better image of the Asians/Asian Americans, and the audience are more vulnerable to turn negative toward Asians under the influence of TV series and other TV content.

Appendix A: Survey (A Survey about Perception of Television)

General TV Viewing

1. How many hours do you usually watch television on a regular weekday?

   [A Sliding Scale from 0 to 24] hours

2. How many days do you usually watch television on regular weekdays?

   [A Sliding Scale from 0 to 5] days

3. How many hours do you usually watch television on a regular weekend day?

   [A Sliding Scale from 0 to 24] hours

4. How many days do you usually watch television on a regular weekend?

   [A Sliding Scale from 0 to 2] days

5. What kind of shows do you usually watch?

   TV Series/News/Talk Shows/Reality Shows/Sports Shows/Game Shows/Other_____

TV Series Viewing

6. How often do you watch these American TV series listed below? (All the posters are

   from the Internet.)
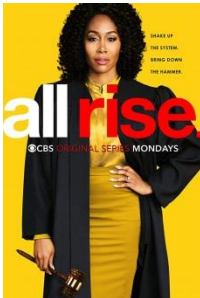
All Rise

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

The Neighborhood

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

This is Us

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

NCIS

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Game of Thrones

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Blue Bloods

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Hawaii Five-0

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Chicago Fire

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Grey's Anatomy

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

The Good Doctor

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always
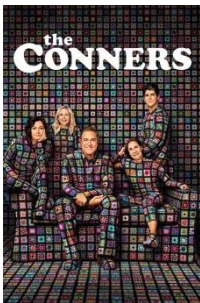
The Conners

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

9-1-1

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Chicago Med

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always
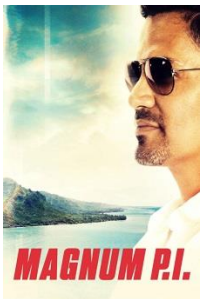
Magnum P.I.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

I Feel Bad

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

The Big Bang Theory

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

New Amsterdam

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Chicago P.D.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always
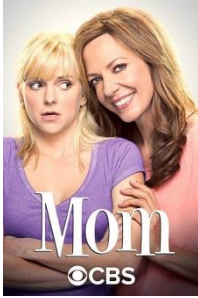
Mom

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always
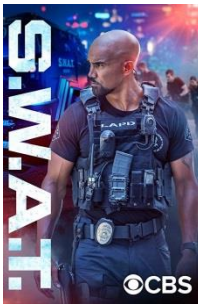
S.W.A.T.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Important Notice:

1) In this survey, "Asian/Asian American" refers to anyone in the US who is from Asia or has an Asian origin with or without an American citizenship. They may have origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam etc.

2) In this survey, "TV series" refer to story-based entertainment shows including dramas, comedies, thrillers etc. and NOT including sports shows, game shows, talk shows, reality TV and news etc.

1. How do you usually watch TV series/films?

   Broadcast Network

   Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

   Cable Channel

   Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

   Online Streaming Platform

   Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Accessibility

2. I **always** see Asian/Asian American characters when I am watching TV series/films.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. I **recently** saw Asian/Asian American characters when I was watching TV series/films.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. Asian/Asian American characters are portrayed **vividly** in TV series/films**.**

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. Asian/Asian American characters are **closely related to the plotline** in TV series/films**.**

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

6. I can easily come up with an Asian/Asian American character from any TV series/films in my mind.

   Very Hard 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Easy

Interracial Contact

7. How frequently do you come into contact with Asians/Asian Americans?

   Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Every Day

   (If choosing "1-Never", the participant will skip to the *Ability* questions.)

8. Perceived importance of relationship with closest Asian(s)/Asian American(s)

   Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Important

9. Liking of closest Asian(s)/Asian American(s)

   Don't Like 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like A Lot

10. Quality of relationship with closest Asian(s)/Asian American(s)

    Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Quality

11. General rating of quality of interaction with Asian/Asian American group as a whole

    Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High

Ability

12. I feel more knowledgeable about making a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans
    compared to other people.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

13. I feel more confident in making a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans compared
    to other people.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

14. I will be more rational when making a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans
    compared to other people.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Motivation 1

1. I am motivated to think deeply about it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. I am motivated to think thoroughly about it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. I am interested in concentrating meaningfully on it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. I really care about it when I'm asked to make a fair assessment of Asians/Asian Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Motivation 2

"Please take your time when answering the following questions, as it is very important that you try to be as **ACCURATE** and **FAIR** as possible."

"Please give the **FIRST ANSWER** that comes to your mind when answering the following questions."

Either of these two instructions randomly appears in one third of the questionnaires distributed before the "Social Judgment" questions and the last one third of participants get no instructions as the control group.

Social Judgments toward Asian Americans

Estimates of Demographics

1. What is your estimate of the percentage of Asian residents in the US?

   [A sliding scale of percentage]

2. What is your estimate of the percentage of Asians 25 years of age and older with a

   Bachelor's degree or higher education level in the US?

   [A sliding scale of percentage]

3. What is your estimate of the percentage of Asian military veterans in the US?

   [A sliding scale of percentage]

Attitudes Toward Asians

4. Asians/Asian Americans should think in more American ways.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. Generally, Asians/Asian Americans are smart.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

6. Asians/Asian Americans tend to be hardworking and diligent.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

7. A strong commitment to family values characterizes many Asians/Asian Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

8. Asians/Asian Americans should never represent the United States for anything, since they

   are not "true" Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

9. The "togetherness" of Asians/Asian Americans' families should be upheld as a model for other Americans.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

10. Most Asians/Asian Americans are intellectually bright.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

11. There are too many Asians/Asian Americans in this country.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

12. Asian Americans are very self-disciplined in their work.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

13. It is annoying when Asians/Asian Americans speak in their own languages.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

14. One problem with Asians/Asian Americans is that they stick together too much.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

15. Asians/Asian Americans make the job market too competitive.

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

In general, I think Asians/Asian Americans are:

16. Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Good

17. Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

18. Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Valuable

19. Unpleasant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pleasant

20. Awful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Nice

Demographic Information

21. What is your age?

    [A sliding scale]

22. Which race do you identify yourself as?

    Caucasian/African/Latino/Asian/Native American/Other

23. Which gender do you identify yourself as?

    Male/Female/Other/Rather Not Say

24. What is your official education level?

    Less than high school/High school/Some college/Associate's Degree/Bachelor's

    Degree/Master's Degree/Doctorate Degree/Higher than Doctorate

25. What is your annual personal income level?

    Under $10,000/$10,000-$19,999/$20,000-$29,999/$30,000-$39,999/$40,000-

    $49,999/$50,000-$59,999/$60,000-$69,999/$70,000-$79,999/$80,000-$89,999/$90,000-

    $99,999/$100,000 or more

Debriefing Statement

This research studies the TV viewing and how it may affect people's perceptions as well as attitudes toward Asian Americans. Do you agree to let the researcher use your data in the study?

1) Yes. I agree to let the researcher use my data after I am aware of the true nature of the purpose of this study.

2) No. I want to withdraw my data and my data will be deleted and not be used in the study.

Appendix B: Tables

Table 1
Participant Profile for the Study (n=442)

Sample Characteristics	Valid n Sample	Valid % Sample
Gender	442	100.0%
Male	238	53.8
Female	203	45.9
Rather Not Say	1	.2
Age	442	100.0%
18-24 years old	28	6.3
25-29 years old	103	23.3
30-34 years old	87	19.7
35-39 years old	66	14.9
40-44 years old	45	10.2
45-49 years old	31	7.0
50-54 years old	23	5.2
55-59 years old	22	5.0
60-64 years old	20	4.5
65-69 years old	10	2.3
70-74 years old	4	.9
75 years and over	3	.7
Race/Ethnicity	442	100.0%
Caucasian	357	80.8
African American	40	9.0
Latino	20	4.5
Native American	12	2.7
Other	13	2.9
Annual Personal Income	442	100.0%
Under $10,000	41	9.3
$10,000 to $19,999	43	9.7
$20,000 to $29,999	67	15.2
$30,000 to $39,999	66	14.9
$40,000 to $49,999	50	11.3
$50,000 to $59,999	54	12.2
$60,000 to $69,999	47	10.6
$70,000 to $79,999	24	5.4
$80,000 to $89,999	13	2.9
$90,000 to $99,999	13	2.9
$100,000 or more	24	5.4
Official Education Level	442	100%
Less than high school	3	.7
High school	42	9.5
Some college	73	16.5
Associate's Degree	50	11.3
Bachelor's Degree	210	47.5

Master's Degree	55	12.4
Doctorate Degree	9	2.0

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics (Alpha, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlations) (n=442)

|	Alpha	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	.58	5.59	4.84	1.00													
2	.94	2.49	1.68	.53**	1.00												
3	.88	5.39	0.92	.14**	.10*	1.00											
4	.93	3.06	1.6	.42**	.68**	-0.02	1.00										
5	.86	4.09	1.33	.32**	.49**	.16**	.37**	1.00									
6	.92	5.11	1.29	.10*	.12*	.42**	-.12**	.25**	1.00								
7	.88	4.2	1.43	.21**	.38**	.28**	.26**	.44**	.44**	1.00							
8	.84	4.85	1.23	.20**	.29**	.36**	-0.04	.37**	.47**	.50**	1.00						
9		29.21	28.09	.95**	.54**	.25**	.40**	.39**	.33**	.32**	.30**	1.00					
10		24.91	26.32	.89**	.63**	.23**	.50**	.46**	.24**	.51**	.33**	.93**	1.00				
11		27.98	27.62	.95**	.60**	.23**	.44**	.44**	.24**	.37**	.42**	.96**	.95**	1.00			
12		12.97	10	.53**	.94**	.25**	.62**	.55**	.38**	.49**	.39**	.62**	.68**	.65**	1.00		
13		11.37	10.33	.52**	.94**	.21**	.67**	.56**	.26**	.63**	.38**	.59**	.72**	.65**	.96**	1.00	
14		12.75	10.37	.56**	.96**	.21**	.63**	.58**	.24**	.49**	.50**	.61**	.68**	.67**	.96**	.96**	1.00

Note. **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed)
1=General Daily TV Exposure; 2=Asian Characters Exposure; 3=Attitudes toward Asians Positive; 4=Attitudes toward Asians Negative; 5=Accessibility of Portrayals of Asian American Characters in TV Series; 6= People's Perceived Motivation to Process TV Viewing Related Questions; 7=People's Perceived Ability to Process TV Viewing Related Questions; 8= Interracial Contact; 9=1^6; 10=1^7; 11=1^8; 12=2^6; 13=2^7; 14=2^8.

Table 3

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Relational Outcomes

	Model 1: ATA Positive			Model 2: ATA Negative		
	M_{1a}	M_{1b}	M_{1c}	M_{2a}	M_{2b}	M_{2c}
Step 1: Demographics						
Age	-.01	.00	.01	-.16***	-.06	-.06
Race	.01	-.02	-.02	.12*	.00	.00
Gender	.10*	.11*	.11*	-.10*	-.08*	-.07*
Education	.07	.05	.04	.14**	-.04	-.04
Income	-.01	.00	.00	-.04	.02	.02
Step 2: TV Exposure						
General Daily TV Exposure		.13*	.12*		.07	.07
Asian Character Exposure		.04	-.02		.64***	.63***
Step 3: Accessibility						
Accessibility			.13*			.03
ΔR^2	.01	.02**	.01*	.08***	.41***	.00
Total R^2 (%)			4.9*			48.3

	Model 3: ATA Positive		Model 4: ATA Negative	
	M_{3a}	M_{3b}	M_{4a}	M_{4b}
Step 1: Demographics				
Age	-.02	.00	-.16**	-.04
Race	.01	-.07	.13**	.02
Gender	.11*	.09	-.12*	-.01
Education	.10	-.04	.15**	.01
Income	-.04	.05	-.04	-.01
Step 2: TV Exposure				
General Daily TV Exposure		.19		-.11
Asian Character Exposure		-1.37***		-.25
Motivation		.01		-.29***
Ability		-.09		-.06
Interracial Contact		.25*		-.28***
Asian Character Exposure*Motivation		1.25**		.39
Asian Character Exposure*Ability		.28		.82**
Asian Character Exposure*Interracial Contact		-.01		-.14
General TV Exposure*Motivation		.00		-.06
General TV Exposure*Ability		.24		-.10
General TV Exposure*Interracial Contact		-.38		.35
ΔR^2	.02	.28***	.08***	.55***
Total R^2 (%)		29.6***		63.3***

Appendix C: Theoretical Model
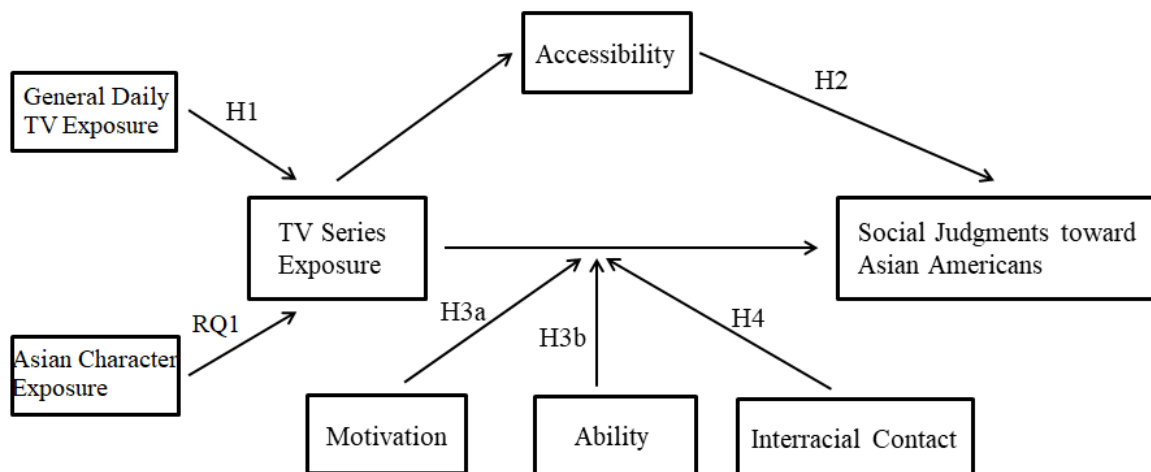
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Vita

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Education

Master of Arts, *Media Studies*, **Syracuse University**	Aug,2017-May,2020 **GPA**: 3.62/4.00

- Co-authored paper "Fake News Correction: How USDA Corrects Fake News about Organic Foods on Social Media" admitted in AEJMC 2018

Bachelor of Arts, *Chinese Language and Literature*, **Shandong University**	Sep,2013-Jun,2017 **GPA**: 3.70/4.00

- First Class Scholarship (2014-2015) and Outstanding Thesis (2017)

Exchange Study, *Chinese Language and Literature*, **National Taiwan University**	Feb,2016-Jul,2016 **GPA**: 3.83/4.00

Working Experience

Intern Journalist, **Sichuan Branch of Xinhua News Agency**	Summer,2018

- Attended governmental press meetings, wrote various themed reports (four posted), post-produced news videos

Director, *Scriptwriter*, *Cameraman*, *Video Production*, **Microfilm-** *Farewell*	Summer,2017

- In charge of the whole film-making process as the core creator
- Won the Second Prize of Microfilm Contest of Shandong University

Founder, *Operator*, *Writer*, **Wechat Public Account-** *Episodia*	Winter,2015-Now

- Wrote articles of all kinds, proses, novels, movie reviews etc., invited contributions, edited and published articles online
- Reached accumulative views of over 11,800

Team Leader, **Student Social Research Team**	Fall,2015-Winter,2015

- On the topic of post-earthquake reconstruction in Yingxiu, Wenchuan
- In charge of the whole team, collected data and materials, interviewed local people, contacted local officials

Campus Experience

Instructional Associate (IA), **COM 117**, Syracuse University	Fall,2018-Spring,2019

- Assisted the professor with teaching
- Taught two lab sessions (Premiere, Au etc.)

Journalist, **Campus TV Station**, Shandong University	Summer,2015-Fall 2015

- Participated in the 22nd International Congress of Historical Sciences as a journalist, tasks including reporting, interviewing, translating and video producing
- Trained in video recording and editing skills

Chief, **English Broadcasting Station**, Shandong University	Fall,2015-Winter,2015

- Organized several big English contests, with both Chinese and students from other countries participating in

- Broadcasted and edited audio programs as one of the main anchors in 2013

Monitor (Supervisor/Coordinator/TA), **Class 2,** Shandong   Fall,2013-Summer,2017
University
- In charge of a class of 50 students
- Dealt with administrative affairs in the School of Chinese Language and Literature as an assistant/coordinator

Volunteer Experience

Volunteer, **Chengdu Office of World Wide Fund for**   Summer,2016
Nature
Volunteer, **Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda**   Summer,2015
Breeding

Skills

- Academic: Quantitative & qualitative research, SPSS
- Production: Adobe Premiere, Au, Illustrator, AE, PS; Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint & Word
- Language: Chinese & English