

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN PRIME TIME BROADCAST TV AND BET

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether there were more empowering images of African Americans on a channel geared towards the Black audience (BET) or the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW). The study was based on a content analysis of a one week sample of programs televised on broadcast network channels (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CW) and on the cable channel BET (Black Entertainment Television) in the fall of 2012 (late September/ early October). A textual analysis was used as a complementary method to understand how African Americans are depicted on BET and whether these messages reflect the cultural perspective. This group is of interest because African Americans have been found misrepresented and underrepresented in past television representations thus influencing perception about the group to adults, children and adolescents of color. Cultivation theory and social cognitive theory serve as the foundation for this study.

The content analysis found more differences than similarities in the way that African Americans are portrayed in broadcast network programs as compared to BET. The qualitative (textual) analysis identified three themes in movies on BET which helped further distinguish differences between the portrayals of African Americans on BET as compared to broadcast network programs. With these results and cultivation theory and social cognitive theory in mind, viewers of color and others can develop empowering and non-empowering perceptions about African Americans. This study adds to research on the representation of people of color.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

One of the major topics in mass communication research is how people of color such as African Americans are presented on television. To date, most of the research has examined the portrayals of people of color on prime-time dramatic programs (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Signorielli, 2009), typically focusing on the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, WB, and CW). Many scholars have also focused on images of people of color particularly African Americans (Poindexter & Stroman, 1981; Greenberg & Atkin, 1982; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Harwood & Anderson, 2002; Greenberg, Mastro & Brand, 2002; Signorielli 2009a & 2009b). Some of these studies have found that on the broadcast networks the portrayals of African Americans often have issues of recognition and the frequency of representation, or misrepresentation.

Although the existing body of research provides relevant findings about the portrayals of African Americans on television, none of these studies included representations on a channel geared towards African Americans and consumers of Black culture such as Black Entertainment Television (BET). In the early 1980's BET developed cable programming primarily for black audiences (Elliot, 1995). Consequently, this raises the "best case scenario" for the depiction of

Blacks from an African American cultural context on programs taking place on a channel geared towards the black audience. It's then important to consider that African American images may not be portrayed in the same way on the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, and CW) as they might be on a channel geared towards the group's audience (BET).

There is some information about the differences in the portrayals of Blacks on BET versus the broadcast media (ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX) in commercials (Elliot, 1995; Messineo, 2008). Elliot (1995) investigated the portrayal of Blacks in television commercials through a content analysis of the broadcast media ("Big 3" networks) and the culturally specific medium (BET) results showed that BET aired commercials containing Blacks at approximately twice the rate of the broadcast television media (Elliot, 1995). Additionally, Blacks tended to be shown in fewer integrated settings, were featured in major roles, and were depicted more in leisure/social situations (Elliot, 1995).

Similarly, Messineo (2008) looked at television commercials airing during prime time on the broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX) and BET in 2002. Messineo's (2008) findings revealed that although the majority of characters on all the stations studied were male and White, BET provided a place for some positive gender representations of Blacks. Messineo (2008) found BET provided more positive representations of men in terms of respect and more positive representations of women in terms of desirability. Messineo (2008) also noted that Black women were to be portrayed more sexually desirable than in the past on BET and that familial and intimate interactions of Blacks were less protruding and in some cases absent. Interestingly, parenting was not specifically visible in prime time advertising, but when it was portrayed, it

continued to be the domain of White females (Messineo, 2008). According to Messineo (2008) White characters were more likely to be portrayed as spouses on both stations with no images of Black spouses or parents in the BET sample. This is interesting because it shows how BET can serve as an outlet for typical representations of people of color on television, however, not without shortcomings (Messineo, 2008).

These studies show that there are differences between the way in which African Americans are portrayed in commercials on ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX in comparison to their portrayals on BET. However, there is no specific information about portrayals of African Americans in programs aired on BET and how these may be similar or different from portrayals seen in programs on broadcast channel.

Significance of Study

Television plays an important role as our society's most shared learning environment. Television has become a common agent of socialization that facilitates what people may learn about people of color with whom they do not have contact in their day-to-day lives. One of the concerns, however, is that television may portray Blacks (and other people of color) less positive from the way Whites are portrayed. So it is possible that television may provide hegemonic images about people, specifically people of color such as African Americans. For example, Stroman, Merritt, and Metabane (1989) note that, concerns have been expressed about the portrayal of African Americans (other people of color) as they relate to the theoretical proposition that frequent exposure to television may result in viewers developing beliefs about African Americans that correspond with televised portrayals. To illustrate, programs with a

predominance of unfavorably portrayed African American characters may send the message that African Americans fail to provide behavioral models that are worthy of imitation and are favorable to growth and development. Consequently, African American children and others who watch these programs may accept these messages. Similarly, Berry and Mitchell-Kernan (1982) found that by viewing television, children of color learn how society in general views their ethnic groups.

African Americans (more than Whites) are influenced by television's images because they are heavily dependent on television for information about Blacks and the Black community, and tend to use television as a source of information about the world (Allen, 1977). On the other hand, programs with a predominance of African American characters may also fit in the prevailing stereotypes which might socialize those who are only exposed to people of color through television. According to Mastro (2003), television stereotyping occurs when people, specifically those from minority groups, are portrayed in terms of their shared group characteristics rather than their personal attributes, which thereby reduces the impact of the group's impression. Additionally, Berg (1990) argued that untrue or incorrect ideas about groups can be validated (by television), and that stereotypes may serve to develop norms of treatment for certain groups which, in turn, may create an unequal power structure excluding those groups. Since BET is a channel geared towards an African American audience, it's possible that programs on this channel would include a predominance of African American characters. Since previous findings reveal a misrepresentation of Blacks on the broadcast networks in the past, BET gives Blacks the potential to change the nature of these past representations.

It is important to look at the representation of African Americans on a channel geared towards them and consumers of Black culture such as BET. Overall, there is a lack of information about the topic; Elliot (1995) and Messineo (2008) are the only researchers who have examined the difference in how African Americans are portrayed on BET in comparison to the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) but this was only in terms of commercials. While Elliot (1995) found there to be more positive portrayals of Blacks on BET than on the “Big 3” networks (ABC, CBS, NBC), a more recent study by Messineo (2008) reported there to have been more negative portrayals of African American women on BET than on the broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX). Consequently, the question is raised that, if BET is a channel geared towards an African American audience, why would it show negative portrayals of Blacks? Giving the socializing power of the media in broadcast and television advertising, these changes are worthy of study in programs as well.

Theoretical Orientation

Several theoretical perspectives are relevant to racial portrayals on television. Support for the notion that television influences viewers’ conceptions of social reality is found in Cultivation Theory (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2009) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2009). Both of these are relevant in understanding how children of color are influenced by television. Both theories are concerned with the role of the media in shaping people’s interpretation of the world in which they live.

Cultivation Theory

Signorielli (2009) argues that television is a collective, symbolic environment of messages with an underlying pattern. Cultivation theory hypothesizes that those who spend more time watching television are more likely to have views that reflect what they see on the medium. Collectively, cultivation theory details the effects television has on the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of those who spend more time with the media. Common stereotypical images of people of color cut across prime time network programs. Consequently, television may cultivate a common world view and common stereotypes of people of color for those who spend more time watching these programs. Overall, television provides a comparatively ritualistic set of programs, images, and messages, and it is exposure to the total pattern of viewing, rather than specific genres, that accounts for most of television's influence in people's conceptions about social reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986). Signorielli (2009a) reported that studies conducted in the tradition of cultivation theory continually illustrate television's content having little diversity and frequently recurring features. Moreover, Metabane (1988) suggested that television viewing cultivates the formation of more reasonable beliefs about racial integration among African American viewers regardless of the viewer's education. African Americans have been reported to be heavily dependent on television for information about Blacks and the Black community and tend to use television as a source of information about the world (McDonald, 1983; Poidexter & Stroman, 1981). Indeed, existing literature examining the television networks reflects a remarkable consistency in the misrepresentation of people of color on the medium (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan 1980; Nelson, 1998; Mastro and Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002; Boyle, 2003). Research in this tradition

has also found that television tends to cultivate, in adolescents, perceptions about what people of color are like, but also attitudes about identification with specific characters and what it means to be a man or a woman (Signorielli, 1989). In sum, if the television landscape concerning racial groups continues to be segregated with stereotypical images, viewers' conceptions about people of color may reflect what they see when viewing television.

Social Cognitive Theory

The mass media also plays another influential role in society, in that the psychosocial mechanisms through which symbols are communicated influence people's thoughts, affects and actions. Bandura (2009) notes that Social Cognitive Theory explains a transactional view of self and society, personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events. He explains how behavioral patterns and environmental events are all interacting determinants that influence each other (Bandura, 2009). Bandura (2009) states that, "people are self-developing, proactive and self-reflecting, not just reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental events or inner forces" (p.94). From the sociocognitive perspective, human nature can be potentially influenced by both direct and observational experiences into a variety of forms within the biological limits (Bandura, 2009). Additionally, Bandura (2009) posits that Social Cognitive Theory accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes and that the most external influences affect behavior through cognitive processes rather than directly. The cognitive factors are specialized for processing, retaining, and using coded information.

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2009) also explains how the media provides images and role models, which viewers, children in particular, may use to develop scripts about different types of people. In other words, humans can learn vicariously through the observations of actions taken by others. Because of its power to influence, television is increasingly used as a facilitator for justification in which people learn from the depictions they are observing. According to Davis and Gandy (1999), research on identity development is employed to explore the impact of media representations on African Americans and possibly other people of color as well. Since African American audiences are often victims of negative, one dimensional and stereotypic media images, the images are then likely to be internalized by black children and adolescents thus leading to negative self-concepts. Additionally, black media may be used as a filter of African American information sources relating to the general status of the people both as a separate group and in relation to the dominant society. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2009) illustrates the influence of the observation and processing of information from television. The theory explains how viewers of the five broadcast networks and BET are able to form assumptions and/or stereotypes of people of color based on how African Americans and other people of color are depicted on programs. Such metacognitive activities usually cultivate veridical thought, but can produce faulty thinking as well for not only those who don't encounter people of color on a day to day basis but also through the socialization of a child of color's identity. Thus, the media plays a significant role in determining the content of a minority child's view of themselves and the content of the African Americans and other people of colors' belief

system. These propositions will be used as theoretical tools for the predictive and explanatory purposes.

Literature Review

Television Portrayals of African Americans

“Love it or hate it, television is an integral part of American civilization” (MacDonald, 1983).

MacDonald (1983) described television as the “seductive and entertaining theater in the home, a readily available source of information, an arena for sporting events, a forum of debate, an audio-visual billboard for advertising, and a reflector and creator of the popular mood” (p. ix). People of color, especially African Americans, have a relationship with television that is particularly important. Television became the dominant media for most people after World War II, a time when the first modern strides toward freedom were taken by Blacks (MacDonald, 1983).

Since the earliest days of television, there have been concerns of the underrepresentation of people of color (Nelson, 1998). The misrepresentation of people of color on television has also been a concern and dates to the 1950’s and the 1960’s, when African American men and women were most likely to be cast as maids, mammies, or handymen (Stroman, Merritt, & Metabane, 1989). The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, usually referred to as Kerner Commission, was formed in August 1967 (Stroman, Merritt, & Metabane, 1989), to examine the racial disturbances that occurred in American cities during the 1960’s. Stroman, Merritt, and Metabane (1989) noted that the Kerner commission investigated how the media

represented people of color and wanted to develop recommendations to prevent similar civil disturbances in the future. The commission found that early media depictions of African Americans were both infrequent and stereotypical. More specifically, the commission criticized White America for creating, maintaining, and condoning societal conditions that caused the disturbances and found that the media was one of the institutions that played a role in creating the division between Black and White Americans. In hopes of helping improve diversity on television, the 1967 Kerner Commission report read:

“Television should develop programming which integrates Negroes into all aspects of televised presentations... in addition to news-related programming. We think that Negroes should appear more frequently in dramatic and comedy series..” (Stroman, Merritt, & Metabane, 1989, p.45).

According to Bogle (2001), those divisions among Black and White viewers started to change during the mid and late 1960's when prime time television began to depict African Americans, more often than not, as social symbols. For example, in the mid 1960's African Americans were seen in guest spots on broadcast networks television programs and in starring roles in new series such as *I Spy*, *Julia*, and *Room 222* (Bogle, 2001). As suggested by the Kerner Commission report, these starring characters were seen as signs of social progress representing a free and integrated America. During the past 50 years of Blacks in television situation comedy, the politics of television art have changed little, leading Black organizations, social leaders, and politicians to complain continually about the role of television in American culture and to identify programs they believe to be beneficial or unfavorable to African

Americans (Nelson, 1998). In addition to the Kerner Commission, other organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Council of La Raza expressed concern about the underrepresentation of people of color on broadcast television. Intellectual community and organizations like the NAACP protested from the early 1950's into the 21st century against television's treatment of Black America (Bogle, 2001). Collectively, boycotts of network programming by people of color and coalitions such as the National Council of La Raza, National Asian American Telecommunications Associations and the NAACP as well as public forums on issues on diversity, have all yielded pledges to increase diversity on programs seen on the big four (ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC). By the late 1980's the social pressure instituted by these organizations resulted in programs focusing upon Blacks including *The Cosby Show*, *Living Single*, and *Family Matters*, with Blacks reaching parity with their numbers in the U.S. population by the turn of the century (Messineo, 2008). However, there have not been long term increases in characters of color because during the first decade of the 21st century there was a dramatic decline in the number of programs (with mostly characters of color casts) on broadcast television which was due, in part, to the new cable niche markets. According to Messineo (2008), the new outlets reduced the pressure on the major broadcast networks to provide diverse programming because there were specific cable channels to effectively serve minority audiences.

Frequency of African Americans on Television

Since the report of Kerner Commission was published, numerous scholars have examined portrayals of African Americans on television (Seggar & Wheeler, 1973; Banks, 1977; Roberts,

1970-1997; Warren, 1988; Baptista-Fernandez & Greenberg, 1992; Atkin, 1992; Greenberg & Brand, 1994; Gray, 1995; Cosby, 1994; Greenberg & Mastro, 2002; Signorielli, 2009b). Several studies have illustrated the changes in the representation of people of color which have occurred during the past 50 years. Most of the research has examined the portrayals of Blacks on prime-time dramatic programs (Gray, 1994; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Nelson, 2008; Signorielli, 2009), typically focusing on the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, WB, and CW). These studies have investigated the underrepresentation of African Americans and other people of color, the demography, genres, stereotypical roles, and occupational roles, in which they are found.

Much of the early research of African Americans on television focused on the issues of recognition or frequency of representation (as reported by Ward, 2004). Although African Americans comprise 13% of the U.S population (U.S Bureau of the Census, 2011), their numbers in mainstream television programming often fall short of this percentage. Mastro and Greenberg's (2000) study of racial minorities on prime time television in 1971 found that African Americans made up 6% of the prime-time characters in comedies and dramas. Accordingly, in reviewing research literature about Blacks and television, Poindexter and Stroman (1981) reported that Blacks appeared in approximately 50% of the television programs and 10% of the television commercials analyzed. Roberts (1970-71) and Seggar (1977) on the other hand, found there was an increase in the visibility of Blacks on television. At the same time, Seggar (1977) reported a decrease of other people of color. In addition to the frequency of Blacks on television, much of the research examined the demographic profile of characters on

television, showing that men outnumbered women in prime time programs. According to Signorielli (2009b), studies conducted during 1970's and early 1980's found a high degree of consistency in television's demography with the underrepresentation of women. Further studies also reported that by 1973 African American male characters outnumbered African American female characters (Hinton, Seggar, Northcott, & Fontes, 1974). Moreover, when studying the socialization influence of television on Black children, Stroman (1983) found that between the years of 1968 to 1983 fewer than 30 African American female characters appeared in starring roles on television. By the 1980's, though the number of Blacks on television had begun to reflect their proportion in the U.S population.

In fact, Harwood and Anderson's (2002) analysis of prime time programs aired in the spring of 1999, found that Whites were overrepresented and Blacks were at parity when compared to the U.S population. Additionally, Harwood and Anderson (2002) established that other people of color such as Latinos and Hispanics were underrepresented. In a study looking at the occupations and occupational prestige in relation to character's race and sex in prime time, Signorielli (2009b) found that racially defined prime time network programs broadcasted between 1997 and 2006 differed in their distribution of men and women as well as people of color. In sum, studies conducted after the Kerner commission up until the early 21st century reported some changes in the frequency of Blacks on television.

During the first decade of the 21st century, the portrayals of people of color on prime-time television changed (Mastro and Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002). When looking at the portrayals of minorities on prime time television, Mastro and Greenberg (2000)

found that there were now more African Americans in prime-time television programs than ever before. Accordingly, Greenberg, Mastro, and Brand (2002) investigated the distribution of minority characters in the prime-time series during the 2001-2002 television season and established that the distribution of characters on television shows was 76% white, 18% African American, 2% Hispanic, 2% Asian Americans, and .2% Native Americans. Overall, they found that the representation of African Americans on television was increasing but other people of color such as Latinos, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians were still underrepresented. Similarly, Signorielli (2009a) found that Blacks and other characters of color had reached parity with the U.S. population in terms of their frequency of portrayal in the first part of the first decade of the 21st century, but by the end of this decade their numbers were no longer at parity with the U.S. population. Overall Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Latinos continued to be underrepresented.

The portrayals of people of color in the U.S prime time television programs have changed in the last 50 years. In an examination of the linkage between social perception of people of color and their television roles, applying them to Latinos in particular, Mastro and Greenberg (2000) found that while African Americans were cast in 16% of the main and minor roles and had achieved a representative position in prime time, Latinos were seen infrequently. Harwood and Anderson (2002) observed the presence and portrayal of age, sex, and ethnic groups on prime time network television. They established that White characters, men, and middle aged individuals were overrepresented on prime time network television while other characters of color, particularly Latino characters, were underrepresented. On the whole, while Whites

continued to be overrepresented, the frequency of the portrayal of people of color on prime time television increased for African Americans up until the middle of the first decade of the 21st century while other people of color such as Latinos and Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans continued to be underrepresented.

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, people of color specifically African American as well as Latinos and Hispanics were underrepresented in prime time network programs, but yet male characters continued to outnumber female characters. Although the representation of minority groups previously increased, it is important to examine how African American characters have been depicted and how their representations relate to the U.S. population. Since we've discussed the frequency of minority's portrayal on television, that still doesn't tell the whole story. Research on media portrayals of African Americans has found that prior to the 1990's, African Americans were frequently portrayed in stereotypical occupational roles, (Seggar & Wheeler, 1973; Warren, 1988), with negative personality characteristics (Cosby, 1994), as low achievers (Bramlett-Solomon & Farwell, 1996; Seggar & Wheeler, 1973) but some were also portrayed with positive stereotypes (Gunter, 1998). It then becomes significant to further examine the meaning of the depictions in which African Americans have been portrayed.

Meaning of Representations

Although African Americans are now seen more frequently on television as compared to previous years, they are not always portrayed positively. A recurrent criticism is that when Black characters are included in television shows, they frequently appear in minor roles, serving as a

comic relief (Ward, 2004), what is often described as the medium's unfulfilled promise (McDonald, 1983). Rather than using television's potential to reverse mockery and misrepresentation, it has spread and maintained some of the worst stereotypes of Blacks in American popular culture.

Genres and other negative images

According to Nelson (1998), Blacks have appeared in the situation comedy genre more than in any other type of television program. Hough (1981) defined situation comedies as open-ended series of 30 minute self-contained episodes revolving around one or more plots generally consisting of stereotypical characteristics, ritualistic humor and an irrational approach to reality. Additionally, situation comedies usually deal with family situations, interpersonal problems, and casual plot lines that exhibit egalitarian interactions and also provide more favorable portrayals of both women and Blacks. On the other hand, crime dramas are dominated by White males and usually restrict women to insignificant roles (Lemon, 1977). When looking at the portrayal of women and Blacks on prime-time television, Lemon (1977) found that the picture was mixed for Blacks. Lemon (1977) explained that in situation comedies Blacks had stronger portrayals than Whites in observed inter-race interactions; Blacks compared to Whites, were more dominant, more equal, and dominated less frequently in situation comedies than in crime dramas. In crime dramas on the other hand, Lemon (1977) found that the trend was reversed: Whites were portrayed more strongly than Blacks in inter-race interactions and dominated Blacks more frequently than Blacks dominated Whites. In the late 1970s, the majority of African Americans on television appeared in situation comedies and half of all Black characters appeared in

predominately African American shows (Baptista-Fernandez & Greenberg, 1980).

Among genres, African Americans have frequently been portrayed with personality characteristics that are stereotypically negative. In the 1940's African Americans were almost always found in unimaginative and restrictive roles. Images of Black women and men brought comfort to white television viewers because they were, "non threatening, unappealing and did not question their social position" (Rhodes, 1980, pg 425). Rhodes (1980) said these images of African Americans continued because television adopted many of its early storylines and stereotypes from successful radio programs at a time when program sponsors had heavy control over content and worried about public acceptance of realistic portrayals of Blacks.

During the second half of the 20th century television often depicted enslaved and free African Americans (Nelson, 2008). In the 1950's, African American women were portrayed as mammy figures to various White employers in dramatic and comedic programming. For example between 1950 and 1953, actresses Ethel Waters and Louise Beavers played the role of "Beulah," (Rhodes, 1980). According to Bogle (2001), Beulah told the story of a Black maid; a warm and engaging, heavily built, full-figured, and a good hearted "colored gal" with a deep cheerful laugh. Beulah was a type long present in American popular culture, the large, often dowdy, usually darker, always seeing, hearing, and understanding mommy figure who nurtured and nourished those in the big house. Bogle (2001) described Beulah as the rival to the White women she worked for, the mammy who was deprived of sexual qualities or attraction; thus her large size and her darker color.

Men on the other hand were portrayed similarly in terms of their intellects. In a well known show “Amos and Andy,” that moved from radio (where the roles were played by two white men) to television, two Black men had migrated from the South to the North. In and out of comic scrapes, the men were known for being “bumbling, stumbling, dim-witted souls” and were reported of constantly misusing the English language (Bogle, 2001, pg.27). Both Amos and Andy and Beulah premiered on CBS and NBC, respectively, and both were played by African American men who used a thick dialect to make the characters baffoonishly stereotyped. Nelson (2008) explained that Black situation comedies which appeared on television from 1948 to 1965 illustrated the explicit social and cultural rules of race relations between Blacks and Whites of that time. It wasn’t until after 1965 that both *Beulah* and *Amos and Andy* shows were seen as negative and problematic. In fact, both shows were criticized by the NAACP for the negative representations of Blacks and found Black women depicted as loud, lazy, dumb, dishonest, and in some cases mammy like characters while Black men were portrayed as unprofessional professionals (ignorant of their profession and without ethics) (Nelson, 2008). The NAACP applied pressure to persuade NBC and CBS to cancel both programs.

Yet by 1975, African Americans were still likely to be cast in insignificant roles that were not central to the plot (Culley and Bennett, 1976). Similarly, Signorielli (2009) reported that by the mid 1970’s, a study commissioned by the U.S Commission on Civil Rights found that people of color were portrayed in stereotypical ways in network prime-time broadcast programs. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1982) also noted that Blacks continued to be in stereotypical roles and their roles were not as powerful or as important as white roles. Dates

(1990) later distinguished that other stereotypes of African Americans existed, including characters that were disrespectful, violent, greedy, ignorant, and power-driven. After determining that Blacks in the media were portrayed as menacing, untidy, rebellious, disrespectful, buffoonish, sexual, immoral, hopeless, untrained, uneducated, and noisy, Cosby (1994) also concluded that most of the roles Blacks portrayed were negative and stereotypical. It wasn't until the 1980's that African American characters were seen regularly in more major roles where they would be lead characters and/or portrayed in more positive roles. By the early 1980's, shows like *The Cosby Show*, *227*, *Amen*, and *A Different World* provided more interesting and diverse vehicles for black men and women, yet they continued in the context humorous portrayals (Rhodes, 1991). Around this time, more Blacks were found in positions in television production such as, producers, writers, and directors (Nelson, 2008).

Poindexter and Stroman (1981) indicated that although Blacks were featured more often in major roles, the roles still conveyed stereotypical messages.. An important situation comedy that featured Blacks in the major roles was *The Cosby Show* (NBC, 1984-1992). Nelson (2008) notes that the Black situation comedy of the 1980's involved a cultural politics of difference within Blackness in how it offered a view of what it meant to be American from an African American standpoint. The stereotype that *The Cosby Show* conveyed was based upon African American value systems and standard characterizations that could be portrayed by Whites as well as Blacks (Nelson, 2008). However, *The Cosby Show*, was thought to harm race relations because it's view of Black Americans did not take into account the context of the world outside of the Huxtable's (the Black family presented in the show) household (Teachout, 1986). In a

way, this allowed some Whites to excuse discrimination against some people of color, specifically Blacks and to become more insensitive to racial inequality (Gates, 1992). Lewis and Jhaly (1992) confirmed this observation in their research with White focus groups who watched *The Cosby Show* where they established a conflict in the way some Whites responded to the show. Lewis and Jhaly (1992) found that some Whites interpreted this show as showing anyone (including Blacks) can make it in the United States and that Black Americans should stop complaining about discrimination. At the same time, some were able to acknowledge that the position the Huxtables took was not like most Black American families (Lewis & Jhaly, 1992). *The Cosby Show* was an example of how black situation comedies were not “Black” because they showed an African American worldview or African American culture but that the performers were black characters who dealt with situations from a “Black” perspective. Thus, a clear description of an effective or more empowering black situation comedy is necessary in future analyses.

Furthermore, Stroman (1986) found that between 1960 and 1982, most African American family shows focused on single parent families and only few depicted a lifestyle different from a deprived struggling family. In addition, Auletta and Hammerback (1985) reported that prime time network series often included communication practices that did not enable close collaboration, intimate relationships, or deep friendships between Blacks and whites. Humphrey and Schuman (1984) also argued that Blacks were depicted more in occupational roles rather than social or interpersonal situations. These programs continued to portray another unrealistic representation of African American culture and illustrated more segregation by showing that

Blacks and Whites were still different, with Whites, in some cases still favored. In some ways this demonstrated the continuation of high levels of segregation for both Black and White characters in addition to a misrepresentation of Blacks in America.

Collectively, early stereotypes of African Americans were often used to justify slavery, segregation and racial downgrade. The depictions in *Beulah* and *Amos and Andy* may also be recognized as Mammy: black women as devoted mothers and Sambo: black men as happy and loyal underling. Additional stereotypes from the sixties to the eighties included Nat: angry black men and fearsome rebels (hustlas and ganstas), Jezebel: black women as teasing harlots, and the tragic mulatto and pickaninny: the disgrace of black blood (Nelson,2008). It will be interesting to see whether any of these stereotypes still exist on programs aired on BET and the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW). According to Nelson (2008), African American stereotypes were created to draw attention to the racial differences thought to exist between Whites and Blacks and illustrated that Blacks differed significantly from Whites, “physically, intellectually, and temperamentally” (p.195). Today, one of the stereotypes that remains is African Americans are seen in mainly comedic roles.

By the start of 1990’s more black shows on cable venues began to air on network television including shows such as *Family Matters* (ABC 1989-1997 & ABC 1997-1998), *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* (NBC 1990-1996), *Hanging with Mr. Cooper* (ABC, 1992-1997) and *Martin* (Fox, 1992-1997) (Haggins, 2008). Although these shows contributed to a slight increase of black presence on television, it was only in comedy. According to Haggins (2008), this

programming strategy first utilized by FOX and then adopted by both WB and UPN enlarged the trajectory for many Black comics.

Not all studies dealing with African American portrayals on television have found them portrayed stereotypically or negatively. Donagher et.al. (1975) found that Black males were portrayed as helpers, givers, and cooperative and Black females were portrayed as virtuous. Similarly, when looking at the difference between British television and American television, Gunter (1988) found that Whites were more likely to be aggressors than Blacks. Gunter (1988) also found that Blacks were more likely to be victims than Whites. Finally, Tamborini et.al. (2000) found Black television characters had similar characteristics as their White television counterparts.

By the mid to late 1990's WB's Thursday nights included shows such as *The Wayans Bros.*, *The Jamie Foxx Show*, *The Steve Harvey Show*, and *For Your Love*. All of these shows not only included African American characters in major roles but also represented the African American culture. Nelson (1998) described the cultural contexts of Black Americans in Black situation comedies to include an emphasis in, or reference to black music, art, literature and the use of Black language and Black verbal forms, respectively. Nelson (2008) specifically explained that most black situation comedies that effectively depict an African American worldview might, for example, emphasize the importance of religion in African American culture within the series (Nelson, 1998).

Occupational Roles

African Americans have also been stereotypically portrayed through their occupational roles. Studies have looked at the occupations in which characters have been portrayed in prime time programs (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001, Signorielli, 2009b), particularly in relation to sex and race. In looking at the role race plays in occupations, research found that in the past, more Whites than people of color were characterized as working (Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001). Signorielli and Kahlenberg's (2001) study about television's world of work in the nineties, found that fewer non-Whites than Whites were professionals while proportionally more non-Whites had law enforcement jobs. Additionally, Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2009) established that compared to the U. S. labor force, professionals and law enforcement agents were overrepresented while managerial jobs, laborers, and service workers were underrepresented. On the other hand, Glascock (2003) found that Blacks and Whites were comparable in the numbers portrayed as working (employed) but that Blacks, compared to Whites, were found in a greater variety of jobs. Hunt (2005) also found that White and Black television characters often had high-status occupations, such as doctors and lawyers. More recently, Signorielli (2009b) looked at the occupation and occupational prestige of characters in relations to race and sex on prime time and found that the types and prestige of occupations in network prime-time broadcast programs differed by the character's sex and the level of character diversity. Signorielli (2009b) concluded that the women in the programs with segregated setting are often not seen working outside of the home or their occupation was not made known to viewers. Most analyses of occupations on television have shown that characters in the

professions (business settings) or in law enforcement are overrepresented, whereas those in white- or blue-collar jobs are underrepresented (Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001). Signorielli's (2009b) analysis established that these same patterns were found in all programs except those mostly populated by minority characters. Thus, it's important to also examine whether these patterns may be the same or different in the channel geared towards a black audience, where programs on this channel are expected to be populated mostly by minority characters.

Changes on Television

The fall of 1999 was a setback for the presence of African Americans during prime time broadcast television because none of the twenty-six new programs starred African Americans in a leading role and only a few programs featured people of color in secondary roles (Baynes, 2003). This absence led the National Council for La Raza to organize a protest called the "National Burnout," where they advised their members to refrain from watching television during the week of September 12, 1999 (Baynes, 2003). At the same time, Kweisi Mfume, president of the NAACP threatened a boycott and legal actions against networks for violating the 1930 Communications Act. According to Baynes (2003), the major networks scrambled to add actors of color to their previously all-White shows. Ultimately, the major networks and the NAACP came to an agreement that FOX, CBS, ABC, and NBC agreed to hire more actors, producers, writers and directors who were of color (Baynes, 2003). However, neither ABC nor NBC went through with the agreement (Baynes, 2003). By 2003 UPN's lineup included shows such as *The Parkers*, *One on One*, *Girlfriends*, and *Half and Half* (Haggins, 2008), shows that depicted African American characters in comedic roles.

Television Criticisms

Several prominent Black entertainment figures and organizations have criticized network portrayals of African Americans. For example, film director Spike Lee criticized the networks for airing shows that feed stereotypes about Blacks stating, “I would rather see *Amos and Andy*...at least they were just straight up Uncle Tommin. We’ve gone backwards” (Baynes, 2003, pg. 301). Spike Lee’s comment was specifically geared towards UPN *Homeboys in Outer Space*, a science fiction/fantasy situation comedy that aired on UPN from 1996 to 1997. The comment was intended to reinforce the fact that just because roles have somewhat changed and Blacks are no longer depicted in the same old stereotypes, doesn’t necessarily mean that the stereotypical portrayals of Blacks on television no longer exist. Accordingly, Bogle (2001) reported the concern as a striking cultural phenomenon, explaining how Black programs were now ghettoized on UPN and WB and that the African American audience was dominated with a collection of old stereotypes. For example, Kim from *The Parkers* (UPN 1999-2004) and Duane from *One on One* (UPN 2001-2006), were African American characters depicted as obnoxious, uncouth, fully knowledgeable of street culture but with no book intelligence. In short, even though shows around this time portrayed more Black major characters, some of the characters were still portrayed “buffoonishly.”

Overall Recent Portrayals

At the start of 21st century, African Americans were portrayed more often in shows that not only represented characters of color but also their culture. Historically, Blacks have appeared most consistently in situation comedies, which are largely responsible for their representation

being at parity with the U.S. population at the start of the 21st century (Signorielli, 2009a). Signorielli (2009a) particularly notes that Black characters were seen most often in programs, typically situation comedies, broadcast on the UPN and WB networks. In 2006 after WB and UPN merged into the CW, the survival of Black situation comedies as a genre declined. By 2007, only three African American situation comedies remained on the fall schedule: *Girlfriends*, *The Game* and *Everybody Hates Chris* (Haggins, 2008).

Overall, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, prime time programming was less diverse than it was in the beginning (Signorielli, 2009a). Moreover, ongoing research of samples (fall of 2010 and fall of 2011) of network prime time programs indicates that the percentage of White characters has increased while the percentage of Black characters decreased, and other people of color were very underrepresented. In short, the decrease in the number of situation comedies and programs with all minority (segregated) castings in recent samples had resulted in Blacks no longer found in parity with their numbers in the U.S. population (Signorielli, 2009b). So as the prime time network landscape continues to change to schedule more “economically” practical programs (such as reality shows), the fate of other characters of color may also be changing. It’s important to note that in the first decade of the 21st century, Blacks reached a level of parity with their numbers in the U.S population because they were in situation comedies with mostly minority characters (Signorielli, 2009a). When these minority programs are removed from programming lineups (which is the case today), Black characters may no longer achieve parity with their numbers in the U.S population and may now be underrepresented. Along with the few representations of African Americans on the broadcast

networks today, it's just as significant to observe whether they remain to be depicted in stereotypical images.

The Emergence of Black Entertainment Television (BET)

Black Entertainment Television (BET) is a noteworthy example of the potential power of a cable channel devoted to people of color to give voice to and celebrate African Americans (Messineo, 2008). BET is the only national cable network designed for the black audience. It provides public affairs, dramatic and comedy series, and musical programs that showcase black characters and themes not shown on the other channels (Elliot, 1995). Launched in 1979 by Robert Johnson, BET's purpose was to give African Americans a channel where they could see African Americans. More specifically, Johnson's goal was to use the narrowcasting approach of cable television to reach the African American community in America with programming that was relevant to Black people in America (African Americans) (Tait & Barber, 1996).

At the time BET launched, there was no television network where positive portrayals of Blacks could be found each day (Pulley, 2004). With a cable channel geared towards the African American audience, BET was officially a business, and it was owned and run by black people. Bob Johnson had given Black people "a source of pride and hope, and feeling that something important belonged to them" (Pulley, 2004, p.92). As reported by Elliot (1995), the cable channel was designed as a forum for the "African American perspective" on issues and topics making BET the primary source for Black America. From its early years, the network offered much of its time to African American film classics of the 1930's and 40's, recent movie releases, movies made for television and college basketball and football games (Barchak, 1993). BET's

two longest running shows were *Bobby Jones Gospel* and *Video Soul*. Other musical programming like *Rhythm and Blues* as well as other programming such as *Lead Story*, *BET News*, *On the Line*, *Roc and Desmond's...* to name a few, explored African American issues and more.

It's important to note that the majority of BET programming involves music. When BET first started, most of the music aired was rhythm and blues format; today rap music (similar to rhythm and blues) is often seen and heard. Though surrounded by controversy based on the issues of misogyny, racism, and homophobia presented in gangsta rap music, a closer examination places music as an essential part of African American cultural traditions (See Tait & Barber, 1996 for a brief historical analysis of African American music). In short, African American music is grounded in the history of the Black experience and the belief of hope for things to change (equality). BET has always relied heavily on music videos and paid programming as network essentials. However, the change in the kind of music depicted on BET may have been due to Johnson's influence. Johnson progressively increased his influence in the media not by providing an Afrocentric channel (channel with African culture) but by managing a successful capitalistic vehicle for reaching African American consumers (Tiat & Barber, 1996).

Unfortunately, BET did not remain a strong African American voice in America's media forum. In 2000, BET was sold to Viacom and is no longer a black owned network (Messineo, 2008). Consequently, the situation comedies seen on BET now frame issues in the African American community in humor (Pulley, 2004). Johnson created BET as a response to serve an audience that had never been adequately or directly addressed before. Although BET recognizes

its responsibilities to the African American community it has yet to fulfill its obligation as a significant media channel to voice the feelings and aspirations of Blacks in America.

Consequently, BET is no longer Black owned, the images of African Americans when not controlled by African Americans may not portray them in the same ways. Thus, the socialization provided to the larger African American community is questionable.

There have been few studies that have examined different networks (e.g. BET) in comparison to the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, & CW), in relations to minority representations. The few studies that compare cables with broadcast programs (Elliot, 1995; Messineo, 2008) show applicable findings but only in relation to commercials. Elliot's (1995) content analysis of broadcast networks versus BET found differences in the portrayal of Blacks. Specifically, Blacks were rarely depicted in intimate settings (family or romantic encounters) in either medium (Elliot, 1995). These results are also in line with Humphrey & Schuman (1984) and Auletta & Hammerback's (1985) contention that Blacks are often not included in communication practices that facilitate close collaboration, intimate relationships, or deep friendships between Blacks and Whites and are likely to be depicted more in occupational roles rather than social or interpersonal situations.

Messineo (2008) examined whether advertising on BET portrayed more positive gender representations as compared to broadcast networks. Messineo's (2008) findings, echoing different studies, found that the majority of characters were male and White. In addition, Messineo (2008) reported that images of cross-sex interactions (male-female) and respect overall were higher for Black characters on BET compared to the broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS,

FOX). Also, Black women were likely to be portrayed as more sexually desirable on BET than in the past. The sexual desirability finding was problematic because such images could have a negative outcome for viewers (Messineo, 2008).

More importantly, it appears that, while BET has the potential to present more positive images of Black characters, that potential is not fully realized. Ultimately results of these studies (Elliot, 1995; Messineo, 2008) need to be considered within the context of the socializing nature of programs on BET as well as the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW). It's important to note that both studies did not include all broadcast networks and examined only commercials. Consequently, the findings may not accurately reflect the portrayal of people of color, specifically African Americans, on BET programs today.

Though Hardwood and Anderson (2002) reported no differences in the role presence credited to age, sex, and ethnicity, concern remains that although the stereotypes are just not as oblivious and depicted as they were in the early years of television, they may, in fact, still exist. Banks (1977) noted that Black characters in all Black television programs were more likely to display stereotypical Black characteristics than Black characters in integrated programs. This is a topic that recent studies have not yet thoroughly examined. In sum, the frequency of the portrayals of people of color on prime-time television has varied for African Americans, but not necessarily for other people of color who remain underrepresented. Nevertheless, people of color are still depicted in minor roles, in crime dramas, in situation comedies, and continue to be depicted with stereotypes and misrepresentations (Greenberg et al., 2002). If the portrayals of

African Americans on a channel geared towards them are also stereotypical, BET will provide little advantage to the target audience or the population at large.

To effectively evaluate the influence of watching the broadcast networks and BET and its portrayals of African Americans and other people of color on these channels, it's important to consider how empowering these images/messages can be. According to Staples (1990), the form of empowerment relates to the process of how power is gained, developed, or facilitated and the outcome of how an individual or group moves from being powerless to be empowered. Staples (1990) described empowerment as the effort to obtain a relative degree of ability to influence the world. Since African Americans and other people of color are underrepresented and/or misrepresented on television, an approach to solving this social issue may stem from talking about empowerment. Staples (1990), notes that power is often not given to minority groups in our society, which may be based on past representations of people of color on television. Thus, more empowering images of Blacks on both the broadcast networks and BET programs may be a solution for this social issue in that they may change false perceptions of African Americans and other people of color. In addition, it's important for BET to provide more empowering images so that African Americans can be empowered even when they are not empowered by images/messages on other (broadcast) networks.

This study will focus isolating empowering images of African Americans (and other people of color) rather than focusing on negative or positive stereotypes. In short, this study will use the term *empowering* to illustrate the influential power images and messages carry and how they can be used to bring integration of self acceptance, self confidence, social and economical

understanding and a person's ability to play a role in the television environment. Therefore, empowering will refer to the increase of social, economic, and spiritual strength of individuals, specifically African Americans and other people of color. It then becomes significant to see whether African Americans may be presented as more empowering on a channel geared towards their audience in comparison to the broadcast networks.

Hypotheses

A major distinction in television's representation of people of color has been through genres; more specifically African Americans have always had greater representation in situation comedies than other genres. Consequently,

H1: African Americans will be found in situation comedies more than in other genres on the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CW) than BET.

Additionally, Signorielli (2009a) found that prime time programming was less diverse at the end of the first decade of the 21st century than at the beginning. Specifically, the percent of White characters increased while the percent of Black characters decreased in the most recent samples of network prime time broadcast programs (fall of 2010 and 2011). In short, the decrease in the number of situation comedies and programs with all minority (segregated) castings in the most recent samples resulted in the disappearance of the gains made by Blacks in terms of parity (Signorielli, 2009b). So as the prime time network landscape continues to change to schedule more "economically" practical programs (such as reality shows), the fate of other characters of color may also be changing. In the first decade of the 21st century, Blacks reached a level of parity with their numbers in the U.S population because they were in situation comedies with

mostly minority characters (Signorielli, 2009a). When these minority programs were removed from programming lineups (which is the case today), Black characters may no longer achieve parity with their numbers in the U.S population and may become underrepresented. Thus,

H2a: In the fall of 2012, White characters on the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW) will be overrepresented, while Black characters and those of other races/ethnicities will be underrepresented in comparison to their numbers in the U.S population.

H2b: The racial distribution on BET will not reflect the racial distribution of the U.S; Blacks will be overrepresented and characters of other races will be under represented.

This may illustrate the racial differences that exist between the characters on the five broadcast networks when compared to those on BET. Additionally, given the history of the underrepresentation of black women on television, scholars have found that women of color including black women are consistently underrepresented in prime time (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Elasmr, Hasegawa, & Brain, 1999; Hunt, 2002). However, in a more recent study, Signorielli (2009a) established that both Black men and Black women reached parity with their representation in the U.S. population, “not under- or overrepresented” (p.327). Moreover, since many of the networks have reduced the number of situation comedies which Blacks are known to have appeared, there may be fewer Black characters in prime time today. Therefore,

H3a: The proportion of Black women on the broadcast networks will not be at parity with their proportion in the U.S. population, whereas the proportion of

black men on the broadcast will be at parity with their proportion in the U.S population.

H3a: Men will be overrepresented while women will be underrepresented in programs on both the broadcast networks and those on BET.

In addition, Elliot (1995) and Messineo (2008) found that there were more positive representations of Blacks on BET commercials in comparison to the broadcast networks commercials. Accordingly,

H4a: African Americans will be presented more favorably and in diverse occupational roles on BET compared to the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW).

Also, in an earlier study (Signorielli, 1982) noticed that themes of marriage were pervasive on television, particularly for women. Specifically, women of color compared to White women (and men overall) were more likely to be classified by marital status and were more likely to be portrayed as married or formerly married (Signorielli, 1982). In a more recent study, Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2001) found that women of color were less likely to be married than White women and that married women were more likely to be seen as not working than working outside the home. Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2001) also found these patterns (working status and marital status) were different for White women and women of color. Consequently,

H4b: African Americans will be more likely to be portrayed as not married on both BET and the broadcast networks compared to Whites and other characters of

color. Those portrayed as not married on both BET and the broadcast networks will be more likely to be cast in a specific occupation.

Also, based on previous findings African American women have been depicted as sexually desirable (Elliot, 1995; Messineo, 2008) specifically in the Jezebel stereotype. Messineo (2008) also found that BET provided more positive gender representations of African Americans in comparison to the four broadcast networks and that female characters were more commonly portrayed on BET in cross sex interactions as sex objects whereas male characters were portrayed as respected. Consequently,

H5: Women will be portrayed more provocatively than men in programs on BET than on the broadcast networks.

In addition, Messineo (2008) found that Blacks appearing on BET were seen in fewer integrated settings, were featured in major roles, and were depicted in leisure/social situations than on ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX. Because BET is geared towards a majority African American audience while the five broadcast networks target the larger population, BET programs are more likely to have black characters in programs with an all black cast. Therefore,

H6a: Black characters will appear in integrated settings on the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW).

H6b: Black characters on BET will appear in programs with mostly minority characters and BET will have fewer programs with an integrated cast.

Furthermore, other findings on characters in broadcast network programs place more value on youthfulness. In short, women are portrayed younger, young adults and middle aged characters

are overrepresented while children, adolescents, and elderly people are underrepresented (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Signorielli, 2004). Thus,

H7a: Women will be portrayed younger than men on the broadcast networks and on BET.

H7b: More women than men will be categorized as young adults and as settled adults on the broadcast networks.

Additionally, this analysis poses three questions:

RQ 1: What is the occupational distribution of black characters on prime time and on Bet? Are there differences between the two?

RQ 2: Are there racial differences between the level of occupation prestige among characters in programs on BET compared to the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CW)?

RQ3: Are there more empowering images of African Americans on a channel geared towards the Black audience (BET) or on the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, and CW)? And what differentiates portrayals of African Americans on the BET from the broadcast networks?

Chapter 2

METHODS

This study will present the results of a content analysis of a week of prime time network programming (ABC,CBS, NBC, FOX, and CW) and programming aired on BET. The study will also include a textual analysis to isolate meanings of the symbols, messages and images found in the programs on BET.

Sample

The study focused on the programs (N=103) and central characters (leading and supporting roles; N=396) in a one week sample of programs broadcast on prime-time network channels (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CW) and on BET (Black Entertainment Television) in the fall of 2012 (October). As reported by Signorielli (2009a), “numerous tests to assess the validity of weeklong samples have found that one week of programming gives a fairly accurate description while being cost and time effective” (p.326). The programs were recorded in September/October 2012 during primetime hours (8pm-11pm on Mondays through Saturday and 7pm-11pm on Sunday).

Coders and coder's training

The coders of the broadcast prime-time network channels (ABC,CBS, NBC,FOX,CW) were junior and senior communication majors enrolled in an upper level communication class and one graduate student from the urban affair and public policy program, all at an East Coast university. Coders of programs on BET were the author and an additional graduate student from the urban affair and public policy program, also from the same East Coast University. All coders experienced a three-week long in-class training session which consisted of discussions to explaining coding schemes and hands on coding of programs specifically selected and coded by all the students and the advisor for the training process.

Recording Instrument

There were two units of analysis in the recording instrument: the program (see, Appendix A) and the leading/supporting character (see, Appendix B). The same recording instrument was used for the network channels and BET. The programs on BET were also subjected to a textual analysis.

Variables

The following variables were used and their coding categories to code programs and characters. Programs were classified by format (cartoon, TV play, TV movie, reality drama, documentary, news magazine/talk show, variety/award, sports, and game show) and type (crime, western/action adventure, drama, science fiction/horror, situational comedy, comedy not sitcom, other children's program, variety/award show, and other). The cast of the programs was originally coded in five categories (cannot code, all white, mostly white, mixed, mostly minority, and all minority) but the analysts combined the mostly minority and minority categories. For this analysis individual major characters (most frequently occurring characters) were coded by gender, race, ethnicity, occupation, marital status and age. The leading and supporting characters were also coded for wearing provocative clothing, having an attractive-body, being involved sexually, using offensive language, personality traits and exhibiting book and street smarts.

Race was coded on five categories: cannot code, white, black, Asian, Native American, and other. After the preliminary description of the race of characters and for subsequent data analysis, the categories for this variable were collapsed into three categories: black, white and other characters of color. The ethnicity of the characters consisted of four categories: cannot code, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/Indian, European/Scandinavian, and other. The U.S. Census Bureau defines Latinos/Hispanics as an ethnic, rather than a racial group (Signorielli, 2009).

Age was assessed in two ways. The social age of the characters consisted of four categories: cannot code, child/adolescent, young adult (few or no family responsibilities), settled adult (family, established career), and elderly/old. Coders also assessed the character's

chronological age. The character's social class consisted of four categories: cannot code, clearly upper, upper middle, lower middle, and clearly lower. The character's marital status consisted of nine categories: cannot code, apparently not married (no reference), impending marriage, presently married, separated, formerly but no longer married, remarried, mixed, cohabiting (living with someone), involved in a homosexual or lesbian relationship. Provocative clothing consisted of three categories: character not appearing in provocative clothing, occasionally appearing in provocative clothing, and frequently appearing in provocative clothing. Sexual involvement consisted of five categories: not involved, involved (talks about it but not seen), involved minimally (kissing and hugging), somewhat involved (passionate kissing..etc), and involved in very intimate behavior (intercourse).

Occupation was coded in several steps using the method devised by Signorielli (2009b).

“Coders first described each character's occupation (which included some “dramatic” occupations such as criminal or superhero) and placed it in 1 of the 67 categories of the primary coding scheme. Occupations were grouped by the type of job—professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, entertainer), white collar (managerial, secretarial, clerical), blue collar (service, repair, labor), law enforcement, criminal, other, not working, and unknown. Occupations were also categorized by job prestige, which was defined by projected income and status. There were four classifications: (a) jobs that were not prestigious (household or service workers), (b) jobs that were neutral in prestige (secretary, social worker, nurse, teacher, household worker, clerical, etc.), (c) prestigious jobs (doctors, lawyers), and (d) unknown. Overall, 17 different occupations were classified as not prestigious, 17 as prestigious, and 30 as neutral” (p. 8).

In addition, the BET programs will also be assessed from a more qualitative perspective using a textual analysis.

Reliability

More than three fourths of the programs in the sample of network programs and the entire sample of BET programs were coded by two independent coders to provide tests of reliability. Reliability was measure for each variable by Krippendorff's (2004) alpha. Most of the variables met Krippendorff's standards (variables with alpha values of .80 or above are unconditionally reliable, whereas variables with value levels of .65 and .79 are conditionally reliable). The value of alpha was .76 for the racial makeup of the cast, and the .88 for the format of the program, .81 for the type of the program. In addition, Krippendorff's alpha was, .97 for gender, .91 for race .75 for ethnicity, .66 for marital status, and .60 for social age. Results for the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, CW and FOX) will be interpreted in reference to broadcast networks whereas that from culturally specific medium (BET) was referred to as BET.

Data Analysis

Different kinds of statistical analyses were employed to test the hypotheses posed and to answer the research questions. Chi –square goodness of fit tests were used to test how close observed values in the sample were to the expected values. The expected values were the percentages of males, females, Blacks, Whites, Other Races and Hispanics (race/ethnicity) and the occupation distribution (by race) found in the actual U.S. population, as reported by the Census in 2011. The majority of the tests for this analysis were cross tabulations where chi-square was used to test the statistical significance for these analyses. Cross tabulations were used to compare programs from the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW) with the programs on BET. The comparisons involved genres in which characters were cast in, the racial distribution, sex, working status, occupation distribution, levels of occupation prestige, racial composition of cast, marital status and work, provocative dress, sexual involvement and social age representations of characters. Finally, an ANOVA analysis was used to test the difference between Black men and women's chronological age.

The analyses of comparisons between the broadcast network channels and BET were conducted only for Black characters because the BET sample only had 4 non-Black characters.

Textual Analysis

An essential first step in understanding the nature of a channel geared towards the Black audience is to clearly define what creative themes help differentiate them from the broadcast networks. Since a direct assessment of this cannot be made in the context of content analysis, it's relevant to operationalize intent in terms of how an African American child may make sense of the images portrayed of his/her group on a channel geared towards the group's audience. Consequently, a qualitative framing provided a further understanding of the images and messages of Blacks included in the content analysis.

Similar to other studies that have combined the two analyses (content and textual), this study adopted a constructionist approach in which the program images and messages were treated as a, "system of organized elements that indicate the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts" (as reported by Feng, Brewer, Ley, 2012). Since BET is a channel geared towards African Americans, certain elements are what make up the ideas encouraged by group's audience processing. The social construction approach suggests that truth and objective messages don't exist and that the messages produced by the media are interpretations created to reflect the shaped reality that producers or writers see (Wu, 2005). To better understand the kinds of ideas the group may process, this analysis focuses on the Black American cultural context of media discourse, while the social construction approach will merely serve as a phenomenological underpinning of this framing.

Certain elements will be used in analyzing the African American culture, which also tend to increase the relevance of the programs to the group. Nelson (2008) clearly explains the cultural contexts of black Americans and how they often aren't evident in situation comedies. Nelson (2008) notes:

“When the shows emphasize and reference black music, art, and literature, along with the use of black language and black verbal art forms. A black sitcom (situation comedy) that is based on an African American worldview might, for example, emphasize the importance of religion in African American culture throughout American history within the series” (p.193-194).

Consequently, the elements that will be used to further identify the meaning of images and messages of Blacks on BET will be based on the music emphasized or made reference to in the programs, the language used among the main and leading characters of the programs, and whether there is an importance of religion within the series. Accordingly, the character variables used in the content analysis that will also be analyzed for the existence of these elements will be the racial makeup of the cast, marital status, and occupation. Meanings of the variables will be analyzed to define and describe the nature of any of the elements’ existence as they relate to African American culture. This will help identify whether the portrayed images and messages are depicted within the context of African American culture for the African American audience.

Thus, a textual analysis will be used as a complementary method by providing a more descriptive understanding of the ways in which African Americans are depicted on the channel geared towards their audience (BET) and whether these messages ring true to the cultural context of Blacks in America (as described by Nelson ,2008). If the images of Blacks portrayed on BET fall within the elements defined by Nelson (2008), and are positive images, these descriptions will be considered empowering images of Blacks on BET by illustrating the cultural framework of Blacks in America.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

This chapter will present the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses. It will begin with the quantitative analysis by answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses.

Part I: Quantitative

The sample consisted of 103 programs (10 on BET and 93 on broadcast network channels) and 396 characters (36 on BET and 360 on the broadcast network channels). The racial distribution of leading and supporting characters in this sample of fall 2012 prime time programs on the broadcast networks is 85% White, 8% Black and 7% other races, and 4% Hispanics and Latinos. Overall, the broadcast networks sample (N=360) is 59% men and 41% women. The gender distribution, however, is not similar for Whites and Blacks: the distribution for Whites (N=305) is 59% men and 41% women whereas for Blacks (N=30) it is 73% men and 27% women. Interestingly, the gender distribution for other characters of color (N=25) is 48% men and 52% women and Hispanics (N=16) are 44% men and 56% women.

The racial distribution of characters in the sample of BET programs is 5% White, 89% Black, 6% of other races, and 8% Hispanics and Latinos. Overall, the gender distribution for BET is 61% men and 39% women and is also not similar for Whites and Blacks. On BET, men made up 50% and women made up 50% of the White characters (N=2) whereas men made up

66% and women made up 34% of the Black characters (N=32). The Hispanic/Latino characters and characters of other races were only women.

Genre Representations

Broadcast Networks

The data in Table 1 were used to test H1. The genre distribution of the Black characters on the broadcast networks is 7% in situation comedies, 27% in action adventure, 23% in drama, 37 in reality shows, 3% in award shows and 3% in news magazines. There was a significant difference between the representations in genres by race in programs on the broadcast networks, $\chi^2(10, n=360) = 29.65, p < .05$. In contrast, the other characters of color on the broadcast networks were more often found in drama (28%) and in action adventures (25%) than in situation comedies (20%). Black characters were not overrepresented in situation comedies on the broadcast networks.

Table 1
Comparison of Representations in Genres by Race on Broadcast Networks (2012)

Variable	White		Black		Other		Total
	C%	R%	C%	R%	C%	R%	N
N=	3705		30		25		(N=360)
Sitcom	26	92	7	2	20	6	86
Action	30	87	27	8	25	5	103
Drama	25	85	23	8	28	7	92
Reality	11	71	37	23	12	6	48
Award	3	91	3	9	-		11
Newsmag	4	70	3	5	20	25	20

Note. Hispanic and Latino identity was coded separately, and it was not included in the racial categories.
C%= column percentage; R%= row percentage
Data were collected for the Fall of 2012.
 $\chi^2(10, n=360) = 29.65, p < .001$

BET

Bet aired mostly movies and one comedy television series. Nonetheless, although more than half of the Black characters were found in drama (88%), there was no significant difference by genre in the representations by race, $\chi^2(2, n=36) = .5625$. In this sample characters on BET were seen in only situation comedies and drama: 12% in situation comedies and 88% in dramas.

Consequently, there was no support for H1; African Americans were not cast more often in situation comedies than other genres on the broadcast networks or on BET. As Tables 1 and 2 indicate, on the broadcast networks Blacks were seen mostly in reality television shows (37%) and on BET were seen mostly in dramas (88%).

Table 2
Comparison of Representations in Genres by Race on BET (2012)

Variable	White		Black		Other		Total (N=36)
	C%	R%	C%	R%	C%	R%	
N=	2		32		2		
Sitcom	–		12	100	–		4
Drama	100	6	88	88	100	6	32

Note. Hispanic and Latino identity was coded separately, and it was not included in the racial categories. C%= column percentages; R%= row percentages
Data were collected for the Fall of 2012.
 $\chi^2(2, n=36) = .5625, p=.7548$

Racial and Gender Distribution Representations

H2a and H2b were tested by comparing the distribution of characters by race/ethnicity and gender with 2011 U.S population estimates using a Goodness-of-Fit Chi-Square (χ^2) (see Table 1). Since the U.S. Census Bureau considers Hispanics and Latinos separate from race and the recording instrument used two variables (race and ethnicity) to isolate this information, the percentages in this table sum to more than 100%.

Table 3 shows that White characters on the broadcast networks (85%) were over parity in comparison with their representation in the U.S. population (64%). Blacks, on the other hand,

were underrepresented as they make up 8% of the prime time characters in comparison to 13% in the U.S population. Similarly, Hispanics and Latinos make up 4% of the prime time characters as compared to 16% in the U.S. population. There was a significant difference between the race/ethnicity of the characters on the broadcast networks (Whites 84%, Blacks 8%, and Hispanics 7%) in comparison to their numbers in the U.S. population (Whites 78%, Black 13%, Hispanics 9%). There was support for H2a for Whites, Blacks and characters of other races, $\chi^2(2, n=360) = 60.9, p <.01$, and for Hispanics $\chi^2(1, n=360) = 30.41, p <.001$

Table 3
 Comparison of Characters on Prime Time (2012) with the
 U.S. Population (2011 Estimates)

Variable	United States ^b (%)	Prime time ^c (%)	N (N=360)
Black	13	8	30
White	64	85	305
Other	23	7	25
Hispanic	16	4	16
Men ^d			214
Black	12	10	22
White	64	84	180
Other	23	6	12
Hispanic	16	3	7
Women ^e			146
Black	13	5	8
White	64	86	125
Other	22	9	13
Hispanic	16	6	9

Note. Hispanic and Latino identity was coded separately, and it was not included in the racial categories.

Data were collected for the Fall of 2012.

^bN= 306,110 million.

^cN= 360.

^dUnited States: N= 150,646 million; Prime time: N= 214

^eUnited States: N=55,466 million; Prime time: N= 146

U.S. Population Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011.

The data in Table 4 show that the racial distribution on BET does not reflect the racial distribution of the U.S. population and support for H2b. Blacks on BET were overrepresented in

relation to their proportion in the U.S. population. On the other hand, Whites and other people of color were particularly underrepresented on BET compared to their numbers in the U.S.

population

Table 4

Comparison of Racial Distribution of characters on BET (2012) with Racial Distribution of U.S. Population (2011)

Variable	United States ^b (%)	BET ^c (%)	N (N=36)
Black	13	89	32
White	64	5	2
Other	23	6	2
Hispanic	16	8	3

Note. Hispanic and Latino identity was coded separately, and it was not included in the racial categories. Data were collected for the Fall of 2012.

^bN= 306,110 million.

^cN= 36.

U.S Population Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011.

There was support for H3a (see Table 3); there is a significant difference between the proportion of Black women and Black men on the broadcast networks in comparison to their proportions in the U.S. population $\chi^2(1, n=30)=8.57, p<.01$. More specifically, both Black men and Black women were underrepresented on the broadcast networks in comparison to their numbers in the U.S. population. Hispanic men and women were also underrepresented. Whites, both males and females, on the other hand, were overrepresented

There was support was for H3b (see Table 5); there is a significant difference in the gender distribution of characters on prime time in comparison to their distribution in the U.S. population ($\chi^2(1, n=360)= 6.42, p<.01$). Men made up 59% and women were 41% of the broadcast networks characters compared to the U.S. where men make up 49% and women make up 51% of the population.

Similarly, men and women on BET were not equally represented. On BET, men make up 61% while women made up 39% of the characters. Consequently, on BET men were overrepresented and women were underrepresented in relation to their proportion in the U.S. population (see Table 5).

Table 5
Comparison of the Sex of Characters in Prime Time and BET with the U.S. Population (2011 Estimates)

Variable: Sex	Broadcast Networks (N=360) (%)	BET (N=36) (%)	United States (%)
Women	41	39	51
Men	59	61	49

Note. Data were collected for the fall 2012 season.

United States:

N=306,110 million; Women, N=155,416; Men, N=150,644

Women on Television:

Prime Time & BET, N= 160

Subsequent analyses of characters on BET will focus only on Blacks because there were too few White characters (N=2) or characters of other races (N=2) to make appropriate comparisons;

analyses of characters on the broadcast networks will look at all races/ethnicities. In addition any analyses comparing BET and broadcast network programs will only focus on Black characters because there were too few White characters to provide meaningful comparisons.

Occupation Representations

Data from tables 6 to 8 answer RQ1a and test H4a. Research question 1a asks about the distribution of occupations for Black characters in programs on the broadcast networks and BET and whether there were differences compared to their occupation distribution in the U.S. population, (see tables 6-8). Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference in whether Black characters were seen working in the broadcast networks ($\chi^2(3, n=30) = .13, p=.718$) and on BET ($\chi^2(1, n=32) = 2.39, p=.122$) in comparison to their working status in the United States. In this case, television does represent the U.S. population: the differences of Black characters working/not working on television and the United States are not far apart.

Table 6
Working Status of Black Characters on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012) Comparison to Black's Working Status in the U.S. Population

Work	Broadcast Networks (N=30) (%)	BET (N=32) (%)	United States (%)
Not Work-Unkn	43	28	38
Working	57	72	53

Note. Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

United States (Blacks): N=29907

Broadcast networks and BET percentages will add to 100%.

Television data were collected for the Fall of 2012.

United States data collected from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013

Broadcast networks compared to United States: ($\chi^2(3, n=30) = .13, p=. 718$)

BET compared to United States: ($\chi^2(1, n=32) = 2.39, p= .122$)

On the other hand, there were differences in terms of specific and actual jobs. Table 7 shows that there is a significant difference between Black characters' occupations on the broadcast networks ($\chi^2(3, n=30)= 10.9, p< .05$) and BET ($\chi^2(3, n=32)= 26.5, p< .001$) compared to their actual occupations in the United States. On the broadcast networks Blacks not working were overrepresented, professionals were overrepresented, white collar jobs were underrepresented and those in blue collar jobs were slightly underrepresented. Specifically, Black characters on the broadcast networks were categorized as follows: 43% were not working, 27% were working as professionals, 7% were in white collar jobs, and 23% were in blue collar jobs.

On BET, Black characters not working were underrepresented, professionals were overrepresented, white-collar jobs were underrepresented, and blue-collar jobs were overrepresented. Specifically, on BET, 28% were not working, 38% were in professional jobs, 9% were in white collar jobs and 25% were in blue collar jobs. Overall, Table 7 shows that there is a significant difference between the occupation distribution of Black characters on television compared to the specific occupations of Blacks in the U.S. population for both broadcast and BET programming.

Table 7

Occupation Distribution of Black Characters on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)
 Compared to Black's Occupation Distribution in the United States (2013)

Occupation	Broadcast Networks (N=30) (%)	BET (N=32) (%)	United States (%)
Not Working	43	28	38
Professional	27	37	10
White Collar	7	9	19
Blue Collar	23	25	24

Note. Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

United States (Blacks): N=29907

Broadcast networks and BET percentages will add to 100%.

Television data were collected for the Fall of 2012.

United States data collected from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013

Broadcast networks compared to United States: $\chi^2(3, n=30) = 10.9, p < .05$

BET compared to United States $\chi^2(3, n=32) = 26.5, p < .001$

The data in Table 8 were used to test H4a. There was no significant difference between the kinds of occupations African Americans were cast in on the broadcast networks compared to those they were cast in on BET ($\chi^2(3, n=62) = 1.73, p = .630$). There was no support for H4a (see Table 8 for results).

Table 8

Black Character's Occupations on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Occupation N=	Broadcast Networks		BET		Total 62
	C%	R%	C%	R%	
Not Working	43	59	28	41	22
Professional	27	40	38	60	20
White Collar	7	40	9	60	5
Blue Collar	23	47	25	53	15

Note. Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

R%: Row percentages. C%: Column percentages. Row and column percentages will add to 100.

Television data were collected for the fall of 2012.

$(\chi^2 (3, n=62) = 1.73, P=. 630)$

Occupation Prestige:

RQ1b asks about differences in levels of occupation prestige among Black characters on BET compared to the broadcast networks (see Table 9). There was a significant difference between the level of occupation prestige among Black characters on BET compared to the broadcast networks ($\chi^2(3, n=62)= 11.08, p<.05$). Particularly, over half of the Black characters on the broadcast networks appear in neutral occupations (53%) and very few were seen in non-prestigious occupations (7%).

On BET, over one third of the Black characters were seen in non-prestigious occupations (34%) while one fifth were seen in neutral occupations (22%) (see Table 9). Black characters appeared more in neutral occupations on the broadcast networks but were seen more in non-

prestigious occupations on BET. Overall, the data in table 9 show differences in the level of occupation prestige among Black characters in programs on the broadcast networks in comparison to BET programs.

Table 9
Black Character's Level of Occupation Prestige on Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Occupation Prestige	Broadcast Networks	BET	Total
N=	30	32	62
	C%	C%	
Unknown	17	9	8
Not Prestigious	7	35	13
Neutral	53	22	23
Prestigious	23	34	18

Note. Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

R. C%: Column percentages. Column percentages will add to 100.

$\chi^2(3, n=62) = 11.08, p < .05$

Data were collected for the Fall of 2012.

Occupation Relations:

Race and Marital Status Representation

There were some differences in terms of working status, race, and marital status. Three different tests were run for the racial composition that appeared on the broadcast networks. The data in tables 10 to 13 were used to test H4b. In the sample of broadcast networks programs, 75% of the characters were portrayed as not married, 16% were married, 8% had been formerly married and 2% were in mixed relationships (in between two categories). There were no

statistically significant differences by races in (all) characters' marital status on the broadcast networks, $\chi^2(6, n=360) = 4.376, p=.625$. There was, however, a statistically significant difference between Black characters' marital status on the broadcast networks, $\chi^2(4, n=28)=14.476, p<.001$.

Table 10
Racial Composition of Characters by Marital Status on the Broadcast Networks (2012)

Variable	White	Black	Other	Total
N=	305	30	25	(N=360)
	C%	C%	C%	
Not Married	74	77	84	270
Married	16	20	8	56
Formerly	8	3	4	28
Mixed	2	–	4	6

Note. Note. Hispanic and Latino identity was coded separately, and it was not included in the racial categories. Consequently because this was specifically dealing with race, Hispanics were not included in this sample.

C%: Column percentages. Column percentages will add to 100.

Race (all): $\chi^2(6, n=360)= 4.376, p=.625$. White : $\chi^2(6, n=296)=7.161, p=.267$. Black: $\chi^2(4, n=28)=14.476, p<.001$. Other: $\chi^2(6, n=21)= 1.647, p=.949$.

*Data were collected fall 2012

The data in table 11 were also used to test H4b. Among the Black characters, there were no statistically significant differences for characters' marital status on the broadcast networks compared to BET, $\chi^2(4, n=62)= 5.11, p=.275$ (see Table 11).

Table 11

Black Character's Marital Status on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Marital Status	Broadcast Networks		BET		Total
	N=				
	C%	R%	C%	R%	
Cannot Code	7	33	12	67	6
Not Married	70	55	53	45	38
Married	20	54	16	46	11
Div-Remar-Wid	3	25	9	75	4
Mixed	0	0	9	100	3

Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

R% : Row percentages. C% : Column percentages. Row and column percentages will add to 100.

$\chi^2(4, n=62)= 5.11, p= .275.$

Data were collected fall 2012

Race, Work, and Marital Status- Broadcast Networks

There were no statistically significant differences for White characters in terms of marital status and work, $\chi^2(6, n=296)= 7.161, p= .267.$ Table 12 shows that most of the White characters, whether married or not married, were seen working (see Table 12).

There was, however, a significant difference between Black characters' marital status by work on the broadcast networks, $\chi^2(4, n=28)= 14.47, p< .001.$ Only one third of married Black characters were seen in a job and nine out of ten who were not married were seen in a job (see Table 12). Among Blacks, those who were not married were more likely to have jobs than those

who were married. There were no statistically significant differences between marital status and work for characters of other races on the broadcast networks, $\chi^2(6, n=21)= 1.647, p= .949$ (see Table 12).

Table 12
Racial Composition of Marital Status by Work on the Broadcast Networks (2012)

Variable	Unknown		Not Working		Working		Total
White N=	49		41		206		(N=296)
	C%	R%	C%	R%	C%	R%	
Not Married	76	17	73	14	73	69	218
Married	10	11	24	21	16	68	47
Div-Remar-Wid	12	23	-		10	77	26
Mixed	2	20	2	20	2	60	5
Black N=	4		3		21		28
Not Married	25	5	33	5	91	91	21
Married	50	33	67	33	10	33	6
Div-Remar-Wid	25	100	-		-		1
Other N=	1		5		15		21
Not Married	100	6	80	24	80	71	17
Married	-		20	50	7	50	2
Div-Remar-Wid	-		-		7	100	1
Mixed	-		-		7	100	1

Note. Note. Hispanic and Latino identity was coded separately, and it was not included in the racial categories. Consequently because this was specifically dealing with race, Hispanics were not included in this sample.

White: $\chi^2(6, n=296)=7.161, p=.267$

Black: $\chi^2(4, n=28)=14.47, p<.001$.

Other: $\chi^2(6, n=21)=1.647, p=.949$.

Data were collected fall 2012

Black Character's Work and Marital Status- BET vs. Broadcast Networks

There were no statistically significant differences between Black characters' marital status and work on BET, $\chi^2(8, n=32)=11.9, p=.153$. Overall, there was no support for H4b: there were no differences by race for characters' marital status on the broadcast networks and BET. Also, among Black characters on the broadcast networks, only 10 percent of those who were working were married (see table 13).

Table 13

Black Character's Marital Status by Work on the BET (2012)

Marital Status by	Unknown	Not Working	Working	Total
Work N=	3	3	26	32
	C%	C%	C%	
Cannot Code	67	0	7	4
Not Married	33	100	50	17
Married	0	0	19	5
Div-Remar-Wid	0	0	12	3
Mixed	0	0	12	3

Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET.

Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

C%: Column percentages. Column percentages will add to 100.

$\chi^2(8, n=32)=11.9, p=.153$.

Data were collected fall 2012

Provocative Representations

H5 tested if broadcast network programs on BET differed in whether or not characters were provocatively dressed or involved sexually. As noted above, only Black characters were examined in this analysis because there were not enough characters in other races to make appropriate comparisons between BET and broadcast programs.

Provocatively Dressed

There was no statistically significant difference in whether Black characters on the broadcast networks, as compared to BET, were provocatively dressed, ($\chi^2(1, n=62) = .0025, p = .962$). Black characters were not provocatively dressed on the broadcast networks and on BET (see Table 14). Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences in whether Black women ($\chi^2(1, n=19) = .7676, p = .380$) or Black men ($\chi^2(1, n=43) = .977, p = .322$) were seen provocatively dressed in programs on the broadcast networks compared to those on BET.

Table 14

Black Characters Provocatively Clothed on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Prov. Clothing N=	Broadcast Networks		BET		Total
	C%	R%	C%	R%	
Not Appear	97	48	97	52	60
Appears	3	50	3	50	2
Men	22		21		43
Not Appear	95	50	100	50	42
Appears	5	100	0	0	1
Women	8		11		19
Not Appear	100	44	91	56	18
Appears	0	0	9	100	1

Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

R% : Row percentages. C% : Column percentages. Row percentages will add to 100.

$\chi^2(1, n=62) = .0025, p = .962$.

Men $\chi^2(1, n=43) = .977, p = .322$

Women $\chi^2(1, n=19) = .7676, p = .380$

Data were collected fall 2012

Sexual involvement

There was a statistically significant difference in sexual involvement for Black characters in programs on the broadcast networks as compared to BET, ($\chi^2(1, n=62)= 28.598, p<.001$). Close to nine out of ten of the Black characters on the broadcast networks were not sexually involved and slightly more than one tenth were sexually involved. On BET, it was quite the opposite, about eight out of ten of the Black characters were sexually involved while two out of ten were not involved sexually.

There was also a statistically significant difference for sexual involvement by sex: Black women ($\chi^2(1, n=19)= 6.73, p<.05$) and Black men ($\chi^2(1, n=43)= 22.33, p<.001$). On the broadcast networks Black men (86%) and women (88%) were less likely to be sexually involved, while on BET, Black men (86%) and women (73%) were more likely to be sexually involved.

Conversely, about one in ten Black men were sexually involved on the broadcast networks compared to BET where, more than eight out of ten Black men were sexually involved. For Black women, few were sexually involved on the broadcast networks (12%) while close to three quarters were sexually involved on BET. Overall, there was partial support for H5: both Black men and women did not appear provocatively dressed in programs on the broadcast networks and BET but were more likely to be sexually involved on BET than on the broadcast networks (see Table 15).

Table 15

Black Character's Sexual Involvement on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Sexual Involvement	Broadcast Networks	BET	Total
N=	30	32	62
	C%	C%	
No	87	19	32
Yes	13	81	30
Men	22	21	
No	86	14	22
Yes	14	86	21
Women	8	11	
No	88	27	10
Yes	12	73	9

Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

R%: Row percentages. C%: Column percentages. Row percentages will add to 100.

$\chi^2(1, n=62)= 28.598, p<.001$

Men $\chi^2(1, n=43)= 22.33, p<.001$

Women $\chi^2(1, n=19)= 6.73, p<.05$

Data were collected fall 2012

Cast Representations: Integrated vs. Segregated

H6a and H6b were tested by comparing the distribution of Black characters on the broadcast networks and BET by whether the entire cast of the program was integrated or segregated; The categories, “all White”, and “mostly White”, and “mostly minority,” indicated that the program was less integrated while a designation of “mixed” indicated the program was more integrated. There was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of Black

characters seen in integrated or segregated programs on the broadcast networks compared to BET ($\chi^2(2, n=62) = 46.74, p < .001$).

Table 16 shows that 53% of the Black characters on the broadcast networks appeared in a mixed (integrated) cast while 47% were in programs with a mostly white cast. There were no programs on the broadcast networks with mostly minority casts of characters. Consequently, there was support for H6a: Black characters appeared more in integrated programs on the five broadcast networks.

Programs on BET were mostly segregated with mostly minority characters. On BET, only 16% of Black characters appeared in a mixed (integrated) cast while more than 8 out of 10 (84%) were in the programs where the characters were more segregated (mostly minority). There was support for H6b: Black characters on BET appeared mostly in a mostly minority cast (segregated) and BET had fewer programs in which characters were more integrated (see table 16).

Table 16

Black Character's by Racially Defined Cast on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Cast Race	Broadcast Networks		BET		Total
	N=				
	C%	R%	C%	R%	
Mostly White	47	100	0	0	14
Mixed	53	76	16	24	21
Mostly Minority	0	0	84	100	27

Characters of other races and ethnicities are not included in this sample because there were too few of them on BET. Consequently, this sample only focuses on the Black characters.

R% : Row percentages. C% : Column percentages. Row and Column percentages will add to 10
Broadcast networks & BET: (χ^2 (2, n=62)= 46.74, p<. 001).
Data were collected fall 2012

Age Representations

Chronological Age:

Support for H7a is found in Table 17 which gives the distribution of Black characters' chronological age by gender in programs on the broadcast networks and BET. The average age of characters was 35 years of age on the broadcast networks and 27 on BET. Also, men (37 years of age) appeared older than women (31 years of age) on the broadcast networks. On BET, men (24 years of age) were much younger than the women (30 years of age).

An ANOVA analysis indicated a main effect for character's gender on the broadcast networks and BET, $f(5, 1) = .101$, $P < .05$; the average age was significantly higher for men on the broadcast networks ($M=37$) and lower for men on BET ($M=24$). There was no support for H7a: women were younger than men in programs on the broadcast networks. Interestingly, on BET men were 6 years younger than women (see Tables 17 & 18).

Table 17

Chronological Age of Black Characters by Sex on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Channel	Male	Female	Total
N=	N=43	N= 19	N= 62
Broadcast Networks	37.5	30.8	35.7
BET	24.2	31.6	26.8
Total	31.0	31.3	31.1

Channel: $F(1,1)= 11.3$; Sex $F=13$, ns Sex by Channel: $F =5.87$, $p<.05$

Social Age:

There was no support for H7b. There were more Black women (29%) than Black men (23%) as young adults and more Black men (77%) than Black women (71%) as settled adults on the broadcast network programs. On BET, there were more Black women (27%) than Black men (21%) cast as young adults and more Black men (68%) than Black women (64%) cast as settled adults. Overall, Black women appear more often than Black men as young adults and more Black men than Black women as settled adults on BET and the broadcast network programs.

Table 18

Black Character's Social Age by Sex on the Broadcast Networks and BET (2012)

Social Age N=	Broadcast Networks (C%)		BET (C%)		Total (N=59)
	Men (22)	Women (7)	Men (19)	Women (11)	
Child-Adol	-	-	11	-	2
Young Adults	23	29	21	27	14
Settled Adult	77	71	68	64	42
Elderly	-	-	-	9	1

Note. Only column total percentages are reported and they will add to 100%

Black women $\chi^2(2, n=18)=.67, p=.712$

Black men $\chi^2(2, n=41)=2.43, p=.295$

Data were collected fall 2012

To sum up the quantitative findings, there were more differences than similarities found in the way that African Americans were portrayed in programs on the broadcast networks compared to BET programs. Specifically, Black characters were likely to be found in two different genres, were seen working in different occupations and were portrayed differently in terms of the occupation prestige in programs on the broadcast networks compared to those on BET. Also, Blacks were more likely to appear in integrated settings on the broadcast networks and in segregated settings on BET programs. Other differences included gender-age distributions where Black men were portrayed older than their women counterparts on the broadcast networks and were depicted younger than Black women on BET. Lastly, Black characters were presented sexually involved on BET, more so than on the broadcast networks.

Nevertheless, not all of the African American portrayals in programs on the broadcast networks compared to BET programs were different. Some of the similarities involved Black

men outnumbering Black women in portrayals on both the broadcast network programs and BET program. Also, Black characters were portrayed respectively in terms of their style of dress on both the broadcast networks and BET. Other than the few similar portrayals there were major differences in the way that Blacks were portrayed in broadcast network programs and BET programs. However, the numbers in their representations don't tell us the full story on how different these images and messages might be. To augment these findings, a textual analysis was used to examine the way in which African Americans were portrayed on the channel geared towards the Black audience and what makes these portrayals different from an African American cultural context.

Part II: Qualitative

This section will present the results of the qualitative (textual) analysis. It will begin by identifying three themes detected from the BET movies which helped further distinguish differences between the portrayals of African Americans in BET programs compared to those broadcast network programs. The section will conclude with comparisons of the results found from both analyses in answering the second research question.

There were 9 movies and 1 television series in the BET programming included in this analysis. Three leading themes were found in the sample of movies on BET: urban settings, religiosity, and music. This analysis examines these themes primarily in relation to the African American cultural context. Interestingly, half of the movies focused on the experiences of urban single parent families from a male perspective. In these films the mother had passed away, was on drugs, or had passed away from drug use. Most families in the movies were in the midst of transformations, divorce, a death in the family, and a marriage. The coming together or deterioration of families is seen as a way to strengthen the members of the family as some cope with the death of a loved one.

THEMES

Urban Setting

Half of the BET movies took place in an urban setting where the majority of those living in the neighborhoods were Black or Hispanic. The locations ranged from Chicago, IL (west side), Queens, NY, Brooklyn, NY (Coney Island), and Modesto, CA. Some movies like *Janky Promoters*, *Coming to America* and *He Got Game* clearly illustrated the existing poverty in many of the neighborhoods through depictions of rough basketball courts, projects (low income housing), drug dealing, prostitution, homelessness and street sales people. Other movies included references about the lack of resources and/or opportunities in the neighborhoods. For example, at the start of

Roll Bounce (a story set in 1978 in Chicago) a group of young boys (including the main character Xavier “X”) are sitting down talking about the neighborhood skating rink that had just closed. In the discussion, one of the boys notes, “you know what they’re going to build there..same thing they always build. Either a gun shop”

Another boy answers, “BBQ shop”

Another boy, “chicken spot”

Another boy, “liquor store..”

In unison the boys reply, “or all 4 in one.”

The young boys expressed how the same kinds of businesses were typically built in these (urban) neighborhoods. In another scene the boys decide to take a trip to the North Chicago to skate in the uptown rink “Sweetwater.” During their visit they recognize major differences between Sweetwater and the recently closed down skating rink from their neighborhood. Some of these differences were the diversity (people of different races with mostly Whites), the music and the people’s dress styles (highly based on their economic status). This scene effectively illustrates the difference between a Black neighborhood and a White neighborhood. In sum, the BET movies (*Roll Bounce*, *He Got Game*, *Of Boys and Men*, *Coming to America*, *Janky Promoters*, *Battlefield America*) portray differences between wealth and poverty through the way in which environmental settings were depicted or discussed.

Music

The movies and the television series, *The Game*, were originally released between 1988 and 2012. The music frequently emphasized was religious, rap and hip hop, or rhythm and blues (R&B) all which bring familiar sounds to the Black American culture. Most of the musical scores included music typically heard when the movie was produced. For example the 1988 comedy film *Coming to America* incorporated disco as well as Afrocentric music from the 80’s, whereas the

2012 dance drama *Battlefield America* included mostly dance songs from the former R&B group B2K. The show *The Game*, was one of the few that included more up to-date-songs such as B.o.B's "Don't Let Me Fall", Rick Ross's "Mayback Music", as well as a few smooth jazz appearances. Other emphasized music genres were R&B, disco, soul, salsa and jazz. In addition, most of the music genres showcased the work of Black American artists.

Religious Music

According to the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2007), African Americans as compared to other racial and ethnic groups were more likely to report a formal religious affiliation. These movies on BET recognize the central significance of religion in African American culture. Half of the BET movies included religious references, many through musical orientations.

Most of the religious music in the BET movies were spirituals whose lyrics included openly religious references about "God" and/ or "Jesus." The religious music was based on the moral of the story and helped describe characters' emotions. Religious music also played a role in telling the story through the rhythm and lyrics. Moreover, the songs were sometimes sung by characters. Slow and fast spiritual songs often appeared in the background illustrating a sense of sadness or a proclamation of good news (gospel) to depict the overcoming of a struggle.

For example, in *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, Tiffany, a young and pretty dark skinned Black girl with hair to her shoulders is asked to sing for the first time in the church choir. Tiffany is the daughter of attorney Brian, a single father whose wife is a drug addict. In one scene Tiffany and her father were driving through the neighborhood while he's on the phone, Tiffany spots her mother on the porch of a house known for drugs (drug house) and asks her dad to stop the car. She invites her mother to church that upcoming Sunday letting her know that she'll be singing with the church choir. A few days later, they appear at church (a Black church), as the pastor is asking the audience, "what will you believe God for?..C'mon and Bless his name.." With music playing in the

background, the sound of the piano with the organ and light drum beats here and there. Suddenly Tiffany steps down for her solo and begins to sing, “Father can you hear me, I need your love today...I know that you are listening, father pleeeeee hear us..we will be okay..”

Tiffany’s voice is full of so much strength as she drags the “pleeeeee” begging God to listen to her prayer. She’s singing the song as though she’s speaking to God but also letting him know that she and her family will be okay. The words she’s singing, with the strength of her voice along with references to God illustrate the hope and faith in those who at times were helpless. In this case, the situation of Tiffany and her family (her father as a single parent and mother a drug addict), she remains faithful to God and continues to hope for brighter days by speaking into existence that things will be okay.

R &B, Rap, Disco and Hip Hop Music

Similar to religious music, R&B, rap and hip hop music were other forms of music often emphasized in this sample of movies on BET. Although rap has been criticized for many reasons, it nevertheless, provides a way to examine the multifaceted use of music in African American communities. In some cases, the lyrics in the songs illustrate the mentality of some of the characters while in other cases the lyrics tell a story about different things in the characters’ lives such as their economic situation, emotions, politics, and money.

The music in these movies included both older and recent artists/groups such as Gerald Lavert, The Cover Girls, Chuck-D, KRS-One, Public Enemy, Ice Cube, P.Diddy, Notorious BIG, Nappy Roots, Rick Ross and Trina, Zhane, Little Dragon, Kathryn Bostic, The Bee Gee’s, Bill Withers, Barry and Robin Gibb, George Clinton, Rick Ross, B.o.B, Young Jeezy and others. BET movies incorporated a variety of different artists, from different genres whose lyrics included a variety of themes such as love, money, drugs, and dancing.

Overall, the music in these movies illustrated the significance of music as an integral part of African American culture. Music reflects the social and cultural organization of African American culture and translates life into living sound by recording the experiences of Black Americans (Maultsby, 1996). Many of the references in the music described struggles (and/or the overcoming of struggles) against tremendous odds (e.g., loss of family members, financial struggles and other life changes).

Religiosity

Religious life has been credited for providing a means for a structured and organized social life within the Black American culture (Hecth, Jackson II & Ribeau, 2003). A major element in 5 out of the 10 movies analyzed was the many references of religion. In many instances, characters were praying, speaking or joking in reference to Jesus or God, and as previously noted, singing about God or Jesus. In addition, many characters prayed when emotionally down or called on God to help them get up. Overall, BET undoubtedly exemplified the importance of religion in the Black American culture.

One example of religious references, both humorous and serious is seen in the 1998 drama, *He Got Game*. In this movie, the main character Jesus Shuttlesworth, a student at Lincoln High School in Coney Island, NY, is being pursued by top college programs in the country because of his athletic abilities. In the movie, Jesus is the legal guardian of his younger sister Mary because his father accidentally killed his mother and was sentenced to prison. Jesus had not been in contact with his father, Jake Shuttlesworth, ever since he was convicted of the killing of his wife (Jesus' mother).

Jake gets temporally released by the governor in attempt to influence Jesus to go to Big State College, the governor's college, in return for an early release. Within the first few days of his release, Jake finds Jesus at a basketball court and attempts to persuade his college decision. In this

same conversation, Jesus expresses his resentment towards his father (Jake) being the cause of his mother's death.

Jake expresses his concern for his son, "I know these are tough times for you now so I figured hey..you might need some fatherly advice.."

Jesus, no longer claiming Jake as his father asks, "from who?"

Jake responds, "from me.. (Jesus asks about what)..about number one, where you gonna go to school at, you made a decision?"

Jesus expresses his frustration of the pressure he's been receiving from everyone else about his college decision, "From you too? ..I already know what you bout to say..this bout to be the most important decision in your life.."

Jake replies, "naw that's not what I'm about to say..I'm just hoping that you aint' compromise yourself son.... All I'm saying is, I would like to know where you're going"

Jesus responds asking, "what difference does it make where I'm going?"

Jake once again expresses his concern, "I would like to know.. I pray that you understand why I pushed you so hard (holding his hands out in prayer stance) It's only to prepare you for that next level son, you're the first Shuttlesworth to (we're going to see) make it out these projects. And I was the one who put the ball in your hand son, I was the one who put the ball in your crib.

Jesus points out, "well I aint no baby anymore.. Why in the hell did you name me Jesus anyway, what type of name is that?"

Jake sincerely responds, "It's a biblical name.... people make mistakes, people view off the past, so what? God forgives them!"

Jesus then asks, "has God forgiven you for killing my mom?"

Jake replies with lots of energy, "I pray that he has son, I believe he has, when will you?"

Jesus responds loudly, “Neva!”

The movie is based on Jesus’ career decision at the same time as Jake (his father) is released on parole for a week by the state’s governor to persuade his son to play for the governor’s college in exchange for a reduced sentence. Jake finds it difficult to persuade or hold a conversation with his son (Jesus) because Jesus is still angry about the death of his mother (Jake’s wife). In this scene Jake uses his faith in God to express his love and care for his son and his college decision.

Meanwhile Jesus continues to resent his father and criticizes the name he was given as a way to express his inability to forgive his father. In a way, faith is used in the form of forgiveness in this scene. Jake explains that he hopes and believes (faith) that God has forgiven him while Jesus expresses hate (unfaithfulness) towards his name (Jesus) and admits to never being able to forgive his father.

Moreover, in the midst of visiting schools Jesus comes across a coach from Tech University. Not knowing the reason for his name the coach expresses to Jesus,

“When I heard you were coming to visit..I got down on my hands and knees and prayed to God (he holds Jesus’s hand and starts praying).. Dear God, please deliver Jesus to us (he yells) to let Tech University be the throne of Jesus.”

Jesus was in the background chucking almost in disbelief of what is taking place. The Tech University coach’s prayer exemplifies how many college scouts were comparing Jesus the character to Jesus Christ based on his basketball talent. Many colleges sought Jesus because they believed he was the best athlete the nation had ever seen and saw him as an upcoming important figure college basketball. In doing so, there were many humorous comparisons of the character to Jesus Christ the figure of the Christian religion.

In the movie, Jesus Shuttlesworth doesn’t appear as a spiritual person although many references associate him and Jesus Christ. Other movies like *Roll Bounce*, *All About the*

Benjamins, and *Coming to America* also included references about God or Jesus in comedic forms. However, there were also references when the truths about characters' religious beliefs were revealed in other parts of the movie. For instance, at the end of *He Got Game*, Jesus Shuttlesworth's high school coach reads a letter written by Jesus announcing his college selection. The letter reads,

“I've done a lot of praying and asked God to show me the way, my sister Mary will be coming with me and she will attend 7th grade.. this September I will be enrolled at Big State University.. In closing, my family and I send our prayers to our father, may God bless him.”

In the letter, Jesus reveals his choice and does so by indicating that it was with the help of God he was able to make the decision. Although Jesus and his father did not end on a good note, Jesus reveals his love and forgiveness for his father through sending blessings from God to his father. This BET movie and a few others disclosed that although religious references may be made comedic, they were still part of the story and at times illustrate the significance of religion to the Black American culture.

Old Stereotypes: Gangstas-Hustlas

Another common element that appeared in 5 out of the 10 movies was the appearances of old stereotypes with depictions in which characters were portrayed as gangstas and hustlas. Of the 5 movies, there were one or more illustrations or references concerning neighborhood gangstas.

Gangsta-Hustla

Gangstas and Hustlas were often portrayed as angry black men or fearsome rebels. In the case of these BET movies, neighborhood gangstas were depicted, portraying a Black man as the neighborhood thug (gangsta) and typically feared by others. In many cases the neighborhood “gangsta,” was known for his involvement in activities such as selling drugs, robberies, carrying a

gun, smoking marijuana and killing. In all 5 movies involving neighborhood gangstas, the gangsta was affiliated with one or more of the main characters although none of the main characters were characterized as gangstas. In 3 of the 5 movies, the neighborhood gangsta was seen smoking marijuana or made reference to doing so. Other than the movies with “gangsta” portrayals, a total of 5 out of 10 movies (*Of Boys and Men, He Got Game, Diary of Man Black Woman, All about the Benjamins* and *Battlefield America*) included drug use references with most involving the use of marijuana. For example, in the 2009 comedy *Janky Promoters*, promoter Jelly Roll drives artist Young Jeezy to the “hood” in hopes of helping him obtain some marijuana. In this movie Mondo, a short, dark skinned, Black man is the neighborhood gangsta.

Jelly Roll decides to take Young Jeezy to Mondo’s house to acquire some marijuana since he had been asking for it since his arrival in Modesto, CA. Jelly Roll knocks on the door and acts fearful, though still comedic, when Mondo answers the door. Jelly Roll explains his situation to Mondo on how he’s trying to acquire some marijuana for Young Jeezy.

Mondo asks, “You brought Young Jeezy to the hood to cop (purchase) some weed?”

Jelly Roll responds in excitement, “to cop (purchase) a pound of weed man..”

Mondo replies, “Jelly Roll, you aint got no sense..now get that man out of here before he gets jacked. This the projects man they don’t give a Fuck how famous you are..man I’m gonna sell it to you this time. The next time, you’re getting shot.”

Mondo’s reponse to Jelly Roll was not concerned with the fact that he was selling an illegal drug to a famous actor but rather that the famous actor was in an unsafe place. The conversation that went on between Jelly Roll and Mondo completely normalized the use of weed and focused more on the

rapper's safety. In this illustration, Mondo is a neighborhood gansta who obviously sells marijuana and is capable of harming someone based on his casual threat to Jelly Roll.

In other movies, neighborhood ganstas were portrayed as involved in illegal activities and smoking marijuana: in one case the "gansta" character also offered marijuana to young boys (*Of Boys and Men*). With so many marijuana references in movies, BET not only normalizes the drug but portrays its frequent use among Black Americans.

Comparing Analyses: Overall Portrayals on BET

Genre

The quantitative analysis testing H1 revealed that over three quarters of the Black characters on BET were found in drama and 12% were found in situation comedies. Specifically, the BET movies *Of Boys and Men*, *Battlefield America*, *I Will Follow*, and *He Got Game* were dramas. Two movies, *Roll Bounce* and *Diary of a Black Woman* and the television series *The Game* were both comedy and drama. While *Janky Promoters*, *Coming to America* and *All about the Benjamins* were comedies. Nevertheless although mostly dramatic, most of the movies on BET included comedic elements.

Movie Cast

Since BET is a channel for the Black audience the majority of characters in the movies were of African American descent (Black characters). There were, however, some instances when a movie had a more racially diverse cast. The following movies involved characters of other races: *All About the Benjamins*, *He Got Game*, *Battlefield America*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Rollbouce*, and *Battlefield America, The Game (TV series)*. Children/adolescents of different races (Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, or biracial) were seen in *Roll Bounce* and *Battlefield America*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* and *The Game*. About 6 out of the 10 BET movies included men as the leading characters whereas 5 of the 10 had both men and women as leading characters. Both *All*

about the Benjamins and *He Got Game* included Hispanic women engaged in interracial relationships with Black men whereas *The Game* and *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* included references about an interracial relationship between a Black man and a White woman.

In the 2002 comedy *All About the Benjamins*, Gina, a light skinned Hispanic woman with brown hair, is Reggie's girlfriend. Reggie is a con man who makes a living from stealing and is on the run from Bucum, a bounty hunter assigned to arrest him. Gina is a supporting, outgoing, and helpful girlfriend who is employed (based on her reference about the amount of money she made in tips). In one scene, Reggie and Gina are at Reggie's apartment, Gina is walking around trying to find her good luck charm before the lottery numbers were revealed and asks Reggie, "Baby, have you seen my Santa Maria?" Based on her accent, Gina sounds Hispanic but once she asks Reggie for her St. Mary (Santa Maria) statue for luck, her native language as well as her religion were revealed. Gina asking Reggie about her Santa Maria charm illustrates a sense of comfort between the two about their cultural differences. She feels comfortable enough to ask him about something that defines her and her beliefs.

Another interracial dating example focuses on Lala, a light skinned skinny Hispanic woman with long black hair. In the 1998 drama *He Got Game*, Lala is Jesus Shuttlesworth's girlfriend, both are students at Lincoln High School while Jesus is the top college prospect in the nation. Lala is portrayed as a shady, disloyal, and conniving girlfriend. She goes behind Jesus's back and is paid to convince him to meet an agent with whom she is sleeping but yet refers to him as her "brother." In one scene, Lala admits to have once loved Jesus, but, she believes she is living a fairy tale and knows that their relationship will not last past high school. Lala decides to look out for herself and, as most people, puts more power in the money the agent(s) was paying her rather than in remaining faithful to Jesus.

The movies *He Got Game*, *All About the Benjamins*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* and TV series *The Game* portrayed interracial relationships involving Black men with women of a different race/ethnicity and exemplified some of the ways women were depicted in this sample of BET movies. In *All about the Benjamins*, Gina, is an outgoing, supporting woman who works and is in a relationship. In a few other movies (*Battlefield America*, *Roll Bounce*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Coming to America*, *Of Boys and Men*) some women were also portrayed in the same ways and as hard workers, helpers, and seen as positive role models.

However, women weren't always portrayed positively, Lala (in *He Got Game*), was depicted making her money by sleeping with another man, as untrustworthy, and sometimes appeared provocative. In the television series, *The Game*, Melanie, an attractive light skinned Black woman with long dark hair, is the wife of San Diego Saber's running back Darwin Davis. In this episode of *The Game*, Melanie is shown as a housewife who was once a medical student but had given up her medical career to stay at home for her husband. Melanie is also depicted to be a jealous and conniving woman who goes behind her husband's back by giving his son (of another woman) a paternity test. Other than staying at home and hanging out with her friends, Melanie wasn't occupied much with other responsibilities. Nonetheless, Melanie repeatedly expresses concern about her husband Darwin and cares for him deeply.

Also in *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, one of the main characters Madea, an elder Black woman with a full figure and gray hair, was often portrayed as a negative role model. In the movie, Madea made many references to smoking marijuana, carried a handgun, occasionally misused the English language by mispronouncing a number of words, and got in trouble with the law a few times. On the other hand, Madea was also depicted as a caring woman who brought the family together and was helpful to those who needed her. Overall, the BET mostly portrayed women in a positive lens with a few instances of pessimistic depictions.

Occupation

Black characters in most of the BET movies were cast in a job with the exception of *He Got Game*. The 1998 drama *He Got Game*, is based on the top ranked high school basketball player, Jesus Shuttlesworth and his career decision. Few of the other main characters were seen working in this movie but the main character (Jesus), as well as others, were frequently identified as student athletes.

The jobs in which characters in BET movies were cast included promoters, business owners, janitors, bounty hunters, athletes, attorneys, a top agent of a marketing firm, garbage men, sports broadcasting agents, a public relations representative, servers, and an auto shop owner.. Each character was cast in a specific occupation for different reasons, but most Black characters were portrayed as hard workers whether they were or were not employed.

For example, in the 2009 comedy *Janky Promoters*, two men work hard to keep their jobs even though they do not have the best attitudes or qualities. Russell Redd, a heavily built light skinned Black man with a mini afro and Jelly Roll, a skinny light skinned Black man with a fade, were rap artist promoters. The movie begins with a definition of the term “janky” describing the two promoters as, “shady, untrustworthy, dishonest, despicable.” Working with his partner Jelly Roll, Russell attempts to promote Young Jeezy, a rap artist who comes to perform in “M-Do” (Modesto), California. Not only do they unsuccessfully promote Young Jeezy’s concert but they also don’t have enough money to pay the artist for his appearance and performance.

On the day of Young Jeezy’s performance, Russell visits his mother to ask for money to fund Young Jeezy’s concert. He asks his mother,

“c’mon mom..all I need is a one day loan, the kind you be giving out around here.”

His mother has been a drug dealer since the 1960’s and he had referred to her habits of lending money to those who would reimburse her immediately. Russell’s purpose in traveling to his

mother's house illustrates his lack of funds from the job he holds. When his mother asked him how short he was, Russell explained,

“Now I got to pay for the building, I got to get the hotels, and you know those rappers be having all kinds of requests.. you know we about ninety five hundred in the whole..”

Russell described to his mother some of the expenses of being a promoter, being responsible for the artist's performance, and admitted to being \$9500 short. As owners of their business, they were responsible for coordinating the concert but could not afford the expenses. Overall, the two men were struggling, in some cases stealing, and spending in their attempt to hold a successful show.

Another example is in the 2005 comedy-drama, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*. In this movie, most of the characters were shown in occupations. Charles and Brian were two attorneys. In the beginning Charles and his current wife, Helen, attend a ceremony where Charles was honored in America as, “the Jacob Feinstein's attorney of the year.” With the kind of money Charles was making, he was shown to be successful and lived in a fine home in the suburbs. Helen, while she was with him, was not working. Brian is also a defense attorney who acts as Madea (his aunt) and Helen's attorney at some point in time. Brian is a single parent taking care of his daughter while his wife is a drug addict. Despite their different lives, Charles and Brian hold prestigious occupations and were willing to use their privilege to defend family and friends.

There were also instances in which characters in BET movies struggled to find jobs. For example, in the 2005 comedy-drama *Rollbouce*, Curtis Smith, an older Black man, a widower with two children, found it very difficult to qualify for a job. With a chemical engineering degree from Georgia State University, Curtis had worked for an engineering company but was laid off. Meanwhile he lost his wife to cancer and was struggling trying to find a job to support his two children. Curtis arises every morning to go on a job hunt trying to cover up the fact that he is unemployed. In one scene Curtis sells his car in order to help make ends meet. When his son

Xavier finds out his father is unemployed, an argument ensues that leads them to realize that things haven't been the same ever since Curtis's wife and Xavier's mother died. In this movie, Curtis is not employed but works hard to try to find a job in hopes of supporting his family.

Overall, whether characters were portrayed as widowers, single, or in relationships they were still depicted with a job. In the cases where men were widowers, they were portrayed sedulously to make ends meet. Black men in BET movies were mostly portrayed as hard workers with a variety of different jobs, both prestigious and non-prestigious, and in diverse levels of occupations. However, although *Janky Promoters* illustrated the two men working hard, they were mostly portrayed as unprofessional ("janky") through their lack of organization and professionalism when promoting for Young Jeezy. There were also positive portrayals of black men in 4 of the 10 BET movies (*Of Boys and Men*, *Roll Bounce*, *I Will Follow*, *Battlefield Ameriaca* and *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*), where men were seen as helpful, loving, and sometimes as leaders.

Marital Status

The relationships frequently depicted throughout the movies were those in which a man and a woman were dating, were widowers, were divorcees, or in one case a couple eventually falling in love and getting married. Some of the movies and the TV series on BET included many marriage references (*Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *The Game*, *Roll Bounce*, *He Got Game*, *Of Boys and Men*, *Janky Promoters*, and *Coming to America*). However, there weren't many portrayals of married couples.

In the 1988 comedy *Coming to America*, Akeem Joffer, a prince of the wealthy African country Zamunda, was pampered his entire life. On his 21st birthday, his parents coordinated a marriage with an arranged bride, Imani Izzi, but Akeem was not pleased that she was trained to serve him and had few interests of her own. He requested to be sent to the United States to find an

independent minded, intelligent woman who loved him for him rather than his position in Zamunda. Akeem and his friend/servant Semi landed in Queens, NY where they pretended to be poor foreign students and began working at a local fast food restaurant called McDowell. Akeem fell in love with Lisa McDowell, the daughter of the McDowell restaurant owner, while still pretending to be poor. Lisa was currently involved with Darryl, a tall handsome light skinned Black man who came from a wealthy family. Akeem eventually won Lisa over but once she found out he lied to her she was no longer interested in him. In the end, Akeem returned to Zamunda with his family only to unravel his bride's face net at the wedding and to discover he was marrying Lisa, the woman of his dreams.

Coming to America and *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* were along with the TV series, *The Game*, portrayed a married couple or a wedding where two people participated in a celebration of togetherness. In *Coming to America*, the celebration included African drums in the background with a room filled with men and women in African attire to represent the cultural tradition. However, based on the events in the movie, *Coming to America*, took place in a fictional African country and may possibly be perceived as an unrealistic story.

In the television series *The Game*, Melanie and Darwin were two characters portrayed currently married while Jason and Kelly were formerly married and frequently referenced the current state of them being divorced. Other movies involved singles, widowers, or couples dating but very few any currently married couples. It's important to note that there were also a few instances where characters were unfaithful to their significant others (*He Got Game*, *The Game* and *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*). Of the 3 movies that involved acts of unfaithfulness, women more than men were those portrayed being unfaithful to their significant others.

Provocativeness

For the most part, both men and women were presented respectively in regards to their style of dress. There were, however, a few instances when women were portrayed as hypersexual, as lascivious women with large sexual appetites. For example, in the 2009 comedy *Janky Promoters*, Jelly Roll and Russell Red attempt to unsuccessfully promote Young Jeezy's concert. Once Young Jeezy arrives to Modesto, CA, women continuously threw themselves on the rapper once they realized who he was. In one scene, Young Jeezy arrived at his hotel to get himself together before the show. Immediately after, a housekeeper walked in his room and shut the door employing her beauty to manipulate him into having sex with her. Young Jeezy was confused and expressed his lack of sexual interest towards the woman eventually escorting her out of his room. Other scenes included sexual involvement such as women having sex while at work, participating in sexual experiences with children near, men making sexual references about women ..to name a few.

Other minor provocative scenes were seen in *Coming to America*, *Roll Bounce* and *He Got Game*, where at least one woman seductively and flirtatiously communicated with one or more men while dressed provocatively (i.e., booty shorts/skirt and a belly shirt). Overall, in the movies noted, women were portrayed or referenced to being hypersexual. Other BET movies mostly depicted women and men as respectfully dressed (fully clothed), as possessing positive moral values, determined to succeed, leaders, and positive role models.

BET and Broadcast Networks Comparison

RQ2 asks about whether there were more empowering images of Blacks in programs on BET or the broadcast network programs. In this study, empowering images/messages referred to the social, economic and spiritual strengthening of African Americans and other people of color. In regards to social interactions, Blacks appeared mostly in mixed settings but had no appearances in shows with mostly minority characters in programs on the broadcast networks. On BET, Blacks appeared in mostly minority settings with few appearances in mixed settings. As illustrated, Blacks

on BET were portrayed in interracial relationships, interacting with people of different races (e.g., Whites, Hispanics, and Asians) and were often portrayed in intimate settings as well as interpersonal and familial situations. Overall, African Americans were seen more in social interactions with people of different races in both the broadcast networks and BET programs. However, based on the under representation of Blacks on the broadcast networks in comparison to their proportion in the U.S, population, BET illustrated more social interactions of Blacks in diverse cast settings.

In regards to economics, Black characters on BET and broadcast network programs were mostly characterized as employed. Specifically, there was a difference in the occupation distribution of Black characters on the broadcast networks and BET. The broadcast networks had a higher percentage of Black characters not working as compared to BET. Also, BET movies portrayed more Blacks working in a variety of different occupations than the broadcast networks. Occupational roles were not only diversified on BET but when Blacks were not employed in the BET movies they were frequently seen working hard to find a job. In general, Black characters on BET were often portrayed as diligent, whether they appeared working or not. Overall, BET portrayed more economically encouraging occupation positions than the broadcast networks.

Lastly, BET exemplified the significance of spirituality than the broadcast network programs because of the BET programs many religious references. BET's programs frequently illustrated characters expressing their belief in God through prayers, songs or, calling on "God" or "Jesus.". There were also a few cases when some of the spiritual references were seen as humorous or less serious. In sum, although BET depicts African Americans in unfavorable positions at times, it still provides more empowering images of Blacks than the broadcast networks in terms of the social, economic, and spiritual strengthening of African Americans.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

This thesis examined two samples of programs aired during prime time hours: a sample of programs aired on the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and CW) and a sample of programs seen on BET. The BET sample was 9 films, many of which were originally theatrical movies, and one comedy television show. The broadcast network programs were dramas, action adventure programs, reality shows, situation comedies, an award show and news magazines.

This analysis examined whether there were more empowering images of African Americans on BET, a network geared towards the Black audience, or on the broadcast network channels. The results provide an interesting look at the differences and similarities of how African Americans were represented in the broadcast network programs as compared to the programs on BET. The qualitative analysis in particular, using an African American cultural context, identified three elements which differentiated differences in the portrayals of African Americans on the broadcast networks and BET.

Overall, results indicated that Blacks are seen in different genres than have been in the past, an overrepresentation of Whites and males and an underrepresentation of people of color and women. In regards to working status and occupation, Blacks are employed and in a variety of different occupations on the broadcast networks and on BET. Blacks are more likely to be seen in integrated settings on the broadcast networks and in segregated settings on BET.

Regarding sexual involvement, Black women are more likely to be portrayed with heavy sexual appetites on BET than on the broadcast networks. With these results in mind, children and adolescents of color can potentially develop stereotypical conceptions of the world and a range of possibilities for themselves. This chapter will discuss the findings and potential implications and address the limitations and future directions of the study.

Genre

The quantitative analyses found fewer African Americans were seen in situation comedies than in the other genres on the broadcast networks and on BET. In short, African Americans were not, as expected, cast more often in situation comedies than in other genres on the broadcast networks or on BET. This finding is different from previous studies (Nelson, 1999 & Signorielli, 2009a). Instead, Blacks were found primarily in reality television shows and action adventure programs on the broadcast networks and in dramatic movies on BET.

Under representations

Television and movies are influential tools of socialization in the United States that effect how people view themselves (Edison and Yancey, 2010). People of color are heavy viewers of television and the media has an impact on how, especially children and adolescents, self-identify and interact with others (Littlefield, 2008). How viewers see and racially identify with, is influenced by the media and viewers tend to pay the most attention to characters who they share the same race, gender and age with (Huntemann and Morgan, 2001).

Race

Accordingly, in the fall 2012 sample of the broadcast networks, Whites were still overrepresented in comparison to their numbers in the U.S population, while Blacks, Latinos and Hispanics, and characters of other races (i.e., Native American & Asian) were underrepresented. These results are different from previous findings because although Blacks had reached parity with their representations on television in the early to mid-2000s (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg, Hardwood & Anderson, 2002; Mastro & Brand, 2002; Signorielli, 2009a), they are now underrepresented on the broadcast networks. Other characters of color, however, also remain underrepresented. As expected, Blacks on BET are overrepresented in comparison to their proportion in the U.S. population and BET has very few White, Latino & Hispanic, and Asian characters. The racial distribution on BET does not reflect the racial distribution in the U.S. Overall; this study shows little change in representation by race on the broadcast networks: Blacks and other people of color are underrepresented while Whites are overrepresented.

Children and adolescents learn social prejudices and practices by observing patterns in society (Kellner, 2003). According to Huntemann and Morgan (2001) children and adolescents recognize the difference in the frequency of portrayals. So it is possible that children and adolescents of color may also be able to distinguish between differences in the frequency of portrayals of people of color and the gender distribution on television on the broadcast networks in comparison to BET. There is still an under representation of Blacks and other people of color on the broadcast network programs and when they do appear, they are seen mostly in mixed settings with few programs with mostly minority casts. Additionally, programs on the broadcast networks and BET continue to underrepresent children and adolescents as well as women in

general. With the underrepresentation of Blacks or other people of color, women and children and adolescents on the broadcast network programs, it is not easy for children, particularly minorities, to be able to find characters with which they can identify as well as see themselves as significant in society. Huntemann and Morgan (2001) note that children and adolescents who aren't exposed to characters like themselves on television learn that their group is not very important in society.

Gender

This analysis also provides information on differences in the gender distribution of characters on prime time television. When comparing the gender distribution of characters to the gender distribution in the U.S., males outnumber females overall, and by race, there were always more men than women. On the broadcast networks, there were more White men than White women, more Black men than Black women, and more Hispanic women than Hispanic men. On BET, there were more Black men than Black women.

Overall, men continue to outnumber women in the broadcast network programs and in BET programming which does not accurately represent the gender distribution of the U.S. population. Specifically, there are more women in the overall population in the U.S. population (51%), yet they remain underrepresented on broadcast networks and on BET. Men, on the other hand, make up a smaller percentage of the U.S. population (49%) and were overrepresented, as compared to women, in primetime both broadcast network and BET (Signorielli, 2009a), and Black men continue to outnumber Black women (Hinton, Seggar, Northcott, & Fontes, 1974).

This illustrates a continuation of an underrepresentation of women as compared to men, even in programs on BET.

Media is not only a tool of socialization but can also be used as a tool of domination. In this study, men compared to women were seen as the dominant group. According to Edison and Yancey (2010), the dominant group is able to reinforce the status quo by justifying inequality and/or equality by denying the existence of inequality. The media tends to deny gender inequality by continuously over representing men and under representing women thus neglecting social structure. With men seen more frequently than women in programs on the broadcast networks and on BET, viewers are more likely to see more male characters than female characters and in the case of BET, more male characters as main leads. This may send the message that women are not as important and may not need to be as frequently portrayed as men on television. These images and messages are influential and worth considering through the lens of those likely to be viewing and forming perceptions. A social cognitive perspective would suggest that these images may contribute to schemas that may showcase men as more important than women in our society.

Age

The analysis found differences in age representations. The average age was significantly higher for men on the broadcast networks (37 years of age) and lower for men on BET (24 years of age). On the other hand, women were portrayed as younger than men on the broadcast networks but appeared significantly (6 years) older than men on BET. Additionally, there were more Black women than Black men cast as young adults in the broadcast networks and BET

movies. And both the broadcast networks and BET movies cast more Black men than Black women as settled adults.

Some of these findings reinforce previous analyses (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Signorielli, 2004) about women being portrayed younger than men in the broadcast network programs. In addition, there is still an underrepresentation of children and adolescents as well as elderly people in the broadcast network programs, more so than on BET. Although BET programs have very few children/adolescents and elders, they manage to include more of a variety in terms of age, specifically among Black characters, than the programs on the broadcast networks. It's important to note that BET programs portray Black men considerably younger than their women counterparts, illustrating a change in the representation of Black men's age on television. Even so, these findings indicate that lessons about aging was not evenly applied to men and women in programs on the broadcast networks or on BET, and there is still an underrepresentation of children and elders.

Occupation

The answer to the first research question indicated that prime time television continues to provide a wealth of information about occupations. In this study, Black characters were seen in specific jobs and working on both the broadcast networks and BET. However, a larger percentage of White characters, as compared to characters of color, were characterized as working on the broadcast networks. This finding duplicates results from an earlier analysis of broadcast network programs (Signorielli & Khaleberg, 2001). Interestingly, there were no

differences in whether Black characters were seen working on the broadcast networks or in BET as compared to their working status in the United States.

In the broadcast network programs, Black characters that were unemployed or cast in the professions were overrepresented while those in white collar and blue collar jobs were underrepresented. On BET, Black characters who were unemployed or in white collar jobs were underrepresentation while they were overrepresented in the professions and in blue collar jobs. By comparison, Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2001), in a previous analysis of occupations on television, found that Black characters in the professions and law enforcement jobs were overrepresented and those in blue and white collar jobs were underrepresented as compared to their numbers in the U.S. population. More recently, Signorielli (2009a) isolated a similar pattern in broadcast network programs except in those programs, with a cast of predominately people of color.

Consequently, BET's portrayals of working life may translate into Black children's expectations about their future in the workforce by indicating the possibility for economic empowerment. Children of color who witness Black characters as hard workers, working as professions as well as in blue collar jobs with mostly representations of neutral or prestigious occupations, may encourage Black children and also confirm that Blacks are just as intelligent and capable of making it in the important world of work.

Marital Status and Work

The analysis also specified differences between marital status and work among Black characters on the broadcast networks. Specifically among Black characters on the broadcast

networks, those who were not married were more likely to be seen working compared to those who were married. There were no differences between marital status and work for Whites and other characters of color. Nonetheless, this result differentiates from a past analysis where Signorielli (1982) found more women of color than White women were likely to be portrayed as married. In this study, three quarters of the characters on the broadcast network programs were portrayed as not married and there were no significant differences by race. By comparison, Signorielli and Khahlenberg (2001) acknowledged that married women were more likely to be portrayed as working than not working. However, this analysis found that among Black characters on the broadcast networks, those who were not married were more likely to be portrayed as working than not working. Thus, characters on the broadcast networks programs and BET, particularly Black characters, were typically portrayed as not married.

Accordingly, both cultivation and social cognitive theories suggest the media's potential to viewers' beliefs, expectations, and standards for romantic relationships (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). With more characters (Black or not) seen as not married, this may send the message that legal relationships between two no longer exist or are not of significance. Children and adolescents viewing these images and messages may falsely interpret the importance of marriage between two. From cultivation and social cognitive perspectives, media depictions may serve as a source of unrealistic relationship beliefs and ideals because they socialize viewers into believing that the lack of marriage illustration are in fact representative of relationships in reality and applicable to one's own experience.

BET

And, of course we cannot ignore that the BET sample was mostly movies. This is important to note because it illustrates the lack of a variety of programs on BET today. In the past scholars have identified BET to rely heavily on music videos, paid programming (Tait & Barber, 1996) and situation comedies that humorously depict the African American community (Pulley, 2004). In this analysis, there were more movies than television series aired on BET in the fall of 2012, which was not the case on the broadcast networks. This disparity is especially interesting given the change in ownership on BET. On the whole, the broadcast networks are provided with a variety of programming and BET has few television show options and tends to go periods of airing more (old) movies than new television series.

Comparing Images of the Quantitative-Qualitative Analyses

Both the qualitative and quantitative analyses observed whether there were provocative representations of characters on the broadcast networks and BET. Interestingly, there were no provocative representations of characters by race on the broadcast networks. On BET, Black men and women were mostly portrayed respectively in terms of their style of dress, however, this is not the case for sexual involvement. The qualitative analysis found some occasions where Black women were portrayed as having larger sexual appetites and practically throwing themselves onto men (*Janky Promoters* and *Coming to America*). Other minor seductive themes involved Black women flirting with one or more men while dressed provocatively (*Janky Promoters*, *Coming to America*, *Roll Bounce*, and *He Got Game*). At the same time, most of the BET content

portrayed Black men and women with positive moral values, determined to succeed, leaders, positive role models and typically dressed respectfully (fully clothed).

According to Hauntemann and Morgan (2001), young audience members learn numerous lessons from portrayals that result from these media figures. The models provide a number of elements of style, outlook and value that can be incorporated into one's own identity (Hauntemann & Morgan, 2001). For the young Black girl exposed to images and messages of Black women being sexualized on BET, the viewer, for example may learn the social definition of what it means to be a Black woman in society. Moreover, these elements may also guide schemas and expectations in dealing with people of color, which may then indirectly contribute to other's sense of identity (Hauntemann & Morgan, 2001).

The second research question focused on empowering images for the characters. Specifically, the study sought to find whether programs on BET or those on the broadcast networks provided more empowering images of African Americans. In answering the second research question, data from both analyses were used to make comparisons. Empowering referred to the economic, social, and spiritual strengthening of African Americans through imagery. Three common themes emerged from the BET movies: an urban setting, music, and religiosity. These thematic elements also helped differentiate the way African Americans are portrayed on a channel geared towards the Black audience (BET) and in the broadcast network programs.

In regard to the economic empowerment of African Americans, the quantitative analysis found that programs on the broadcast networks and BET provide different levels of occupational

prestige, particularly for Black characters. Black characters appeared more in neutral compared to prestigious or non prestigious occupations in programs on the broadcast networks. These results are similar to Signorielli's (2009a) findings that women and men of color, specifically Blacks, are more likely to be cast in neutral occupations in broadcast network programs. On the other hand, BET content compared to the broadcast network programs show more Black characters working in professional and white collar jobs and few as not working. Black characters on BET also appear equally in non-prestigious and prestigious occupations.

In comparison, the qualitative results illustrated that over half of the BET movies took place in an urban setting and displayed a lower socioeconomic class standard of living. The other movies as well as the TV series on BET portrayed Black characters living in more developed, suburban neighborhoods and possibly as part of the middle and/or upper class. Black characters on BET were seen working in an array of different occupations and when shown struggling to find jobs (*Roll Bounce* and *Of Boys and Men*), they were still shown as hard workers. Overall, this study found that on BET Black characters have more diversity and prestige in terms of jobs in which they are cast as compared to the broadcast network channels. BET provides more economically empowering images of African Americans because, Black characters are more likely to be seen employed on BET, are able to view themselves in a variety of different occupations and are shown putting effort in trying to obtain a job. The overall offer is that Blacks are seen employed and in a variety of diverse occupations on television. Unfortunately, based on the different levels of occupation prestige Blacks are seen in, work is still about status, power and money (Hauntemann & Morgan, 2001).

In regards to social interactions, the quantitative analysis showed Black characters on the broadcast network programs in mixed settings with no programs with a cast of mostly minority characters. In other words, based on the quantitative results, Black characters appeared in integrated settings on the broadcast network programs while appearing more in segregated (Black only) settings in BET movies. Conversely, the qualitative analysis illustrates Black characters interacting with Blacks in addition to a few interactions with characters of other races.

Additionally, the qualitative results found that BET included Latino and Hispanic women cast in leading roles in a few movies (*He Got Game* and *All About the Benjamins*) and more references to Black-Hispanic interactions. Also, BET portrayed Black characters in major roles and contain a few interactions with characters of other races. Interestingly, many of the BET movies and the TV series also involved men as the leading characters with only a few including women as the leading characters (*I Will Follow*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* & *The Game*).

African Americans are portrayed in less racially diverse settings on BET. The broadcast network programs, on the other hand, provide no programs whose cast consists of mostly minority characters. These results correspond with, and present some differences from Signorielli's (2009a) finding; in the fall of 2012 Blacks characters on the broadcast networks were more likely to be found in racially diverse programs and there were no programs on the broadcast networks with mostly minority castings. In the case of BET, this analysis found Black characters to be seen in mostly minority programs on BET with not many representations of Whites and other people of color.

The qualitative analysis also illustrated that Black characters on BET were involved in many intimate interactions, although, there were not many married couples. Only one movie actually involved a marriage (*Coming to America*), while another referenced a couple once married but in a “complicated situation” (*Diary of a Mad Black Woman*). Other scenarios included heterosexual dating relationships (*The Game, I Will Follow, All about the Benjamins, He Got Game, Battlefield America*), widowers (*He Got Game, Roll Bounce, Of Boys and Men*), and a few cases of marriage in which women were unfaithful (*Janky Promoters, The Game*). These results differ from Elliot’s (1995) conclusion that Blacks were rarely depicted in intimate settings on BET programs and Humphrey and Schuman’s (1984) contention that Blacks are more likely to be portrayed in occupational roles rather than social and interpersonal situations. This analysis found Blacks were depicted in both occupational roles (as previously presented) as well as social and interpersonal situations. However, some of the depictions of African Americans in interpersonal and social situations were not always positive and may be less empowering images for the child of color who watches these programs. Overall, most of the BET movies dealt with family situations, interpersonal problems, and casual instances that displayed egalitarian interactions and provided both favorable and unfavorable portrayals of Blacks. There were also many illustrations of single parent households where the father was the only guardian present in the home but had little or no household help.

Other images captured through the textual analysis illustrate changes in the personality traits of Black characters on BET. Black men were portrayed as respected, hard workers, helpers and leaders in the following films: *I Will Follow, Diary of a Mad Black Woman, Roll Bounce, Of*

Boys and Men. In other films, however, Black men were depicted as unprofessional professionals, dishonest, power driven and at times ignorant (*All about the Benjamins, The Game & Janky Promoters*), illustrating a similarity to some stereotypical portrayals found in past analyses (Dates, 1990; Cosby 1994; Nelson, 2008). Also, Black men are still seen in humorous/comedic roles (*All about the Benjamins, Janky Promoters, Roll Bounce, Coming to America, Diary of a Mad Black Woman* and *The Game*).

In comparison, Black women were portrayed as caring, helpful, hard working women and sometimes as sexual objects, appearing as provocative (*Janky Promoters, Roll Bounce, Coming to America*), untrustworthy, unfaithful and conniving (*The Game & He Got Game*). Interestingly, many of the BET movies include men as the leading characters with only a few with women in the leading roles (*I Will Follow, Diary of a Mad Black Woman & The Game*).

Since the quantitative analysis found that most characters were not portrayed married on the broadcast networks, Blacks were less likely to be seen in intimate settings (i.e., family and romantic encounters). Yet on BET, the qualitative analysis found more social interactions of Blacks including romantic relationships, some references of marriage, parenting..etc. Although there were some changes in the way Blacks were portrayed (mostly positive), the negative portrayals still convey stereotypical messages about Black men not being seen as professionally intelligent and Black women appearing as unfaithful when in relationships and always searching for sexual attention. Yet, overall, African Americans were mostly portrayed as socially empowering with a few discouraging portrayals.

A major distinction between the ways Blacks were portrayed in network broadcasts as compared to BET, a cable channel, was through the many religious references and the kind of music emphasized. The broadcast network programs rarely make any references to religion while the BET content presents religion as a significant element within the African American culture. The qualitative analysis found that BET provided a plethora of illustrations of religion as an important value in the African American culture. With religiosity identified as one of the common themes in the BET movies, 5 of the 10 movies involved references to God or Jesus, praying and/or singing contemporary Christian or gospel songs. Interestingly, other religions were not emphasized in the BET movies. Another theme was the music emphasized in the BET programs which included songs from different genres, times, and artists. Most of the songs on BET were also by African American musicians.

For the most part, BET provides more spiritually encouraging images/messages through the many illustrations of the importance of religion to the African American culture while supporting music by African American musicians. This study demonstrates differences and similarities within the way African Americans are portrayed on the broadcast network programs compared to BET movies. Specifically, BET offers more empowering images of African Americans compared to the broadcast networks through economic, social, and spiritual exposure from an African American cultural context.

So what kinds of messages are these images of African Americans in the broadcast network and in BET programs telling viewers, particularly children of color? On one hand, Black characters are more frequently portrayed on BET than in programs on the broadcast networks.

Viewers thus see an array of different images of Blacks, through exposure of Black characters in diverse opportunities and circumstances (socially & economically). On the other hand, BET still does not always provide viewers with the most favorable images of African Americans.

Furthermore as BET is the channel geared towards the Black audience, one would assume that all representations of Blacks would positively exceed those of other networks. Instead, this is not always the case especially in the ways in which Black women were portrayed in some of the BET programming. When female characters did appear on BET they were not always presented respectfully; for example some Black women were portrayed as hyper-sexual and in some cases unfaithful. From social cognitive and cultivation perspectives, viewers exposed to the content on BET may perceive Black women as overly sexual and untrustworthy when in relationships. Accordingly, young people who watch a lot of these programs may begin to form beliefs and attitudes about Black woman that reflect these images. In this case, viewers who watch these programs (Children and others) may internalize and even cultivate the overly sexual representation of Black women, making that representation more likely to be used to interpret information about African American women. Accordingly, it's likely that young Black girls watching these programs may normalize these types of behaviors and may even strive to imitate these actions. According to Ford (1997), stereotypical television portrayals of men and women are reflected in sex-role behaviors. Thus, the more images Black girls watch with Black women having big sexual appetites, the more likely they may perceive, internalize and normalize these behaviors.

Other non-empowering images/messages from BET's portrayals of African American were the frequency of gangsta/hustla depictions and the many references to the use of drugs, particularly marijuana.

These images are problematic because they continue to victimize African Americans with negative, one dimensional stereotypical media images. These images of Blacks are then likely to be internalized and at the same time the use of marijuana among Blacks becomes normalized thus leading to negative self-concepts. Although no one image can alter a child or adolescents consciousness or directly influence behavior, the quantity and redundancy of drug use by Black male/gansta images and messages are what accumulate as part of the overall childhood experience. According to Comstock (1993), television's influence resides affecting what people think about and not only how they behave. From the standpoint of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2009), children are able to observe and process images of Blacks being gangstas/hustlas and internalize the use of marijuana as a typically ordinary act thus influencing their use if it as well. These accumulated experiences are what contribute to the cultivation of a child's "values, beliefs, dreams and expectations " (Huntemann & Morgan, 2001, pp.311).

Limitations and Future Research

Although results from this study found differences in the portrayal of African Americans between the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, CW) and a cable channel for the Black audience (BET) the comparisons are somewhat limited. First, the BET sample consisted almost entirely of movies with a relatively small number of programs. Perhaps future research could plan to collect data during a time when regular programs rather than mostly movies are aired.

Also, because BET aired more movies (mainly old ones) and only one comedy program whereas the broadcast networks included a variety of different programs it was difficult to get an accurate sense of the kinds of images regularly aired in the situation comedies, dramas, and talk shows. Second, the programs are from a one week period, during prime time, with only one channel for an ethnic group. Future studies could explore other days, over more channels geared towards other ethnic groups, and perhaps over a longer period of time to better understand the impact of programs on the ways that other race/ethnic groups are presented. Third, the qualitative analysis only analyzed BET for a better understanding of the meanings in the images and messages seen, and their influential power. Other studies could further analyze differences in the way African Americans are portrayed on BET as compared to the broadcast networks by also evaluating programs on the broadcast networks from a qualitative perspective. Lastly, the purpose of this study was not merely based on the politics of representations of African Americans on television. In order to gain more insight into this concern future research should also consider comparing the portrayals of Black characters with respect to ownership by analyzing the structure (directors, writers, producers) of programming on BET and the broadcast networks.

Conclusion

On the whole, BET's purpose is to target the Black audience by providing relatable images and messages to those who watch the network. This study shows that BET airs programs that expose Blacks in a variety of different circumstances, occupations and exemplifies the multiplicity of people within the African American community. The quantitative analysis found more differences than similarities in the ways that African Americans are portrayed in programs

on the broadcast networks as compared to those on BET. While the qualitative analysis identified three themes (urban setting, music and religiosity) which helped make sense of the the portrayals of African Americans from the cultural context in the BET content from broadcast network programs, and how those depictions were presented from an African American cultural context. Furthermore, the analyses describe Black characters portrayed more stereotypically and depicted in diverse settings in BET movies than in the broadcast network programs. This is a clear illustration of ongoing changes in the way that African Americans are represented on prime time television today and differences in their portrayals on the broadcast networks and a cable channel. The difference in portrayals may be due to the specific cultural audience that BET targets compared to the five broadcast networks. Moreover, it's important that the broadcast networks also provide accurate portrayals of African Americans from their cultural context and for BET to consider more empowering images for their target audience. In sum, BET provides more empowering images of Blacks from an African American cultural context in the way that Black characters are portrayed to be socially, economically, and spiritually encouraging but more positive portrayals are needed for empowerment.

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Appendix A

PROGRAM RECORDING INSTRUMENT

COMM 424 - FALL 2012

September, 2012

UNITS OF ANALYSIS: There are two units - the Program and the Leading/Supporting Character

GENERAL VIEWING AND RECORDING PROCEDURE:

In most cases, you will find it necessary to view the program, or portions of it, more than once. Replay the show or segments as often as necessary. The following procedure has proven to be the most efficient:

On the first viewing, which should be relatively uninterrupted, it helps to take notes on scratch paper and to compile three lists:

- (1) list the possible major/leading and supporting characters
- (2) keep a running list of possible themes
- (3) keep a running list of the number of violent actions, including rapes, fights, murders, shootings, terrorists acts, etc. Try to note where they occur in the program to facilitate re-screening.

After you have seen the entire program and completed the lists, finalize your selection of leading/major and supporting characters. Now proceed to code, beginning with Section A. the instrument for the program as a whole.

When you have finished, check all forms for legibility, labels, and write-ins. Make sure that you have a good description of the character's occupation. Make sure you have a coding sheet for each major and supporting character.

DO NOT ASSIGN IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS to the characters or a numerical code for occupation. These tasks will be completed when all coding is completed. Use all the program information given to you on your assignment sheet for the identification number of the program, the date of broadcast, network, time of broadcast.

MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE A LEADING 0 FOR ALL ONE-DIGIT NUMBERS IN A TWO-DIGIT CODING SPACE. For example, code a child whose chronological age is 8 years as 08

SECTION A: RECORDING INSTRUMENT FOR THE PROGRAM RECORDING UNIT

1 **PROGRAM ID NUMBER**

2 **CODER ID NUMBER**

3 **MONTH** of broadcast

4 **DAY** of broadcast

5 **YEAR (12)**

6 **TIME OF BROADCAST**

1 = begins at 7:00 PM

2 = begins at 7:30 PM

3 = begins at 8:00 PM

4 = begins at 8:30 PM

5 = begins at 9:00 PM

6 = begins at 9:30 PM

7 = begins at 10:00 PM

8 = begins at 10:30 PM

7 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES**

0 = not rated

8 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES: CONTENT (V) VIOLENCE**

1 = TVG (general audience)

2 = TVPG (parental guidance suggested)

3 = TV14 (parents strongly cautioned)

4 = TVM (mature audiences only)

5 = TVY (all children)

9 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES: CONTENT (F) COARSE LANGUAGE**

0 = does not appear

1 = appears

10 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES: CONTENT (L) LANGUAGE**

0 = does not appear

1 = appears

11 ~~APPEARANCE~~ 0 = does not appear
1 = appears

12 ~~CONTENT~~ 1 = violence only
2 = adult situations/language only
3 = both
4 = other advisory (write in)

13 **NETWORK** 1 = ABC
2 = CBS
3 = NBC
4 = FOX
5 = WB
6 = UPN
7 = PAX
8 = CW
9 = TNT
10 = USA
11 = FX
12 = Bravo
13 = BET

14 **DURATION of Program in minutes**
(030, 060, 090, 120, etc.)

15 **RATING** (record with decimal point)

16 **FORMAT** 0 = cannot code

1 = cartoon
2 = TV play
3 = feature film/TV movie/mini-series
4 = reality drama/re-enactment
5 = documentary
6 = news magazine/talk show
7 = variety/award
8 = sports
9 = game show

17 **PROGRAM TYPE** 0 = cannot code

1 = crime
2 = western/action adventure
3 = drama
4 = science fiction/horror
5 = situation comedy
6 = comedy, not sitcom or variety skits
7 = other children's program
8 = variety/award
9 = other

18 **PROGRAM TONE**

0 = cannot code
1 = mostly comic, humorous
2 = mixed, both
3 = mostly serious, even if in comedy

19 **CAST: RACE**

0 = cannot code
1 = all white
2 = mostly white (some minorities appear)
3 = Mixed
4 = mostly minority (some whites appear)

5 = all minority

20-28 **THEMES AND ASPECTS OF LIFE - EMPHASIS**

- * 0 = no attention paid to theme
- * 1 = theme is minor part of plot
- * 2 = theme is significant to plot
- * 3 = theme is outstanding focus of plot
- *

20 **LAW ENFORCEMENT** and the administration of justice; police, other agents and agencies of law, courts, trials, prisons

21 **CRIME;** corruption, illegality, gross (criminal) behavior

22 **FAMILY,** marriage, children, family relationships

23 **ENVIRONMENT,** global warming, recycling, environmental issues

24 **SCIENCE,** scientists, technology

25 **HEALTH PORTRAYALS,** includes the discussion or depiction of illness, disease, or injury. Includes discussion by those suffering or medical professionals treating it.

26 **MENTAL ILLNESS,** serious emotional disorder requiring therapy; cure for mental illness.

NOTE: Do not consider off-hand remarks, such as "you must be crazy," "you're nuts," etc. unless the statement or phrase is actually directed at a character's mental health or statements that refer to mental health in general (such as psychotic, neurotic, etc.).

27 **PHYSICAL ILLNESS**, injury (bodily wound, gunshot, broken leg, etc.) requiring therapy, treatment, medicine, or cure.

NOTE: This item refers only to illness or injury that requires treatment.

Minor illness or injuries do not qualify unless some treatment is called for, shown, or discussed. Thus a common cold, or a bump on the head, should only be considered if a remedy (aspirin, ice pack, etc.) is prescribed, taken or considered. Injuries or illnesses that are not minor in nature should always be coded without reference to treatment.

28 **PHYSICAL HANDICAP**, or disability.

NOTE: This item refers to objectively recognizable physical handicaps Do not consider social or psychological handicaps, or subjectively perceived physical handicaps such as buck teeth, crossed eyes, tendency to obesity, etc.

29-32 **SUBSTANCE USE AND/OR ABUSE & RESPONSIBLE USE**

- * 0 = no attention is paid to the theme
- * 1 = attention but not to harmful effects
- * 2 = attention to harmful effects, minor to plot
- * 3 = attention to harmful effects, significant
- * 4 = attention to harmful effects, main focus

29. **NARCOTICS** Use and abuse

30. **DRUGS (OTC, PRESCRIPTION)**, use and abuse-physical

31. **ALCOHOL**, use and abuse

32. **SMOKING**, use and abuse

33. **ALCOHOL**, acceptable use

0 = no alcohol use

1 = drinking seen as an acceptable behavior

2 = both acceptable and unacceptable

3 = drinking seen as totally unacceptable

34. **OFFENSIVE/EXPLICIT LANGUAGE**

0 = no offensive language

SEXUAL PORTRAYALS include the discussion or depiction of kissing, embracing, touching, ~~moderately~~ ~~sexual~~ ~~intercourse~~, ~~homosexual behavior~~, ~~offensive language~~, etc. Any actions or behaviors that could be classified as sexual, or potentially sexual, in nature.

35. **SERIOUSNESS OF SEXUAL PORTRAYALS**

0 = no sexual portrayal

1 = mostly light or comic sexual portrayal

2 = mixed, ambivalent

3 = mostly serious sexual portrayal

36. **SIGNIFICANCE OF SEXUAL PORTRAYALS**

0 = no sexual portrayal

1 = some sexual portrayals, incidental to plot

2 = sexual portrayal is significant to plot; it matters considerably for the story and major characters

3 = sexual portrayal is the major outstanding feature, highlight, or resolution of the plot

37. **GRATUITOUS SEXUAL PORTRAYALS:** superfluous or not essential to the plot.

0 = no sexual portrayal

1 = no gratuitous sexual portrayals

2 = some gratuitous sexual portrayals, incidental

3 = significant gratuitous sexual portrayals

4 = sexual portrayals are totally gratuitous;
totally unnecessary to the story line

38 **CONSEQUENCES OF SEX** (physical and/or mental)

0 = no sex
1 = no consequences presented
2 = consequences, minimal focus
3 = consequences, moderate focus
4 = consequences, serious focus

39. **SAFE SEX** 0 = no sexual portrayal

1 = sexual portrayal not accompanied by reference
to having safe sex
2 = accompanied by references to having safe sex
3 = accompanied by serious discussions of safe
sex

40-45 **TYPES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIORS**

* 0 = does not appear

* 1 = appears

*

* **Appears** involves both implicit sex (sexual innuendos
and physical suggestiveness) and explicit sex (kissing,
heavy kissing, sexual embraces and hugs, sexual
caressing or touching, sexual intercourse. Do not code
non-intimate touching (nonsexual greetings and chaste
farewell/hello kisses parent-child kissing and hugging
(as long as incest is not implied).

40 **KISSING**

41 **KISSING - FADE TO BLACK** (greater activity implied)

42 **SCENE IN BED** (apparently nude)

43 **SEXUAL INTERCOURSE SEEN OR STRONGLY IMPLIED**

44 **RAPE**

45 **HOMOSEXUALITY**

46 **HOMOSEXUAL REFERENCES**

Does the program mention homosexuality? Are characters openly presented as homosexual/lesbian and/or having a homosexual/lesbian relationship?

0 = none

1 = topic is mentioned, no specific characters

2 = character(s) identified as being homosexuals

3 = character(s) seen in a homosexual relationship

4 = other, explain

47 **HUMOROUS REFERENCES TO HOMOSEXUALS**

0 = no jokes

1 = none

2 = jokes about gays only

3 = jokes about lesbians only

4 = jokes about both

48 **HOMOSEXUAL STEREOTYPES**

0 = none

1 = minor references

2 = major references

3 = flagrant references

VIOLENCE is the overt expression of physical force (without or without a weapon, against self or other) compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing. It must be plausible and credible; no idle threats, verbal abuse, or gestures with no credible violent consequence. May be intentional or accidental; violent accidents, catastrophes, acts of nature are included.

49 **SERIOUSNESS** (or potential seriousness) **OF VIOLENCE**,
regardless of style or format

- 0 = no violence
- 1 = strictly humorous, comic
- 2 = partly humorous; ambivalent
- 3 = mostly real, serious violence, even if in
cartoon or comedy

50 **SIGNIFICANCE OF VIOLENCE** to the plot and main characters

- 0 = no violence
- 1 = some violence, incidental to plot
- 2 = violence is significant to plot, it matters
considerably for story and major characters
- 3 = violence is the major outstanding feature or
climax, highlight, or resolution of the plot

51 **INTENTIONALITY OF VIOLENCE**

- 0 = cannot ascertain INTENTION
- 1 = no violence
- 2 = violence mostly unintentional
- 3 = both intentional and unintentional
- 4 = violence mostly intentional

52 **GRAPHIC (descriptive/vivid/gory) VIOLENCE**

- 0 = no violence
- 1 = no graphic violence
- 2 = violence somewhat graphic
- 3 = violence moderately graphic
- 4 = violence very graphic

53 **PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE**

- 0 = no violence
- 1 = no consequences presented
- 2 = consequences, minimal focus
- 3 = consequences, moderate focus

4 = consequences, serious focus

54 **IMMORAL VIOLENCE:** Violence clearly and explicitly intended, within the story, to be seen as destructive, negative, evil.

0 = no violence

1 = no immoral violence

2 = some immoral violence, incidental

3 = significant immoral violence

4 = violence is totally immoral

55 **JUSTIFIED VIOLENCE:** Violence clearly and explicitly intended, within the context of the story, to be seen as being just or as means to an end.

0 = no violence

1 = no justified violence

2 = some justified violence, incidental

56 **GRATUITOUS/EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE:** Violence that is not essential, superfluous, beyond that essential to the plot.

0 = no violence

1 = no gratuitous violence

2 = some gratuitous violence, incidental

3 = significant gratuitous violence

4 = violence is totally gratuitous; violence is totally unnecessary to the story line

57 **TYPE OF VIOLENCE**

0 = no violence

1 = violence against property only

2 = physical violence only

3 = both physical and property

58 **RECOGNITION OF CRIMINAL NATURE OF VIOLENCE**

0 = no violence

1 = violence never recognized as criminal

- 2 = violence sometimes recognized as criminal
- 3 = all violence recognized as criminal

59 **ACCIDENTAL OR INTENTIONAL**

- 0 = no violence
- 1 = all or mostly accidental violence
- 2 = mostly accidental
- 3 = both intentional and accidental
- 4 = mostly intentional violence
- 5 = all intentional violence

60 **IMPLIED VIOLENCE**

- 0 = no violence
- 1 = all violence is seen onscreen
- 2 = most violence seen onscreen
- 3 = violence equally on and off screen
- 4 = most violence is implied, we see the consequences, effects of violence but do not see the actual violent action.
- 5 = all implied violence

61 **AGENTS OF LAW**-appearance in program

An agent of law is authorized, licensed or certified by the prevailing legal authority; may be official or private, but authority is derived from the established legal system.

- 0 = cannot code
- 1 = agents of law do not appear
- 2 = private (unofficial) agents
- 3 = official agents
- 4 = both unofficial and official

62 **AGENTS OF LAW INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENCE**

- 0 = cannot code
- 1 = no agents of law
- 2 = agents of law not involved in violence
- 3 = agents of law involved minimally in violence
- 4 = agents of law involved in a significant amount of violence
- 5 = agents of law involved in all violence; play a major role in the violence

- 63 **GUNS-USE**
- 0 = no guns
 - 1 = gun seen only (in holster, not in open)
 - 2 = gun used, safely
 - 3 = gun used, unsafely
 - 4 = hear gunshot; do not see gun
 - 5 = mixed

- 74 **NUMBER OF VIOLENT ACTIONS** - fully describe and count the number of separate violent actions

NOTE: **Violent Action** is a scene of some violence confined to the same agents. Even if the scene is interrupted by a flashback, etc., as long as it continues in "real time" it is the same act. However, if new agent(s) enter the scene it becomes another

Appendix B

CHARACTER RECORDING INSTRUMENT

RECORDING INSTRUMENT FOR THE LEADING/SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Analyze all characters who play leading roles representing the principal types essential to the story and those in essential supporting roles.

Write in the character's full name and/or anything that may help identify the character without a proper name.

Describe the character's occupation as precisely as possible. Avoid overly broad labels, e.g. driver, clerk.

1 **PROGRAM ID NUMBER**

2 **Character ID number** (leave blank for now)

3 **CODER ID NUMBER**

4 **MONTH** of broadcast

5 **DAY** of broadcast

6 **YEAR (12)**

7 **TIME OF BROADCAST**

1 = begins at 7:00 PM

2 = begins at 7:30 PM

3 = begins at 8:00 PM

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1 = TVG (general audience)

2 = TVPG (parental guidance suggested)

3 = TV14 (parents strongly cautioned)

4 = TVM (mature audience only)

5 = TVY (all children)

10 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES: CONTENT (L) COARSE LANGUAGE**

6 = TVY7 (older children)

7 = TVY7-FV (children - fantasy violence)

11 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES: CONTENT -- (L) COARSE LANGUAGE**

0 = does not appear

1 = appears

12 **TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES: CONTENT -- (D) SUGGESTIVE DIALOGUE**

0 = does not appear

1 = appears

13 **ADVISORY**

0 = none

1 = violence
only

2 = adult situations/language only

3 = both

4 = other advisory (write in)

14 **NETWORK** 1 = ABC

2 = CBS

3 = NBC

4 = FOX

5 = WB
6 = UPN
7 = PAX
8 = CW
9 = TNT
10 = USA
11 = FX
12 = Bravo
13 = BET

15 **RATING** (record with decimal
 point)

16 **FORMAT** 0 = cannot code
 1 = cartoon
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 3 = feature film/TV movie/mini-series
 4 = reality drama/re-enactment
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 1 = crime
 2 = western/action
 adventure
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 4 = science fiction/horror

5 = situation comedy
6 = comedy, not sitcom or variety skits
7 = other children's
program
8 = variety/award
9 = other

- 18 **PROGRAM TONE** 0 = cannot code
 1 = mostly comic, humorous
 2 = mixed, both
 3 = mostly serious, even if in comedy
- 19 **CAST: RACE** 0 = cannot code
 1 = all white
 2 = mostly white (some minorities appear)
 3 = mixed
 4 = mostly minority (some whites appear)
 5 = all minority
- 20 **CHARACTER STATUS** 1 = major/leading character
 2 = supporting character
- 21 **OCCUPATION** (leave blank; describe on recording
 sheet)
- 22 **GENDER/SEX** 0 = cannot code
 1 = male
 2 = female

- 23 **RACE of character** 0 = cannot code
- 1 =
white
- 2 =
black
- 3 =
Asian
- 4 = Native American
- 5 =
other
- 24 **ETHNICITY** 0 = cannot code
- 1 = Hispanic, Latino
- 2 = Middle Eastern/Indian
- 3 = European/Scandinavian
- 4 =
other
- 25 **MARITAL STATUS** 0 = cannot code
- 1 = apparently not married/no reference
- 2 = impending marriage
- 3 = presently married
- 4 = separated
- 5 = formerly but no longer married
- 26 **CHRONOLOGICAL AGE** (Record chronological age as known
or estimated--01 to 99) 0 = cannot code
- 1 = divorced, widowed
- 2 = remarried
- 3 = remarried
- 4 = remarried
- 5 = remarried
- 6 = remarried
- 7 = mixed
- 8 = cohabiting, "living with" someone;
must be of the opposite sex
- 9 = involved in a homosexual or lesbian
relationship
- 27 **SOCIAL AGE** 0 = cannot code
- 1 = child/adolescent
- 2 = young adult (few or no family
responsibilities; can be from late
teens
to mid-
thirties)
- 3 = settled adult (family, established career)

- 4 = elderly, old
- 28 **HAIR COLOR** 0 = cannot code
1 = blond
2 = red/auburn
3 = light brown
4 = brown
5 = black
6 = bald - balding
7 = grey
8 = other
- 29 **HAIR TEXTURE** 0 = no hair; bald
1 = naturally straight
2 = straight (relaxed, flat ironed
3 = wavy
4 = very curly (natural or permed)
5 = kinky (natural texture for blacks)
- 30 **BODY WEIGHT** 0 = cannot code
1 = thin
2 = toned/fit/average
3 = slightly overweight
4 = very overweight - obese
- 31 **BODY ATTRACTIVENESS:** In relation to the ideal in bodily appearance. Includes but not limited to legs, butt, hips, stomach/abdomen, chest, shoulders, muscle tone and thighs.
0 = cannot code

- 1 = not very attractive
- 2 = average, typical attractiveness
- 3 = very attractive

32 **FACIAL ATTRACTIVENESS** in relation to the ideal in facial appearance. Includes but not limited to mouth, smile, nose, cheeks, teeth, eyes, expression, ears, complexion, and makeup

- 0 = cannot code
- 1 = not very attractive
- 2 = average, typical attractiveness
- 3 = very attractive

33 **SKIN TONE/complexion**

- 0 = cannot code
- 1 = white, extremely fair, celtic, freckles
- 2 = white, light skinned European, bit darker
- 3 = Mediterranean, olive toned\
- 4 = Asian, yellow toned
- 5 = light caramel (light)
- 6 = Darker caramel; milk chocolate; medium
- 7 = ebony to black

34. **PROVOCATIVE CLOTHING** (sexy, revealing, etc.)

- 0 = character does not appear in provocative clothing
- 1 = character occasionally appears in provocative clothing
- 2 = character frequently appears in provocative clothing

- 35 **SOCIAL CLASS** 0 = cannot code
 1 = clearly upper, obvious wealth
 2 = upper middle
 3 = lower middle
 4 = clearly lower, obvious poverty
- 36 **ROLE OF THE CHARACTER**
 0 = cannot code
 1 = mostly light, comic
 2 = neither light nor serious, mixed,
 unclear
 3 = mostly serious
- 37 **CHARACTER TYPE** 0 = cannot code
 1 = "good" - protagonist, hero type
 2 = mixed
 3 = "bad" - antagonist, villain type
- 38 **SEXUAL INVOLVEMENT**, is the character involved sexually
 0 = not involved
 1 = involved, talks about but not seen
 2 = involved, minimally intimate behavior
 (kissing, hugging)
 3 = involved somewhat intimated behavior
 (passionate kissing, etc.)
 4 = involved in very intimate behavior
 (intercourse)
- 39 **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**
 0 = cannot code
 1 = straight
 2 = bi-sexual

3 = homosexual/lesbian

40 **DRUG USE** -does character take drugs (prescription or otherwise) of any kind? Code the highest degree.

0 = cannot code

1 = no reference to character's taking drugs

2 = takes drugs under proper doctor's care

3 = takes drugs (not know if under doctor's care)

4 = takes drugs excessively

5 = uses drugs recreationally

6 = a drug addict (specific information exists)

41 **SMOKING - does the character smoke?**

0 = cannot code

1 = no reference to character's smoking/
character does not
smoke

2 = specific information that character smokes

3 = character smokes excessively (chain smoker)

42 **DRINKING** -Does the character drink alcoholic beverages?

0 = cannot code

1 = no reference to character's drinking/
character does not
drink

2 = specific information that character drinks

3 = appears to be an alcoholic

4 = specific information character is an alcoholic

43 **DRINKING - ACCEPTABILITY**

0 = cannot code

1 = character does not drink

2 = drinks, behavior acceptable

3 = drinks, behavior acceptable and not acceptable

4 = drinks, behavior not acceptable

44 **PHYSICAL ILLNESS**

0 = none indicated

1 = minor ailment (cold, cough)

2 = major ailment (sick in bed, sees doctor)

3 = significant ailment (in hospital)

45 **MENTAL ILLNESS**

0 = none indicated

1 = minor illness (outpatient therapy; in control)

2 = major illness (hospitalized, not in control)

46 **PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

0 = none indicated

1 = minor disability (limp, hearing aid)

2 = major disability (wheelchair, blind, deaf)

47 **VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY CHARACTER** (Does the character commit any violence? Code highest degree).

0 = does not commit violence

1 = commits non-fatal violence; hurts but does not

appear to kill anyone

2 = commits fatal violence; kills or appears to
kill; fatal consequences indicated

48 **VIOLENCE SUFFERED BY CHARACTER: VICTIMIZATION** (Is
the character subjected to any violence; code
highest degree).

0 = not subjected to violence

1 = suffers non-fatal violence; hurt but recovers
or recovery indicated

2 = suffers fatal violence; dies violent death,
or

fatal result is indicated

49 **RELATIONSHIP OF VICTIM TO PERSON COMMITTING VIOLENCE**

0 = no violence

1 = person not known to victim

2 = person an acquaintance of victim

3 = person well known to victim

50 **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

0 = character does not engage in violent behavior

1 = character's violent behavior is neither
rewarded nor punished

2 = character's violent behavior is mostly
rewarded (character uses violence for
reward)

3 = character's violent behavior is mostly
punished (violence gets the character in
trouble)

4 = character's violent behavior is both rewarded
and punished

- 51 **JUSTIFIED VIOLENCE** (Character commits violence that is portrayed by the writers as being just or a means to an end).
- 0 = character did not engage in violent behavior
 - 1 = character's violent behavior was not portrayed as being justified
 - 2 = character was portrayed as committing justified violence
- 52 **IMMORAL VIOLENCE** (Character commits violence that is portrayed by the writer as being immoral, destructive, negative, or "bad").
- 0 = character did not engage in violent behavior
 - 1 = character's violent behavior was not portrayed as being immoral
 - 2 = character was portrayed as committing immoral violence
- 53 **REACTION TO VIOLENCE** (Character exhibits remorse).
- 0 = character did not engage in violent behavior
 - 1 = character's did not show remorse
 - 2 = character exhibited remorse
- 54 **CRIME COMMITTED BY CHARACTER** (Does the character commit a criminal act?)
- 0 = does not commit a criminal act
 - 1 = commits a criminal act

55 **SUSPECT STATUS**

- 0 = character does not commit violence
- 1 = character a suspect, not charged
- 2 = character a suspect, charged, not guilty
- 3 = character a suspect, charged, guilty

56 **SELF INFLICTED VIOLENCE**

- 0 = does not commit violence against him/herself
- 1 = commits self-inflicted violence (non fatal)
- 2 = commits suicide

57 **OFFENSIVE/EXPLICIT LANGUAGE**

- 0 = no offensive language
- 1 = infrequent offensive language
- 2 = moderately use offensive language
- 3 = frequent use offensive language

58 **ADVICE**

- 0 = cannot code
- 1 = gives advice only
- 2 = both gives and takes advice
- 3 = only receives/takes advice

59 **ACADEMIC INTELLIGENCE** (book smarts)

- 0 = cannot code
- 1 = below average intelligence
- 2 = average intelligence

3 = highly intelligent

60 **PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE** (street
smarts)

0 = cannot code

1 = below average intelligence

2 = average intelligence

3 = highly intelligent

61 **GENDER STEREOTYPES - typical
behaviors**

0 = cannot code

1 = extremely feminine, girly

2 = somewhat girly, feminine

3 = neutral, neither girly or manly

4 = somewhat manly

5 = extremely manly, jock mentality

62-68 **PERSONALITY TRAITS**

<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
2 <u>Very</u>	neither	moderate	<u>Very</u>
Moderate			

62 **REPULSIVE**

63 **MASCULINE**

64 **IRRESPONSIBLE**

65 **IMMATURE**

66 **BUMBLING**

67 **PASSIVE**

68 **IMPOTENT**

ATTRACTIVE

FEMININE

RESPONSIBLE

MATURE

EFFICIENT

AGGRESSIVE

POWERFUL