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**An Analysis of the Representation of Black Men in
Modern U.S. Television Commercials.**

A Thesis

Presented to the Departments of Strategic Communication

College of Communication

and

The Honors Program

of

Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

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Abstract

Throughout the history of media, minority groups have been on the losing end of representation, with racist, stereotypical portrayals, or in many cases, no representation at all. This study analyzes the current representation of black men in modern television commercials. To answer the research questions posed about how black men are represented in commercials, a content analysis was conducted. A systematic sample of television commercials was taken from an online directory of television commercials, and the sample (N = 117) was analyzed using a coding instrument to determine the level of involvement and characterizations of the black male characters featured in the commercial. Of particular interest was the role played by black characters, ranging from background or token roles to major characters. The results showed that the black men had major roles more than any other option, and that compared to past studies, background roles had largely decreased. However, the study also found that stereotypical roles and token roles for black men were still present, even in modern media. Based on the data from the study, despite some positive change, advertisers still have work to do to eliminate negative representation for black males.

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Introduction

Representation has become an increasingly important topic in today's world of abundant media as well as poignant conversations about race and society. In everything from movies,¹ news reporters,² politics,³ and the workplace,⁴ society has called for leaders, actors and role models that are more diverse, in contrast to the white-dominated elite of the past, in an attempt to level the playing field for people of all races and build up the leaders of the future to believe that they can achieve and thrive in modern society. But how successful have those calls been? In some ways, good, but there is still room for improvement. For example, according to a 2015 report on representation in television programming, from 1987 until 2009, representation of Latinos and Asians on TV increased 3 percent and 2.8 percent respectively,⁵ however, representation of blacks actually decreased by over 10 percent.⁶ More recently, according to the 2019 Hollywood Diversity Report, minorities made up under 20 percent of film leads, under 15 percent of film directors, and under 10 percent of film writers.⁷ But how are minorities represented in other forms of media that do not make the theaters or the silver screen but are perhaps even more prevalent on a daily basis?

¹ Blay, Z. (2016, February 19). 18 Times Black Actors Nailed Why We Need Representation In Film. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from <https://www.huffpost.com>

² Cobb, J. (2018, November 5). When newsrooms are dominated by white people, they miss crucial facts. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com>.

³ Dittmar, K. (2018, November 16). Why Scaling Up Women's Political Representation Matters. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from <http://www.genderwatch2018.org>.

⁴ Funk, C., & Parker, K. (2019, December 31). Racial diversity and discrimination in the U.S. STEM workforce. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org>.

⁵ Tukachinsky, R., Mastro, D., & Yarchi, M. (2015). Documenting Portrayals of Race/Ethnicity on Primetime Television over a 20-Year Span and Their Association with National-Level Racial/Ethnic Attitudes. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(1), 17–38.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Hunt, D., Ramón, A.C., & Tran, M. (2019). Hollywood Diversity Report 2019. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/hollywood-diversity-report-2019/>

Literature Review

Advertising has long been a staple in capitalist culture. In the opening of Chris Wharton's book, *Advertising as Culture*, he explains how advertising has evolved over time and become an essential element of society thanks to its incorporation of art, design, cultural aspects, and reappropriated ideas.⁸ Wharton breaks down how culture includes high art, but also popular culture,⁹ and advertising draws from both to create content. He explains that advertising, "reappropriates ideas, designs and artefacts produced in these areas and in addition creates its own productions and products that can be analysed using criteria associated with these areas of cultural production."¹⁰ The idea of producing culture through advertising is continued in John Storey's article, "What is Popular Culture?", where he connects pop culture to ideology, explaining that the media we consume helps to construct an image of the world around us, influencing our views and opinions.¹¹ Advertising is a part of that pop culture, as explained in the book *Diversity in Advertising*: "Advertising is... a powerful social and cultural force in American society... a mirror of societal values and a molder of our beliefs and norms... with the current level of media and technology available, advertising and the mass media have become more powerful than other institutions such as education, religion, and even the family."¹² There is no doubt on advertising's effects on society, and perhaps more precisely, the impact that television commercials have on society.

⁸ Wharton, Chris. *Advertising as Culture*. Bristol: Intellect, 2013., 5.

⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁰ Ibid, 5.

¹¹ Storey, John. "What Is Popular Culture?" *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 2001, 4.

¹² Williams, Jerome D., Wei-Na Lee, and Curtis P. Haugtvedt, eds. *Diversity in Advertising: Broadening the Scope of Research Directions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2015.

After commercial television was developed in the 1940s, the popularization of the TV in the American household soared. Along with everyone's favorite programming, national commercials with high production value and local, low-budget commercials became staples in daily home life.¹³ However, not everyone was enamored with this new technology. People became increasingly concerned with having blatant advertising messages in their homes that they could not necessarily tune-out or control.¹⁴ However, commercials were here to stay and continued to be engrained into American TV. During the 1984 Super Bowl, Apple released its famous 1984 commercial, revolutionizing advertising with the way it broke through the clutter and blurred the lines between advertising and entertainment.¹⁵ Since then, this focus on advertising content (especially around the Super Bowl) has only grown, from 2% of 1996 viewers claiming to only watch the big game for the commercials,¹⁶ to 7% in 2000.¹⁷ In 2019, despite Super Bowl viewership decline, commercials made for the game broadcast were viewed by millions before, during and after the big game online.¹⁸ The ascent of TV commercials into everyday solidifies advertising as a factor in American culture.

Since the beginnings of inclusion of minority groups in media, representation has been a defining factor in advertisements, their reception in society, and their success. Much of

¹³ O'Barr, William M., "A Brief History of Advertising in America." *Advertising & Society Review* 6, no. 3 (2005) (accessed February 25, 2019).

¹⁴ Williams, Jerome D., Wei-Na Lee, and Curtis P. Haugtvedt, eds. *Diversity in Advertising: Broadening the Scope of Research Directions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2015.

¹⁵ Gulas, C. S., & Weinberger, M. G. (2006). *Humor in advertising: a comprehensive analysis*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Granados, N. (2019, February 8). 2019 Super Bowl Ads Were Viewed Massively Online Before And After The Game. Retrieved November 27, 2019.

advertising has followed a traditionally white-only model,¹⁹ up until the 1960s when the civil rights movement brought up concerns about the lack of diversity in advertising.²⁰ As a response to this public outcry, advertisers of the time period were faced with a possible marketing dilemma: including black actors with white actors in commercials. “This new form of promotion, called “integrated” advertising, became a societal concern, and a focus of marketing strategy for the next fifteen years... advertisers risked alienating white [, racist] consumers.”²¹ With integrated advertising, it was found that white audiences actually preferred the integrated ads over ones with just white or just black actors. This helped to spread the inclusion of more blacks in advertising materials from the 1970s on.²² By the end of the 1990s, around 12 percent of commercials included black actors,²³ a small step forward, albeit a step, considering that in 1969 just over 1 percent of ads contained even a single black face.²⁴

With the beginning of the inclusion of black actors in advertising came racist portrayals in advertising, and this racism left a mark on the advertising industry.²⁵ According to the 2015 report on diversity in advertising from the New York Psychology Press, the most common and most sensitive representation in advertising has been that of African Americans.²⁶ Initial

¹⁹ Williams, Jerome D., Wei-Na Lee, and Curtis P. Haugtvedt, eds. *Diversity in Advertising: Broadening the Scope of Research Directions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2015.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Whittler, Tommy E. "The Effects of Actors Race in Commercial Advertising: Review and Extension." *Journal of Advertising* 20, no. 1 (1991): 54-60

²² Barban, A. M. (1969). The Dilemma of "Integrated" Advertising. *The Journal of Business*, 42(4), 492.

²³ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. (1989). Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19-25.

²⁴ Ibrahim, Y. (2016). The Negro marketing dilemma. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing; Bingley*, 8(4), 545-559.

²⁵ Brown, Christopher. “Dimensions of Racism in Advertising: From Slavery to the Twenty-first Century.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95, no. 3 (September 2018): 859.

²⁶ Williams, Jerome D., Wei-Na Lee, and Curtis P. Haugtvedt, eds. *Diversity in Advertising: Broadening the Scope of Research Directions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2015: 125.

marketing efforts in the 1960s assumed that African American communities were entirely homogenous, and relied on what Ibrahim (2016) describes as “ghetto marketing,” which identified black consumers as “economically and socially deprived.”²⁷

Some of the most dangerous and long-lasting negative representations of African Americans come from the earliest of American performances: minstrel shows. The purpose and institutionalization of the racist representations of blacks in minstrel shows are fully explained in Marlon Riggs’ award winning documentary “Ethnic Notions: African American Stereotypes and Prejudice.”²⁸ The standard black characters presented in these shows were given (as we understand them now) slurs for titles; the “mammy,” (a happily obedient and protective caretaker woman who was usually overweight and desexualized), the “sambo,” (a carefree, irresponsible black man who was always dancing or singing rather than working), the “coon,” (a black man who attempts to imitate whites but cannot due to a lack of intelligence), the “black savage,” (a strong, animalistic and aggressive black man who is uncivilized), and the “pickaninny,” (a black child who was usually naked and also given animal-like qualities).²⁹ Caricatures of African Americans like these helped to spread the myth that slaves were happy and carefree, as well as promote stereotypes about African Americans being violent and animalistic, as well as unintelligent, irresponsible and inherently rhythmic.

Over time, minstrel caricatures have been marked as racist and messages that were once acceptable (or for some even considered entertaining) have been slowly faded from public

²⁷ Ibrahim, Y. (2016). The Negro marketing dilemma. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing; Bingley*, 8(4), 545–563. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JHRM-04-2015-0013>

²⁸ *Ethnic Notions: African American Stereotypes and Prejudice*. (1987). Retrieved from <https://butler.kanopy.com/video/ethnic-notions-0>

²⁹ Ibid.

marketing.³⁰ But time has not healed all racial wounds. In a 2018 study on racial stereotypes, Priest et al identify that white Americans are still more likely to label black teens as lazier, more violent and less intelligent than any other race,³¹ evidence that those minstrel representations and their effects have lasted far beyond the Jim Crow era.

A possible explanation of these continued stereotypes in the American public is poor representation and further stereotyping in popular media. For example, African Americans are overrepresented in the news as perpetrators of violent crime, and underrepresented as the victims compared to actual arrest rates.³² Additionally, outside of sports games, representation of African Americans in popular video games is very low, with many portrayals being gangsters or thugs.³³ The article also discusses how the most common representations of black men in media have created modern stereotypes for black audiences revolving around lofty, unreasonable and uncommon career goals like becoming a rap star or an NBA player.³⁴

Stereotyping and general poor representation has bled into modern advertising as well. Even today, studies show nearly half of marketing professionals feel that their brands, “are failing to reflect a contemporary, racially-diverse, society in their marketing and advertising.”³⁵ While minority groups are being presented in advertising more than ever before, even the

³⁰ Brown, Christopher. “Dimensions of Racism in Advertising: From Slavery to the Twenty-first Century.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95, no. 3 (September 2018): 860.

³¹ Priest, N. et al. (2018). Stereotyping across intersections of race and age: Racial stereotyping among White adults working with children. *Plos One*, 13(9). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0201696

³² Media Portrayals and Black Male Outcomes. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/media-representations-impact-black-men/media-portrayals>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hobbs, Thomas. "Pepsi's Ad Failure Shows the Importance of Diversity and Market Research." *Marketing Week*. July 28, 2017. Accessed March 04, 2019.

content's creators are unhappy with the way they are being shown, but why? One possible answer: plastic representation.

In her 2017 article, Dr. Kristen J. Warner defines plastic representation as, “a combination of synthetic elements put together and shaped to look like meaningful imagery, but which can only approximate depth and substance because ultimately it is hollow and cannot survive close scrutiny.”³⁶ She explains that plastic representation allows for ‘checking the box’ of diversity by including people of color, without creating a complex, authentic or nuanced role for a person of color to occupy. Warner explains the idea of plastic representation again in a film review of the movie *Windows*. She likens plastic representation to examples like the reboots of the *Ghostbusters* or *Oceans* franchises with their gender-blind casts: “neither script delved into the complexities of what the women characters faced being themselves in the world... audiences and critics place so much emphasis on the visual imagery as the sole marker of meaningful representation that questions about complexity and depth are allowed to be elided from the conversation.”³⁷ The idea of plastic representation is similar to that of tokenism; “recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality.”³⁸ Both can be seen as a weak attempt at encouraging diversity; they miss the mark when they take no further steps to foster inclusion and real meaningful impact for people of

³⁶ Warner, Kristen J. "Plastic Representation." *Film Quarterly*. December 05, 2017. Accessed March 04, 2019.

³⁷ Warner, Kristen J. “It Can’t Always Be Nina: The Battle between Plasticity and Specificity in *Widows*,” *Adaptation*.

³⁸ Snell, Tonie. "Tokenism: The Result of Diversity Without Inclusion." *Medium.com*. May 30, 2017. Accessed March 04, 2019. <https://medium.com/@TonieSnell/tokenism-the-result-of-diversity-without-inclusion-460061db1eb6>.

color. In her piece on tokenism, Tonie Snell asks, “Do they truly have a seat at the table or are they just there as figureheads for ‘diversity’?”³⁹

Analyzing these examples of media can help advertisers do better in the way of representation. Perhaps Christopher Brown said it best in his review of the book, *Dimensions of Racism in Advertising*: “As racism continues to rear its ugly head in branding and advertising, multicultural marketing must persist in the face of naïve companies that flounder in producing short-sighted racist imagery [or tokenism] despite strict approval processes.”⁴⁰

Studies on Representation

In a 1989 study published in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, researchers analyzed representation in cartoons from the *New Yorker* magazine between the years 1946-1987. The results found that while there were rarely black characters featured, their numbers decreased with the passage of each time period.⁴¹ Additionally, the characters shown changed throughout each time period: from the earliest period most were stereotypical roles, in the 1960s and 70s blacks were included to highlight racial themes, and in the 80s they were included mostly in token roles.⁴² Over the entire study, only a single black character was shown as a main character in a cartoon that was not explicitly about race relations.⁴³

In their 1989 study titled, “Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials,” Wilkes and Valencia identify that far more blacks were represented in commercials than Hispanics, and that

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Brown, Christopher. “Dimensions of Racism in Advertising: From Slavery to the Twenty-first Century.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95, no. 3 (September 2018): 860.

⁴¹ Thibodeau, R. (1989). From Racism to Tokenism: The Changing Face of Blacks in New Yorker Cartoons. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53(4), 482. doi: 10.1086/269168

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

of the 240 commercials that featured black actors, more than half only featured black males.⁴⁴ Of those black actors in the commercials, only 31% were identified as having a major role in the commercial, 22% had minor roles, and 47% had just background roles. Additionally, in 89% of ads featuring black actors, they were among a group of characters, not the lone character.⁴⁵

The 2017 study entitled, “Look Who’s Talking to our Kids: Representations of Race and Gender in TV Commercials on Nickelodeon,” researchers Peruta and Powers identified that based on real-life population percentages in the United States African Americans are overrepresented in commercials as a whole⁴⁶. However, in some ways they are underrepresented, for example in commercials featuring advanced technology, or in roles for characters that are more often lower-class.⁴⁷ According to their study, 23.1% of lead characters were black,⁴⁸ and, “non-White and White characters are portrayed similarly. Rather than depicting racial and ethnic minority characters as exhibiting stereotypical characteristics as has been demonstrated in the past, the lead presenters analyzed here are depicted in the same favorable light across the board.”⁴⁹

Researcher Lisa Wade has also studied modern representation in advertising, and in her 2014 article, “Why and How People of Color are included in Advertising: 2nd in a Series,” she explores her hypothesis that frequently, people of color are used in advertising messages to

⁴⁴ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. (1989). Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25. doi: 10.1080/00913367.1989.10673139

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Peruta, A., & Powers, J. (2017). Look Who's talking to our kids: Representations of race and gender in TV commercials on Nickelodeon. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 1133.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 1134.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 1142.

broadcast the idea of, “Color, flavor, or personality.”⁵⁰ For example, she sites pictures of boxes of Life cereal where the original flavor is packaged in a box with a pair of white children on the front, and the cinnamon as well as the maple and brown sugar flavor variations are packaged in boxes with black children and parents on the front.⁵¹

These studies provide insights about the representation of blacks in America in the second half of the 1900s, but how are blacks represented in today’s television advertising, and has society progressed towards fair and truthful representation without relying on stereotypes or tokenism?

Framing Representation in Advertising

Companies, and the agencies that create their advertisements for them, often show their products being used or interacted with by targeted audiences and the general public in their commercials. These commercials reveal the representation of black men and indirectly communicate the feelings of the company and society as a whole toward black people.⁵²

In the past, scholars have been quick to analyze the representation of blacks in other forms of entertainment media, but as previously discussed⁵³, advertising has grown to have huge effects on culture and society, making it a medium that cannot be ignored in this quest for racial justice. This elevation into societal importance allows advertising to socially construct reality, as well as reflect on where we are today in the timeline of racism to equality.

⁵⁰ Wade, L. (2014). Why and How People of Color are Included in Advertising: 2nd in a Series - Sociological Images. Retrieved November 7, 2019.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Brown, Christopher. “Dimensions of Racism in Advertising: From Slavery to the Twenty-first Century.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95, no. 3 (September 2018): 860.

⁵³ Williams, Jerome D., Wei-Na Lee, and Curtis P. Haugtvedt, eds. *Diversity in Advertising: Broadening the Scope of Research Directions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2015

This study analyzes the representation of black men in American TV commercials by asking the following questions:

RQ1: How many black men are shown in a typical commercial?

RQ2: Are the black men clearly American or are they somehow ‘othered’ foreigners?

RQ3: What level of involvement do black men have in the commercial?

RQ4: How frequently and in what ways are black men stereotyped in TV commercials?

Method

This study was highly influenced by Wilkes and Valencia’s 1989 study on the representation of Hispanics and Blacks in television commercials,⁵⁴ but instead focused on modern commercials and the representation of black men instead of all black and Hispanic people combined into one. Though 40 years old, the 1989 study uses sound research methods in coding and content analysis, and marks a specific point in the history of black representation. It is time advertising media was reevaluated.

Sample

The study sample was extracted from a database directory of television commercials housed on the video sharing website YouTube. Within the directory, keyword searches, time limits, and date of upload were input to narrow the commercials analyzed into the area of study: at least one black actor, TV commercials (identified by branding and a length of 15 seconds to a

⁵⁴ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. (1989). Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25.

minute and a half), broadcast between 2015-2020. Once results were generated by directory, a systematic sample was used to select the commercials for analysis by choosing every fifth commercial in the directory results. If for some reason a video appeared that was not a commercial or did not meet the other requirements, it was skipped and the next fifth commercial was chosen. Duplicates were also skipped over for the next fifth commercial. The following search terms were used in the following order to gather a total of 117 commercials that fit the requirements: commercials with black actors (23), commercials with black men (31), commercials with African American actors (6), commercials with African American men (12), commercials with black characters (10), commercials with African American characters (7), advertisements with black men (12), advertisements with black characters (6), advertisements with black actors (7), advertisements with black men (3). 88 different companies were represented by the selection of 117.

Data Collection and Analysis

The analysis conducted in this study was guided by both Wilkes and Valencia's 1989 report on representation of blacks and Hispanics in commercials⁵⁵ and Thibodeau's 1989 study of the representation of blacks in New Yorker cartoons.⁵⁶ Wilkes and Valencia's report used frequency of blacks and Hispanics, as well as perceived importance of the black or Hispanic to the commercial as categories of analysis.⁵⁷ Thibodeau's study also used identification as U.S.

⁵⁵ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. (1989). Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25.

⁵⁶ Thibodeau, R. (1989). From Racism to Tokenism: The Changing Face of Blacks in New Yorker Cartoons. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53(4).

⁵⁷ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. (1989). Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25.

blacks or non-U.S. blacks as a category of analysis. The categories that I used for this study's analysis were directly taken from those previous studies: number of black men in the commercial, U.S. or non-U.S. black, and level of involvement or importance to the commercial.

Hyperlinks to commercials were recorded and copied into a spreadsheet where each one received its own row for analysis. The name of the commercial and company that it represented was recorded in columns on the spreadsheet, as well as a brief description before coding was completed. In the number of black men category, a number was recorded. In the race code category, it was recorded whether or not the characters in question were U.S. or non-U.S. blacks. Every single black male character was recorded for each commercial viewed. If there was any uncertainty about any of the recorded categories or codes, a commercial was reviewed multiple times by the researcher. In the involvement category, it was recorded whether the characters had major roles, minor roles, background roles, or if they were token characters or stereotypical characters. The major role, minor role, and background role codes are the same that were used in Wilkes and Valencia's 1989 study of minorities in commercials.⁵⁸ The token role and stereotyped role were adapted from Thibodeau's 1989 study.⁵⁹

Measures

The measuring tool used in the content analysis was a code sheet with race variables, cast variables and involvement variables.

⁵⁸ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. (1989). Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25.

⁵⁹ Thibodeau, R. (1989). From Racism to Tokenism: The Changing Face of Blacks in New Yorker Cartoons. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53(4).

The two race variables were U.S. blacks and Non-U.S. blacks. U.S. blacks were black characters that appeared to be from the United States, or at least were not othered in any foreign way. Non-U.S. blacks were characters that were either already known to not be from the U.S., had features that identified him as being from another country, or were placed in a foreign scene where they seemed to fit in. The cast variable was simply how many black men were present in the commercial.

The involvement variables were the major role, minor role, background role, token role, and stereotyped role. The major role is a character that is very important to the commercial theme or layout, and is shown in the foreground, interacting with the product, or has a speaking role. The minor character has an average importance to the commercial theme or layout, and might speak, but is not a main character of the commercial. The background role is a character that is hard to find in the scene, or appears in the literal background of the commercial and does not speak. The token role is a character who is not important to the commercial other than being the lone black character in the cast. The stereotyped role is a character who might play a main role in the commercial, but is stereotyped according to the longstanding black characterizations and/or more modern ones that are explained in the literature review.

Content analysis was iterative and ongoing, with codes being redefined and adjusted as the instrument was tested and refined for the main study. An initial code sheet was developed to test an initial sample of 23 commercials with a second coder. The second coder matched 77% of codes to my initial coding. This was used as a test round for the code sheet to ensure validity of the methods. Based on the test round, changes were made to the descriptions of minor roles and non-U.S. blacks on the code sheet. Additionally, examples of stereotypes from articles examined in the literature review were added to provide clarity on the code sheet. A more experienced

second coder, a faculty member at this university, was recruited as a more experienced second coder to code a random sample of commercials to ensure that the changes made increased the validity of the study. Her analysis with the updated code sheet resulted in a 90.91% code match on involvement codes and a 64% match for numbers of black men in the commercials. The discrepancies between the researcher's coding and the second coder in this instance revolved around the differences between the codes between major and minor roles, and between the major and stereotype roles. The discrepancies between the stereotyped roles and the major roles was caused by the second coder's general lack of knowledge of professional athletes, and the discrepancy between the major and minor role came in a commercial with lots of characters of equal involvement and not being confident in who was a major character or who was more of a minor character. The primary reason for the low reliability was the lack of coder training. Instead, the code sheet and study data were emailed to the coder and the coding commenced without training. Typically, coders are trained on a small sample that is not included in the study sample, until the coder and principal researcher reach 100 percent exact agreement consecutively on a certain agreed-upon number; due to schedule conflicts this did not occur. Without that training, it is no surprise that the reliability was low on some variables during this round. To ensure reliability was present, a third coder was recruited and trained. In coding the same sample as the second coder, the third coder matched 90.91% on involvement codes 83.33% of numbers of black men in commercials. The discrepancies on involvement codes revolved around not knowing that an actor was a famous musician and naming them a stereotyped role instead of simply a major role. The discrepancies on numbers of black men in commercials was caused by identifying more black faces in crowd shots as background roles.

The variables explained in previously were abbreviated in the content analysis as the following codes. The race codes were abbreviated as USB for U.S. blacks, NUB for Non-U.S. blacks. The cast code was given as a number to represent the number of black men present in the commercial. The involvement codes were abbreviated as MJ for major role, MN for minor role, BG for background role, T for token role, and ST for stereotyped role.

The appendix provides a complete code sheet with variables and their full descriptions and nuances (Appendix A), as well as the data sheet (Appendix B) that contains the commercials examined, companies that they represent, URLs, codes assigned to them based on characters and content, as well as a brief description of the premise of the commercial. The entire sample was collected and analyzed over a 46-day period from November 21st of 2019 until January 5th, 2020. 22 hours were spent searching for and analyzing the commercials gathered.

Results

Data from the content analysis showed that in the commercials chosen for this study, major roles were the most prevalent for black men in commercials. Background roles were the second most frequent, followed closely by minor roles. Stereotyped characters made up 8.85% of all black men in commercials, while token roles made up 5.20% (Table 1).

(Table 1) Representation of black men in commercial acting roles:

Type of role	Percentage of total roles for black men	Number of examples noted	Number of examples examined
Major Role	37.00%	71	193
Minor Role	22.30%	43	193
Background Role	26.94%	52	193
Stereotyped Role	8.80%	17	193
Token Role	5.20%	10	193

Of the commercials analyzed in this study, the majority offered a major role for black men, and around a quarter of them offered a minor role or background role. Stereotyped roles appeared in 6.84% of commercials while token roles appeared in 8.55% of commercials (Table 2).

(Table 2) Commercials with roles for black men:

Type of role	Percentage commercials that featured this role for black men	Number of commercials identified as offering that type of role	Number of commercials examined
Major Role	53.85%	63	117
Minor Role	25.64%	30	117
Background Role	28.21%	33	117
Stereotyped Role	6.84%	8	117
Token Role*	8.55%	10	117

In commercials where just one role type was present for black men (either multiple versions of the same involvement level, or only one black man was present), Major roles were by far the most prominent. Background roles were slightly more prominent than minor roles. Stereotyped roles and token roles remained the same (Table 3).

(Table 3) Commercials that exclusively offer single types of roles for black men:

Type of role	Percentage commercials that featured ONLY this role for black men	Number of commercials identified as ONLY offering that type of role	Number of commercials examined
Major Role	38.46%	45	117
Minor Role	13.68%	16	117
Background Role	14.53%	17	117
Stereotyped Role**	6.84%	8	117
Token Role*	8.55%	10	117

Examples of each involvement variable from the content

Major Role

Major roles were defined in the coding instrument as being a role that was very important to the commercial theme or layout, or someone who was shown in foreground and/or shown holding the product or appears to be speaking.

Black men in major roles occupied a variety of character personalities and interests, from people buying insurance, to walking in crowds to participating in focus groups or going about their daily lives at home. One encouraging example of representation, and clear example of a major role, in the sample comes from a Hyundai commercial titled, “The Perfect Match.” The ad features a black man as a major character, who appears to just be a normal person (he is not a celebrity and does not have any distinguishing or otherworldly characteristics). It tracks him over the course of a few scenes, working as an architect, going out with friends, and eventually bumping into a white woman, who viewers later find out to be the love interest. They end up meeting at the end of the commercial and bonding over both owning a Hyundai Tucson. The black actor is clearly the main character of the commercial, along with the white woman because of the fact that the focus of the plot revolves around them. And while that plot may have some holes, the way that the commercial represents its main characters is a win for the normalization of positive representation of black men in society.

Another positive example of a major role for a black actor can be seen in a Progressive Insurance commercial entitled “Flocus Group.” In this ad, there are five people in the room with the Progressive spokeswoman, Flo, and they are discussing a video that they all apparently just

watched. They all seem unhappy with the video, and Flo tries to push them to notice the tagline for the insurance company, “bundle your home and auto.” At this point, the lone black character comes up with the idea of creating a character for the company called “Mr. Bundles,” which all the other characters love. While this role is not earth-shattering or boundary-breaking, it expands the idea of what a normal role for a black actor can be, even if it is just an insurance focus group participant.

Minor Role

Minor roles were classified in the coding instrument as roles that were of average importance to the commercial theme or layout, and stipulated that the character may speak but is not the main character of a commercial.

Black men in minor roles played a wide range of characters, from people trying out new products, to customers interacting with company representatives, to comic reliefs. This character type, and the gap between major and minor characters, is exemplified by the Progressive Insurance commercial entitled, “Motaur: Do You Mind.” In the commercial, there is a white man filling up a truck with gas in the desert. His friend, a black character, is sitting in the driver’s seat of the truck, waiting. At the pump across from them is a black man, who has a motorcycle for legs: i.e., the Motaur. The white man and the Motaur go back and forth. The white actor asks the Motaur if he minds being a Motaur, to which the Motaur responds, “The real question is, do you mind *not* being a Motaur?” At this point, the camera shifts to the other black actor who simply says, “I do.” The black actor playing the Motaur clearly has the major role in the commercial; He says multiple lines, the camera is on him frequently and the commercial is named after his character. The other black actor, although he gets to deliver the punchline at the end, clearly has

a minor role; he doesn't really appear until the very end of the commercial, and just has those two words to say. He is still important to the commercial, just not so important to get the characterization of main character. This commercial is also an example of positive representation for black actors, because while goofy, it still represents them in a positive light: the one plays the seemingly-mythical being and focus of the commercial, and the other is just waiting for his friend to fill up their truck at the gas pump.

Another example of positive representation in a minor role for black actors comes from a Subaru commercial entitled, "A Parent's Imagination." The commercial is about the new safety features in the latest Subaru Forester vehicle, and shows parents worrying about their teens driving, and then flashes to scenes of those teens frozen in mid-crash situation. Four different parents are shown worrying about their sons and daughters driving, and they are each followed by a different actor or actress playing their children. One of the parents is a black actor, and that actor's 'son' in the commercial is also played by a black actor. The father is shown in a restaurant looking out the window and pondering the possibility of his son getting into a crash. The next shot is one of the son in his car, upside-down in an intersection. While the son is shown getting into a crash, the commercial frames it as though this is something that happens to young adults who are newer to driving, and definitely as something that parents will worry about, regardless of whether or not their child is a safe driver, which keeps the commercial from having a negative tone towards the kids getting into the crashes. Both the father and the son in the commercial are in minor roles, as neither speaks and each is just one of eight total characters shown across the entirety of the commercial.

Background role

In the coding instrument, the background role is defined as someone who is hard to find, or in the background of the commercial, and stipulates that there must be other black characters in the commercial to distinguish the background role from the token role.

Black actors in background roles played a more limited range of characters, like people enjoying theme parks with their families, or passersby in scenes where they were not necessarily a part of the action. This characterization of the background role can be seen in the commercial for YSL Beauty, entitled “BLACK OPIUM EAU DE PARFUM.” The perfume commercial shows short clips in quick succession of multiple women walking around a party in a big city. There are scenes in big crowds and in one clip one of the women is shown kissing a black actor. That actor does not appear in any other portion of the commercial. He speaks no lines, and doesn’t have anything to do with the commercial other than that short clip. Because the commercial moves from shot to shot so quickly, a viewer might even miss seeing him there all together. This is typical of a background character, and although some are clearer to see than others, they are usually just there in crowd scenes or short seemingly unimportant clips.

Another example of a background character comes from the Mass Mutual commercial entitled, “Father Daughter Dance.” The commercial features a newlywed bride dancing with her father. The dance starts out slow, but breaks out of the traditional ballroom dance and into a hip-hop routine that they had clearly choreographed ahead of that night. In the background of the dancers, the wedding guests watch in a crowd. In the crowd, there are multiple black men, who say no lines and don’t do anything besides watch the father and daughter do their dance. This is a typical example of the background characters that appear in crowd scenes.

Token role

The coding instrument outlines the token role as a character that is not important to the commercial theme or layout other than being the lone contributor to an integrated setting (i.e. the only black character), and that there is no explanation about why this character must be black otherwise. It would not be considered a token role if, for example there was only one black actor, there was also a black actress in the commercial because there would be other players that contributed to the integrated setting.

Black actors in token roles were usually playing a role that could be described as, ‘the black friend,’ and all of them were in commercials that featured multiple other roles that were played by non-black actors and actresses. A perfect example of this can be found in the Volkswagen commercial, entitled “College.” The commercial highlights the company’s ‘people first warranty’ and focuses on the idea of moving a child into college for the first time. As the mom and son get onto campus, there are multiple shots of other students hanging out on the campus mall, in which one of them features a black actor throwing a football with a friend. The black actor is the only one in the commercial, despite there being multiple group shots where others could have been inserted to elevate that role from token to background role.

Another example comes from the Progressive Insurance commercial, entitled “Road Trip.” The commercial features four friends going on a road trip into the mountains. One of the friends in the commercial is played by a black actor. This character has no lines, sits in the back seat of the car, and has very little opportunity to make the role stand out over the course of the commercial. This is a great example of a commercial that articulates the difference between the background role and the token role; while the black actor was definitely in the background of the

commercial (both literally and in his importance to the overall plot) him being the only black person in the commercial dropped the role from background to token.

Stereotyped role

In the coding instrument, the stereotyped role is defined as one that plays a main role in the commercial but is bound by a stereotypical representation of blacks in the U.S. based on either longstanding Jim Crow era stereotypes or modern ones that were addressed in the literature review. The definition of the stereotyped role also stipulates that it cannot be a stereotyped role if that black character is played by a celebrity who is famous for doing that thing, even if it is a common stereotype for black men.

This is exemplified in a Mountain Dew commercial entitled, “That’s Cold.” In the ad, two friends are playing basketball and drinking Mountain Dew. The drinks are supposedly so cold that they are able to blow ice out of their mouths and conjure up icy basketball players to play one-on-one. The one black actor conjures up another black actor playing basketball, while his friend conjures up Joel Embiid, a famous NBA player for the Philadelphia 76ers. The no-name basketball player drives on Embiid, who blocks his shot. All of the characters in this commercial are black men, but because they are playing basketball, a stereotype identified in the article, “Media Portrayals and Black Male Outcomes,”⁶⁰ they fall into the category of a stereotyped role. This applies to all of the characters in the ad, except for Embiid, because he makes his living as an NBA player, it is not forcing him into a stereotyped role for him to be acting as a basketball player in the commercial; that is just how audiences know him.

⁶⁰ Media Portrayals and Black Male Outcomes. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/media-representations-impact-black-men/media-portrayals>.

Another example of a stereotyped role can be seen in the TD Bank commercial entitled, “Dancer.” The commercial features a black actor working at a bank into the evening hours. When it is time to close, he looks around and realizes no one is there, prompting him to dance in a silly way, until he spots a man and his son at the door, causing him to put back on his professional face and help them with what they need. This role fits into the stereotyped role because of the way that it mirrors the stereotypical roles for blacks outlined in Marlon Riggs’ documentary “Ethnic Notions.”⁶¹ The documentary discusses many different caricatures that have lingered in the portrayals of blacks in media, but perhaps most heavily covers that of the ‘sambo.’ Riggs describes the sambo as a dumb, carefree black man (usually played by a white man in blackface), always laughing and dancing. This character was an inspiration for the infamous Jim Crow character that populated racist minstrel shows and continued harmful ideologies about slavery and black people in general into the 1900s and are still present in media today. The actor in the TD Bank commercial dances like the sambo character might dance if adopted to modern media. To establish the balance between this negative representation and positive counterparts, we can look back to “Ethnic Notions,” where Riggs explains that there is nothing wrong with dancing and singing, but if all the roles for blacks in media revolve around dancing and singing without realistic portrayals as well, then that is where the issues of minstrel caricatures are perpetuated.⁶²

⁶¹ *Ethnic Notions: African American Stereotypes and Prejudice*. (1987). Retrieved from <https://butler.kanopy.com/video/ethnic-notions-0>

⁶² *Ethnic Notions: African American Stereotypes and Prejudice*. (1987). Retrieved from <https://butler.kanopy.com/video/ethnic-notions-0>.

Analysis

The following insights were gathered in response to the research questions from the content of the commercials that were selected from the YouTube directory discussed earlier, and the statistical results listed above.

RQ1: How many black men are shown in a typical commercial?

The mean number of black men shown in the analyzed commercials was 1.68. The mode for the selected sample was just one black character and the range was 1-6. As a reminder, this study is not representative of all commercials, just commercials that featured at least one black male character.

RQ2: Are the black men clearly American or are they somehow ‘othered’ foreigners?

Only 7 of the 193 (3.63%) of the black men that appeared in the data set were identified as Non-U.S. blacks, the majority being celebrities who were not American. For example, Usain Bolt, the famous Jamaican sprinter was featured in multiple advertisements, and because he is famously not-American, he was listed as the NUB, code. The same goes for Joel Embiid, the famous Cameroonian basketball player; Drake, the famous Canadian rapper; or Idris Elba the famous English actor, who all also appeared in the commercials.

Only one of the seven identified Non-U.S. blacks was not a famous person from another country. This character was from a Skittles commercial, where he was seen wearing a Rasta cap and laughing manically in a Jamaican accent. The commercial centered around this stereotype of Jamaican men, and featured him milking a giraffe, with the Skittles coming out of the giraffe’s

udders into a bucket while Reggae music plays on the radio. This psychedelic scene led to the NUB to be coded in a stereotyped role.

RQ3: What level of involvement do black men have in the commercial?

Major roles in commercials for black men accounted for over 35% of all roles examined in the sample, and more than 53% of all commercials that featured a black actor (male) had a black actor in a major role. This puts black men in major roles more than any other type of role, and is an improvement from past studies of black men in major roles. In the 1989 study, “From Racism to Tokenism: The Changing Face of Blacks in New Yorker Cartoons,” only *one* black man was featured as a major character in cartoons that were not inherently about race over a 42 year stretch in the mid 1900s.⁶³ More specifically, the percentages of black men in leading roles in TV commercials has increased since 1989 as well. In the study, “Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials,” black actors were found to be in leading roles in commercials just 31% of the time, indicating a 4% increase over the last 40 years.⁶⁴

Additionally, it is important to note that 29/71 (40.85%) of black men in major roles in the sample are celebrities. Their fields of work range from professional sports (Anthony Davis and Usain Bolt are both featured in two different commercials, among other professional basketball and football players), musicians (Common, Chance the Rapper, Ludacris, Migos, Drake, Lionel Richie and Lil John all make appearances in the sample), and actors (Don Cheadle, Idris Elba, and Morgan Freeman all make appearances as well). While it is an age-old

⁶³ Thibodeau, R. “From Racism to Tokenism: The Changing Face of Blacks in New Yorker Cartoons.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53(4), 482, (1989).

⁶⁴ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. “Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials.” *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25, (1989).

marketing technique to feature a celebrity spokesperson in promotional material, these cameos can distract from roles for black actors as everyday people, not just famous athletes or rappers (a common stereotype for black men, outlined in the literature review). This can be dangerous, from a representation standpoint.

In the commercials surveyed, black men were present in minor roles 22.30% of the time, while they were present in background roles 26.94% of the time. In their 1989 study, Wilkes and Valencia identified that only 22% of black males had minor roles in commercials, indicating very little change when compared to this study.⁶⁵ Additionally, and more impressively, the 1989 study reports that 47% (!) of black actors had background roles in the commercials observed, indicating a 19% decrease over the last four decades.⁶⁶ While this is a positive statistical change when compared to past studies, it is important to note that even today, the number of background roles for black actors still surpasses the number of minor roles.

RQ4: How frequently and in what ways are black men stereotyped in TV commercials?

While negative representation in the form of token roles for blacks has vastly decreased from the time of the previous studies (the 1989 study of representation of blacks in New Yorker cartoons recorded that the majority of roles for black characters were token roles)⁶⁷ it is important to note that these roles have not been erased from modern advertising. Still today, in our ‘progressive’ (at least compared to the past) society, 5.20% of roles for black actors are token roles and 8.55% of commercials feature a token black character. Similar trends are still around in

⁶⁵ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. “Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials.” *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25, (1989).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Thibodeau, R. “From Racism to Tokenism: The Changing Face of Blacks in New Yorker Cartoons.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53(4), 482, (1989).

modern film as well. A 2019 article by data journalist Kira Schacht discusses how common token roles for black men like the ‘black best friend’ or the ‘black dude who dies first’ persist in modern media while other blatantly stereotypical roles like characters in blackface have faded away over time⁶⁸.

Stereotyped roles in the study were found to be present in 6.84% of commercials, and 8.80% of total roles available for black actors. These roles frequently included historical stereotypes that aligned with those discussed in Marlon Rigg’s documentary on Jim Crow era stereotyped like the black entertainer/dancer/naturally rhythmic dancer (exemplified in the TD Bank commercial called “Dancer”). Additionally, modern TV commercials played on more modern stereotypes as well, like the black athlete/ball player (exemplified in the Mountain Dew commercial called “That’s Cold”) which was explained to be dangerous due to its common use as a role model for young black boys to aspire do become, despite it being a limited and unrealistic option in society.

Examples from the study echo these same sentiments; roles like these are limiting at their best, and offensive and perpetuating damaging racial stereotypes that have existed since the civil war at their worst, leaving a dark spot on the companies that use them in their everyday marketing mixes that should not be ignored.

Discussion

This content analysis set out to examine the representation of black men in modern commercials, with the main goal of better understanding what types of roles were given to black

⁶⁸ Schacht, Kira. “What Hollywood Movies Do to Perpetuate Racial Stereotypes: DW: 21.02.2019.” DW.COM.

actors and identifying lingering racial stereotypes in the messaging that our ‘post-racial’ society is subjected to daily. The study found that most roles for black men in commercials were major roles, and that the split between major, minor, and background roles was 37.00% / 22.30% / 26.94% respectively. Statistically speaking, it makes sense for the numbers in a split like this to be more skewed towards background roles and minor roles, simply because there are more of them available. For example, a commercial might have two characters that are in major roles, and then 15 people that are in the background of the scene, and maybe a few of them do something that bumps them up to a minor character level. From a script writing perspective, it is difficult to have more than a few characters with lines or meaningful actions in a commercial, but it is easy to have a handful of extras that walk by or appear in the crowd of a scene. However, for a demographic that has historically been left out of positive media portrayals like blacks in America have, an ideal split would benefit from an equitable approach, where the numbers for major and minor roles are a bit higher than the ones for background roles. With this in consideration, the split for black men in modern TV commercials is not too far off, especially when comparing against similar historical studies. Wilkes & Valencia’s 1989 study found black males to be represented in a 31% / 22% / 47% split, where the majority of roles were background ones.⁶⁹ And, this 1989 report neglects stereotypical and token roles, which in this study were found to be 8.80% and 5.20%, respectively. Based on previous research on the advertising of the 1900s, it can be concluded that the numbers, had the 1989 study taken stereotypes and tokenism into account, would have been much worse,⁷⁰ considering that in the early 1970s, advertisers

⁶⁹ Wilkes, R. E., & Valencia, H. “Hispanics and Blacks in Television Commercials.” *Journal of Advertising*, 18(1), 19–25, (1989).

⁷⁰ Williams, Jerome D., Wei-Na Lee, and Curtis P. Haugtvedt, eds. *Diversity in Advertising: Broadening the Scope of Research Directions*. New York: Psychology Press, 2015.

were still just starting to experiment with integrated marketing and trying to de-couple the messaging towards black consumers from the backlash from whites who didn't want them there.⁷¹

While the increase in major roles and the decrease in background and stereotypical roles is encouraging, it is disappointing that companies still employ age-old stereotypical roles for black men. These characterizations are flat out inaccurate, and insensitive to the historical representation of blacks in America. Stereotypical roles for black men in commercials likely have very much to do with the lack of diversity in the people who are making them.

A 2006 article from the popular trade publication *Advertising Age* outlined this issue that has been historically present in most types of jobs: "There's not a lot of desire by [general-market] agencies to become more integrated... There are more pressing issues: profit margins, compensation, and an overall talent drain from the industry... it is more in the middle of things that keep agencies awake at night than a top priority."⁷² Another article, in discussion of the infamous Pepsi commercial starring Kendal Jenner that received backlash for its tone-deaf portrayal of police-protestor/minority conflict and the #blacklivesmatter movement, cited a statistic from a poll of 754 marketing professionals that found that nearly half of all marketers believe the brands that they work for fail to reflect a contemporary racially diverse society.⁷³ Similarly, a 2018 study from the Association of National Advertisers found that of the

⁷¹ Ibrahim, Y. (2016). The Negro marketing dilemma. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing; Bingley*, 8(4), 545–559. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JHRM-04-2015-0013>

⁷² Sanders, Lisa. "Still so White; Still No One Really Wants to Discuss It. (Cover Story)." *Advertising Age* 77, no. 25 (June 19, 2006): 1–25.

⁷³ Hobbs, T. "Pepsi's ad failure shows the importance of diversity and market research." *Marketing Week*, 2019. Retrieved November 7, 2019.

employees of the organization's member agencies, only 6% are black,⁷⁴ less than half of the percentage of blacks in the U.S. population.⁷⁵ This lack of representation in the rooms where these advertisements are made can lead to further lack of positive representation on screen-where non-black advertisers might not be thinking of the ramifications of stereotyped and token roles on the larger media landscape.

Limitations

Despite best efforts to ensure the validity and reliability of this study, there were some limitations, the first of which being a lack of representation within the researchers. I personally identify as a white male, and seeing as though there are no black-identifying men on the Butler College of Communication staff, those advising me on the methods and focus of the study were not representative of the subject of the research either. This is essential, due to conclusions drawn by leading psychologists about the inherent biases that exist within everyone.⁷⁶ In retrospect, a person of color should have been recruited to be a coder for the data. Future research should be done with a more diverse cast of researchers and perhaps explore the representation of other minority groups as well.

Another limitation of the study is the media choice; while video is perhaps the most engaging to the senses (both sound and visuals are used to capture the viewer's attention) there are other forms of media that advertising can harness and perhaps use to continue racial biases and stereotyping. Future research questions could be focused on the representation of minorities

⁷⁴ Duggan, Bill. "A Diversity Report for the Advertising/Marketing Industry - And A Call to Action: Marketing Maestros: Blogs." ANA.net. Association of National Advertisers, November 15, 2018.

⁷⁵ "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States." U.S. Census Bureau, 2019.

⁷⁶ Moskowitz, Gordon. "Are We All Inherently Biased?" Lehigh University, February 20, 2019.

in print advertising, out-of-home advertising, radio, digital, and mobile avenues instead of simply television commercials.

One last limitation of the study is the sourcing of the commercials studied. While the YouTube directory was a helpful tool, its number of commercials was limited and there were many that had to be skipped during the selective sampling because they were clearly older commercials that had just been posted recently. Future studies of the same topic would benefit from finding other databases of commercials or recording real-time commercials for playback and analysis.

Conclusion

While some of the findings of this study are encouraging, the fact that stereotypical representation of black men still exists in today's advertising media is discouraging, and likely is a result of a larger problem: a lack of diversity in the advertising industry itself. This will not be the last time you hear about issue of representation. The topic has been and will continue to be on the front lines of public discourse in many areas, from politics to media and across all demographics. Examples range from the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite,⁷⁷ to the newest class of congresswomen setting a record for the most in the history of the country,⁷⁸ or the controversy of the representation of the United States by Iowa during the most recent caucus season.⁷⁹ With the

⁷⁷ Reign, April. "#OscarsSoWhite Creator: With a Mostly White Academy, What Could We Expect? (Column)." *Variety*, January 15, 2020.

⁷⁸ Kurtzleben, Danielle, Sean McMinn, and Renee Klahr. "What It Looks Like To Have A Record Number Of Women In The House Of Representatives." *NPR*, January 4, 2019.

⁷⁹ Zak, Dan. "Why Iowa? How Closely Does It Represent the Country?" *Stars and Stripes*. *Washington Post*, February 1, 2020.

amount of media that Americans are consuming rising to fill most of their waking hours,⁸⁰ media representation will continue to be of the utmost importance, especially on mobile and digital platforms. We, as a society, need quality representation to avoid the continued perpetuation of racial and other stereotypes and biases.

⁸⁰ Perrin, Andrew, and Madhu Kumar. “About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Say They Are 'Almost Constantly' Online.” Pew Research Center, July 25, 2019.

Appendix A:

Coding Instrument

Codes:

Race Variables:

U.S. Blacks (USB)

Non-U.S. black (NUB) –Character is known to not be from to the United States (for example, Comedian Trevor Noah is a well-known South African man), has features that identify him as being from somewhere else (an accent, traditional dress), or is placed in scenery that he is native to (for example, a black man working in a Parisian restaurant likely is not from the U.S.).

Cast Variables:

How many black characters are present?

Involvement Variables:

Major role: very important to the commercial theme or layout, shown in foreground and/or shown holding the product a or appears to be speaking. (MJ)

Minor role: average importance to the commercial theme or layout, may speak but is not the main character of a commercial (MN)

Background role: hard to find, or in the background of the commercial (must be other black characters to distinguish from the token role). (BG)

Token role: not important to the commercial theme or layout other than being the lone contributor to an integrated setting. There is no explanation about why this character must be black otherwise. (T)

Stereotyped role: plays a main role in the commercial but is bound by a stereotypical representation of blacks in the U.S. based on either longstanding Jim Crow era stereotypes as defined in Marlon Riggs' documentary "Ethnic Notions,"

"The standard black characters presented in these shows were given (as we understand them now) slurs for titles; the "sambo," (a carefree, irresponsible black man who was always dancing or singing rather than working), the "coon," (a black man who attempts to imitate whites but cannot due to a lack of intelligence), the "black savage," (a strong, animalistic and aggressive black man who is uncivilized), and the "pickaninny," (a black child who was usually naked and also given animal-like qualities).⁸¹ Caricatures of African Americans like these helped to spread the myth that slaves were happy and carefree, as well as promote stereotypes about African Americans being violent and animalistic, as well as unintelligent, irresponsible and inherently rhythmic.,"

or modern stereotypes, as explained in the article, "Media Portrayals and Black Male Outcomes,"

“For example, African Americans are overrepresented in the news as perpetrators of violent crime, and underrepresented as the victims compared to actual arrest rates. Additionally, outside of sports games, representation of African Americans in popular video games is very low, with many portrayals being gangsters or thugs. The article also discusses how the most common representations of black men in media have created modern stereotypes for black audiences revolving around lofty, unreasonable and uncommon career goals like becoming a rap star or an NBA player.”

- Note, a role cannot be a stereotyped role if it is a black celebrity who is doing their job in the commercial. (i.e. if LeBron James is playing basketball, it is not a stereotyped role for him, that is what he does. If it is a non-celebrity black actor who is the one playing basketball in the ad, that would be a stereotyped role). (ST)

Appendix B: Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Taking Stock	old spice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVCDWrbyp4E	1	USB	MJ	Man (USB) and wife argue over who gets to use the men's shampoo. Wife is also black. Both speak lines.
A Taste of Power	Xbox/taco bell: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNuoXh5_dhU	1	USB	T	White main character and black friend sit in taco bell and WMC realizes he won the Xbox giveaway. Mysterious bearded white man slides into the booth, forcing black friend to move aside (he gets no further screen time). Bearded man says that he won the giveaway last week, steals some food, leaves.
Motaur: Do you mind?	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWCyGnkasyw	2	USB x2	MJ, MN	Motaur (black actor with the torso of a man and motorcycle for legs) is at a gas station, white man talks to him while filling up his truck. In the truck is his black friend. Both black actors speak lines.
This is Universal	Universal Studios: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bRYc3n8Kq8	1	USB	BG	Different Universal guests share their videos from their trip. Each one is around 3 seconds long. One video is of a black family dancing, including a boy in his late teens.
Chance the Rapper x Backstreet Boys Super Bowl	Doritos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTMzIZhI7q8	4	USB x4	MJ*, ST x3	Chance the Rapper is the main character, eats a Dorito, goes into a sort of throwback music video where he raps about Doritos while the background dancers (all black) dance with him. Then the Backstreet boys come out and take the place of the background dancers

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Witness	Liberty Mutual: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQnbL_5ZgbY	2	USB x2	MN, BG	A silhouetted figure speaks to the camera on a boardwalk, while two black actors (USBs) and one white actress sit and stand in the background. They do not speak, until one of the black actors recognizes him and yells over, "Mr. Landry?" which compromises his identity and causes him to jump off into the water.
School of Hard Lefts	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISmVG Mta-7I	2	USB x2	MJ, BG	Drivers school, taught by a black actor (USB). Progressive agent is sitting in, argues with him. One other black actor (USB) is sitting in the classroom among the rest of the students.
Restaurant	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-vEADnh_vg	1	USB	MJ	Black (USB and wife) couple meets white couple for dinner. White couple just switched to progressive and the joke is that they talk about it like your parents might talk about it.
Flocus Group	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRPkQD OHSt8	1	USB	MJ	Focus group just watched progressive commercial, generally didn't like it because Flo was in it. Black actor (USB) suggests making a new character for the company called Mr. Bundles.
Give and take	Old Spice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uf574n796U4	1	USB	MJ	Black couple (USB and wife) is in their closet (it's huge, massive walk-in) and fighting over who gets to use the lavender scented old spice.

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Boy Band	ATT: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWRofcEPV2I	3	USB x3	MJ, MN x2	Boy band (W, W, USB and M) is on stage singing but not dancing, in the audience a black actor says, "are we supposed to dance?" The joke is that "Boy bands without dancing are just ok."
That's cold	Mountain Dew: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJ7BXxSOp4E	4	USB x3, NUB	ST x3 MJ*	USB and M actors are playing basketball. Take a sip of Mountain Dew and breathe out Ice basketball players, one random (USB) and the other is Joel Embiid. Ice Embiid (NUB) blocks the other ice player's shot.
Helium	State Farm: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRL41ufljrg	2	USB x2	MJ x2	White man and his black friend are in the aftermath of a fender bender, calling the insurance agent. There is a crashed helium truck that caused the pile up and the gas is making their voices all higher. A black police officer comes and asks everyone to stay calm.
Lobster Hot Tub Party	Geico: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80klgcnfP2E	1	USB	MJ	USB and wife are in a hot tub, across from a lobster. They all talk about how they just got married and the lobster is afraid of commitment
Something Greater	Devil May Cry 5: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiePImZ7gVE	3	USB x3	MJ, MN x2	People are out doing their normal thing, until they realize they need something greater and become fighting machines at their regular jobs. Black actor summons a monster at his construction site (in front of his USB coworker), white woman chops veggies with buzz saws in the kitchen in front of dinner guests (one USB guest).

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Cardi B Pepsi super bowl commercial	Pepsi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgnJQ4oPKgM	1	USB	MJ*	Woman orders coke, waiter asks if Pepsi is ok? Steve Carrell comes in and says, are shooting stars and puppies just ok? Then he says, Pepsi is... Lil John (USB) says his famous tagline, 'OKAY,' then Cardi B comes in and says Okurrrrrrr. It is saying that Pepsi is more than just okay.
Peyton Manning declares Tuesday the official laundry night	Tide: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Wa36JPC368	1	USB	MJ*	Peyton manning is talking about how every Sunday you're doing laundry and your favorite player (in this case Juju Smith-Schuster, USB) makes an awesome play and you miss it because of the laundry. Juju says that line. Peyton declares Tuesday laundry day so that you don't miss the NFL action
Shave, or Don't	Harry's: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyuX7-3xZzY	2	USB x2	MN x2	Ad about all the times we might or might not shave. 10ish different scenarios shown, 1 USB shown shaving with his kids, another, shown shirtless to reveal gender reassignment surgery scars admiring his beard.
Unmissable	Heineken: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilZ_U1AICJk	3	USB x3	MN x3	People not paying attention and missing soccer goals during big games. One USB is getting a beer from the fridge when there is a goal, another USB is saying hi to his friend (USB) at a bar and turns around and misses the goal.
Body Double	Toon Blast: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CyYMzXW478	1	USB	MJ	Director (M), needs Ryan Reynolds for a scene, but he is too busy playing toon blast. Suggests that he use the body double, who looks nothing like him.

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Passwords	TD Bank: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDwHVzImXws	1	USB	MJ	Wife is trying to log into all of the couple's accounts but doesn't know the passwords, husband (USB) is yelling out random things that it might be.
One on One	Old Spice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sNVDpZQJrM	2	USB x2	ST x2	Two friends (USBs) play basketball on the driveway. One friend admits to stealing the other's old spice. No hard feelings.
Bolt Signal	Virgin Media: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSOfsC2lTHE	1	NUB	MJ*	Usain Bolt is dressed up like a super hero but all the technology in his lab only works with the Virgin Media Wi-Fi hub
Anthony Davis - NBA Finals	Men in Black International: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMIFaZVaRSE	1	USB	MJ*	Anthony Davis is confronted by the men in black because they think he is an alien
BLACK OPIUM EAU DE PARFUM	YSL Beauty: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BZ3o7saatk	1	USB	BG	Perfume commercial, woman walks around from home to club to top of skyscraper- at one point is shown kissing a black man
Let's Do	Mountain Dew: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15PJjavATTQ	5	USB x4, NUB	MJx2**, MNx3	Migos (the rap group) rides around on trikes with Mountain dew and a normal looking black man. Joel Embiid dunks a couple of times.
Doors are always opening	Uber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiVXmLkcOiA	3	USB x3	MNx3	Lots of different people's stories flash across the screen- they all use Uber different ways
4-way observation	Allstate: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i_Y5lewEKY	1	USB	MJ	Allstate's spokesperson, (USB) sits in an intersection and talks safe driving

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Gamer x Toothbrush	Duracell: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrOBVN5Lapc	1	USB	MJ	Two people are interviewed about batteries. The girl being interviewed says she wants batteries with extra life, The man being interviewed(USB) wants batteries with extra power.
Cash Pop	NJ lottery: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VD-uG2CnF2g	2	USB x2	ST, BG	People are dancing in a bar, one USB dances in the background, another is the DJ (Stereotyped because of the idea that blacks are inherently musical)
The Perfect Match	Hyundai: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suJacsZPSVw	2	USB x2	BG, MJ	Main character (USB) keeps running into the same girl, one night he goes out with his friend (USB) and finally talks to her because she has a Hyundai and so does he.
Road Trip	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPLxEwqL4Wg	1	USB	T	Friends go on a road trip. One black (USB) friend sits in the back seat, doesn't say anything for the duration of the commercial. He is the only black character.
Dietz Nutz super bowl commercial	Dietz Nuts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GLHIKUOSws	2	USB x2	MJ x2	Two friends (USB) sit on the couch and talk about the product
Get Hooked Up	Aldi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha0hebCobiE	2	USB x2	MN, BG	Man talks about how the cashier always gives a discount, USB walks by in the background, another USB waits behind them in line and talks about how he always gets a discount at the end
The Impossible taste test	Burger King: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9FED3jkNT0	2	USB x 2	MJ, BG	BK customers are interviewed about the new impossible whopper. On USB is interviewed. Another is in the restaurant in the background

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Patrick Mahomes	DIRECTV: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZoWsl99_1s	2	USB x2	MJ*, BG	Patrick Mahomes (USB) sits in an ice bath after a game. Another USB sits in the background
Campus Tour	Aflac: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCavw7Tp3ng	1	USB	MJ	Man (USB) and wife take a tour of Aflac's campus with Nick Saban
Gorgon Ramsey	AT&T: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sivc97UXGI0	1	USB	MJ	USB and his wife go to a store and Gordon Ramsey is there handing out samples
Buffet Your Way	Pizza Ranch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebIELpZH9A	1	USB	MJ	Kirk Cousins and friend Kevin talk about the buffet your way at Pizza ranch
The Elevator	Hyundai: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5FzKB5TW0Y	2	USB x2	BG x2	Couple going car shopping take an elevator that takes people to all kinds of different places. USBs in 2 different background scenes
The Beat	Sprite: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8DMLxCA_TE	4	USB x3	MJ x2**, ST x2	Group of friends (USBs) drink sprite and make hip-hop beats and dance with the hip-hop duo Rae Sremmurd.
Chance the Rapper x Lionel Richie	Doritos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fko7fcg438E	5	USB x5	MJ x2**, BGx3	Chance the rapper performs a song with Lionel Richie while other USBs are in the diverse group of background dancers
Tailgate cheating	Dr. Pepper: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IODn7DHT3Z8	1	USB	MJ	USB mans the tailgate grill, gets sad when girlfriend goes to another grill for food
Pick 3	NJ Lottery: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_dkNvpVhYk	3	USB x3	MJ, BGx2	Black man wins lottery and talks about it with a coworker. Other USBs in background
Official beer of going golfing just to drink beer	Coors Light: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6i7ZfAD_Vk8&has_verified=1	2	USB x2	MJ, BG	Group of friends goes golfing but is just there to drink Coors. Main golfer is black, background friend is too

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Father Daughter Dance	MassMutual: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4uuetyWJ7U	3	USB x3	BG x3	Father and daughter do a planned dance at her wedding. USBs in background watching
Tide Pure Clean	Tide: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SGWOMEcQ94	1	USB	MJ	black family cleans up kids messes with tide pure clean, dad is USB
Damian Lillard	Hulu: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=277rHHI4diE	3	USB x3	MJ x2*, MN	Damian Lillard is getting a tattoo that says Hulu has live sports. His agents (USB) make sure it doesn't violate the contract
Blabber Beak	Discover: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pA6XrJZwhA	1	USB	MJ	Man (USB) calls discover support, same man answers the phone
Copper Lager is back	Budweiser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe2xRZNiduM	1	USB	Mn	Charlize Theron goes to a bar and beats all the men in bar games while still holding her beer. Bartender is USB
Whoa Whoa Whoa	Axe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWDzvfUllrM	5	USB x5	ST x4, BG	A handful of men are shown trying too hard to get girls. One is at a bar and the band's (2 ST) lead singer is a USB(ST), the other is playing basketball and trying to impress a girl (ST)
Need more for your family?	boost mobile: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUfYYuIYiKc	3	USB x3	Mj, Mn, BG	Guy (USB) and his date are in the car, surrounded by her family (Dad and brother = USB)
Bounce	Apple: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyNtm0LZiKc	3	USB x3	Bg x3	Guy bounces around town with air pods, background USBs
Be You with the Webcam kill switch	HP: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BiPVQD0EoU	1	USB	Mn	A bunch of random people are shown doing weird things in front of their computers, USB sticks a Cheeto in his nose

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Empowering Innovators	Microsoft: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5OWdqfAYfw	1	USB	MJ*	Common is the spokesperson for Microsoft, talking about the innovation of its engineers
Gucci Mémoire d'une Odeur	Gucci: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IEfgbkpOSg	1	USB	T	A bunch of people are just laying around and there is one USB
Rematch	Kaiser Permanente: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMNvKyFF-5A	2	USB x2	MJ x2*	Klay Thompson (USB) talks with the personification (USB) of a challenger
College	Volkswagen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWQBFkEVfUU	1	USB	T	Boy moves into college, sees a single USB throwing a football on the front yard
Call of the Road	Subaru: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmkUckrk2nA	1	USB	MJ	USB and wife and dogs go on a camping trip in their Subaru
Boardroom	Haribo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAAnwmPFYgU	1	USB	MN	Group of coworkers sit around a boardroom and talk about gummy bears in little kid voices. One is a USB
Ft. Micah Tarver	McDonald's: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rh9kna3KiqU	3	USB x3	MN x2, BG	People starting their days with McDonald's breakfast, three are USBs
Sad Device	Pringles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDakI68u2xE	1	USB	MJ	USB and friend sit and talk about Pringles with a smart speaker
Drake	Virginia Black: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN4JWnTOSmg	1	NUB	MJ*	Drake (NUB) goes to flirt with a woman at a bar, but she passes him up for an older black man
Hard Inquiry	Credit Karma: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkBFXj-TUd4	1	USB	MJ	Husband (USB) and wife talk credit score in their undesirable apartment

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Tables have turned	State Farm: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8qjkcihNCU	2	USB x2	MJ x2*	Patrick Mahomes (USB) and Aaron Rodgers visit their state farm agents (one is a USB)
Parking	Geico: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe-dgV9tScM	1	USB	T	USB police officer gives ticket to Pinocchio
Letter	Airforce: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAINsh-m-vHg	5	USB x5	BG x5	US Airforce officer talks about how the air force will better you, USBs all flash in the backgrounds of scenes
Warrior Training	Final Fantasy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aqju18pcq6U	1	USB	MJ*	Tom Holland and Hannibal Buress (USB) are roommates and super into final fantasy
A Parent's Imagination	Subaru: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2MFzG5IM-c	2	USB x2	MN x2	Parents worry about their children driving
Names	Head & Shoulders: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuEW3kk39k	6	USB x6	MJ*, MN, BG x4	Odell Beckham Jr. (USB) talks about the names he carries on his shoulders. Gives an autograph to a fan (USB), plays with other USBs (BG)
Dancer	TD Bank: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-c7t1v8EtNo	1	USB	ST	USB dances in a silly way when it is closing time at the bank
Ohio State Bowl Season	Coca Cola: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5-iWqKV7uI	1	USB	T	A Cappella group sings a OSU themed version of Deck the halls. One black singer and he doesn't even sing most of the time
Nick's Cleaning Confession	Swiffer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amA5uMXtcl	1	USB	MJ	USB explains how he uses Swiffer to clean his home
Human	M&M's: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uth5Vt6bc-M	1	USB	MN	M&M turns into a human, asks random people on the street if they still want to eat him, one USB in crowd.

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Not everything makes the cut	Amazon: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y-1h_C8ad8	1	USB	MN	USB tries out the Alexa toothbrush, among other failed prototypes.
Pepsi Black	Pepsi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsbnIpFBD54	1	USB	T	Bunch of people are dancing, one is a USB
Dunk Challenge	Oreo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I93zwm9OqUg	1	USB	MJ*	Shaq (USB) is doing arial aerobics
A song of Ice and Fire	Doritos https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2l8e6TFPSNI	2	USB	MJ*, MN	Peter Dinklage and Morgan Freeman (USB) are practicing tongue twisters with advisors (USB)
Just like You	Mercedes-Benz A-Class: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6XG-226CBE	1	USB	BG	A bunch of people driving the new Mercedes
Do the Math	Sprint: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBx2gmFz1Yg	1	USB	BG	USB is seen in the background of a Sprint Store
Endgame	Marvel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iFq6IcAxBc	1	USB	BG*	Don Cheadle (USB) is shown in the background
Switch Super Bowl	Nintendo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdWd8fUC71g	1	USB	BG	People use the new Switch everywhere
The Corning	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOdnR7jCz7Q	1	USB	T	Bunch of progressive agents come out of the corn and one of them happens to be a USB
Jamie's 40th	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTqmiJ4LW9c	2	USB x2	BG x2	People gather at Jamie's house for a birthday party- 2 USBs in the crowd

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
#RealStrength	Dove: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoqWo3SJ73c	2	USB x2	BG x2	Lots of fathers interacting with their kids, two are USBs
Reflection	Liberty Mutual: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcOTtwXjXaU	1	USB	MN	Emu and Doug explain to a USB and his wife about their insurance
Don't let your mattress steal your sleep	Purple: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B-h_1ocZQQ	1	USB	T	Burglars fall asleep mid theft, are awoken by police (one USB)
Overflowing Office	Geico: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSZYM EZ5bNg	1	USB	MJ	USB is nervous about buying a house, should have had Geico
Wayfair's Got You Covered	Wayfair: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_SW2s1wC_8	3	USB x3	MJ, BGx2	People are buying all kinds of stuff for their homes on Wayfair
212 VIP Black & Rosé	Carolina Herrera: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS_fs7mpIjE	3	USB x3	BG	People out at a wild party. 2 bartenders are USBs and one partygoer
What do black men appreciate most about black women?	Blackpeoplemeet.com : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xamn0XUR-II	5	USB x5	MN	Black men (USBs) talking about what they want in a woman
Milking a Giraffe	Skittles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFf7XH LcRD0	1	NUB	ST	Man, in a Rasta cap with a Jamaican accent is milking a giraffe (sort of psychedelic) a stereotype of Caribbean blacks
Russell Westbrook	Men in Black International: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abomQZ LZoXs	1	USB	MJ*	Russell Westbrook (USB) stars in the MIB commercial

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
Men's Skincare	Jack Black; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LP6KqVTGQm0	1	USB	MJ	Men using skincare products in their everyday routines
Clear	Gorilla Glue: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3ZEAR307bo	1	USB	MJ	Man (USB) and wife are looking for a glue to use on their dining room table
Sky Box sets	Sky: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbHp2F8iX-I	1	NUB	MJ*	Idris Elba (NUB) talks about the sky + box
Jackhammer	Geico: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoepRfuZm_M	1	USB	MJ	USB pretends that he is riding a motorcycle while working a jackhammer
The Visit	Aflac: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38seTWo7VMc	1	USB	MJ	Nick Saban talks to man (USB) and wife about why they should get Aflac
All the ways	Target: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1A7wHPrbX4	1	USB	MN	People getting everyday items at target, one is USB
Anthony Davis World of Redbull	Redbull: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWd6VkgDrKg	1	USB	MJ*	Anthony Davis dribbles a basketball at the opening of a Redbull commercial
A shower worth singing about	Harry's: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekMwRQMqvXg	1	USB	MJ*	Ludacris sings in the shower using Harry's soap
You can't be serious	Twizzler: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze5vcf8EzTM	1	USB	MJ	USB is tickled with a Twizzler
Super Mario Party	Nintendo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pu9t5AL1Ss	1	USB	MN	Bunch of people playing the new game, one is a USB

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
The future	Samsung: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajD2WZioOOc	3	USB x3	MN x2, BG	People using the Samsung galaxy phone to do cool futuristic stuff
Ride of the Hog Riders	Clash of Clans: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XH3Xu1-cvII	1	USB	MJ*	Mr. T's character from clash of clans is shown preparing for battle, character's features resemble the black savage but he is shown taking a bath and playing cards and doing other, non-stereotypical things
Dale Mas	Boost Mobile: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF84YSQrsjM	1	USB	BG	A group dances in the streets. One in the second row is a USB
Lounge Act	Progressive: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIUuSABTxak	1	USB	BG	The progressive bundle sings to a crowd, one of the audience members is a USB
Okurrr	Pepsi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=NXO1PK9LO2E	3	USB x3	MN, BGx2	Cardi B is in a diner talking about Pepsi with 3 USBs in the background. One gets to say her catchphrase of Okurrr which elevates him to a Minor role
Emily Ratajkowski	Paco Rabanne: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6jK_Nzb9HQ	1	USB	T	Emily Ratajkowski walks through a mansion being chased by some men. One is a USB.
Massage Chair	Geico: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ls29LZ-xi8l	1	USB	MJ	USB talks to his family about the benefits of Geico
Undisputed Christmas	JD Sports: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQosWaWd_0E	1	USB	BG	A bunch of young models show off the sportswear. One is a USB.
Switch to Super	Virign Media: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGDtdX04FeQ	1	NUB	MJ*	Usain Bolt runs on a treadmill to the sound of an orchestra playing faster and faster

Name of Ad	company and link to commercial	# of black, male characters	Race codes	Involvement codes	Description of commercial
The Dance	H&M: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-ioZDeER-s	1	USB	BG	USB is in the restaurant where the commercial begins
St. Bernard	Allstate: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pheB-gNIGF4	1	USB	MN	Woman driving distracted, passes car that has a barking dog in it. USB driver crashes
Testimonials	GoodRx: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1K_UtWDyNTE	1	USB	MN	People talk about their experiences with GoodRx, one is a USB.
Close the gap	Delta: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmYxkAqjpYA	1	USB	MN	Kids growing up wanting to fly, look to the sky and there is a USB on a plane looking down on them
Speaks for itself	Chevrolet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h157td3dMzk	4	USB x4	MN x2, BG x2	Real people look at and talk about the new Chevy

Appendix C:

(Table 1) Representation of black men in commercial acting roles:

Type of role	Percentage of total roles for black men	Number of examples noted	Number of examples examined
Major Role	37.00%	71	193
Minor Role	22.30%	43	193
Background Role	26.94%	52	193
Stereotyped Role	8.80%	17	193
Token Role	5.20%	10	193

(Table 2) Commercials with roles for black men:

Type of role	Percentage commercials that featured this role for black men	Number of commercials identified as offering that type of role	Number of commercials examined
Major Role	53.85%	63	117
Minor Role	25.64%	30	117
Background Role	28.21%	33	117
Stereotyped Role	6.84%	8	117
Token Role*	8.55%	10	117

(Table 3) Commercials that exclusively offer single types of roles for black men:

Type of role	Percentage commercials that featured ONLY this role for black men	Number of commercials identified as ONLY offering that type of role	Number of commercials examined
Major Role	38.46%	45	117
Minor Role	13.68%	16	117
Background Role	14.53%	17	117
Stereotyped Role**	6.84%	8	117
Token Role*	8.55%	10	117

*In commercials where token roles were available for black men, by definition, they were the only roles present.

**Commercials observed that offered stereotyped roles only offered stereotyped roles for black men

Note: the percentages on the tables for “Commercials with roles for black men,” and “Commercials that exclusively offer single types of roles for black men,” do not add to 100%.

In the “Commercials with roles for black men” table, this is because many commercials offered more than one type of role for black men. For example, a commercial could have one major character and one background character.

In the “Commercials that exclusively offer single types of roles for black men” table, this is because not every commercial offered just one role for black men, meaning every commercial that offered multiple roles for black men was excluded from this table.

Appendix D:

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