Images of Women's Sexuality in Advertisements: A Content Analysis of Black- and White-Oriented Women's and Men's Magazines

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This article represents an analysis of the sexual images of women in magazine advertisements. I examined advertisements in Black- and White-oriented, men's and women's magazines to compare the images of women's sexuality that are constructed for each specific audience. Over 600 images of women were analyzed based on seven dimensions, including function/role, relative function/authority, physical/body position, relative size/height, character traits, body view, and physical characteristics. The images of women's sexuality vary depending on the race of the intended audience and the race of the women in the advertisements. Advertisements for White audiences portray women in roles and with characteristics that suggest dependency and submissiveness, whereas advertisements for Black audiences portray women as independent and dominant. I also found that White women are objectified much more than Black women are.

KEY WORDS: advertisements; gender roles; racial images; sexuality.

The average person in the United States is exposed to over 3,000 advertisements per day (Kilbourne & Jhally, 2000); these permeate our society through such media as television, magazines, billboards, and internet banners. The fact that advertisements are so pervasive suggests that they have a significant impact on society.

The media play a large part in the socialization process, perhaps especially socialization into gender roles (Goffman, 1979; Lindsey, 1997; MacKinnon, 1989; Strinati, 1995). The media both reflect and reinforce traditional gender roles. Most people realize that the images in the media do not always, in fact rarely, reflect reality. However, that does not mean that these images are not influential. Advertisements often represent a type of fantasy, or ideal, image of the way that things should be (Gornick, 1979). Specifically, they help to reinforce how the ideal woman should look and behave. According to many advertisements, the ideal woman is an object that exists to satisfy men's sexual desires.

Previous researchers have analyzed the images of women in magazine advertisements, and concluded that women are portrayed as sex objects (Archer, Iritani, Kimes, & Barrios, 1983; Courtney & Whipple, 1983; Goffman, 1979; Kang, 1997; Kilbourne & Jhally, 2000; Krassas, Blauwkamp, & Weaseling, 2001; Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo, & Lueptow, 2001). It is important to study the portrayal of women's sexuality because it has been suggested that sexuality is the root cause of gender inequality (e.g., MacKinnon, 1989). MacKinnon (1989), for example, explained that "sexuality (is) the dynamic of the inequality of the sexes" (p. 130). However, researchers have generally examined advertisements in mainstream women's magazines or mainstream gender-neutral magazines, where the majority of the readers are White.[2] Black women have been excluded from most analyses because,

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[2] The terms "mainstream" and "White-oriented" are used interchangeably throughout this article to refer to magazine types. Mainstream magazines do not specify a target racial group. However, a large majority of the women in the advertisements and of the magazine audience are White. Therefore, I classify mainstream magazines as White-oriented.

as prior research has shown, they are under-represented in the mainstream media (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Jackson & Ervin, 1991). Although some research has focused on media images geared specifically toward African American audiences (Humphrey & Schuman, 1984; McLaughlin & Goulet, 1999; Thomas & Treiber, 2000) or male audiences (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Krassas et al., 2001), even less research has focused on the differences between both the gender *and* race of the audience simultaneously. There are no studies of Black men as the primary audience. This research addresses this gap in the literature by considering Black men, as well as White men, and Black and White women, as the audience for images of women.

Images of Women in Mainstream Media

Goffman (1979) was one of the first sociologists to analyze gender stereotypes in advertisements. He argued that advertisements help to construct the ideals of masculinity and femininity. He found that women were often portrayed in very stereotypical ways, such as in submissive roles or family roles, and in lower physical and social positions than men. Although the actual position of many women in society may have improved considerably since Goffman's analysis, previous studies have shown that the images of women in advertisements have not changed appreciably (Kang, 1997; Lueptow et al., 2001; McLaughlin & Goulet, 1999; Milburn, Carney, & Ramirez, 2001; Paff & Lakner, 1997). Women are still shown primarily in submissive positions and as sex objects. Sexual women are often used in advertisements for men to imply a sexual relationship between the man who uses the product and the woman in the advertisement. Sexual women are also used in advertisements for women to imply that the product will increase the user's appeal to men (Courtney & Whipple, 1983). Advertisements continuously promote the message that a woman's ultimate goal is to attract men. However, it is important to note that "advertisements depict for us not necessarily how we actually behave as men and women but how we *think* men and women behave" (Gornick, 1979, p. 7).

There are now more media outlets for various audiences, and advertisers increasingly target certain groups. However, in a patriarchal society, the image of sexuality that is presented to all people is highly influenced by a heterosexual man's perspective. From this perspective, sexual attractiveness in women is as-sociated with physical beauty. A sign of status for a man is to have a physically attractive woman by his side. The more physically attractive a woman is, the more prestige she will bring to her male partner/spouse (Renzetti & Curran, 1999). Therefore, it is men who ultimately benefit from the media images of women's sexuality and beauty. MacKinnon (1989) argued that sexuality is the underlying cause of gender inequality. She noted, "sexuality is substantially what makes the gender division be what it is, which is male dominant" (p. 130). Thus, the continuous showing in the media of women as submissive sex objects reinforces the gender hierarchy.

It has been suggested that media that target women are more likely to portray women in a way that reflects reality, and thus should be more responsive to the changing situation of women in society than media that target men and women, or only men (Strinati, 1995). However, researchers have shown that women are still often shown as sex objects in media designed specifically for women, which implies that advertisers believe that women accept an objectified and passive view of themselves (Courtney & Whipple, 1983). Coltrane and Messineo (2000) found that television commercials that targeted women contained about as many stereotypes as did those intended for other audiences. Another recent study, which compared the images of sexuality presented in the men's magazine *Playboy* and the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*, demonstrated that both magazines displayed similar ideas about sexuality and women's sexual attractiveness (Krassas et al., 2001). The messages conveyed through *Cosmopolitan*, however, were subtler, because there was the need to appeal to a woman's sense of empowerment when addressing women specifically. These findings led to my first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Sexual women will be portrayed with characteristics such as submissiveness and dependency in both women's and men's mainstream/White-oriented magazines.

Images of Black Women in the Media

Researchers who analyze images of women in advertisements often take for granted that these images apply to all women. However, most women in the images they analyze are White. Therefore, the image of women as submissive sex objects applies specifically to White women. Ethnic minority women are subjected to other forms of repression by

the media. Specifically, minority women are excluded from much mainstream media, and, when included at all, they are often portrayed according to racially specific gender stereotypes.

The number of ethnic minorities in the media has increased in recent decades, often with a few token minorities in a White crowd, in order to appear sensitive to ethnic minorities (Cortese, 1999). However, Blacks continue to be underrepresented in mainstream media. Ross (2000) pointed out that even when Black characters appear on television, they usually have White partners. Humphrey and Schuman (1984) found that between the years 1950 and 1982, the number of Blacks had increased, although Blacks continued to be underrepresented in the mainstream media. After analyzing 962 advertisements in fashion magazines, Jackson and Ervin (1991) found that only 23 advertisements contained Black women, and those women were often only shown from a distance. Coltrane and Messineo (2000) found, in their analysis of television commercials, that racial minorities were rarely shown in commercials, White women were most often portrayed as sex objects, and Black women were often shown as inconsequential. They also found that "regardless of race or ethnicity, women continue to be much more likely than men to be shown as sex objects, but it is White women who are singled out as icons of beauty" (p. 383).

Stereotypes of Black women that have been portrayed in the mainstream media differ from those of White women. Black women's sexuality has often been portrayed as overly aggressive and divergent from the submissive image of women's sexuality that is most prominent in society. The most common media images of Black women have been classified as the matriarch, as Sapphire, and as Jezebel (Collins, 2000; Jewell, 1993). The Jezebel image is meant to present the sexuality of Black women as aggressive, and it has persisted through many generations. However, the characteristics displayed by the matriarch and Sapphire images are highly correlated with those of the Jezebel.

The matriarch image portrays Black women as mothers, who are either the head of the household with equal or more authority than the fathers, or are single mothers. One explanation for the characteristics of the matriarch image is the difference in socio-economic status between Blacks and Whites. The economic position of many Blacks has improved over time, however, Blacks continue to be disproportionately represented in the lower and working classes (Loury, 2000; Wilson, 1987). Wilson (1987) stated that the "marriageable pool" of Black men is significantly lower than that of White men. One main condition for men to be part of the marriageable pool is sufficient employment. "With the underemployment of black men, black women have traditionally assumed family provider roles essential to the stability and survival of many families" (Lindsey, 1997, p. 203). Therefore, when compared to their male counterparts, Black women have traditionally held a more authoritative and dominant position in the family than have White women. The often matriarchal Black family structure has been criticized as a weakness of Black families (Lindsey, 1997; Rainwater & Yancey, 1967). Lindsey (1997) argued that because of this responsibility of Black women within the family, Black men are made to feel powerless. The Black matriarch is portrayed as deviant because she challenges the assumption of the patriarchal family. This image of the dominant and independent Black matriarch has been so pervasive that it likely effects the way that Black women are portrayed sexually.

The next most common stereotypical image of Black women is that of Sapphire. Sapphire is an independent and headstrong Black woman. Similar to the matriarch image, Sapphire is portrayed as overpowering her male counterpart and threatening his sense of masculinity. Jewell (1993) explained that the Sapphire image necessitates the presence of an African American man; "It is the African American male that represents the point of contention, in an ongoing verbal dual between Sapphire and the African American male . . . (His) lack of integrity and use of cunning and trickery provides her with an opportunity to emasculate him through her use of verbal put downs" (p. 45). She also stated that "the most noticeable characteristic of Sapphire is her sassiness which is exceeded only by her verbosity . . . Because of her intense expressiveness and hands-on-hip, finger pointing style, Sapphire is viewed as comedic and is never taken seriously" (p. 45). The Sapphire image emerged after that of the matriarch, and the characteristics of Sapphire were likely influenced by those of the matriarch.

The aforementioned characteristics, independence and dominance, are exaggerated through the images of the matriarch and Sapphire. Because these characteristics are contradictory to the mainstream image of women as submissive, and because they challenge the patriarchal hierarchy, they are exaggerated in order to appear deviant (Jewell, 1993). This is similar to the image of Jezebel, who is portrayed

as a sexually aggressive Black woman, and therefore is considered deviant from the submissive image of women's sexuality in mainstream culture. Jezebel is portrayed as an alluring and seductive African American woman. Jewell (1993) explained that the image of Black women as sexual originated during slavery as an explanation for the sexual relations between male slave owners and their female slaves. The sexual exploitation of slave women was the result of several motives. One motive was economic; slave owners wanted to produce more slaves, and one way to do this was to have sexual intercourse with their own slaves. Another motive was purely sexual; the slave owners simply wanted to fulfill their sexual desires. A third motive was power; slave owners thought they could control their female slaves in this way, and they enjoyed that sense of power (Frankenberg, 1993; White, 1981). Slave owners, in order to deny responsibility for their actions, attributed their encounters with female slaves to the hypersexuality and aggressiveness of Black women (Jewell, 1993).

The image of Black women as being sexually promiscuous is still present through more modern images. The portrayal of Black women's sexuality has even been described as "predatory and animal-like" (Plous & Neptune, 1997, p. 638). For example, Plous and Neptune (1997) found that Black women were shown wearing animal print much more often than White women were. In addition, the animal print was most often patterned after a predatory animal, thus reinforcing the stereotype of Black women being sexually aggressive. Based on these stereotypical images of Black women, my second hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 2   Sexual Black women are more likely than sexual White women to be portrayed as dominant and independent.

Though the images of Black women were constructed quite a while ago, studies have shown that once images are established, they change very slowly, if at all (Kang, 1997; Lueptow et al., 2001; McLaughlin & Goulet, 1999; Milburn et al., 2001; Paff & Lakner, 1997). These images become part of the culture, and are the basis for the creation of new images. These images are also internalized by members of society, and therefore they become ideals for certain groups to achieve (Gornick, 1979). Thus, even media designed specifically by Blacks contain images that maintain some of the characteristics of these stereotypes.

Black-Oriented Media

Because of the limited opportunities available for Blacks in all aspects of the mainstream media, there have emerged media options designed by Blacks specifically for Black audiences. This has meant that there are more opportunities to portray positive images of Black women. "The Black media have been instrumental in portraying images of African American women that transcend socioeconomic class" (Jewell, 1993, p. 50). However, the extent to which the Black media outlets have succeeded at portraying positive images of Black women is somewhat unclear. Coltrane and Messineo (2000) found that television commercials that targeted Black audiences contained about as many stereotypical images of Blacks as did those directed toward Whites. McLaughlin and Goulet (1999) compared gender stereotypes in advertisements found in Black-oriented magazines to advertisements in White-oriented magazines. They found that Black-oriented magazines were less likely to show women in submissive positions than were White-oriented magazines. On the other hand, they found that women in Black-oriented magazines were portrayed in the role of a mother more often than were women in White-oriented magazines. Most of these women were not shown in a nuclear family, which conforms to the matriarch stereotype. Finally, Thomas and Treiber (2000) found that differences in the portrayal of women are more pronounced between the race of the magazine's audience than between the race of the models in the images. Based on these findings that the Black-oriented media portray women in roles that diverge from those in the White-oriented media my third hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 3   Black-oriented magazines are more likely than White-oriented magazines to portray sexual women as dominant and independent.

Consumers of Black-oriented media have not been shielded from the images of and ideas about beauty that are presented in mainstream media. "The Black media, like their White counterparts, have also been criticized for having a predilection for portraying African American women with physical characteristics that conform more to European than African standards of beauty . . . and for portraying African American women in the image of the (Jezebel)" (Jewell, 1993, p. 50). The physical appearance of Jezebel differs from the other two stereotypical images of Black women. She is usually an

African American woman with a fair complexion and European-like features, such as a thin nose, thin lips, thin figure, and long-straight hair, which conform to the mainstream American ideal of beauty (Jewell, 1993). "She fulfills the sex objectification requirement of white womanhood, although she is portrayed as a less naïve and worldly seductress" (Jewell, 1993, p. 46). This reinforces the idea that sexual attractiveness is associated with Whiteness, as sexual Black women are often portrayed with European-like features. The influence of European American standards of beauty on African Americans is also illustrated by the increasing number of Black men who marry White women (Frankenberg, 1993). The high rate of intermarriage may be influenced by the fact that men gain more prestige in mainstream society by having sexually attractive wives (Renzetti & Curran, 1999). Because the ideal image of a sexually attractive woman is White, having a wife who fits that description should earn a man more prestige. This led to my fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4   Black women will be portrayed with physical characteristics that conform to White standards of beauty. However, Black women are more likely to have European features in White-oriented magazines than in Black-oriented magazines.

To test these hypotheses, I examined how women are portrayed in magazine advertisements aimed at four different racial and gender groups: Black women, Black men, White women, and White men. Because women are often portrayed as sexual in advertisements, I analyzed the portrayal of women's sexuality depending on the race and gender of the intended audience of the magazine. The images of Black women in the media have traditionally been contrary to the mainstream image of an ideal woman. Traditionally, femininity has been associated with submissiveness and dependency, whereas the images of Black women have emphasized authority, strength, and independence. I argue that these characteristics influence the way that women of each race are portrayed sexually.

Because Blacks have been underrepresented in the mainstream media, the images of beauty are most often of White women. In order to assess the possible influence of White beauty standards on Black women and on Black-oriented media, I also examined the physical characteristics of the Black women in the advertisements and the extent to which they conform to those of White women. That is, the degree to which

Black women are portrayed with European-like features, such as fair skin, a thin body, and straight hair.

The following questions are addressed: How are women portrayed sexually depending on the race of the magazine's audience? How are Black women portrayed sexually compared to White women? Are sexual Black women portrayed with European features more often than with African features?

METHOD

The Sample

In order to assess the differences between the portrayal of women to different audiences, I performed a content analysis of images of women in advertisements in eight different popular magazines published in the year 2002: *Black Men*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Essence*, *GQ*, *Honey*, *King*, *Maxim*, *Vogue*. I was able to focus on the specific audience for which the images in the advertisements were intended, because each magazine has very clear descriptions of its target audience. In order to control for the characteristics of the readers across all eight magazines as much as possible, the magazines used in the analysis were comparable in content. Therefore, the target audience of each of the magazines should be similar, except for race and gender. All of the magazines are popular general interest magazines that focus on issues related to the gender of the primary audience, and they regularly feature articles pertaining to the following topics: (1) fashion and style information; (2) entertainment information and celebrity profiles; (3) relationship and sex advice. Based on these criteria, I selected two magazines specifically geared toward White women (*Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*), two geared toward Black women (*Essence* and *Honey*), two geared toward White men (*GQ* and *Maxim*), and two geared toward Black men (*Black Men* and *King*). As there are fewer Black-oriented magazines specifically for men than for any other audience, I selected those magazines first. The other six magazines were matched based on the content of the Black men's magazines. The magazines used for each race/gender group are two of the most highly circulated for that type of magazine and for that audience.

Table I describes the race of the readers of the magazines used in my analysis and the magazines' circulation. This information was obtained from the advertising departments of the magazines, from Simmons Market Research Bureau (1998) study, and

Table I. Race of Magazines' Audiences

Audience	Magazine	White (%)	Black (%)	Circulation
White women	Cosmopolitan	84.87[a]	11.51[a]	2,963,351[b]
White women	Vogue	75.46[a]	17.34[a]	1,245,490[b]
Black women	Honey	N/A	80.00[c]	387,999[b]
Black women	Essence	6.87[a]	91.28[a]	1,052,925[b]
White men	Maxim	88.40[c]	6.80[c]	2,600,000[c]
White men	GQ	64.63[c]	27.99[a]	775,084[b]
Black men	Black Men	N/A	N/A	750,000[c]
Black men	King	N/A	80.00[c]	150,000[c]

[a]Simmons Market Research Bureau.
[b]Mediamark Research, Inc.
[c]Magazine Advertising Department.

from Mediamark Research, Inc. (2003). The statistics for the race of the magazine audience of *Black Men* were not available. However, the magazine describes itself as "A lifestyle magazine for African American males." It is clear from the title and the magazine's description that the majority of the readers are African American men.

All of the magazines are published monthly, except one that is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter). Because one of the magazines is a quarterly, I used that as a standard for selecting the magazine issues. In the analysis I used one issue from each of the eight magazines from each quarter of the year 2002, for a total of 32 issues.

I coded the characteristics of each woman in every full-page advertisement in the magazines that contained at least one women displayed in a sexual manner. That is, the images were analyzed if they met at least one of the following criteria: (1) Revealing clothing (e.g., the woman is showing cleavage, wearing a short skirt, or wearing tight clothing), (2) Portrayed as the object of another's desires (e.g., a man gazing at a woman or approaching a woman sitting at a bar), (3) Performing a sexual act (e.g., kissing or embracing), (4) Portrayed with a sensual or alluring gaze or facial expression.

Categories and Coding

The categories that I used to code the advertisements were based on two methods. Some of the categories were based on Goffman's (1979) analysis. In addition, I used an inductive method to establish other categories for a more complete analysis. The observed characteristics of a sample of the advertisements were recorded, and then categories were established based on those observations. There are a total of seven coding categories, each with multiple subcategories. Particular images of women could often fit into more than one category (but only one subcategory, unless stated otherwise). The categories that were used to code the women in the advertisements are as follows.

(1) *Function or role:* Professional (wearing a business suit or in a work setting), spouse/partner (interacting with someone of the other sex, e.g., kissing or hugging), decorative object (having no function other than to look attractive), product user (using the product being advertised, such as putting on make-up or wearing a pair of jeans), mother, or engaged in recreational activity (playing a sport or doing something active, such as running). In a few cases, a woman had more than one function, and was therefore placed into multiple subcategories. The purpose of this category was to compare the type of roles that are portrayed as being sexy or attractive.

(2) *Relative authority/function to a man:* Woman in a more authoritative/superior role, woman and man in equal status roles, or woman in a less authoritative/inferior role. This category only applies to advertisements that picture both a man and a woman. The purpose of this category was to compare the amount of power a woman is portrayed as having relative to a man, which is an indication of sexual aggressiveness or submissiveness.

(3) *Physical position:* Standing, sitting, lying down, or bending forward. High physical positions, such as standing, are associated with superiority or dominance, whereas

lower positions, such as lying down or sitting, are associated with submissiveness (Goffman, 1979). Also, according to Goffman, lying down and bending forward are often associated with sexual availability. The purpose of this category was to examine whether the woman in the image was portrayed as sexually dominant or as sexually submissive.

(4) *Relative size/height compared to a man:* Woman bigger or higher, woman and man of equal size or height, or woman smaller or lower. As with the previous category, higher physical positions are associated with higher social status and superiority, and lower physical positions are associated with lower social status and submissiveness. This category only applies to advertisements that picture both a man and a woman. This category also examined whether the woman in the image was portrayed as sexually dominant or as sexually submissive.

(5) *Character traits:* Delicate/soft (e.g., lightly touching something, looking away or down as if shy), athletic (engaging in an athletic activity or having athletic looking physical features, such as a muscular body), independent (engaging in an activity by herself or rejecting the attention of a man), or dependent (relying on a man). The subcategory soft/delicate implies submissiveness, and the subcategory athletic implies strength. The purpose of this category was to compare the character traits that were portrayed as being sexy or attractive.

(6) *Facial/Body view*: Face showing (woman is pictured with her face and body or her face only), face hidden (woman is pictured with her body only or one body part only). According to Archer et al. (1983), showing a woman's face emphasizes her personality and character. On the other hand, a faceless woman displays no personality. Showing only her body or a body part dehumanizes her, and emphasizes the idea that she is an object (Cortese, 1999; Kilbourne & Jhally, 2000). The purpose of this category was to examine the degree to which the woman in the advertisement is objectified.

(7) *Physical traits:* Race (Black, White, or other). For Black women, I also coded skin tone (fair, medium, or dark complex-

ion), hair texture (straight, wavy, curly, or braided), body type (thin, curvy, full-figured, or athletic). The subcategories of hair texture (range from straight to curly), body type (range from thin to full-figured), and skin complexion (range from fair to dark) were measured on a continuum. The purpose of this category was to measure the physical features that were presented as sexually attractive, and whether Black women were portrayed with more European-like or African-like features. European-like features, such as fair skin, straight hair, and a thin figure conform to mainstream beauty standards.

Two independent coders examined the advertisements from each magazine that met sampling criteria. The intercoder reliability was 92%. The statistical analysis was conducted in three steps. First, to assess the difference in the portrayal of women across magazine audiences, the percentages of the women who conformed to each of the categories were calculated for each of the four magazine audience categories (Black women, White women, Black men, and White men). A *t*-test was used to test whether the percentages were equal across two of the groups; Black women's magazines were compared to White women's magazines and Black men's magazines were compared to White men's magazines. Second, in order to assess whether the differences between the portrayal of women to different magazine audiences translates to differences in the portrayal of women according to race, the race of the women in the advertisement and the race of the magazine's audience was controlled. Logistic regression coefficients and odds ratios were calculated for the categories that were significant in the first analysis (the *t*-test). Third, the percentage of Black women who displayed each of the physical traits mentioned above (Category 7) was calculated.

RESULTS

There were a total of 626 images of women in the advertisements that met the requirements for inclusion in this analysis (i.e., a woman is portrayed in a sexual manner in a full-page advertisement). The results from the first analysis, in which the portrayals of women in the magazine advertisements to different audiences were compared, are presented in

Table II. Percent of Women from Each Type of Magazine Who Conformed to Each Category (Black Women and White Women)

	Black women's magazines (n = 132)	White women's magazines (n = 304)
Race		
Black (%)	67.42	5.59***
White	27.27	87.50***
Other	5.31	6.91
Function		
Mother (%)	1.52	0.00*
Object	21.97	15.79
Partner	7.58	16.78*
Product User	63.64	62.50
Professional	0.76	0.00
Recreation	7.58	3.95
Relative authority/function[a]		
Higher than men (%)	5.00	0.00*
Equal to men	80.00	91.14
Lower than men	15.00	8.86
Physical position		
Standing (%)	42.42	41.12
Sitting	15.91	25.00*
Laying	7.58	13.16
Bending	8.33	3.95
Relative size/height[a]		
Higher/Bigger than Men (%)	20.00	21.52
Equal to Men	50.00	50.63
Lower/Smaller than Men	30.00	27.85
Character traits		
Soft/Delicate (%)	44.70	33.22*
Athletic	4.55	1.32*
Independent	18.94	0.00***
Dependent	11.36	21.38*
Face/Body view		
Face showing (%)	90.91	83.55*
Face hidden	9.09	17.11*

*p < .05. ***p < .001 (two-tailed).
[a]n is 20 for Black women's magazines, and n is 79 for White women's magazines.

Table III. Percent of Women from Each Type of Magazine Who Conformed to Each Category (Black Men and White Men)

	Black men's magazines (n = 85)	White men's magazines (n = 105)
Race		
Black (%)	68.24	3.81***
White	20.00	94.29***
Other	11.76	1.90*
Function		
Mother (%)	0.00	0.00
Object	68.24	53.33*
Partner	24.71	42.86**
Product User	4.71	9.52
Professional	2.35	0.95
Recreation	0.00	5.71*
Relative Authority/Function[a]		
More/Higher than Men (%)	3.03	3.90
Equal to Men	96.97	84.42
Less/Lower than Men	0.00	11.69*
Physical Position		
Standing (%)	51.76	51.43
Sitting	37.65	16.19**
Laying	3.52	7.62
Bending	14.12	3.81*
Relative Size/Height[a]		
Higher/Bigger than Men (%)	45.45	19.48**
Equal to Men	18.18	54.55***
Lower/Smaller than Men	36.36	25.97
Character Traits		
Soft/Delicate (%)	2.35	10.48*
Athletic	0.00	0.95
Independent	7.06	3.81
Dependent	31.76	46.67*
Body View		
Face Showing (%)	91.76	84.71
Face Hidden	8.24	15.24

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 (two-tailed).
[a]n is 33 for Black men's magazines, and n is 77 for White men's magazines.

Tables II and III. Each table shows the percentage of advertisements that fit into each category for two of the four magazine audience categories. The results from the logistic regression analysis are presented in Tables IV and V. Also, Figure 1 displays the results for the analysis of the physical characteristics of Black women in the advertisements.

Differences by Magazine Audience

Women in Mainstream Magazines

Tables II and III show that the majority of women in the advertisements in mainstream magazines were White: 88% of images of women in main-stream women's magazines were White, and 94% of images of women in mainstream men's magazines were White. There were very few Blacks in mainstream magazine advertisements: 6% of images of women in mainstream women's magazines were Black, and 4% of images of women in mainstream men's magazines were Black.

The results in Tables II and III support the first hypothesis, which is that White-oriented magazines would be more likely to portray women as dependent on men and as submissive. Women's dependency on men is determined by the character trait category "dependent" and by the function category "partner." In White-oriented magazines, women were more likely to be portrayed as dependent and with a male partner than they were in Black-oriented magazines.

Table IV. Effect of Race of Magazines' Audiences and Race of Women: Logistic Regression Coefficients (Odds ratios in parentheses)

	Women's magazines	
	White audience	White model/woman
Partner	0.65 (1.91)	0.43 (1.54)
Mother	−7.97 (0.0)	−7.92 (0.0)
Soft/Delicate	−0.64* (0.53)	0.26 (1.30)
Athletic	−0.39 (0.68)	−1.46 (0.23)
Sitting	0.21 (1.23)	0.62 (1.87)
Dependent	0.82* (2.28)	−0.12 (0.89)
Independent	−10.45 (0.0)	−0.49 (0.61)
More authority	−9.20 (0.0)	−8.54 (0.0)
Face showing	0.17 (1.18)	−1.68** (0.19)
Face hidden	−0.03 (0.97)	1.46** (4.29)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$ (two-tailed).

The percentage of women in White women's magazines who were portrayed as "dependent" is significantly greater than in Black women's magazines (21% vs. 11%), and the percentage who conformed to the partner category was significantly greater in White women's magazines than in Black women's magazines (16% vs. 8%). Also, in White men's magazines, the percentage of women who were portrayed as dependent was significantly greater than in Black men's magazines (47% vs. 32%), and the percentage of women portrayed as partners was significantly greater in White men's magazines than the percentage in Black men's magazines (43% vs. 25%).

The lower relative authority category, the lower relative size/height category, and the character trait category "soft/delicate" were used to determine whether a woman is portrayed as submissive. White men's magazines were significantly more likely than

Table V. Effect of Race of Magazines' Audiences and Race of Women: Logistic Regression Coefficients (Odds ratios in parentheses)

	Men's magazines	
	White audience	White model/woman
Partner	1.67** (5.24)	−1.06 (0.35)
Recreation	7.60 (1990.20)	6.62 (751.94)
Object	−1.60** (0.20)	1.23* (3.41)
Sitting	−0.26 (0.77)	−1.17* (0.31)
Bending	−1.35 (0.26)	−0.09 (0.91)
Soft/Delicate	1.38 (3.96)	0.28 (1.32)
Dependent	1.12* (3.05)	−0.63 (0.53)
Higher position	−0.22 (0.80)	−1.35* (0.26)
Equal position	0.76 (2.13)	1.34 (3.81)
Less authority	7.27 (1441.96)	7.11 (1221.45)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Black men's magazines to portray women with less authority than men (12% vs. 0%). Women in White women's magazines were significantly more likely to be pictured sitting (which is a low physical position) than were women in Black women's magazines (25% vs. 16%). Also, the percentage of women in White men's magazines who were portrayed as soft or delicate was significantly greater than the percentage in Black men's magazines (10% vs. 2%). One instance that does not support the hypothesis that White-oriented magazines would be more likely to portray women as submissive is that Black women's magazines were significantly more likely than White women's magazines to portray women as soft/delicate (45% vs. 33%). However, in both Black women's and White women's magazines, more women fit into this category than into any other character trait category.

White-oriented women's magazines were also significantly more likely to portray women with their face hidden than were Black-oriented women's magazines (17% vs. 9%). This places emphasis on a woman's body and physical attributes. In this way, images of women in White-oriented women's magazines were more objectified than images of women in Black-oriented women's magazines.

Women in Black-Oriented Magazines

As presented in Tables II and III, the majority of images of women in the Black-oriented magazines were Black: 67% of women in Black-oriented women's magazines were Black, and 68% of women in Black-oriented men's magazines were Black. Even though most of the women in the Black-oriented magazines were Black, there was a more equal distribution of races in Black-oriented magazines than in White-oriented magazines. In Black-oriented women's magazines 27% of the women were White, and in Black-oriented men's magazines 20% of the women were White.

The third hypothesis, that Black-oriented magazines would be more likely to portray women in dominant and independent roles, was partially supported by the results shown in Tables II and III. The higher relative authority and size/height categories, physical position, and the character trait "athletic" determine whether the woman is portrayed as dominant. The percentage of women in Black women's magazines who were portrayed as athletic is significantly higher than the percentage in White
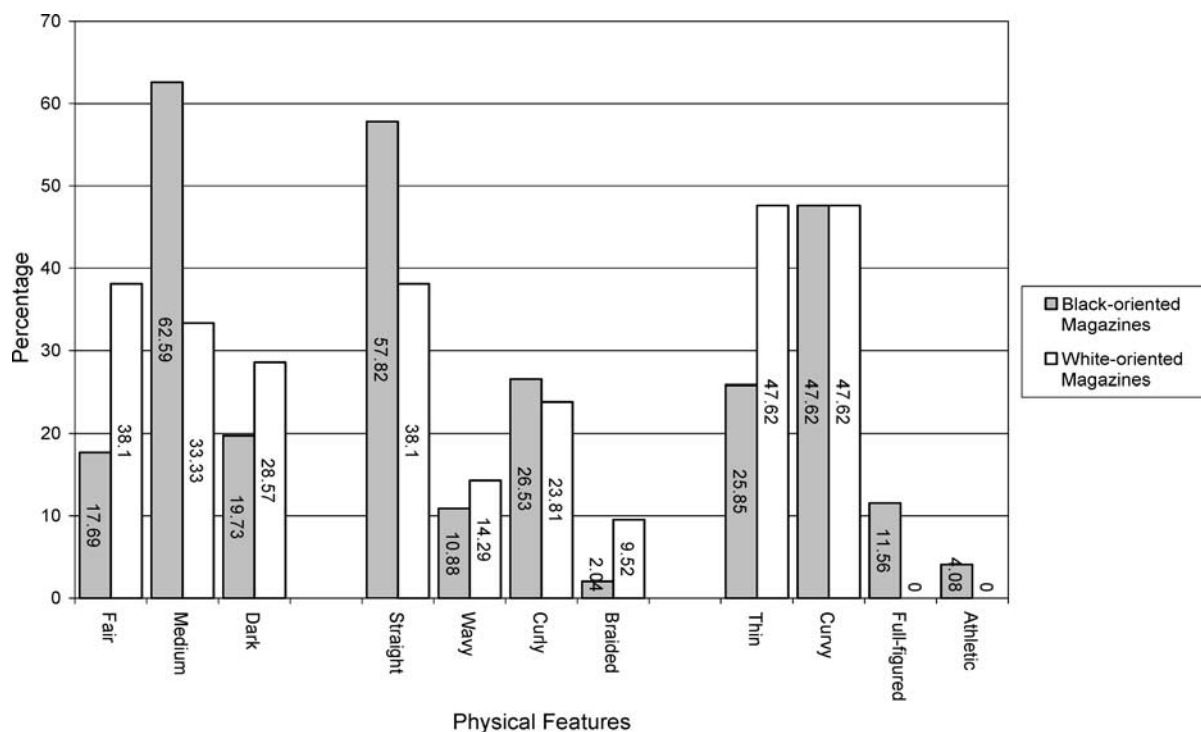
Fig. 1. Physical features of black women.

women's magazines (5% vs. 1%). The percentage of women in Black women's magazines who were portrayed as having more authority than men was significantly higher than the percentage in White women's magazines (5% vs. 0%). In Black men's magazines women were significantly more likely to be portrayed in a higher physical position than a man than they were in White men's magazines (47% vs. 22%). However, contradictory to the second hypothesis, Black men's magazines were also more likely than White men's magazines to picture women sitting and bending, which are low physical positions. Black men's magazines were also more likely than White men's magazines to portray women as objects.

The function category "partner" and the character trait category "independent" were used to determine whether a woman is portrayed as independent. Black-oriented women's and men's magazines were significantly less likely to portray women as the partner of a man, which implies independence. Also, the percentage of women in Black women's magazines who were portrayed as "independent" is significantly greater than the percentage in White women's magazines (19% vs. 0%). Black men's magazines were slightly more likely than White men's

magazines to portray women as independent (7% vs. 4%), however this difference is not statistically significant.

Magazine Audience and Race of Models

As previously stated, the majority of women in White-oriented magazines were White (88 and 94%), and the majority of the women in Black-oriented magazines were Black (67 and 68%). Because not all of the women in White-oriented magazines were White, and not all of the women in Black-oriented magazines were Black, we cannot necessarily conclude that the differences in the portrayal of women to audiences of different races translates to differences based on the race of the women in the advertisements. In order to assess whether the results for the images of women in Black-oriented magazines represent the portrayal of Black women and the results for the images of women in White-oriented magazines represent the portrayal of White women, I performed a logistic regression analysis for each category where the percentage of women who conformed to that category was significantly higher in Black- or White-oriented magazines. In the regression analysis

both the race of the women in the advertisements and the race of the magazine's audience were entered as independent variables. If, for a particular category, the magazine's audience is significant when the race of the women was controlled, that means that all women, regardless of race, were more likely to be portrayed in that particular way if they were pictured in that particular type of magazine. Thus, the category would not represent the portrayal of women of one particular racial group. However, if the race of the magazine audience is no longer significant when the race of the women in the advertisements was controlled, then the categories that are significantly higher in Black-oriented magazines (shown in Tables II and III) are explained by the fact that most of the women in Black-oriented magazines were Black. Similarly, it would mean that the categories that are significantly higher in White-oriented magazines can be explained by the fact that most of the women in White-oriented magazines were White.

Table IV displays the regression coefficients for each category where the percentage of women who conform to that category was significantly higher in Black women's magazines than in White women's magazines, or higher in White women's magazines than in Black women's magazines. Table V displays the coefficients for the categories that were significantly higher for Black- or White-oriented men's magazines.

Women's Magazines

Referring to back to Table II, Black-oriented women's magazines were significantly more likely than White-oriented women's magazines to portray women as mothers, as soft/delicate, as athletic, as independent, with more authority than men, and with their faces showing. However, Table IV shows that when the race of the model was controlled, the magazine audience was not significant for the categories "mother," "athletic," "independent," "face showing," and "more authority." Therefore, the higher percentage of women in these categories in Black-oriented magazines in Table II is a result of the higher percentage of Black women who fit into these categories in Black-oriented magazines. This means that the reason why there are more women who fit into these categories in Black-oriented magazines is that there are more Black women in Black-oriented magazines who fit into those categories. The findings

in Table II, that more women in Black-oriented magazines were portrayed as mothers, as athletic, as independent, with their faces showing, and with more authority, represent the portrayal of Black women in Black women's magazines. The findings that Black women are portrayed as mothers, as athletic, as independent, and with more authority than men are consistent with the characteristics displayed by the stereotypical images of Black women (matriarch, Sapphire, and Jezebel).

Table IV also shows that for the category "soft/delicate," the race of the magazine audience is significant, but the race of the model is not. This means that, after the race of the magazine audience was controlled, Black women and White women were equally likely to be portrayed as soft/delicate. However, Black-oriented women's magazines were more likely than White-oriented women's magazines to portray women as soft/delicate, regardless of the race of the model in the advertisement. This means that whether a woman was Black or White, if she was pictured in a Black women's magazine, she was more likely to be portrayed as soft than if she was pictured in a White women's magazine. Even though Black-oriented magazines were more likely to picture women as soft/delicate, Black women were no more likely than White women to be shown that way.

White-oriented women's magazines were more likely than Black-oriented women's magazines to portray women as partners, sitting down, as dependent, and with their face hidden (Table II). After the race of the model was controlled (Table IV), the categories "partner," "sitting," and "face hidden" were not significant. This means that these categories are representative of the portrayal of White women in White women's magazines. However, after the race of the magazine audience was controlled, White women were more than four times (4.29) more likely than Black women to be pictured with their faces hidden. This means that, regardless of the race of the magazine audience, White women were more likely than Black women to have their faces hidden. The race of the magazine audience also was significant for the category "dependent" when the race of the model is controlled. White-oriented women's magazines are over two times (2.28) more likely than Black-oriented women's magazines to portray women as dependent, regardless of the race of the model. These findings are consistent with the traditional mainstream image of women as dependent and submissive.

Men's Magazines

Black-oriented men's magazines were significantly more likely than White-oriented men's magazines to portray women as objects, as sitting, bending, and in a higher physical position than men (Table III). Table V demonstrates that, after the race of the models in the advertisements was controlled, the race of the magazine audience was not significant for the categories "sitting," "bending," and "higher position." This means that these categories are only representative of Black women in Black-oriented men's magazines. This is a somewhat contradictory finding, as Black women are portrayed in low positions (sitting and bending), however, when Black women were pictured with men, they were portrayed in a higher position than the men. However, this finding is consistent with both the Sapphire and the matriarch images, which both portray Black women as overpowering her male counterpart.

Table V also shows that the category "object" is significant for the race of the magazine audience and the race of the model in the advertisements. This means that after the race of the model was controlled, women in Black-oriented men's magazines were more likely than women in White-oriented men's magazines to be portrayed as objects. In other words, whether a woman is Black or White, if she was pictured in a Black men's magazine she was five times ($1/0.20 = 5$) more likely than if she was pictured in a White men's magazine to be portrayed as an object. When the race of the magazine audience was controlled, White women were significantly more likely than Black women to be pictured as objects in men's magazines. Specifically, White women were more than three times (3.41) more likely than Black women to be pictured as objects in men's magazines, regardless of the race of the magazine audience. This supports previous findings that White women were more likely to be viewed as objects of physical beauty (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000).

White-oriented men's magazines were significantly more likely than Black-oriented men's magazines to portray women as partners, as engaged in a recreational activity, as soft or delicate, as dependent, in an equal physical position to men, and with less authority than men. Table V demonstrates that after the race of the women in the advertisements was controlled, the categories "recreation," "soft/delicate," "equal position," and "less authority" were not significant for the race of the magazine audience. This means that the categories are represen-

tative of the way that White women were portrayed in White men's magazines. However, after the race of the women in the advertisements was controlled, the race of the magazine audience was significant for the categories "partner" and "dependent." Specifically, regardless of the race of the women in the advertisements, women who were in White men's magazines were more than five times (5.24) more likely to be pictured as partners and more than three times (3.05) more likely to be pictured as dependent than were women in Black-oriented men's magazines. These results support the first hypothesis, that women in White-oriented magazines would be portrayed as dependent and submissive.

Physical Characteristics of Black Women

Figure 1 illustrates the physical features of all of the Black women pictured in the advertisements. The percentages of Black women who display each physical trait were categorized based on the race of the magazine's primary audience. The final hypothesis was that Black women would be portrayed with European-like physical features more often than with African-like features and that this would be more prevalent in White-oriented magazines. The first part of the hypothesis was only partially supported. Figure 1 shows that Black women were most often portrayed with medium toned skin, straight hair, and a curvy figure. The fact that Black women were most often shown with straight hair conforms to European standards of beauty. However, the fact that the majority of Black women had a medium skin complexion and a curvy figure does not.

The results support the second part of this hypothesis, though, which is that Black women would be more likely to have European-like features in White-oriented magazines than in Black-oriented magazines. Black women were more likely to have fair skin in White-oriented magazines than they were in Black-oriented magazines (38% vs. 18%). Black women also were much more likely to have a thin figure in White-oriented magazines than in Black-oriented magazines (48% vs. 26%). Although Black women in White-oriented magazines were less likely to have straight hair than were Black women in Black-oriented magazines (38% vs. 58%), Black women in White-oriented magazines were more likely to have straight hair than any other hair texture. These findings suggest that the Black-oriented media play an important role in presenting images of

Black women who have physical characteristics that are more representative of the actual physical features of Black women.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that the images of women's sexuality vary both by the race of the audience and the race of the women in the advertisements. The data build on previous findings that differences in the portrayal of women are more pronounced between magazine audiences than between models in the advertisements (Thomas & Treiber, 2000); in the present study both the race of the audience and the race of the model were significant. However, much of the difference between magazine audiences was due to the fact that the race of the models in the magazines differed depending on the race of the audience. That is, White women were most often pictured in White-oriented magazines, and Black women were most often pictured in Black-oriented magazines.

The images in White-oriented media and the images of White women conformed to the traditional image of sexuality, which is submissive and dependent on men. White women were also objectified more than Black women, and more importance was placed on the physical attractiveness of White women. This suggests that it is White women who are thought of as desirable sex objects. Similar to previous findings (Krassas et al., 2001), the portrayal of women's sexuality in White-oriented women's magazines paralleled the portrayal of women's sexuality in White-oriented men's magazines. However, the image of women as sex objects was more blatant in men's magazines. This is illustrated by the fact that in men's magazines the most common function of a woman was as an object, but in women's magazines the most common function of a woman was as a product user. In both cases, the emphasis was on physical appearance. However, women in women's magazines were shown using a product to achieve attractiveness, whereas in men's magazines the product was supposed to attract a sexually attractive woman. In women's magazines, the idea was to try to obtain beauty through a certain product, whereas in men's magazines the idea was to obtain an attractive woman through a product.

These findings were true for both Black- and White-oriented magazines. Women in Black men's magazines were objectified more than women in Black women's magazines. In addition, Black men's magazines were more likely than White men's magazines to portray women as objects. This suggests that media for audiences of Black men have not only adopted the mainstream view of women as sex objects, they have taken that view even further. One explanation for this is illustrated by Franklin's theory of Black masculinity. As a reaction to a social structure that oppresses Black men through underemployment and discrimination (Franklin, 1994; Wilson, 1987), Franklin (1994) explained that the men adopt exaggerated traits of the dominant/hegemonic masculinity. Because hegemonic masculinity prescribes that men should view women as sex objects, this theory suggests that Black men further objectify women in order to exhibit their masculinity. However, as the results indicate, White women were objectified in advertisements more than were Black women regardless of the magazine's audience.

The results for the portrayal of Black women and of White women in Black-oriented media have both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, Black-oriented media for women appear to be instrumental in portraying images of Black women that diverge from the traditional and repressive images of women. Black women were not as likely to be portrayed in traditional feminine roles as were White women, and they were not as likely to be objectified as White women were. They were more often portrayed as having characteristics such as strength and independence, and they had physical characteristics that did not necessarily conform to mainstream media images of physical beauty. Modern women of many races tend to strive for the independence for which Black women have often been criticized.

The other aspect of the portrayal of women in Black-oriented magazines is that, similar to Jewell's analysis, characteristics that are present in the stereotypical images of the matriarch, Sapphire, and Jezebel images were present in the images in the present study. This means that images of Black women are still at least somewhat constrained by stereotypes. Unlike the traditional stereotypical images of Black women, however, in the present study most of the characteristics of Black women were not exaggerated in order to appear deviant. Although the characteristics of independence and strength are valued by patriarchal society in general, it is an open question whether they are really valued in women by mainstream society, because women are usually valued more according to their physical attractiveness than according to their personality characteristics.

One reason to be concerned about these stereotypical images of Black women is illustrated by a recent study (Gillum, 2002) that linked the endorsement of the matriarch and Jezebel stereotypes to intimate partner violence in the African American community. Gillum (2002) found that a large percentage of Black men endorsed those stereotypical images of Black women, and those who did were more likely to justify using violence against women.

It is important to note that 12% of *Cosmopolitan* readers and 17% of *Vogue* readers are Black (Table I), which means that many Black women are exposed to the submissive images of women. However, Frisby (2004) found that Black women were more likely to evaluate themselves in relation to idealized images of other Black women than to idealized images of White women. According to Frisby (2004), exposure to idealized images of White women is not related to lowered self-evaluations among Black women. A positive contribution of the Black-oriented media is that they tend to portray Black women with a variety of physical features that do not necessarily conform to the European or mainstream standards of beauty. Whereas studies have shown that images of women in mainstream advertisements generally have a negative effect on women's body image and self-esteem (e.g., Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999), the images of women in Black-oriented media may have a more positive effect on Black women's body image. The variety of physical features with which Black women are portrayed may contribute to Black women being more satisfied with their bodies than White women (Patel & Gray, 2001). Patel and Gray (2001) also found that Black women's higher level of body satisfaction was related to the fact that Black women were more likely to believe that they fit the body type that Black men find physically attractive.

Similar to previous findings (Jackson & Ervin, 1991), images of Black women in mainstream media were still uncommon. This means that the mainstream image of sexuality and beauty is still highly associated with Whiteness. Another aspect of this is that even though there are very few Blacks in mainstream magazines, the ones who are pictured often have European-like physical features. This confirms and emphasizes the racial hierarchy of sexual attractiveness in mainstream society.

Future Research

Although the number of advertisements in the present study was large, the results are based on advertisements from a small sample of eight magazines. Although there is little reason to think that the images of women in the magazines that I selected for each audience would differ from other magazines with similar content, future researchers could benefit from using a larger sample of magazines. Including types besides general interest magazines in an analysis could help provide a broader picture of the images of women that are prominent in the media. However, at the time of the present study, there were few options to choose from for magazines targeted primarily toward Black men or Black women. This restriction could change in the future.

Although I did find differences between the portrayal of Black and White women, a longitudinal study would illuminate the changes in the media images of Black women and White women over time. As the economic and social status of some Blacks has neared parity with that of some Whites, the media representations should reflect this increase in equality. In addition, the growth of Black-oriented media means that there are more opportunities to portray Black women in a variety of ways (Jewell, 1993). A longitudinal study may help to explain the influence of Black-oriented media on the overall portrayal of Black women. Although I was only interested in the differences between the portrayal of White and Black women in the present study, women of other racial groups were also pictured in the magazine advertisements. Future researchers could examine the way that women of other racial groups are portrayed in the media.

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