

# An Intersectional Analysis of Gender and Ethnic Stereotypes: Testing Three Hypotheses

Psychology of Women Quarterly  
37(1) 113-127  
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/0361684312464203  
pwq.sagepub.com



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## Abstract

We compared perceived cultural stereotypes of diverse groups varying by gender and ethnicity. Using a free-response procedure, we asked 627 U.S. undergraduates to generate 10 attributes for 1 of 17 groups: Asian Americans, Blacks, Latinos, Middle Eastern Americans, or Whites; men or women; or 10 gender-by-ethnic groups (e.g., Black men or Latina women). Based on intersectionality theory and social dominance theory, we developed and tested three hypotheses. First, consistent with the intersectionality hypothesis, gender-by-ethnic stereotypes contained unique elements that were not the result of adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes. Second, in support of an ethnicity hypothesis, stereotypes of ethnic groups were generally more similar to stereotypes of the men than of the women in each group. Third, a gender hypothesis postulated that stereotypes of men and women will be most similar to stereotypes of White men and White women, less similar to ethnic minority men and ethnic minority women, and least similar to Black men and Black women. This hypothesis was confirmed for target women, but results for target men were mixed. Collectively, our results contribute to research, theory, and practice by demonstrating that ethnic and gender stereotypes are complex and that the intersections of these social categories produce meaningful differences in the way groups are perceived.

## Keywords

stereotyped attitudes, social perception, group differences, human sex differences, racial and ethnic differences, intersectionality, social dominance

In a multicultural society like the United States, we are exposed to individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. What images do we hold about members of various ethnic groups? And do these images change when gender is salient? Shared beliefs about the typical attributes of members of a social category such as Asian Americans or women constitute cultural stereotypes. Although stereotypes can provide useful information about what members of social groups are like and how they might behave (Martin & Macrae, 2007), they can also set up biased expectations, reinforce prejudiced attitudes, and foster discrimination—even if we personally do not endorse these beliefs (for a review, see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010).

## Theoretical Perspectives and Hypotheses

Most stereotype research has focused on a single social identity such as ethnicity (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Katz & Braly, 1933; Madon et al., 2001) or gender (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Wood & Eagly, 2010). However, all individuals simultaneously belong to both gender and ethnic groups, and the intersection of these categories meaningfully affects the way we think

about other people. As many feminists scholars have argued (e.g., Hancock, 2007; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008), the lack of research on intersecting categories has led to a simplistic and incomplete description of cultural stereotypes. To redress this shortcoming, we provide a fine-grained documentation of the content of contemporary cultural stereotypes that combines gender and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, we focus on stereotypes associated with men and women who are Asian American, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern American, and White.<sup>2</sup> We draw on intersectionality theory (e.g., Cole, 2009) and social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) to develop and test three main hypotheses about stereotypes combining gender and ethnicity.

*Intersectionality theory and hypothesis.* Black feminist scholars have criticized feminists and anti-racist activists for their focus on White women as targets of sexism and on Black men

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as targets of racism (Beale, 1970; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1995). They argued that "focusing on the experiences of the most privileged members of the subordinate groups" renders Black women invisible (Crenshaw, 1993, p. 383). Other social scientists (e.g., Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Kahn & Yoder, 1989; Thomas & Miles, 1995) have made a similar point. Intersectionality theory was proposed to provide a more inclusive account of Black women's experiences with sexism and racism in the United States. This perspective is recognized as a "signal contribution of feminist studies" (Cole, 2008, p. 171) and comprises three main themes. It begins with the key observation that each person simultaneously belongs to multiple social categories and that these categories are mutually constitutive. There is no universal woman or man—each person has a race; there is no universal Black or White person—each has a gender. Therefore, to fully understand the experiences of individuals, both their gender and their ethnicity must be taken into account. Second, group identities based on the intersection of ethnicity and gender (e.g., being a Black woman) are unique and cannot be understood by simply adding together the ingredients of each separate identity (Cole & Zucker, 2007; Peplau, Veniegas, Taylor, & DeBro, 1999). Each gender and ethnic combination gives rise to distinctive experiences that are not reducible to the original identities that went into them. Third, social categories "encapsulate historical and continuing relations of political, material and social inequality . . . that structure social and material life" (Cole, 2009, p. 173). Thus, people's experiences need to be understood in the context of power relations embedded in these social identity categories.

To date, most empirical research on intersectionality has centered on the experiences of Blacks and Whites in the United States, although a few researchers have applied insights from intersectionality theory to other ethnic minority groups (see Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, for a review). The majority of these studies has focused on the consequences of intersectionality for the individual. For instance, these studies have generally focused on how being both a woman and an ethnic minority (e.g., a Black woman) as compared with an ethnic majority woman (e.g., a White woman) affects psychological well-being, personal income, or educational attainment (see Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000, for a review).

Intersectionality theory provides a useful framework for examining stereotypes associated with the combination of gender and ethnicity. To date, a few studies have applied this theory to stereotypes but have usually focused on stereotypes of Blacks and Whites (e.g., Donovan, 2011; Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008). No known study has simultaneously assessed, compared, and tested theoretically driven hypotheses about the content of stereotypes associated with men and women who are Asian American, Latino, and Middle Eastern American. To fill this gap, we developed our *intersectionality hypothesis* predicting that intersecting gender and ethnic

stereotypes will contain unique elements that are not the result of adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes. Intersectionality theory does not provide predictions about the specific content of stereotypes of ethnic men and women. Instead, it directs us to consider the cultural and social structural context that affects the content of stereotypes. To complement the intersectional perspective, we drew on social dominance theory.

*Social dominance theory and hypotheses.* Developed by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), social dominance theory proposes that human social systems tend to organize themselves as group-based hierarchies of status and power. Dominant groups have greater access to material and symbolic resources than do subordinates. In the United States, both gender and ethnicity are central factors in the status hierarchy (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Sidanius, Sinclair, & Pratto, 2006). Evidence shows that men typically have more power and status than women (see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, for a review). When U.S. respondents are asked to rank the social status of American ethnic groups, they typically put Whites at the top and Blacks at the bottom, with Asians, Latinos and Arabs in between (e.g., Sidanius, Pratto, & Rabinowitz, 1994). Citing a wide range of evidence, Sidanius, Pratto, and Rabinowitz (1994) demonstrate that social hierarchies are created and maintained by legitimizing myths that include stereotypes, attitudes, and values that provide justification for current social inequalities.

Based on social dominance theory, we expect that gender and ethnic stereotypes will map onto the social hierarchies of gender and ethnicity. As a consequence, because stereotypes reflect the characteristics of dominant groups, namely men and Whites, stereotypes of ethnic minority women (who are subordinate based on both gender and ethnicity) will be least likely to be reflected in either gender stereotypes or ethnic stereotypes. Based on this reasoning, we proposed two hypotheses. Our *ethnicity hypothesis* states that stereotypes of an ethnic group (with gender unspecified) will reflect the characteristics of the men rather than the women of that group. For example, the general stereotype of Blacks will have more attributes in common with the stereotype of Black men than Black women. As a consequence, the stereotype profile of Black women will have more unique elements than the stereotype profile of Black men. Our *gender hypothesis* states that stereotypes of men and women (ethnicity unspecified) will be most similar to those of White men and White women, less similar to stereotypes of ethnic minority men and ethnic minority women, and least similar to stereotypes of Black men and Black women. As one example, we expected that compared to stereotypes of White women, stereotypes of Black women will have fewer attributes in common with the general stereotype of women. Therefore, stereotypes of Black women will contain more unique attributes than stereotypes of White women.

### The Content of Ethnic and Gender Stereotypes

In this section, we review research bearing on our three hypotheses involving intersectionality, ethnicity, and gender. Previous research has provided detailed descriptions of stereotypes both of racial and ethnic groups and of women and men (see Madon et al., 2001; Wood & Eagly, 2010, for reviews), often based on assessing the views of college students. Furthermore, in assessing stereotypes, researchers have employed diverse methods, with no single method of assessment being used consistently.

*Intersectionality hypothesis.* According to this hypothesis, intersecting gender and ethnic stereotypes will contain unique elements that are not simply the result of adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes. As a corollary, there will be more distinct elements in the stereotype profiles of ethnic women than of ethnic men. Indirect support for this hypothesis comes from three lines of work.

First, some studies have examined subtypes within global ethnic or gender groups. In a study of White college students, Devine and Baker (1991) found that descriptions of the general category "Blacks" partially overlapped with each of nine subtypes of Blacks (e.g., "Black athlete," "ghetto Black," "Black businessman"). Importantly, however, the description of each subtype included unique elements that reliably distinguished one subtype from the others and from the general "Blacks" category. In a recent study of undergraduates, Schneider and Bos (2011) documented that the image of "Black politician" partially overlapped with the image of "Blacks" (e.g., "being interested in their own group") but differed in being ambitious and determined. Gender categories can also be meaningfully differentiated into subtypes. In an illustrative study (Coats & Smith, 1999), undergraduates (ethnicity unspecified) generated many distinct subtypes of men and of women (e.g., "professional woman," "homemaker," and "feminist" for women; and "businessman," "family man," and "playboy" for men). Each subtype had unique attributes. For example, although the subtype of "professional woman" shared some similarities with the general category "woman," such as being dedicated and friendly, it differed in depicting the "professional woman" as hard working and ambitious.

Second, indirect support for the intersectionality hypothesis comes from a study of nationalities by Eagly and Kite (1987). In this research, undergraduate psychology participants (ethnicity unspecified) rated the extent to which a predetermined list of attributes characterized 28 nationalities as well as the men and the women of each nation. The combination of gender and nationality consistently affected the content of stereotypes. For example, Iranian women, but not men, were described as emotional, conforming, and conservative. Instead, Iranian men, not women, were perceived to be arrogant and aggressive and to never give up. Although their study assessed stereotypes based on nationality (gender

unspecified), it did not assess stereotypes based on gender (nationality unspecified). Therefore, we cannot determine whether intersecting gender and national stereotypes contained unique elements that did not result from adding gender stereotypes to national stereotypes. Additionally, this methodology precluded an assessment of the corollary to the intersectionality hypothesis. Therefore, we are unable to determine whether more distinct elements appeared in the stereotype profiles of women or men.

Third, more direct evidence comes from a study by Niemann, Jennings, Rozelle, Baxter, and Sullivan (1994). Ethnically diverse psychology undergraduates (12% African American, 11% Asian, 20% Latino, 51% White, and 6% other) generated stereotypic attributes associated with men and women who were African American, Asian American, Mexican American, and Anglo-American. In support of the intersectionality hypothesis, the combination of gender and ethnicity led to distinctive stereotypes. For example, whereas Mexican American women were described as baby makers, attractive, and passive, Mexican American men were described as criminal, ambitionless, and alcohol users. Because their study did not assess stereotypes based on gender (ethnicity unspecified) or ethnicity (gender unspecified), it did not provide a clear test of the intersectionality hypothesis or its corollary. In sum, although limited, available research provides some support for the intersectionality hypothesis, a more direct test is clearly needed.

*Ethnicity hypothesis.* According to this hypothesis, because ethnicity is conflated with "maleness," stereotypes of an ethnic group will be more similar to those of the men than the women of that ethnic group. To our knowledge, no research has directly tested this hypothesis for U.S. ethnic or racial groups, but two lines of work do provide indirect support. In their study of gender and nationalities, Eagly and Kite (1987) found that stereotypes of each nation were more similar to stereotypes of the men than the women from that nation. Social cognitive research on racial prototypicality lends further support to the ethnicity hypothesis (e.g., Hugenberg & Sacco, 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Using facial recognition paradigms, Zárate and Smith (1990) demonstrated that after being primed with a racial category, White and Black psychology undergraduate participants were faster at categorizing the gender of faces of men from each group than of women. Faster categorization of Black and White men indicates that the prototypical Black or White person was perceived as a man. In sum, despite indirect support, direct evidence about the ethnicity hypothesis in stereotypes of U.S. ethnic groups is lacking.

*Gender hypothesis.* A final hypothesis asserts that gender stereotypes are conflated with "Whiteness." Specifically, stereotypes of the general categories of "men" and "women" will be most similar to those of White men and White women and least similar to stereotypes of Black men and Black women. Stereotypes of other ethnic men and ethnic

women will fall in between those of Whites and Blacks. No known studies have systematically tested the gender hypothesis, but a few studies provide indirect support for it. In a study of White undergraduates, Landrine (1985) showed that stereotypes of women differed significantly by race and by social class. White women and middle-class women were rated higher than Black women and lower-class women on feminine attributes such as dependent, emotional, and passive. In contrast, Black women and lower-class women were rated higher than White women and middle-class women on a range of negative attributes such as dirty, hostile, and superstitious. In a similar vein, Donovan (2011) documented meaningful differences in the content of stereotypes associated with Black and White women. For example, compared to White women, Black women were described as more religious, loud, and tough, but less sensitive and educated. Further, research on media representations documents that television shows, advertisements, and movies often depict White women in traditionally feminine ways such as attractive, friendly, and emotionally dependent (e.g., Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Licata & Biswas, 1993). In contrast, women from other ethnic groups are often portrayed in ways that deviate from traditional stereotypes of women (Ginorio, Gutierrez, Cauce & Acosta, 1995; Root, 1995).

### The Present Study

In summary, although prior research on gender and ethnic stereotypes has been informative, it has not provided a comprehensive examination of intersecting gender and ethnicity stereotypes. The current study simultaneously compared stereotypes associated with men and women, five ethnic groups, and the combination of gender and ethnicity. To improve on prior research that has focused primarily on Black and White Americans, we also included Asian Americans, Latinos, and Middle Eastern Americans (one of the least-studied ethnic groups). Importantly, our study was designed to test three theoretically driven hypotheses focused on intersectionality, ethnicity, and gender.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 627 undergraduate students from a large 4-year public university in southern California participated. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 55 ( $M = 20.16$ ,  $SD = 2.2$ ). The sample was ethnically diverse: 19 (3%) African American/Black, 270 (43%) Asian/Asian American, 163 (26%) European/White, 107 (17%) Latino/Latina, 25 (4%) Middle Eastern, and 43 (7%) other/mixed. A majority of participants were women 458 (73%) and 19 (3%) did not indicate their gender. Most participants ( $n = 489$ ; 78%) were U.S.-born, but 138 (22%) were foreign-born who had been in the United States for an average of 9.1 years.

### Materials and Procedure

Participants were recruited from the Psychology Department subject pool to complete an online survey in exchange for partial course credit. The survey assessed views about various ethnic and gender groups. All survey procedures took place online, a methodology that can facilitate participation by providing anonymity to the participants (e.g., Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). Upon logging on to the study website, participants read an information sheet describing the study and then were asked to grant consent to participate. To prevent multiple entries, each respondent was required to indicate whether he or she had previously completed the survey.

Participants were then randomly assigned to 1 of 17 conditions describing 5 ethnic groups (e.g., Black or Latino), 2 gender groups (women or men), and 10 gender-by-ethnic groups (e.g., Black women or Latino men).<sup>3</sup> To ensure that random assignment was successful, we conducted three separate chi-square analyses focused on participants' gender, ethnicity, and immigrant status, none of which was significant ( $ps > .38$ ). After agreeing to participate, participants read the following instructions:

We are all aware of *cultural stereotypes* of social groups. These may be ideas that you learned from movies, saw in commercials, or in magazines, etc. For example, people often perceive models as beautiful, tall but dumb. Note that these characteristics may or may not reflect your own personal beliefs about these groups. In the space below, list at least 10 characteristics that are part of the current cultural stereotypes of [the target group, e.g., Asian American men]. Think of [the target group] as a group rather than a specific individual you may know. Please note that we are *not* asking for your personal beliefs, but rather those held by people in general.<sup>4</sup>

When participants finished the attribute generation task, their responses could not be changed. Next, participants answered other questions not relevant to the current report. The survey ended with standard demographic questions. Finally, participants read a written debriefing statement and were thanked for their participation. The entire procedure took approximately 45 minutes.

## Results

### Treatment of Free-Response Data

Participants generated 7,012 words or phrases. Across all conditions, 539 (86%) participants generated 10 characteristics as requested. Participants who listed fewer than 10 characteristics were prompted to generate more, and they did. We conducted three separate chi-square analyses and showed that no significant differences based on participants' gender,

ethnicity, or immigration status were found in the average number of attributes initially listed (all  $\chi^2 > .26$ ).

Our first task was to reduce this large set of free responses to a smaller list. To organize and code the free responses, we drew on the method described by Buss and Craik (1985). Using this procedure allowed us to inductively derive conceptual categories that emerge from the free responses of participants rather than imposing a priori categories on the data. In addition, our method relied on college student coders rather than researchers to inductively arrive at categories, which provides a more accurate reflection of college student participants' stereotypes. However, a limitation of our method is that the categories coders derive from the data may in part depend on their experiences and exposure to various ethnic and gender groups. To minimize this possibility, we recruited three ethnically diverse woman undergraduate research assistants (one Black, one Latina, and one White) for whom the purpose of the study was masked.

Each participant's self-generated characteristics were printed on a note card with one characteristic per card. Given the consensual nature of cultural stereotypes, many duplicate responses emerged. For example, many participants used "loud" to describe Black women. A note card was created every time "loud" was listed. Our three undergraduate coders reduced the data within each of the 17 target groups into synonymous attribute categories. Each coder independently combined the participant-generated characteristics into synonymous attribute categories. For example, they combined "fat," "obese," "thick," and "heavy" into an umbrella category "overweight." This process combined duplicate and synonymous characteristics. For ease of presentation, we will refer to synonymous attribute categories as attributes from this point forward.

To determine interrater reliability, all the responses generated by participants were coded separately by each of the research assistants. A reliability score was calculated using a percentage agreement among the three coders. The three coders agreed with each other 87% of the time. Disagreements among the coders were discussed until the three coders agreed. In the rare event that no consensus was reached among the undergraduates, the principal investigator (the first author) made the final decision.

In order to identify a wide range of attributes that were characteristic of each target group, we computed frequency distributions within each target group (e.g., "Black women") for each attribute (e.g., "overweight"). Frequencies for each attribute were based on counting the total number of times each word or phrase in that attribute category was listed. Analysis revealed that the total number of attributes differed greatly across the 17 target groups. For example, 39 attributes emerged for "Blacks," 29 for "Latino men," 20 for "Middle Eastern women," and 16 for "women." Furthermore, we found that the frequency of specific attributes differed within groups. For example, "tall," the 1st attribute listed for the general category "men," was listed 18 times, whereas "fixer-upper," the 15th attribute, was listed only 3 times.

To define the content of a group stereotype, we modeled our analytic approach after the work of Niemann et al. (1994), the only other known study to systematically examine stereotypes associated with intersecting gender and ethnicity. Specifically, we a priori defined the content of each group stereotype as the 15 most frequently listed attributes. Furthermore, to minimize the inclusion of very low frequency, idiosyncratic attributes, we again used Niemann et al.'s approach and included only those attributes that represented at least 1% of the total attributes listed for each of the 17 target groups. For example, "fixer-upper" was the 15th most common attribute listed for "men." Given that a total of 252 words, phrases, or characteristics were listed for "men" and "fixer-upper" was listed 3 times, it accounted for 1.2% of the total attributes listed for this group. Therefore, this attribute was included in the analysis. However, "hairy," the 16th most commonly listed attribute for "men," was not included because it was listed twice and accounted for only 0.08% of the total attributes. Taken together, our a priori decisions to use the top 15 attributes and to include only attributes that represented at least 1% of the total attributes listed for that group resulted in a standard number of attributes for each target group.

### *Testing the Intersectionality Hypothesis*

The intersectionality hypothesis predicts that intersecting gender and ethnic stereotypes will contain unique elements that are not simply the result of adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes. We considered an attribute to be unique if it was not included in the 15 most frequent attributes for that gender and for that ethnic group. To illustrate, for "Black women," 10 unique attributes emerged (e.g., overweight, hair weaves, likes to eat fried chicken). The attribute "overweight," for example, was unique for "Black women" because it was not included in the top 15 attributes for either "Blacks" or for "women." As a corollary, we also predicted that there would be more distinct elements in the stereotype profiles of ethnic women than of ethnic men. To test this hypothesis, we determined separately for each of the five ethnic groups whether the proportion of unique attributes for women differed significantly from that for men.

In analyzing our data, we took three steps. First, we summed across the frequencies for all unique attributes in each target group. For example, for "Black women," we added 18 (overweight) to 12 (hair weaves) to 6 (likes to eat fried chicken) and so on to arrive at 112, the total number of unique attributes for "Black women." Second, we conducted similar computations for "Black men," arriving at 42 unique attributes. Our calculations showed that of the 199 total attributes listed for "Black women," 112 (56%) were unique. In contrast for "Black men," only 42 (27%) of the 155 total attributes were unique. Third, to determine whether the proportion of unique stereotypes for "Black women" differed significantly from that for "Black men,"

**Table 1.** Top 15 Attributes Listed for Blacks, Black Men, and Black Women.

Blacks (n = 39)		Black Men (n = 38)		Black Women (n = 40)	
Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency
Ghetto/unrefined	30	Athletic	20	Have an attitude	38
Criminals	26	Dark-skinned*	13	Loud	26
Athletic	26	Loud	12	Big butt*	19
Loud	22	Quick to anger*	12	Overweight*	18
Gangsters	21	Tall	12	Confident*	13
Poor	20	Violent	11	Dark-skinned*	13
Have an attitude	20	Rapper*	10	Hair weaves*	12
Good at basketball	19	Dangerous	9	Assertive*	10
Unintelligent	17	Poor	9	Ghetto/unrefined	9
Uneducated	17	Unintelligent	9	Athletic	8
Dangerous	17	Gangsters	8	Promiscuous*	7
Speak in Black vernacular	17	Good at basketball	8	Not feminine*	7
Violent	15	Lazy	8	Aggressive*	7
Tall	15	Criminals	7	Unintelligent	6
Lazy	15	Hypersexual*	7	Like to eat fried chicken*	6

Note. Unique attributes are designated with an asterisk.

**Table 2.** Top 15 Attributes Listed for Middle Easterners, Middle Eastern Men, and Middle Eastern Women.

Middle Easterners (n = 41)		Middle Eastern Men (n = 38)		Middle Eastern Women (n = 36)	
Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency
Terrorists	30	Bearded	36	Quiet*	22
Dark-skinned	24	Dark-skinned	23	Religious	21
Oppress women	23	Terrorists	22	Covered*	19
Muslim	22	Sexist	19	Oppressed*	19
Hairy	16	Speak English with accent	17	Conservative	18
Wear turban	15	Dirty	16	Dark-skinned	15
Religious	15	Rich	15	Submissive	14
Rich	15	Muslim	14	Attractive	13
Dangerous	13	Wear turban	12	Dependent	12
Dirty	12	Religious	9	Muslim	9
Intelligent	11	Intelligent	8	Family-oriented*	8
Speak English with accent	10	Anti-West*	7	Have many children*	8
Violent	10	Suspicious*	7	Small build/petite	6
Bearded	8	Dangerous	7	Sexually conservative*	5
Conservative	8	Good at bargaining*	6	Housewives*	5

Note. Unique attributes are designated with an asterisk.

we conducted a two-way chi-square test of independence, comparing the frequency of unique and nonunique attributes for "Black women" and "Black men." A significant association means that the proportion of unique stereotypes is differentially distributed between the group profiles.

**Stereotypes of Blacks.** Table 1 presents participants' reports of cultural stereotypes of Blacks (gender unspecified), Black women, and Black men. Analysis revealed that 10 of the 15 most frequent attributes associated with "Black women" were unique. Only five of the attributes listed for "Black women" overlapped with the stereotype profile of "Blacks" and none overlapped with the profile of "women." Of the 15 attributes listed for "Black men," 4 were unique stereotypes.

Only 1 of 15 attributes listed for "Black men" overlapped with the stereotypes of "men" and 11 attributes overlapped with stereotype of "Blacks." One of these overlapping attributes (tall) was common to stereotypes of both "men" and "Blacks." Our results revealed that 112 (56%) of the 155 attributes listed for "Black women" were unique compared to only 42 (27%) of the attributes listed for "Black men." As predicted, we found a significantly greater proportion of unique attributes for "Black women" than for "Black men,"  $\chi^2(1) = 29.02, p < .001$ .

**Stereotypes of Middle Eastern Americans.** Table 2 presents participants' reports of cultural stereotypes of Middle Eastern Americans, Middle Eastern American women, and Middle

**Table 3.** Top 15 Attributes Listed for Latinos, Latino Men, and Latina Women.

Latinos (n = 42)		Latino Men (n = 36)		Latina Women (n = 39)	
Attributes	Frequency	Attributes	Frequency	Attributes	Frequency
Poor	19	Macho	23	Feisty*	26
Have many of children	19	Poor	14	Curvy*	19
Illegal immigrants	17	Dark-skinned	14	Loud	13
Dark-skinned	16	Day laborers	14	Attractive	11
Uneducated	16	Promiscuous*	13	Good cooks*	10
Family-oriented	14	Short	11	Dark-skinned	10
Lazy	12	Hard workers	11	Uneducated	10
Day laborers	12	Jealous*	11	Have many children	9
Unintelligent	11	Uneducated	10	Hard workers	9
Loud	10	Illegal immigrants	10	Promiscuous*	9
Gangsters	10	Arrogant	9	Unintelligent	8
Short	10	Unintelligent	8	Short	8
Overweight	9	Aggressive	8	Early motherhood*	8
Macho	9	Violent*	8	Sexy*	8
Hard workers	8	Drunks*	7	Maids*	7

Note. Unique attributes are designated with an asterisk.

Eastern American men. Our analysis revealed that 7 of the 15 most frequently listed attributes for "Middle Eastern American women" were unique. Four attributes overlapped with stereotypes of "women," and four overlapped with stereotypes of "Middle Eastern Americans." Only three unique stereotypic attributes emerged for Middle Eastern American men. Two attributes overlapped with stereotype profile of "men," and eleven overlapped with the stereotype profile of Middle Eastern Americans. One of these overlapping attributes (intelligent) was common to stereotypes of both "men" and Middle Eastern American men. Results revealed that 86 (44%) of the 194 attributes listed for Middle Eastern American women were unique compared to only 20 (9%) of the 218 attributes listed for Middle Eastern American men. As predicted, a two-way chi-square test revealed a significantly greater proportion of unique stereotypes for Middle Eastern American women than for Middle Eastern American men,  $\chi^2(1) = 21.16, p < .001$ .

**Stereotypes of Latinos.** Table 3 shows participants' reports of cultural stereotypes of Latinos, Latina women, and Latino men. Of the 15 attributes associated with "Latina women," 7 were unique. Only one attribute overlapped with the stereotypes of "women" and 7 with stereotypes of "Latinos." Stereotypes of "Latino men" contained only four unique attributes. These stereotypes shared three attributes with the stereotype profile of "men" and nine with the stereotype profile of "Latinos." One of these overlapping attributes (macho/sexist) was common to stereotypes of both "men" and "Latinos." Specifically, 87 (53%) of the 165 attributes listed for "Latina women" were unique compared to only 39 (23%) of the attributes listed for "Latino men." As predicted, a two-way chi-square test of independence showed a significantly greater proportion of unique stereotypes for

"Latina women" than for "Latino men,"  $\chi^2(1) = 32.08, p < .001$ .

**Stereotypes of Whites.** Table 4 shows participants' reports of cultural stereotypes of Whites, White women, and White men. Of the 15 attributes associated with "White women," 2 were unique, 6 overlapped with stereotypes of "women," and 8 with stereotypes of "Whites." One of these overlapping attributes (attractive) was common to stereotypes of both "women" and "Whites." For "White men," 3 unique elements emerged. In all, 6 attributes overlapped with stereotypes of "men" and 10 with stereotypes of "Whites." Specifically, 32 (19%) of the 166 attributes listed for "White men" were unique and 21 (12%) of the 170 attributes listed for "White women" were unique. A two-way chi-square test of independence revealed a nonsignificant pattern,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.27, p = .07$ . The absence of a significant sex difference does not support the corollary to the intersectionality hypothesis.

**Stereotypes of Asian Americans.** Table 5 presents participants' reports of cultural stereotypes of Asian Americans, Asian American women, and Asian American men. Of the 15 attributes associated with "Asian American women," 4 were unique. Of all, three attributes overlapped with stereotypes of "women" and nine with stereotypes of "Asian Americans." Of the 15 most commonly listed attributes for "Asian American men," 5 were unique. Only 1 attribute overlapped with stereotypes of "men" but 10 with stereotypes of "Asian Americans." A two-way chi-square test of independence found no significant difference between the proportion of unique attributes for "Asian American women" (30; 19%) and for "Asian American men" (36; 23%),  $\chi^2(1) = 0.6, p = .45$ . Our results did not support the corollary to the intersectionality hypothesis.

**Table 4.** Top 15 Attributes Listed for Whites, White Men, and White Women.

Whites (n = 38)		White Men (n = 37)		White Women (n = 32)	
Attributes	Frequency	Attributes	Frequency	Attributes	Frequency
High status	25	Rich	21	Arrogant	26
Rich	18	Tall	15	Blond	20
Intelligent	17	Intelligent	15	Rich	15
Arrogant	14	Assertive*	12	Attractive	14
Privileged	13	Arrogant	12	Small build/petite	13
Blond	12	Successful*	12	Ditsy*	13
Racist	11	High status	12	Tall	9
All-American	11	Blond	10	Materialistic	9
Ignorant	9	Racist	10	Racists	8
Red-neck	9	All-American	10	Intelligent	8
Tall	8	Educated*	8	Feminine	8
Attractive	8	Leaders	8	Sexually liberal*	8
Patronizing	8	Privileged	8	Emotional	7
Blue eyes	8	Attractive	7	Submissive	6
Overweight	7	Sexist	6	High status	6

Note. Unique attributes are designated with an asterisk.

**Table 5.** Top 15 Attributes Listed for Asian Americans, Asian American Men, and Asian American Women.

Asian American (n = 39)		Asian American Men (n = 41)		Asian American Women (n = 39)	
Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency
Intelligent	35	Intelligent	20	Intelligent	26
Bad drivers	22	Short	20	Quiet	22
Good at math	17	Nerdy	20	Short	14
Nerdy	15	Quiet	11	Bad drivers	13
Short	14	Good at math	10	Shy	12
Shy	13	Bad drivers	10	Small build/petite	11
Skinny	12	Small build*	9	Family-oriented*	11
Small eyes	11	Shy	9	Skinny	9
Educated	10	Speak English with accent*	9	Studious*	7
Quiet	10	Skinny	8	Good at math	6
Lack social skills	9	Studious*	8	Small eyes	6
Hard working	8	Lack social skills	8	Submissive	6
Passive	8	Wear glasses	6	Lack social skills	6
Rich	7	Small penis*	5	Over-achievers*	6
Wear glasses	7	Effeminate*	5	Foreign*	6

Note. Unique attributes are designated with an asterisk.

**Summary.** As shown in Tables 1–5, stereotypes of every one of the 10 ethnicity-by-gender groups contained unique attributes, thus providing strong support for the intersectionality hypothesis. The corollary of the intersectionality hypothesis predicting more unique attributes for women than for men was supported in stereotypes of three ethnic groups: Latinos, Blacks, and Middle Eastern Americans, but not in stereotypes of Asian Americans or Whites. Additionally, we documented that the proportion of unique attributes differed among ethnic women. Specifically, the highest proportion of unique attributes was found for stereotype profiles of “Black women” and “Latina women” and the lowest for “White women.” “Asian American women” and “Middle Eastern American women” fell in between.

### Testing the Ethnicity Hypothesis

We predicted that stereotypes of an ethnic group will be more similar to stereotypes of the men than the women of that ethnic group. To test this hypothesis, we took four steps. First, we identified the overlapping attributes. An attribute was considered to be overlapping if it was included in the top 15 attributes for both the ethnic group and the ethnicity-by-gender group. To illustrate, in analyzing the attributes for Blacks, we identified 11 overlapping attributes between “Blacks” and “Black men” (e.g., athletic, criminal, good at basketball). The attribute “athletic,” for example, was considered to be overlapping because it appeared for both “Blacks” and for “Black men.” Second, to calculate the total



**Table 6.** Top 15 Attributes Listed for Women and Men.

Women (n = 24)		Men (n = 28)	
Attribute	Frequency	Attribute	Frequency
Emotional	19	Tall	18
Caring	17	Physically strong	13
Soft	16	Respected	12
Care about appearance	15	Intelligent	10
Talkative	12	Have high status	9
Small build/petite	11	Leaders	9
Submissive	9	Sexist	7
Dependent	7	Like sports	7
Motherly	7	Providers	7
Feminine	7	Aggressive	7
Manipulative	5	Unfaithful	6
Attractive	5	Ambitious	6
Sexual objects	3	Arrogant	4
Materialistic	3	Messy	3
Jealous	3	Fixer-uppers	3

Note. Unique attributes are designated with an asterisk.

number of overlapping attributes, we took the frequency with which each overlapping attribute was listed and then summed across these attributes. For example, to arrive at the total number of overlapping attributes for "Black men," we added 20 (athletic) to 7 (criminal) to 8 (good at basketball) and so on to arrive at 113, the total number of overlapping attributes. Third, we conducted the identical set of calculations for "Black women" and arrived at 87 total overlapping attributes. Our calculations showed that of the 155 total attributes listed for "Black men," 113 (72%) overlapped with "Blacks." Of the 199 total attributes listed for "Black women," only 87 (44%) overlapped with "Blacks." Fourth, we conducted a two-way chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of overlapping and nonoverlapping attributes for "Black women" and for "Black men." A significant association means that the proportion of overlapping stereotypes is differentially distributed across the target groups. These four steps in the analysis were repeated for each ethnic group.

**Stereotypes of Blacks.** As depicted in Table 1, three attributes were common to "Blacks" in general and to both sexes. All groups were described as athletic, unintelligent, and loud. Analysis revealed that stereotypes associated with "Blacks" shared a greater degree of commonality with "Black men" than with "Black women." Specifically, of the top 15 attributes listed for "Blacks," 11 were also associated with "Black men" but only 5 with "Black women." There was a significantly greater proportion of overlap between stereotypes of "Blacks" and "Black men" (113; 72%) than between "Blacks" and "Black women" (87; 44%),  $\chi^2(1) = 29.02$ ,  $p < .001$ . This pattern supports the ethnicity hypothesis.

**Stereotypes of Middle Eastern Americans.** As reported in Table 2, three attributes were common to the "Middle Eastern Americans" in general and to both sexes. All three groups were characterized as Muslim, religious, and dark-skinned. Consistent with our hypothesis, stereotypes of "Middle Eastern Americans" were more similar to stereotypes of "Middle Eastern American men" than to stereotypes of "Middle Eastern American women." Of the 15 attributes listed for "Middle Eastern Americans," 11 were also listed for "Middle Eastern American men" but only 4 for "Middle Eastern American women." Analysis revealed a significantly greater proportion of overlap between stereotypes of "Middle Eastern Americans" and "Middle Eastern American men" (179; 82%) than between "Middle Eastern Americans" and "Middle Eastern American women" (63; 32%),  $\chi^2(1) = 104.35$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Stereotypes of Latinos.** As depicted in Table 3, four common stereotypic attributes characterized "Latinos" in general as well as both sexes. All three groups were described as dark-skinned, unintelligent, short, and hard workers. Consistent with our hypothesis, stereotypes of "Latinos" were more similar to stereotypes of "Latino men" than to "Latina women." Of the 15 attributes listed for "Latinos," 9 were also listed for "Latino men" but only 7 for "Latina women." We found that 115 (67%) of the attributes listed for "Latino men" overlapped with the general stereotype of Latinos as did 66 (40%) of the attributes listed for "Latina women." A two-way chi-square test revealed significant gender differences in the proportion of overlapping stereotypes,  $\chi^2(1) = 25.10$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Stereotypes of Whites.** As shown in Table 4, eight attributes were common to "Whites" in general and to both sexes. All three groups were characterized as rich, tall, blond, arrogant, high status, racist, attractive, and intelligent. As expected, stereotypes of "Whites" shared a greater degree of commonality with stereotypes of "White men" than with stereotypes of "White women." Of the 15 attributes listed for "Whites," 10 were also listed for "White men" but 8 for "White women." Analysis revealed that 120 (72%) of the attributes for "White men" overlapped with the general stereotype of "Whites" as did 106 (62%) of the attributes listed for "White women." In line with the Ethnicity hypothesis, the degree of overlap for men differed significantly from that for women,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.92$ ,  $p = .047$ .

**Stereotypes of Asian Americans.** As presented in Table 5, eight attributes were common to the ethnic group in general and to both sexes. All three groups were characterized as intelligent, bad drivers, good at math, short, shy, skinny, quiet, and lacking social skills. In contrast to the other ethnic groups, the stereotypes of "Asian Americans," "Asian American men," and "Asian American women" were remarkably similar. Of the 15 attributes listed for "Asian Americans," 10 were also listed for "Asian American men"

and 9 were listed for "Asian American women." A two-way chi-square test failed to support the Ethnicity hypothesis. The proportion of overlap between both the stereotypes of "Asian American women" (114; 74%) and "Asian American men" (122; 77%) did not significantly differ,  $\chi^2(1) = .57, p = .45$ . In summary, we found support for the ethnicity hypothesis in stereotypes of Blacks, Latinos, Middle Eastern Americans, and Whites, but not for Asian Americans.

### Testing the Gender Hypothesis

The gender hypothesis predicts that stereotypes of "men" and "women" will be most similar to those of White men and White women and least similar to stereotypes of Black men and Black women. Stereotypes of other ethnic men and ethnic women will fall in between those of Whites and Blacks. To test this hypothesis, we examined whether there were differences in the proportion of overlap between the general stereotype of "women" (ethnicity unspecified) and the stereotype of women from each of the five ethnic groups. Our analyses followed three steps. First, we identified overlapping attributes. An attribute was considered to be overlapping if it appeared, for example, in the stereotype of "women" and in the stereotype of "Middle Eastern American women." We identified four overlapping attributes for "Middle Eastern American women" (e.g., submissive, dependent). Second, we calculated the total number of overlapping attributes for each ethnicity-by-gender group. To arrive at the total number of overlapping attributes, we took the frequency with which each overlapping attribute was listed and then summed across these overlapping attributes. For example, we calculated the total number of overlapping attributes for "Middle Eastern American women" by adding 14 (submissive) to 13 (attractive) to 12 (dependent) and so on to arrive at 45. Our calculations showed that of the 194 total attributes listed for "Middle Eastern American women," 23% overlapped with "women." Third, to examine whether the proportion of overlapping attributes was significantly greater for "White women" than for the other four ethnic groups of women, we conducted four two-way chi-square tests of independence. Each analysis compared the frequency of overlapping and nonoverlapping attributes for "White women" and one of the other four groups of ethnic women. A significant association means that the proportion of overlapping stereotypes is differentially distributed across groups. We repeated these analyses separately for stereotypes of men.

**Gender hypothesis for women.** Of the 15 attributes characterizing "women," 6 (34%) overlapped with stereotypes of "White women," 4 (23%) with "Middle Eastern American women," 2 (11%) with "Asian American women," 1 (7%) with "Latina women," and none with "Black women." Consistent with the gender hypothesis, results of the two-way chi-square tests of independence showed that the proportion of overlap in the stereotype of "White women"

was significantly greater than that in stereotypes of "Middle Eastern American women,"  $\chi^2(1) = 4.45, p < .05$ ; "Asian American women,"  $\chi^2(1) = 15.02, p < .001$ ; "Latina women,"  $\chi^2(1) = 25.14, p < .001$ ; and "Black women,"  $\chi^2(1) = 57.69, p < .001$ . These findings demonstrate that the stereotypes of "White women" are more similar to those of "women."

Next, we examined whether the degree of overlap differed significantly among stereotypes of "Middle Eastern American," "Asian American," "Latina," and "Black" women (e.g., whether the 6% overlap for "Latinas" differed from the 23% overlap for "Middle Eastern American women"). We conducted a series of additional chi-square tests comparing the frequency of overlapping and nonoverlapping attributes for each pair of ethnic women, for example, "Asian American women" and "Middle Eastern American women." Results revealed significant differences in the proportion of overlap for all pairs of ethnic women ( $ps < .05$ ). Taken together, these results strongly support the gender hypothesis.

**Gender hypothesis for men.** Of the 15 attributes listed for "men," 6 (41%) overlapped with the stereotype of "White men," 3 (23%) with "Latino men," 2 (12%) with "Middle Eastern American men," 1 (13%) with "Asian American men," and 1 (8%) with "Black men." Consistent with the gender hypothesis, results of chi-square analyses revealed that the proportion of overlap in the stereotype of "White men" was significantly greater than the stereotypes of "Latino men,"  $\chi^2(1) = 6.16, p < .05$ ; "Middle Eastern American men,"  $\chi^2(1) = 24.50, p < .001$ ; "Asian American men,"  $\chi^2(1) = 19.20, p < .001$ ; and "Black men,"  $\chi^2(1) = 29.20, p < .001$ .

Next, we examined whether the degree of overlap differed significantly among stereotypes of "Middle Eastern American," "Asian American," "Latino," and "Black" men. We conducted a series of additional chi-square tests comparing the frequency of overlapping and nonoverlapping attributes for each pair of ethnic men, for example, "Asian American men" and "Middle Eastern American men." Results failed to reveal significant differences in the proportion of overlap among "Black men," "Asian American men," and "Middle Eastern American men" ( $ps > .05$ ). By contrast, our analysis showed that the proportion of overlap in the stereotype of "Latino men" differed significantly from the overlap in the stereotypes of other ethnic men ( $ps < .05$ ). In sum, consistent with the gender hypothesis, the stereotype of "men" was most similar to "White men." However, contrary to our prediction, the stereotype of "Black men" was not the least similar to the stereotype of "men."

### Discussion

Our study is the first known to simultaneously assess, compare, and test three theoretically driven hypotheses about cultural stereotypes based on gender, ethnicity, and the

combination of gender and ethnicity. We generally found support for our three hypotheses focused on intersectionality, ethnicity, and gender.

### *Intersectionality Hypothesis*

Participants' reports of culturally held intersecting gender and ethnic stereotypes contained unique elements that could not be obtained by simply adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes. This robust pattern emerged for every combination of gender and ethnicity in our study and provided strong support for the intersectionality hypothesis. As a corollary to this hypothesis, we predicted and generally found more distinct elements in the stereotypes of ethnic women than of ethnic men. This finding is consistent with the analysis of intersectional invisibility by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008), which suggested that ethnicity is conflated with "maleness" and gender with "Whiteness." As a result, the characteristics of ethnic minority women are less well represented than those of ethnic minority men in global stereotypes of their gender or ethnic group. We are the first known to demonstrate that the degree of intersectional invisibility differed among ethnic women. Participants' reports of cultural stereotypes about Latina and Black women contained the highest proportion of unique elements whereas stereotypes of White women contained the lowest proportion of unique elements. Asian American and Middle Eastern American women fell in between.

### *Ethnicity Hypothesis*

Consistent with the ethnicity hypothesis, we demonstrated that participants' reports of cultural stereotypes of an ethnic group were generally more similar to stereotypes of the men than the women from that group. This pattern was found for Blacks, Middle Eastern Americans, Latinos, and Whites:

A noteworthy exception emerged for Asian Americans. Unlike any other ethnic group, the stereotype of Asian Americans (gender unspecified) was not more similar to the stereotype of Asian American men than of Asian American women. In fact, both Asian American men and Asian American women were described with attributes that are typically associated with femininity such as "effeminate" and "submissive." The stereotypic feminization of Asian Americans found in our study is consistent with previous research. Niemann et al. (1994) also documented feminine attributes (e.g., speak softly, shy, and caring) for both Asian American men and Asian American women. Furthermore, in recent social perception research, Johnson, Freeman, and Pauker (2012) demonstrated that in evaluating faces, people were more error-prone when categorizing the gender of Asian men than of Asian women. These researchers argued in favor of a substantive overlap between stereotypes of Asians and of women. Our results lend support to their argument by identifying the specific attributes that produce this overlap.

Our findings supporting the ethnicity hypothesis are also relevant to research on racial prototypes. This line of work consistently demonstrates that Black and White men, not women, are perceived as the prototypes of their race (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Our work offers an explanation for the conflation of ethnicity with "maleness." Because of the greater overlap between the content of stereotypes of "Blacks" and "Whites" and those of the men of those groups, it is reasonable to expect that when people think about Blacks and Whites, the men (not the women) come to mind. We are not aware of any racial prototype studies with Latino and Middle Eastern American targets. Our results supporting the ethnicity hypothesis for Latinos and Middle Eastern Americans suggest that a similar pattern of prototypicality may emerge for those groups. Finally, our findings point to an important boundary condition for the ethnicity hypothesis. The stereotypic feminization of Asian American men may be a plausible explanation for when we may find the exception to the general pattern of men as prototypes of an ethnic group.

### *Gender Hypothesis*

Consistent with the gender hypothesis, we documented that reports of cultural stereotypes of "women" were most similar to those of White women, less similar to those of ethnic minority women, and least similar to those of Black women. However, although reports of cultural stereotypes of "men" were most similar to those of White men and less similar to those of ethnic minority men, they were not least similar to those of Black men. In fact, we found little differentiation in the degree of overlap in stereotypes of ethnic minority men.

Our finding that the stereotype of Black women was least similar to the general stereotype of women is consistent with the Black exceptionalism hypothesis (Sears, 1988), which asserts that the experiences of Black Americans are unique, mainly because of their long history of slavery, racial conflict, and social disadvantage. In line with this perspective, unlike any other ethnic women, Black women have been characterized as masculine (Donovan, 2011; Johnson, Freeman, & Pauker, 2012; Landrine, 1985). Further, although we did not show that the stereotype of Black men was least similar to that of men in general, we did show that unlike other ethnic men, Black men were characterized as "hypersexual" and "quick to anger"—images deeply rooted in historical depictions of Black men (Davis, 1981).

### *Strengths and Limitations of the Current Work*

Our research is the first known to document cultural stereotypes of men and women from a wide range of ethnic groups. Our free-response methodology identified a broad set of attributes associated with gender and ethnic groups. Our results clearly demonstrated that cultural stereotypes of every ethnic and gender group are multicomponential and include

ideology (e.g., Anti-West, sexist), social status (e.g., high status, ghetto), and physical descriptors (e.g., soft, physically strong) among others in addition to personality traits (e.g., caring, arrogant). Our results also indicated that cultural stereotypes comprise a mix of both positive and negative attributes. A valuable direction for future research would be to systematically document various stereotype domains, including the positive and the negative attributes that compose them, and to develop a new standardized stereotype instrument that is relevant to diverse ethnic and gender groups.

Whereas early stereotype research was based on the perceptions of White middle-class respondents, we surveyed a more ethnically diverse sample. In addition, roughly 22% of participants were born outside the United States and had lived in the United States for an average of 9 years. Because of our between-subjects design, we were unable to examine whether respondents' stereotypes differed by their immigration status. A useful direction for future research would be to examine the possible effect of respondents' immigration status and acculturation on the content of gender and ethnic stereotypes.

Although our sample was ethnically diverse, women were overrepresented in our sample. The relatively small number of men in each condition did not allow us to test for differences in stereotype content based on the gender of respondents. However, a large body of research on gender stereotypes (Helgeson, 2012) has generally not found differences in stereotype content based on the gender of respondents. Another important question is whether the ethnic mix of our participants, specifically, the relatively large percentage of Asian Americans, affected our results. We do not believe that this would be the case. Because we assessed participants' reports of cultural stereotypes associated with gender and ethnic groups, they represent beliefs that are held by the majority of people in a society (Gardner, 1994). Therefore, participants from all ethnic groups should have equal access to those cultural stereotypes. Furthermore, our results are consistent with those found by Niemann et al. (1994) whose sample included a relatively small proportion (11%) of Asian American participants. Research is needed that examines whether and how intersecting cultural stereotypes may differ based on these participant characteristics.

A final strength of our research was the inclusion of stereotypes of Middle Eastern Americans, a social group that has been virtually ignored in stereotype research. In the United States, media portrayals of Middle Eastern Americans have been quite negative: Middle Eastern American men are often depicted as terrorists and anti-American; Middle Eastern women, as oppressed and subservient (Marvasti, 2005; Weston, 2003). Our fine-grained examination demonstrated that, like cultural stereotypes of other ethnic and gender groups, those of Middle Eastern Americans included not only negative attributes but also positive ones. Middle Eastern American men were described as dirty and suspicious, but

also as intelligent. Middle Eastern American women were depicted as both oppressed and attractive.

### *Practice Implications*

Our work addressed an important knowledge gap and examined the joint impact of gender and ethnicity on the content of stereotypes. In line with previous gender stereotype research (Wood & Eagly, 2010), as shown in Table 6, our study revealed overall gender differences: Men were generally depicted as assertive and leaders and women as emotional and caring. However, not all men and not all women were described in traditionally gendered ways. In particular, Asian American men were characterized by more feminine and passive attributes, and Black women were characterized as aggressive and dominant. These differences in the content of stereotypes underscore the dangers of assuming a universal experience for women and men of various ethnic groups. Like previous researchers (Madon et al., 2001), we found differences in the content of stereotypes of ethnic groups. For example, Latinos were seen as illegal immigrants and poor whereas Blacks were seen as criminal and lazy. The stereotypes of ethnic groups also differed based on gender. As a case in point, Latina men, but not women, were perceived as illegal immigrants and sexist. Latina women, not men, were seen as sexy and feisty. Knowledge of the specific content of cultural stereotypes may help combat bias in many domains, for example, alerting us to challenge beliefs about which potential workers are likely to be perceived as lazy versus hard working or which school children may be perceived as struggling with coursework because of low intelligence rather than low motivation.

In addition, our results have implications for psychological practice. The American Psychological Association Council of Representatives endorsed guidelines for practitioners and researchers in order to promote "societal understanding, affirmation, and appreciation of multiculturalism against the damaging effects of individual, institutional, and societal racism, prejudice, and all forms of oppression based on stereotyping and discrimination" (American Psychological Association, 2003, p. 382). Our findings highlight the importance of recognizing how the unique stereotypes of women and men from various ethnic groups can affect the lives of individuals seeking professional help and can shape the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals such as therapists, educators, police officers, and others who interact professionally with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

### *Conclusion*

Our study builds on and extends previous work on stereotypes in several important ways. First, we developed and tested three theory-based hypotheses about the nature of ethnic and gender cultural stereotypes. Second, our study systematically demonstrated that cultural stereotypes are distinct and

differentiated based on gender, ethnicity, and the combination of gender and ethnicity. Third, our study added important knowledge about the stereotypes of Latinos, Asian Americans, and Middle Eastern Americans. Fourth, our research demonstrated that attributes other than personality traits including physical characteristics, social status, and ideology are central to gender and ethnic stereotypes. Taken together, our work identified key attributes that make up people's perceptions of women and men of various U.S. ethnic groups and demonstrated that gender and ethnic categories combine to produce meaningful differences in the way groups are perceived.

### Acknowledgments

We thank David O. Sears, Michele A. Wittig, and Hector F. Myers for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of the manuscript. We also recognize the work of our dedicated research assistants without whom this project would not have come to fruition.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: in part by a Charles F. Scott Fellowship to the first author.

### Notes

1. In the present research, we focused solely on gender and ethnic stereotypes. Although we recognize that individuals possess many other meaningful social identities such as sexual orientation, social class, or disability status, a large body of social cognitive research shows that people classify others on the basis of gender and ethnicity readily and rapidly in the earliest stages of social perception (see Mason et al., 2006 for reviews). Additionally, researchers and scholars from a wide range of disciplines (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Wood & Eagly, 2010) argue that stratification based on gender and some arbitrary system such as ethnicity exists in all societies, and it can meaningfully structure social and material life.
2. In our analysis of gender, we focused solely on women and men and do not include other gender identities such as transgender. In our review of previous research on ethnic group stereotypes, we use the ethnic labels used by the authors of those studies. In discussing the current research, we use the exact labels presented to participants in eliciting the free-responses.
3. We chose a between-subjects design for several reasons. First, a strength of the between-subjects design is that participants are only subjected to a single condition. This is beneficial because it minimizes participant fatigue and boredom. Because our research included 17 conditions, a within-subjects design would have placed an enormous cognitive burden on the participants. Second, because participants generated stereotypes associated with only one particular ethnic and gender target group, the risk of carry-over effects of information from one condition to the next that would be present in a within-subjects design was

eliminated. Third, a between-subjects design also reduced social desirability bias. This is particularly important given the sensitive nature of a study about the content of gender and ethnic stereotypes. Consequently, by choosing a between-subjects design, we attempted to minimize the possibility that participants would alter their responses in reaction to previous conditions.

4. To instruct participants to generate cultural stereotypes, we gave them the example of "models are tall, beautiful but dumb." This general approach is commonly used (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002). It is possible that the specific wording of our example may have primed participants to think about stereotypes associated with White women. However, because the same example was used across all conditions, the potential of a confound is evenly distributed across all conditions. Consequently, it is unlikely that any one condition was unduly affected by the instructions. In the future, researchers should consider either using examples of more gender-neutral stereotypes or systematically examining the possible impact of stereotypes linked to gender.

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