Media's Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women

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Abstract

Although media representations of Trans women are becoming increasingly more common, many real Trans women still face discrimination in their daily lives, in part due to prejudices and stereotypes that are still perpetuated by media. This study investigated how different representations of Trans women in media influence people's attitudes toward this community. After providing information about their baseline attitudes toward Trans individuals, 387 participants watched either two positive, two negative, or two problematic depictions of Trans women from a film or television show. After watching the clips, participants' attitudes toward Trans individuals were reassessed. Comparisons across groups showed that differences in pre- and posttest scores approached significance, and that pretest attitude scores differed according to gender, religion, age, and political ideation. Implications of these findings are discussed in relation to recent media attention concerning Trans women.

Media's Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women

From the breakthrough success of *Orange is the New Black* actress Laverne Cox to Caitlyn Jenner's culturally iconic coming out, Trans women have entered public discourse like never before, and an influx of new films and television shows seek to explore the real and fictional lives of Trans women in America. However, Trans women are still among one of the most vulnerable populations in the United States, as they face a multitude of challenges ranging from social stigma to physical violence. Due to the small size of the Trans population, most Americans do not have opportunities to interact with Trans individuals in ways that constructively reduce feelings of transphobia. As such, fictional media representations of Trans women in film and television may be the only way that some individuals receive information and impressions about real Trans women, and it is therefore crucial to examine how these representations may influence people's attitudes and beliefs. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine how different media portrayals of Trans women may influence perceptions of this community.

Trans Discrimination and Transphobia in the United States

Of the approximately one million Trans individuals living in the United States, researchers estimate that 78% have experienced discrimination in the workplace, with as many as 47% reporting being unfairly fired or denied employment (Movement Advancement Project (MAP), National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), & Transgender Law Center (TLC), 2015). A smaller number—19%—of Trans individuals have been denied housing, and 10% have been evicted from housing for their gender identity. One in 5 Trans individuals has been homeless at least once in their life, and despite high rates of higher education, 15% report earning less than \$10,000 a year, compared to 4% of the general population (MAP, NCTE, &

TLC, 2015). Many Trans individuals also lack access to health care and service providers who are sensitive to their needs as Trans patients, and many Trans individuals are uninsured for desired surgeries or hormonal therapies (MAP, NCTE, & TLC, 2015). About 40% of Trans individuals report being physically assaulted in their lifetime, and at least 50% of Trans individuals report having been sexually assaulted or raped (Stotzer, 2009). From the years 2008 to 2014, 1,731 Trans individuals were murdered worldwide (Balzer et al., 2012). The emotional and psychological toll of this discrimination puts many Trans individuals at risk for depression, anxiety, and suicidality, which increases upon personal experiences of violence (Sciacca, Hendricks, Goldblum, & Bradford, 2012).

The discrimination Trans individuals face stems largely from widespread Transphobic attitudes that generally go unchallenged. Transgender individuals' nonconformity to the gender binary with which most people are familiar often elicits feelings of discomfort or disgust in heterosexual, cisgender samples. A predominant stereotype about Trans individuals is that they are mentally ill or "confused," and additional stereotypes about Trans women include characteristics such as "criminal," "abusive," "lazy," and "smelly" (Gazzola & Morrison, 2014).

Certain individual characteristics have been known to correlate with attitudes toward Trans individuals. Because men generally adhere to stricter gender norms than women, they are often less tolerant of gender ambiguity and transgression in others, particularly in individuals they perceive as male. A U.S. national probability sample showed that cisgender, heterosexual men may therefore be particularly intolerant of Trans women if they perceive them as men violating masculine norms (Norton & Herek, 2012). In the same study, individuals high in religiosity were less likely to be tolerant of Trans individuals due to religious condemnation of gender variance (Norton & Herek, 2012). Individuals who were more politically conservative

were also less tolerant, perhaps due to their discomfort with ambiguity and resistance to change (Norton & Herek, 2012). By contrast, although transphobia does exist within lesbian and gay communities, lesbian and gay individuals have shown higher rates of tolerance toward Trans individuals than heterosexuals, perhaps due to their similar minority status (Warriner, Nagoshi, & Nagoshi, 2013). As such, certain demographic groups may require more intervention than others to reduce transphobia.

Intergroup Contact Theory and the Reduction of Prejudice

Although little research has investigated methods to reduce transphobia specifically, a large body of psychological research has been dedicated to the reduction of prejudice towards other minority groups. Most notably, many researchers have applied Allport's intergroup contact theory (1954) in ways that have effectively reduced prejudice. Intergroup contact most successfully reduces prejudice when interactions foster equal social standing between in-group and out-group members, and this is most often successfully accomplished through developing common goals, interests, and a sense of common humanity between groups. These methods are even more effective when group contact is sanctioned by governmental, community, or other authoritative institutions. Meta-analysis has shown that interventions that employ intergroup contact theory successfully reduce prejudice, particularly for members of majority groups. Effective use of intergroup contact not only improves attitudes toward the target group but can also improve participant attitudes toward other minority groups (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ 2011).

In several studies, intergroup contact has been effective in the reduction of transphobia. Individuals who report having prior contact with Trans individuals score lower on transphobia measures than those who have had little to no prior contact with Trans individuals, and these

lower scores were consistent across different measures (King, Winter, & Webster, 2009; Walch et al, 2012). Research within a classroom setting has shown that having a live question and answer session with a panel of Trans individuals is more effective in reducing transphobia than a traditional lecture on Trans issues (Walch et al, 2012).

Virtual and Vicarious Intergroup Contact

Given the small global population of Trans individuals and limited institutional resources, direct contact with Trans individuals is not feasible on a large scale. This same problem has arisen in the study of prejudice toward other minority groups, and therefore researchers have proposed virtual alternatives to intergroup contact. In imagined intergroup contact, in-group individuals mentally simulate interactions with one or more fictitious out-group members. For example, imagined intergroup contact significantly increased Turkish Cypriot students' intentions to engage in future contact with Greek Cypriots, despite a long history of ethnic conflict (Husnu & Crisp, 2010). However, in a study with heterosexual Australian students, imagined intergroup contact with Gay men failed to create either explicit or implicit attitude change (Dermody, Jones, & Cumming, 2013). As Dermody et al. (2013) suggest, the lack of attitude change following intervention may be due to the distinct ways that homophobic attitudes are learned and expressed within cultures, which may also apply to other LGBTQ identities. Therefore, a more tangible form of virtual intergroup contact may be necessary to reduce prejudice toward Trans communities.

Researchers have proposed vicarious intergroup contact as a more accessible form of intergroup contact, particularly for in-group individuals who rarely have opportunities to interact with out-group members (Joyce & Harwood, 2014; Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011). In vicarious intergroup contact, participants observe successful interactions between in-group and

out-group individuals, most often through pre-recorded film footage. Mazziotta et al. (2011) showed that watching a film of German students successfully interacting with Chinese students significantly improved German students' sense of self-efficacy by demonstrating appropriate "scripts" for them to follow in otherwise ambiguous interactions with Chinese students. Watching footage of positive intergroup contact between a U. S. border patrol volunteer and an illegal immigrant significantly improved participants' attitudes toward illegal immigrants compared to conditions in which the intergroup contact in the footage was either negative or mixed (Joyce & Harwood, 2014).

Fiction Media as Vicarious Intergroup Contact

In many ways, fiction media can be seen as a form of vicarious intergroup contact. Films and television shows are often accessible to large numbers of people, and they allow viewers to observe interactions with minority individuals whom they may not otherwise be able to meet in person. The desire to experience a different reality from the perspective of a fictional character is a key motivating factor in many individuals' consumption of media, and often consumers of media form empathetic connections with the characters they follow (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004). As such, positive representation of minority groups in film and television has led to positive change in cultural attitudes towards those minority groups (Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015).

Unfortunately, not all media representation elicits positive change, as negative or otherwise stereotypical portrayals of minority characters can reinforce negative biases and attitudes in viewers. Clark (1969) outlined four stages of how minorities can be represented in media. In the *non-recognition* stage, minority groups are not represented in media at all. In the *ridicule* stage, they are represented in ways that elicit derision and ridicule from audiences. In the

regulation stage, minority characters are represented in ways that uphold majority norms. Only in the final *respect* stage are minorities fully and fairly represented as equals alongside majority characters (Clark, 1969).

Until recently, most representations of Trans women have been roles designed to ridicule them and reinforce many of the harmful stereotypes discussed above. Although recent portrayals of Trans women have become more sympathetic, they may be problematic in that they still function to regulate normative ideas. For instance, casting a cisgender man to play a Trans woman, even if the role is a sympathetic one, reinforces the notion that Trans women are really cisgender men pretending to be women. By contrast, the most respectful portrayals of Trans women in media are performed by Trans actresses in roles where they can candidly and fairly represent themselves. While these roles are steadily becoming more available (e.g., *Orange is the New Black*, *Sense8*), even more roles for Trans characters are going to cisgender actors and enforcing implicit stereotypes about the Trans identity (e.g., *The Danish Girl*, *Transparent*). In addition, there are still many transphobic depictions of Trans women circulating throughout media. As such, television and film, along with other forms of media, can serve as a medium for either reducing or enforcing prejudicial attitudes toward Trans women.

It is therefore important to examine the recent influx of media representing Trans women and how these media may influence the public's attitudes towards Trans women and other sexual and gender minorities. I hypothesize that individuals experience vicarious intergroup contact when viewing films and television shows, and that the in-group/out-group interactions they see onscreen will influence their own attitudes and beliefs toward out-group members. As such, I have designed this study to assess the change between pre- and post-test scores following media intervention that represents Trans women. The media I have chosen come from real films and

television shows, and portray Trans women in either positive, negative, or problematic ways. I expect that individuals who view film clips that positively represent Trans women will have a more positive attitude change toward Trans women than individuals who view media that either negatively or problematically represents Trans women. Furthermore, I predict that certain participant characteristics, including gender, religious and political affiliations, and previous contact with Trans individuals will be related to both their pre-test scores. Specifically, I anticipate that women, non-religious individuals, and liberals will report more positive attitudes at pretest than men, Christians, and conservatives, respectively.

Method

Participants

A total of 387 United States participants were recruited through the crowdsourcing website Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). All participants recruited were ranked by MTurk as “Masters” in order to ensure the highest quality survey data. The final sample included 204 women, 160 men, and 22 individuals who identified outside of the male/female gender binary. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 83 ($M = 35.51$; $SD = 11.57$), with 80% of participants between the ages of 19 and 45. Three hundred and five participants identified as White/Caucasian, 33 as Black/African American, 17 as Asian/Asian American, 16 as Biracial, 9 as “Other,” and 4 as Native American. Thirty participants identified as Hispanic.

Christians ($n=173$) and atheists ($n=149$) made up the majority of the sample, with small numbers of Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and other non-Abrahamic religions presenting. The majority of participants ($n=187$) had a Bachelor's or higher degree, with next largest group reporting some college or an Associate's degree ($n=181$). Most participants identified as middle income ($n=225$), with the next largest group reporting low income ($n=143$), and only 18

participants self-identifying as high income. One hundred and seventy three participants reported knowing a Trans individual, and 17 participants reported that they themselves were Trans. Based on their selection of gender and sexual preference, 111 participants were categorized as LGBTQ. It is important to note that this sample is not representative of the general population, particularly in regard to the number of LGBTQ participants and to the number of participants who reported knowing a Trans individual.

Materials

The survey was hosted through the web survey generator Qualtrics, and each survey contained portions of the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS), the Attitudes Toward Transgendered Individuals measure (ATTI), demographic questions, and 2 of 8 total media clips.

The Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS; Hill & Willoughby, 2005). The GTS was designed to assess several different dimensions of discrimination toward Trans and other gender non-conforming individuals, including violence, harassment, and prejudicial attitudes. The 32-item measure asks participants to rate their agreement with statements such as “If I found out that my best friend was changing their sex, I would freak out,” on a 7-point scale (1 = “*Strongly Agree*”; 7 = “*Strongly Disagree*”). All questions are reverse scored except for questions that are negatively worded such that higher scores on the GTS indicate greater genderism and transphobia. Items were divided evenly into one 16-item pre-test ($\alpha=.923$) and one 16-item post-test ($\alpha=.937$) measure and were matched for similar questions in order to have comparable items for pre- and post-test analysis (e.g., “My friends and I have often joked about men who dress like women,” and “It is all right to make fun of people who cross-dress”).

The Attitudes Toward Transgendered Individuals Scale (ATTI; Walch, Ngamake, Francisco, Stitt, & Shingler, 2012). The ATTI focuses more specifically on transphobic attitudes

that do not include physical or verbal violence. Rather, participants are asked to rate their agreement with 20 statements such as “Transgenderism endangers the institution of the family” on a 5-point Likert scale. Negatively worded questions are reverse scored such that lower scores indicate greater transphobia (Walch et al., 2012). Like the GTS, the ATTI was split into two sections to create one 10-item pre-manipulation ($\alpha=.936$) and one 10-item post-manipulation ($\alpha=.947$) measure. Again, the items were matched for similarity (e.g., “Transgenderism is immoral,” and “Transgenderism is a sin”).

Media Clips. A total of 8 film and television clips were used in this study, with 2 clips in each condition each lasting approximately 4 minutes. In all but the control condition, a Trans character was engaged in dialogue with one or more cisgender characters. The performers portraying the Trans characters were matched for age and race to minimize any extraneous influence. In the *positive* condition, the characters are involved in open discussions about their identities, and all of the Trans characters represented are portrayed by Trans actresses. In the *problematic* condition, sympathetic but otherwise stereotyped or inaccurate portrayals of Trans women are performed by cisgender men. The *negative* condition clips portray Trans women as pathological, violent, or highly sexualized with the Trans characters played by cisgender men. Finally, the *control* condition did not represent any Trans characters, instead featuring dialogue between a cisgender woman and one or more individuals.

Reaction Questions. After viewing each clip, participants completed a series of response questions designed specifically for this study. They rated their agreement with statements such as “I thought the subject of this clip was genuine/intelligent/feminine/scary” on a 7-point scale ranging from “*not at all*” to “*very much so*.” They then reported on a similar scale how accurate they thought the clip represented Trans women and how much the clip challenged their beliefs

about Trans women. The mean scores for the positive clips were 4.3 (SD=.93) and 4.6 (.95), with higher scores indicating more positive reactions to the clips. The mean scores for the negative clips were 2.8 (SD=.88) and 3.4 (SD=1.03), and the mean scores for the problematic clips were 4.5 (SD=.91) and 4.5 (SD=1.0).

Demographic Information. Participants reported several types of demographic information. Participants typed in their exact age. They selected their gender from the options *Male, Female, Trans Male, Trans Female, Genderqueer, or Other*. They selected their race from the options *White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Asian/Asian American, Native American or Other*. They selected their ethnicity from the options *Hispanic/Latino or Not Hispanic/Latino*.

Participants selected their sexual preference from the options *Attracted to men, Attracted to women, Attracted to multiple genders, Attracted to all genders*. They selected their religion from the options *Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Other Abrahamic Religion, Other Non-Abrahamic Religion*. They also rated how important religion was to them on a 1 to 10 scale. Participants ranked on a 1 to 10 scale how strongly they identified with the following political parties or movements: *Conservative, Liberal, Republican, Democrat*. Participants provided their highest level of education given 7 choices ranging from *No high school* to *Master's or Doctorate degree*, and indicated their income group, selecting from *low income, middle income, or high income*. Finally, participants indicated with a *yes* or *no* response whether they personally knew any individuals who identified as Trans.

Procedure

Participants began the survey by giving electronic consent and then answered demographic questions. Participants were then randomly assigned one half of the GTS/ATTI measure. After completing the questions, participants were randomly assigned to a clip condition

(i.e., *positive*, *problematic*, *negative*, or *control*) and viewed the appropriate clips. Each clip was followed by a manipulation check in which participants selected the correct description of their clip out of several multiple-choice options (e.g., “In this clip, the subject greeted and played cards with a new hospital roommate.”). Participants were asked to respond to the clip by rating their perceptions of the individual character. Then they completed the other portions of the GTS/ATTI measures. Upon completing the survey, participants were given a code that they could redeem for compensation.

Results

Because both the GTS and ATTI were split into two sections, we computed the averages of item scores rather than summing across items as was done by the scale authors (Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Walch et al., 2012). Participants' mean pre-test GTS score was 2.42 ($SD=1.15$), indicating generally low rates of genderism and transphobia within the sample. Similarly, the mean ATTI score was 3.90 ($SD=.94$), also indicating low rates of transphobia among participants. These item averages for both the GTS and ATTI showed higher rates of tolerance toward Trans individuals compared to the original samples for both the GTS ($M=2.79$) and the ATTI ($M=3.74$) (Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Walch et al., 2012). However, because the sample was not representative of the general population, we cannot draw any broad conclusions about potential changes in recent years regarding general attitudes toward Trans individuals.

Repeated measures ANOVAs were used to compare the effect of clip condition on changes in GTS and ATTI scores. These ANOVAs were computed both for the entire sample and for non-LGBTQ participants. Because we predicted that both the *problematic* and the *negative* clip conditions would negatively influence participants' attitudes, participants in those two conditions were combined into one *negative* condition to compare with the *positive* and

control conditions. In the resulting 3(Clip Condition) x 2(Time) ANOVA on GTS scores, the Clip Condition x Time interaction was not significant, $F(2, 384) = 2.23, p = .109$. Similarly, the effect of clip condition on change in pre- and post- ATTI scores was not significant, $F(2, 383) = 2.79, p = .063$ (See Table 1).

When these ANOVAs were calculated using only non-LGBTQ participants ($n=276$), the Condition x Time interaction for the GTS was not significant, though it came closer to approaching significance, $F(2, 273) = 2.92, p = .055$. The ATTI interaction for non-LGBTQ participants was also non-significant, $F(2, 273) = 2.04, p = .132$ (See Table 2).

Because we anticipated that certain characteristics would influence participants' attitudes, we recalculated the ANOVAs for all participants and controlled for gender, sexuality, religion, and whether or not participants knew a Trans person. The Condition x Time interaction for the GTS was non-significant, $F(2, 373) = 2.11, p = .122$, but the interaction for the ATTI was significant, $F(2, 372) = 3.15, p = .044$ (See Table 3). The results of this study therefore provided some evidence that media clips influenced participants' scores, particularly on the GTS, with mean comparisons showing that individuals tended to report less genderism/transphobia after viewing positive clips, whereas attitudes of participants in the negative and control conditions did not change.

Gender, Religiosity, and Political Ideation Differences in Attitudes

Several more ANOVAs were conducted to examine pretest scores as a function of certain participant characteristics. Cisgender men ($n=180$) and women ($n=204$) were compared, omitting participants who identified as Trans or genderqueer. As predicted, women were significantly more likely to show tolerance toward Trans individuals in their pre-tests scores both for the GTS and the ATTI, $F(2, 361) = 9.42, p < .001$ (see Table 4). Cisgender, heterosexual participants

were compared to participants on the LGBTQ spectrum, and LGBTQ participants were significantly more tolerant toward Trans individuals at pre-test, $F(2, 383) = 16.64, p < .001$. Because a similar number of participants were under 30 and over 30, the two age groups were compared, and participants who were under the age of 30 showed higher tolerance in pre-test scores than participants over the age of 30, $F(2, 382) = 8.28, p < .001$.

Because the majority of participants identified as either Atheist or Christian, only these two groups from the religion categories were compared. Ratings of religiosity among Christian participants were also correlated with pre-test scores. Atheist participants showed higher tolerance pre-test scores than Christian participants, $F(2, 319) = 28.97, p < .001$, and religiosity of Christian participants was significantly correlated with pre-test scores both for the GTS, $r(227) = .20, p < .01$, and the ATTI, $r(227) = -.27, p < .01$.

Political ideation was also correlated with pre-test scores. Liberalism significantly correlated with higher tolerance both on the GTS, $r(379) = -.49, p < .01$, and the ATTI, $r(379) = .53, p < .01$. By contrast, Conservatism was significantly correlated with lower tolerance in pre-test scores for the GTS, $r(380) = .53, p < .01$, and the ATTI $r(380) = -.57, p < .01$. Finally, participants who reported knowing a Trans individual were compared to individuals who did not report knowing a Trans individual. Participants who knew a Trans individual showed significantly higher tolerance on pre-test scores than participants who did not know a Trans individual, $F(2, 383) = 5.90, p < .001$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how various portrayals of Trans women in media influence people's perceptions of real Trans women. As media have been used as a tool for reducing prejudice toward some other minority groups, and because of the particular

vulnerability of the U.S. Trans population, we consider this study especially relevant to finding methods of reducing transprejudice. Positive, negative, and problematic portrayals of this group continue to circulate contemporaneously, and all three portrayals were considered in our study. We believe the results are promising.

Media Representations and Attitude Change

Although viewing the films about Trans women did not significantly change attitudes, the Clip Condition x Time interaction approached significance for each measure, providing some support that different representations of Trans women in media may influence individuals' attitudes toward this group. Because the video clips were brief (less than 5 minutes), exposure to various representations of Trans women may not have been long enough to influence attitude change. Longer, repeated exposure—for instance, watching entire films or several episodes of a television show—may have yielded significant results. In addition, it is possible that the relatively high pre-test tolerance scores may have limited the opportunity for positive attitude change.

While Clark (1969) theorized the four stages of media representation for minorities to be roughly sequential, all four stages are co-occurring in media's current representations of Trans women. Media, particularly mainstream media, still largely excludes Trans women from film and television. Media that do represent Trans women often reinforce pre-existing stereotypes, which may be reflected in the lesser degree of change between pre- and post-test scores in the negative/problematic clip condition. Over time, these negative/problematic representations will continue to maintain transphobia in the United States, whereas more respectful portrayals of Trans individuals, such as those in the positive clip condition, may create positive attitude change in individuals who otherwise would have never had their prejudices challenged.

Gender, Age, Religiosity, and Political Ideation Differences in Attitudes

It is unsurprising that certain participant characteristics were significantly related to pre-test scores. In previous studies, gender, religious beliefs, and political attitudes have all been shown to be related to attitudes toward Trans individuals (Norton & Herek, 2012).

Unfortunately, pre-existing negative attitudes toward the Trans community lessen the likelihood that in-group members will have the opportunity to interact with out-group members in constructive ways. For instance, if a political or religious institution has anti-Trans biases or policies, a Trans individual may feel unwelcome. Therefore, the members of that institution will have few, if any, opportunities to meet Trans individuals, and members' prejudices will go unchallenged.

In the same way, men and older individuals often hold less favorable attitudes toward the Trans community than women and younger individuals, and therefore media that positively represent Trans individuals most often have a target demographic of young women (e.g., *Orange is the New Black*, *How to Get Away With Murder*). These positive representations may therefore not be reaching certain demographics due to predictions of negative reception by the media makers. A future study may design a vicarious intergroup contact intervention for reducing transphobia specifically within these groups. It is also important to consider that actual intergroup contact with Trans individuals is highly influential in shaping people's attitudes toward Trans communities, and that a majority of the sample reported knowing a Trans individual.

Recent Changes in Transphobia

The increase in tolerance as reflected in the GTS/ATTI scores compared to scores reported by Hill and Willoughby (2005) and Walch et al. (2012) may be due to the recent

visibility of Trans women in media. In the past year alone, representations of Trans women in media have increased dramatically, reaching broader audiences than ever before (Adams, 2016). In addition, the coming out of high-profile celebrity Caitlyn Jenner in 2015 started a nation-wide discussion of Trans individuals and issues in the United States, and although many reacted negatively, public opinion seemed to turn in favor of the Trans community (Adams, 2015; Sutton, 2015). Importantly, this increased tolerance may be due in part to many celebrity news outlets and personalities affirming Jenner's identity and showing public support of Trans women in the United States. Although research has yet to be done on the specific impact of Jenner's coming out on attitudes towards Trans individuals in the United States, it has certainly had an effect. The more tolerant scores on the GTS and ATTI may be reflections of these changing attitudes.

Alternatively, the difference in scores across studies might be due to sample characteristics, as a large number of participants reported either being LGBTQ or knowing a Trans individual. It is likely that an online advertisement for a survey regarding Trans individuals drew a disproportionate number of individuals who held more favorable attitudes than the general population toward this group.

Our Study's Representation of Trans Women

It is important to note that even the "positive" representations of Trans women that we chose for this study may still reinforce stereotypes in that they reflect certain expectations for Trans women to conform to norms of the male/female gender binary, namely to "pass" as cisgender women. Both of the positive condition actresses, Alexandra Billings and Jamie Clayton, are conventionally attractive, White, and have access to a variety of medical and cosmetic tools that allow them to conform to traditional norms of femininity. In reality, Trans

women often do not have access to these procedures, nor do they necessarily want them (Gehi & Arkles, 2007). In part, we were limited in our selection of positive clips by the media itself, as gender-variant Trans women, Trans Women of Color, plus-sized Trans women, etc., are often not represented at all. However, due to the brief, informal nature of our survey, we also chose these positive clips because the actresses within them reflect the current popular understanding of the Trans woman identity. It is therefore important to keep in mind that positive representation is not always inclusive, and that future research should investigate interventions to reduce transphobia for other communities of Trans women beyond the White and famous.

Conclusion

Media can be a powerful tool, and as our society becomes increasingly integrated with various forms of media, the influence they hold over our attitudes cannot be ignored. This influence can be especially powerful for the ways in which media shape our perceptions of minority groups who continue to face discrimination due to widespread stereotyping and prejudice. The variety of issues that Trans women face will not be resolved through media alone, but the results of this study indicate that media may be an influential tool that can work for or against this community. We therefore have reason to believe that the ways in which media represent Trans women is worthy of continued analysis.

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Table 1*Means and Standard Deviations for GTS and ATTI*

	Positive (<i>n</i> =101)		Negative/Problematic (<i>n</i> =199)		Control (<i>n</i> =87)	
Measure	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Pre-GTS	2.39	1.05	2.44	1.19	2.39	1.19
Post-GTS	2.31	1.09	2.44	1.24	2.27	1.20
Pre-ATTI	3.89	.88	3.88	1.00	3.93	.89
Post-ATTI	3.87	.96	3.80	1.06	3.95	1.00

Note: In the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS), higher scores indicate higher rates of genderism and Transphobia. In the Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals (ATTI) measure, higher scores indicate greater tolerance toward Trans individuals.

Table 2*Means and Standard Deviations for GTS and ATTI, non-LGBTQ participants*

	Positive (n=75)		Negative/Problematic (n=138)		Control (n=63)	
Measure	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Pre-GTS	2.47	1.08	2.68	1.23	2.64	1.18
Post-GTS	2.37	1.11	2.72	1.26	2.53	1.21
Pre-ATTI	3.81	.93	3.69	1.06	3.72	.88
Post-ATTI	3.81	.99	3.60	1.10	3.73	1.03

Note: In the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS), higher scores indicate higher rates of genderism and Transphobia. In the Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals (ATTI) measure, higher scores indicate greater tolerance toward Trans individuals. Non-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) participants are those who identified their gender as either “Male” or “Female” and who only expressed sexual preference for the other sex.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the GTS and ATTI, controlling for gender, sexuality, religion, and knowing a Trans person

	Positive (n=99)		Negative/Problematic (n=194)		Control (n=87)	
Measure	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Pre-GTS	2.41	1.05	2.43	1.20	2.39	1.19
Post-GTS	2.33	1.09	2.43	1.25	2.27	1.20
	(n=99)		(n=194)		(n=86)	
Measure	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Pre-ATTI	3.86	.88	3.88	1.00	3.93	.89
Post-ATTI	3.86	.96	3.80	1.06	3.95	1.00

Note: In the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS), higher scores indicate higher rates of genderism and Transphobia. In the Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals (ATTI) measure, higher scores indicate greater tolerance toward Trans individuals.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Pre-ATTI and Pre-GTS by participant characteristics

Characteristic	Pre-GTS Scores			Pre-ATTI Scores		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Men	180	2.71	1.15	160	3.69	.95
Women	204	2.20	1.10	204	4.04	.92
Age < 30	197	2.35	1.2	197	4.02	.93
Age > 30	188	2.49	1.10	188	3.76	.95
Christian	173	2.87	1.18	173	3.48	1.01
Atheist	149	2.05	1.00	149	4.24	.73
KnowTrans	173	2.19	1.14	173	4.06	.94
Not KnowTrans	213	2.59	1.14	213	3.76	.93

Note: In the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS), higher scores indicate higher rates of genderism and Transphobia. In the Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals (ATTI) measure, higher scores indicate greater tolerance toward Trans individuals. “KnowTrans” participants claimed to personally know a Trans individual, and the the “Not KnowTrans” participants did not claim to know a Trans individual.