Story
at Scale

WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST?
AN INTERSECTIONAL EXAMINATION OF STEREOTYPES ASSOCIATED WITH GENDER

A RESEARCH REVIEW

**by Janay Cody, Rachel D. Godsil, and Alexis McGill Johnson
in association with**

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Authors' Preface

All those who are, have met, or have heard descriptions of women of any race or ethnicity who have been successful in a role outside that of "mother" may be both surprised and unnerved by the negativity of the majority of stereotypes we found in an exhaustive review of the literature. The person trying to learn more about stereotypes and how people view and process information about transgender and/or non-binary people may be equally dismayed by the dearth of academic research on this important, timely subject.

In conducting a review of the academic literature in social psychology and related fields from roughly the last five years, we sought studies about gender that seek both to identify the negative stereotypes we know abound and to understand the changing nature of gender identity and expression, as well as the power and strength women exercise in daily life. As of today, the literature on the former is robust; on the latter, it is surprisingly limited. The research rarely addresses the dramatic changes over the past century in gender identity and gender expression or the underpinnings of progress toward equality women have made in recent decades. As a result, the research, and this literature review, is more useful as a tool to diagnose the operation of the gender binary and the challenges we face in seeking gender justice than as a foundation for the path forward.

We also find that far too many studies have failed to accurately reflect the experiences of women of all races and ethnicities and that far too few have included transgender and/or non-binary people in their studies of "gender." Instead, a majority of studies have drawn upon samples of people who identify as white cisgender women and men. As in earlier reports (for example, Godsil et al., 2016), we reject the idea that "women" means "white cisgender women"—with modifiers necessary only for those who are not white. However, a significant number of studies included in this review fail to state the race, ethnicity, or gender expression of the participant group or to report whether any of the outcomes differ for particular identity characteristics.

We urge academic researchers to embrace the objective animating the Story at Scale project—to engage in intersectional work to understand how the gender narratives of people living in the United States move attitudes toward gender justice—and we offer this review recognizing that most academic researchers support social justice. The research, however, is effective at identifying dominant stereotypes that have served as impediments to progress—and for that reason, we think it valuable even with its limitations. We need to know what we are up against.

In this vein, our goal here is to provide a review of research produced by academic scholars to inform the fight for social justice among practitioners.

About the Authors
Janay Cody is a consultant and applied political scientist who works with political organizations, educational institutions, and socially responsible businesses to make positive change.

Rachel D. Godsil is co-director and co-founder of Perception Institute and Professor of Law and Chancellor's Social Justice Scholar at Rutgers Law School.

Alexis McGill Johnson is a co-director and co-founder of the Perception Institute. She is currently on leave to act as interim president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

About Perception Institute
Perception Institute is a consortium of researchers, advocates, and strategists who translate cutting-edge mind science research on race, gender, ethnicity, and other identities into solutions that reduce bias and discrimination and promote belonging. Learn more at **perception.org.**

Introduction

As humans, we define who we are by who we are not. In the 1970s, Henri Tajfel (1974) revealed this duality in laboratory experiments demonstrating that people will categorize humans much as they do objects, creating in-group identities and discriminating against an out-group based on something as trivial as the number of dots on a display.

Gender—which is not the same as biological sex—is as much an "us versus them" or in-group versus out-group categorization as race. Both gender and race are socially constructed categories with physical or biochemical traits that can be recognized in the human mind within milliseconds, making categorization easy, efficient, and (almost) instantaneous (Amodio, 2014; Kawakami et. al, 2017). Both gender and race are used to allocate resources, rights, privileges, and norms of behavior to the benefit of those affluent, white, cisgender men who seek to hoard and control property and capital (Grusky, 2019). Both gender and race exist as independent categories that structure society and humans' relationship to it.

However, neither gender nor race can be understood in isolation of each other—especially in American society, where both gender and race organize society, dictate ownership of wealth, and prescribe acceptable norms of behavior (Hancock, 2016; Collins and Blige, 2016). Rather, it is the intersectional nature of race and gender, or the multiplicative and interactive effect of both racial categorization and gender assignment, that produces social stratification (Zuberi, 2001; Bright et al., 2016). This stratification is institutionalized in societal structures and embedded into intellectual frameworks that have become normalized and accepted to the point of shaping people's conscious and unconscious cognition (Collins, 2012; Garcia et al., 2016).

Thus, race and gender are deeply entrenched categories operating in the human mind, accompanied by predetermined beliefs serving as perceptual lenses that distort and restrict people's ability to see one another clearly.

The struggle to recognize humans' fundamental equality and value in society and to overcome our proclivity to categorize and discriminate moves in

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Gender justice is a system that treats people of all genders fairly and provides equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It recognizes that those directly impacted by gender-based oppression include transgender and cisgender women, genderqueer and non-binary people, and transgender men. True gender justice is intersectional and includes community health and immigrant rights as well as economic, criminal racial, education, environmental, and reproductive justice.

The Culture Change Fund, 2019

fits and starts. Our capacity to understand hostility to powerful women, people of color, and those who are transgender and/or non-binary is critical to developing tools that can break through these prejudices and open more American minds to the wonder and strength of a truly diverse population.

In this review, we share research findings from the past five years on the effects of stereotyping and bias based on gender for adults age 18 and above across racial groups. Frequently, research on women of color and transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming people is thin. In these cases, we share studies that go beyond the five-year mark.

Throughout this literature review, the use of the term "women" is based on how the authors of each study define it, which is mostly in line with the historical use of this term as meaning a cisgender person of the "female" sex. In addition, except where explicitly noted, people (faces, personas, etc.) used as stimuli in these studies are usually white or assumed to be white (assigned white names, etc.) (Levitt and Dubner, 2005). As mentioned in our preface, we reject the notion that "women" means white cisgender women. However, our goal with this review is to reveal where the research is, as opposed to putting forth our understanding.

This review does not include a study of sexual orientation (which is distinct from gender), religion, citizenship, ability, or age, as each of these additional categories is a sufficiently complex and distinct topic as to require its own focused review.

Our unit of analysis in this review is the individual, and we report the findings on the effects of stereotypes on individuals. We recognize that stereotypes have profound and often pernicious effects on policy, but a study of policy effects is beyond the scope of this review. In addition, our focus is on reporting the findings of empirical research. Therefore, we do not engage in a critique or broader treatment of theories on important concepts like intersectionality. Rather, we have used our definition of intersectionality (see the box to the right) to guide the selection of research included and excluded.

Our goal is to develop narratives and stories that move us forward based on an understanding of how stereotyping and bias operate in gendered and racialized ways and of the mechanisms that can work against our implicit and explicit biases.

Gender Justice Is More Than Gender: An Intersectional Lens

Gender justice cannot exist or be achieved without an understanding and application of **intersectionality**—a mode of analysis that examines disempowerment or discrimination experienced by people who face multiple lines of identity-based exclusion. Intersectional feminism examines the overlapping systems of oppression and discrimination that women face, based not just on gender but on ethnicity, sexuality, economic background, and a number of other axes (Crenshaw, 1989). As we work toward gender justice, we view it through the lens of multiple, simultaneous identities—for instance, as a poor cisgender woman or an Asian transgender man—not by gender identity alone.

Gender—A Look at the Research

To begin to understand how schemas about gender have been constructed, it is important to understand the distinction between gender and sex. In general, "sex" refers to the categorization of people as "male" and "female" based on chromosomes, genitals, hormones, and other physical traits related to reproduction. "Gender" has historically referred to the categorization of people as "woman" or "girl" and "man" or "boy" based on behaviors associated with, and membership in, "female" or "male" sex categories in a given culture.

More people are beginning to understand that gender and sex are not the same, that gender is a social category, and that there are many ways of "doing" and expressing gender (Pew Research Center, 2019). In fact, gender tends to be the first social category children learn. Researchers found that children identified by parents as Black, white, or biracial identify themselves and others with either a "girl" or "boy" label by age three—earlier than the age at which they identify racial categories (Rogers & Meltzoff, 2017).

Do gender categories include a set of inherent traits and characteristics beyond biological sex difference? Are the minds of men and women different? Recent studies in neuroscience show that our brains are more similar than different (e.g., Hyde, 2014; Joel et al., 2015; Fine, 2013a).

Researchers often acknowledge that the generally "larger physical strength of men and the ability of women to bear children may in certain limited circumstances predispose them for different types of activities and relate to testosterone and oxytocin levels, which can also impact behavior" (Ellemers, 2018, p. 277). These same researchers, nonetheless, challenge the "men are from Mars, women are from Venus" shibboleth. Rather, they point us to the wide range of studies that show what most of us experience in life—that the differences among women and those among men are larger than those between men and women as groups (Ellemers, 2018).

The lack of support for a biological basis for psychological differences between the sexes has not translated into mainstream acceptance of the notion that gender categories are somehow

Schema: Boxes in the Brain

The human brain absorbs hundreds of thousands of pieces of information from the senses every hour. It relies on organizing systems to sort, store, and make this information useful for survival. The schema is one such system. A schema is a pattern of thought or behavior that organizes categories of information and the relationships among them. It can also be described as a mental structure of preconceived ideas—a framework representing how the world works. A kind of generalized story, a schema connects beliefs to values (which are like big cognitive goals) and pivots on metaphors that make abstract ideas more concrete.

The schemas that implicitly define people (which map onto our social identities), comprise a combination of stereotypes (traits and characteristics) and attitudes (warmth or coldness) (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

When it comes to people of different genders, our schemas are based on the narratives we have heard from others—such as our family members, teachers, or friends—or have seen in television, movies, and other forms of media. When these narratives contain consistent pieces of information, our brains latch onto them and integrate them into our schemas for that gender. For instance, if we consistently see television programs that show mothers staying at home while their spouses go to work, we may unconsciously associate motherhood with homemaking.

Schemas can unconsciously determine the attitudes we hold about ourselves and people of different genders. We may feel more warmly toward a mother who is a homemaker than a mother with a career outside the home because a maternal homemaker is consistent schema that leads to a feeling of comfort.

It is important to keep in mind that a schema is our brain's attempt at a "shortcut"—it aims to be helpful by allowing us to sort through information rapidly and by aiding our ability to make quick decisions. However, these shortcuts can lead us astray. For instance, just now, as you were reading about the mother and her spouse, your brain may have envisioned her having a husband going to work—even though there was no gender description of the spouse. Many of us might have a shortcut in our brains that "married couple = woman and man," even if we consciously believe otherwise. The problem, of course, is that in many cases, our schemas are oversimplified narratives about other people.

A detrimental feature of schema shortcuts is that they can drive how we interact with people of different identity groups—as our brains offer a nudge toward a response or action based on stereotypes. The impact of prejudiced behavior affects people of all genders and nationalities. It is particularly acute for women of different races and ethnicities and people who do not conform to gender binaries and norms.

insignificant. Instead, most men and women continue to associate a set of traits and characteristics with each gender that affects how we are perceived and the roles we are expected to inhabit. Those who fail to conform to these associations are often disadvantaged (Ellemers, 2018).

According to Fiske and her colleagues' (2002) stereotype content model, competence is conferred upon members of a dominant group (i.e., white, cisgender men) because they are perceived as high status. Attributes most commonly associated with men include agency (referring to self-directed behavior and associated with traits such as adventurousness and self-reliance), competence, general aptitude or ability, and a "masculinized" orientation focused on exerting independence and distinctiveness. These traits have regularly been associated with leadership in politics and the business world (Fiske et al., 2002).

This combination of attributes also resembles popular understandings of creative thinking and reinforces male dominance in the creative industries, including film, television, and advertising. Specifically, perceived masculine attributes combine into the "archetype of the eminently creative thinker—a figure in possession of a mind that works in ways that diverge from the normative, a figure characterized by great independence and uniqueness of thought and action" (Proudfoot et al., 2015, p. 1751).

By contrast, the attributes traditionally associated with women are more likely to be communality (concern for others and associated with traits such as social sensitivity and cooperativeness [Abele, 2003]) and a "feminized" orientation focused on maintaining social harmony and interconnectedness (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007).

Traditional gender roles are upheld by distinct but complementary ideologies: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1997; Huang, 2016). The former is manifested by explicit condemnation of women, while the latter emerges as idealizing women who conform to traditional gender roles. Women are apt to recognize and oppose hostile sexism but are at risk of adhering to benevolent sexism and of increasing their support and praise of gender-conforming behavior when faced with hostile sexism (Sullivan, 2000). Have you ever wondered why it is culturally normative to address an entire room with "Hey, guys!" even when there is not a single man present? Much like instances of habitual defaults to whiteness, benevolent sexism can appear in ambiguous forms (Sullivan, 2000).

The Role of Reproduction

The core narrative of women as mothers exerts enormous power. Motherhood is seen as the ultimate manifestation of being a woman—a woman's highest calling (Chrisler et al., 2013).

The idealized view of women as mothers has chilling consequences for women who aren't seen as capable of being mothers or who otherwise act contrary to the motherhood ideal. For example:

- Women who are of reproductive age are described with more warm and positive attributes than their counterparts who are past the age of reproduction (Chrisler et al., 2013).
- Pregnant women (and mothers of young infants) were more likely to be seen as "complete" and "respected" than women who had hysterectomies or were postmenopausal (Chrisler et al., 2013).

In a retail environment, women who appeared to be pregnant were likely to be treated well when shopping but to be met with hostility if job seeking (Hebl, 2007).

KEY CONCEPT

The Stereotype Content Model— Warmth without Respect

The stereotype content model describes the trouble with the woman-as-mother ideal.

Fiske and her colleagues (2002) describe two fundamental dimensions of social perception, warmth, and competence, predicted by perceived competition and status. Out-group members perceived as being of high status are judged as competent, and out-group members perceived as a competitive threat are judged as not being warm. Out-group members perceived as low status are judged as incompetent, and out-group members perceived as allies are judged as being warm. Combinations of warmth and competence generate distinct emotions of admiration, contempt, envy, and pity (Fiske et al., 2002).

To be seen as warm and competent is to be admired. To be seen as only warm is to be viewed with pity.

Attitudes about women are shaped by the warmth and competence dimensions of the stereotype content model (discussed in the sidebar). The perceptual "sweet spot" is to be perceived as highly competent and warm.

Such perceptions are associated with admiration. Negative attitudes are associated with anything outside of this sweet spot. The table below illustrates this point.

COMPETENCE

	LOW	HIGH
WARMTH — LOW	**Contempt/Disgust** **low status/competitive** **(e.g., toxic stereotypes like "welfare queens" or "illegal immigrants")**	**Envy** **high status/competitive** **(e.g., feminists, career women)**
WARMTH — HIGH	**Pity** **low status/not competitive** **(e.g., housewives)**	**Admiration** **high status/not competitive** **(e.g., in-group, close allies)**

Source: Table 1 from Fiske et al., 2018

Although motherhood is generally viewed through a lens of warmth, both women and men associate motherhood with a significantly decreased level of competence:

- Mothers with qualifications identical to those of women without children were two times less likely to be recommended for a job, received a lower starting job salary, and were regarded as less promotable (Correll, 2007).
- Study participants considered mothers to be less suitable than women without children for promotions at work based upon perceived lower competence levels (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008).

Fathers suffer no such penalties. Indeed, in Correll et al. (2007), fathers were rated as *more* competent and had a greater likelihood of promotion than men who had no children. Clearly, the motherhood narrative impacts not only social interactions but also perceptions of women at work.

Furthermore, ideals of motherhood influence women's self-perceptions. In general, women form their identities in the context of their social connections and interpersonal relationships, and motherhood influences identity more than either marital status or occupation. (Laney et al., 2013). The process of identifying as a mother involves reconciling ideals with the lived reality and personal experience of motherhood (Choi, Henshaw, Baker, & Tree, 2005; Shelton & Johnson, 2006). When ideals and lived experience are at odds, women frequently feel a sense of guilt and shame (Arendell, 2000; Phanco, 2003; Laney et al., 2013).

Effects of Egalitarian Essentialism

Americans are ambivalent in their beliefs about and support for traditional gender roles based on perceived differences between the sexes. On one hand, a majority of Americans believe men and women are basically similar when it comes to the things they are good at in the workplace. For example, according to a Pew Research Center survey, nearly half of Americans (49%) say society isn't accepting enough of women taking on roles that are typically associated with men. Similarly, 46% say society is not accepting enough of men taking on roles that are typically associated with women (Pew Research Center, 2017).

On the other hand, the same survey showed that most Americans see inherent differences between men and women, especially when it comes to parenting, expressing feelings, hobbies and interests, physical abilities, and the varying types of pressure men and women face in society. Typically, strength and ambition are especially valued for men, while compassion, kindness, and responsibility are particularly valued for women. Large majorities of men and women believe that women face pressure to be involved parents (77%) and to be physically attractive (71%) while men face pressure to support their families financially (76%) and to have a successful career (68%) (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Further, at rates of 90% or higher, young people endorse the idea that men and women should be equal at work, but between 1994 and 2014, the percentage of high school seniors who felt that the "best family" was one where the man was the primary breadwinner working outside the home and the woman took care of the home increased from 42% to 58% (Coontz & Rutter, 2017).

Coontz and Rutter described this ambivalence as "egalitarian essentialism"—the commitment to equality of opportunity combined with the belief that men and women will "typically choose different opportunities because men are 'inherently' better suited to some roles and women to others" (Coontz & Rutter, 2017, p.3). They demonstrated that support for this view has increased over the last 20 years.

As problematic as many of us may find the underlying tenets of egalitarian essentialism, the reality is even worse, as the premise that men and women possess different traits interferes with their equality of opportunity in the public sphere. Associating gender with particular traits undermines even an explicit social commitment to "equality of opportunity" because these implicit associations distort how women are seen in contrast to men.

Recent studies with striking results bring to mind the notion that powerful schemas link men and women to particular attributes—scientific, successful, respectable, worthy—and manifest in attitudes and decision-making that undermine the opportunities for and advancement of women, despite widespread, explicit endorsement of egalitarian values:

- Gender stereotyping causes female students to be seen as less talented than male students in all areas of science (Leslie et al., 2015). For instance, in biology, male students are seen to excel even when their female classmates actually have higher grades (Grunspan et al., 2016).
- The design of a house is evaluated more favorably if the architect credited has a male rather than a female name (Proudfoot et al., 2015).
- Evaluations of teacher behaviors (e.g., promptness) during an online course were rated nearly a full point higher (4.35 points compared to 3.55 points) on a five-point scale when the instructor was identified by a male name rather than a female name (MacNell et al., 2015).
- Female professors of management are less likely than male professors to be awarded an endowed chair, even when there is no difference in their objective performance (e.g., academic publications, citations) or in their personal circumstances at work (e.g., years into career, discipline of study) or at home (e.g., whether they had children) (Treviño et al., 2015).

Studies showing the positive bias toward men in the public realm and the material rewards that follow would seem to suggest that traditional gender roles benefit men. Yet, current work has emerged showing harm to men from their exclusion from the private realm:

- The underrepresentation of men in occupational and family roles that emphasize communality and care translate into gender stereotypes that implicitly prevent their interest and inclusion in such roles (Croft et al., 2015).
- A meta-analysis surveying nearly 20,000 research participants revealed that, across race, age, and sexual orientation, men prompted by masculine stereotypes to be self-reliant and exert power over women display outcomes indicating negative social functioning and impaired mental health, including depression, loneliness, and substance abuse (Wong et al., 2017).

Norms of Beauty, Femininity, and Sexuality

Traditional gender roles have created a seemingly inextricable link between women and beauty (Craig, 2006). A woman is expected to "perform gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987) in a way that exudes certain prescribed notions of desirability. Those who do not conform to this societal expectation and are perceived as lacking beauty are considered essentially flawed (Craig, 2006).

The assumption and enforcement of submissive heterosexuality undergirds beauty norms, and these norms affect how women obtain and retain positions of leadership. For example:

- Due to intrasexual competition, women have been found to avoid friendships with other women who dress or act in ways that can signal sexual availability or promiscuity (Vaillancourt & Sharma, 2011). Men have been found not to trust sexualized women because they think that these women are attempting to use their sexuality to gain power over men (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001).
- Women are penalized for dressing in a revealing manner in a professional setting (Howlett et al., 2015; Wookey et al., 2009).
- A study using both eye-tracking methodology and survey questions on trustworthiness and competence found that college-aged women and men evaluated female candidates more negatively when they were wearing revealing clothing than when they were wearing conservative clothing (Smith et al., 2018).

Race and Gender—Intersectional Invisibility

Women of Color in a White Society[1]

As noted above, while gender stereotypes are salient across race and ethnicity, the stereotypes associated with women of color found in the research are distinct and potent.

As we describe in more detail below, the stereotypes are often binaries—with a strong "positive" schema contrasted with an equally strong (and noxious) negative schema. Dominant narratives characterize Black women as the embodiment of balance and resilience, holding down families, communities, and jobs; as angry, hostile, and aggressive; as faithful, overly jovial "mammies"; or as hypersexualized "jezebels" with overly curvaceous bodies (Adams-Bass et al., 2014; Bogle, 2001). Latinx women are characterized as either sexual and outspoken or religious, conservative, and family oriented (McLaughlin et al., 2018). Asian women are characterized as docile, passive (and, if wearing glasses, studious) or seductive and dangerous (Chou & Feagin, 2015). Native women, who rarely appear in dominant narratives, are characterized as either mystically connected with the earth, as victims of sexual violence, or as drudges (Green, 1975). As described in the gender-justice discussion below, seeing these stereotypes in print in the research—and reprising them here—is a powerful reminder both of how toxic our culture often is toward women of color and of the human consequences of this toxicity.

Caricatures of women of color often arise, in part, because of the structural separation by race and racial stratification in our society. The United States continues to be residentially and educationally segregated—particularly for Black, Latinx, and Native peoples—which means that people of particular racial groups, ethnic groups, education levels, and socioeconomic means live in close proximity to one another and far from people of other groups. This segregation often translates into comparatively "weak identification" (less of a tendency to share other people's perspectives and internalize their views) between people of different races and genders (Correa, 2010). Those from nondominant groups (e.g., people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people) are frequently depicted as less variable and more stereotypical than those from dominant groups (e.g., white people, cisgender men, heterosexual people) because dominant group members are not only exposed to a larger number of people of their own in-group, but they also "pay greater attention to the attributes of in-group members and are exposed to a larger number of them" (Correa, 2010, p. 426). The physical separation of people by race and ethnicity contributes to greater lack of understanding of their attributes by people of other races and ethnicities.

The single shared association for women of color as a distinct group is important enough that it justifies our title for this part of the paper, "intersectional invisibility," a term coined by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) to describe the additional prejudice that each marginalized identity adds to the pressure women of color feel. Women of color are chronically ostracized (ignored and excluded) in popular culture and in academic examinations of gender and are frequently excluded in the social justice movement context as well (Menjivar, 2019). Being rendered invisible and being excluded have both personal and social consequences that are profound (de la Riva & Muñoz, 2014). Ensuring inclusion of all women and challenging the normativity of whiteness in the discussion of gender is clearly crucial. In other words, the word "woman" seems to presume that the woman is white unless stated otherwise (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). The white default has made this seem as though white is the norm and everyone else is the exception to that norm.

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[1] When referring to women of color in this review, we refer to the racial groups—African American, Latinx, Asian American, and Native peoples—as these represent the major racial groups in the US context. We do not cover stereotypes of various ethnicities within each of these racial groups, and we do not cover stereotypes of women of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) descent. The empirical literature is notably sparse when looking at heterogeneity within racial groups. There is also a big oversight in the empirical literature, which tends to lump all MENA women together as Arab and lump all Arab women together as Muslim. Similarly, Pacific Islander women are lumped together with Asian women. Rather than repeat these problematic generalizations, we have limited our focus and do not include that research.

Yet, we also need to recognize that lumping all women of color into a single group glosses over the reality that racial and ethnic groups differ greatly in their gendered experiences. In the United States, in academic research on "racism" in particular, by far the most common comparison is between perceptions of white people and perceptions of Black people specifically. To be frank, "nonwhite" or "women of color" does not mean "Black."

But prejudice toward Black women is not the same as prejudice toward all women of color. Dark-skinned Black women are subject to the same noxious stereotypes as those imposed upon Black men (Mathews and Johnson, 2016; Kleider-Ouffutt et al., 2016; Uzogara and Jackson, 2016). Worse, Black women are derided and taught to shrink themselves and hide their physical features (e.g., full lips, curvaceous hips, round behinds, braids, locs), all while watching as society, especially in fashion and popular culture, celebrates those same features displayed on non-Black women (Adams et al., 2014).

Different Black women face different challenges, as do members of different Asian American, Latinx, and Native groups. This is true even within racial and ethnic groups. For example, among Asian Americans, the challenges faced by a woman of Indian origin differs from those faced by a woman who is of Chinese origin. The hard work of intersectionality is in recognizing and rectifying the specific needs of heterogeneous racial and ethnic groups to overcome distinct forms of injustice. We share top-line findings from recent research about particular racial and ethnic groups because, beyond recognizing that all women—not just white women—need to be part of the story of gender, the content of stereotypes about different groups differs substantially.

Black Women

Black women maintain a precarious balance between social invisibility and social hypervisibility, depending on how salient their gender is versus their race (Cooley et al., 2018). Multiple teams of researchers have examined this phenomenon. One team found that—being prototypical of neither the category "women" nor the category "Black"— Black women's faces, and their statements within a group conversation, were less likely to be remembered than the faces or statements of Black men or of white people of male or female genders (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Research continues to demonstrate that the association of "Blackness" with masculinity results in people often struggling to classify Black women who are expressing neutral facial expressions as either male or female in speeded categorization tasks (Thomas et al., 2014). Interestingly, difficulty in gender categorization is mitigated when Black women smile—which triggers recognition of femininity in the mind of the participant (Cooley et al., 2018).

The strength of the association of Blackness with masculinity translates into Black women being stereotyped as high in agency and strength. On the one hand, from this association arises the notion of the "Strong Black Woman" (Cooley et al., 2017), who is resilient and graceful in navigating strife (Abrams et al., 2014). On the other hand, it contributes to the pernicious archetype of the "Angry Black Woman" (see, for example, Ashley, 2014)—the default presumption that Black women are angry or that an emotional expression is rooted in anger. In either sense, a Black woman's emotional range is stunted or oversimplified, as she is not permitted the leeway to be anything but strong or angry (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007).

While this schema clearly needs to be expanded to recognize Black women's full humanity, the association of Blackness and strength has the important potential to be part of a narrative in which Black women are accorded respect and dignity and are in positions to successfully exercise leadership.

However, other strong schemas of Black women must be acknowledged and challenged. For example, there is a highly prevalent cultural association of "Black" and "poor" (Verhaeghen et al., 2011). Black women are likely to be presumed to be poor unless visible markers convey otherwise. Fiske and others (2002) found that perceived levels of warmth and perceptions of competence increase markedly for Black professionals. Authentically showing Black women and men inhabiting different social classes is important

to unlink Blackness and poverty. At the same time, work must be done to overcome the powerfully negative stereotypes associated with poverty generally and Black women who are poor in particular.

A study of northeastern US undergraduates (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016) examined perceptions of women by using nearly identical photos of white women and Black women (see examples below)
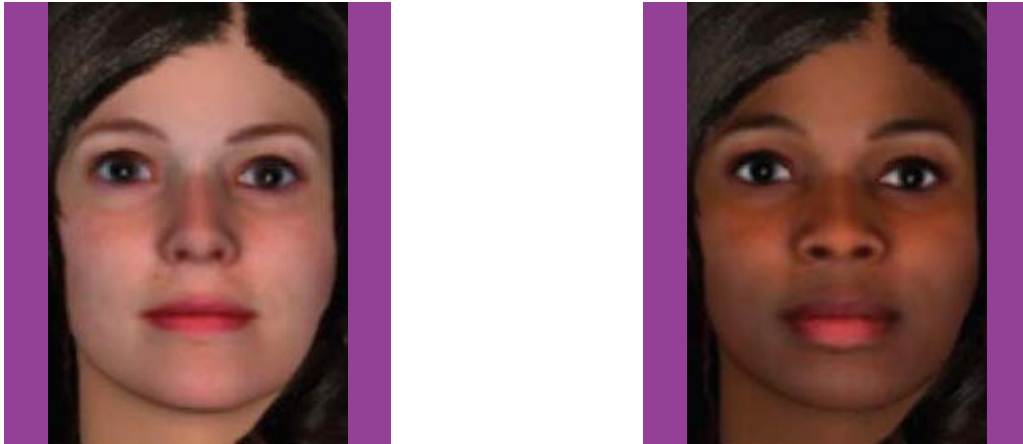
Though the effect sizes were small, the study found that participants perceived "Jasmine" when associated with a photo of a Black woman to have had sex with more people in the past month, to have been less likely to use birth control regularly during sex, to be more likely to have children, to have been more likely to have been pregnant at some time in the past, to be more likely to receive some form of public assistance, to have attained a lower level of education, and to earn less income per year than was "Jasmine" when associated with a photo of a white woman. When Jasmine was portrayed as Black and was described as pregnant, she was also perceived as more likely to be a single mother and to need public assistance than was "Jasmine" when portrayed as white and described as pregnant. Some findings were held by both Black and white participants in the study—others differed by race (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016).

Latinx Women

The generalized stereotypical vision of Latinx women is "overly sensual but also religious, conservative and family oriented. They have a Spanish accent and a homogeneous look: slightly tan, dark hair, short and curvilinear" (Correa, 2013, p. 426). Stereotypes may be distinct depending upon context. For example, in the entertainment industry, Latinx women may be characterized as "'virginal', 'passive', 'dependent on men' or as 'hot-tempered', 'tempestuous', 'promiscuous' and 'sexy'" (Correa, 2013, p. 427; see also Carstarphen & Rios, 2003), and in the marketing industry as "family oriented, collectivist, religious, feminine, and with a generic look—long straight hair and olive skin" (Dávila, 2001). These stereotypes are contrary to the reality that Latinx identity is extraordinarily multi-faceted, given that it encompasses people of different races and ethnicities (Morales, 2018).

In academic discourse, intersectional invisibility has been acute for Latinx women. An article in 2015 noted that a slightly earlier review of articles from three major social psychology journals found that only 7% of published research focused on Latinx-identified people as the targets of bias; ironically, this article critiquing the dearth of research only included Latinx men in its study of implicit bias (March & Graham, 2015).

Of the few studies of Latinx women that exist, many show virulently negative stereotypes. For example, Lopez (2013) contends that narratives about Latinx women include stereotypes similar to those of Latinx men (e.g., undocumented, uneducated, cheap labor, vandals, criminals, maids, needy), but also stereotypes specific to women (e.g. submissive, emotional, and weak) that make them vulnerable to abuse within and outside of their families (Lopez, 2013).

In a study of how newspapers frame Latinx women, Correa (2010) contrasts their depictions in the *Miami Herald* (an English-language paper targeting a mainstream audience) with *El Nuevo Herald* (its Spanish-language counterpart). In her research, Correa found that "the success, oppression, family devotion, and sensuality frames" were the most prominent in *El Nuevo Herald,* and "success, attractive consumer, affirmative action and oppression frames were the most relevant ideas in the English-language publication"(Correa, 2010, p. 434). Correa's work shows how even seemingly positive framing devices, such as "success," can rest upon more destructive stereotypes. For example:

> The idea of successful Hispanic women was associated with other subframes, such as overcoming, hardworking, family sacrifice and sensuality. When the stories used the success frame, they often highlighted the idea that Latinx women had to surmount obstacles and work hard to achieve their goals. For instance, the lead of an article stated: "Priscilla Colón has faced every challenge presented in the business world in order to achieve her goal of building an enterprise with her own style." (Correa, 2010, p. 433).

By contrast, qualitative research is a source of particularized and genuinely empowering stories about Latinx women. For example, Navarro (2013) utilizes "grounded theory" to tell the story of two Latinx women who ascended to the federal judiciary in Texas.
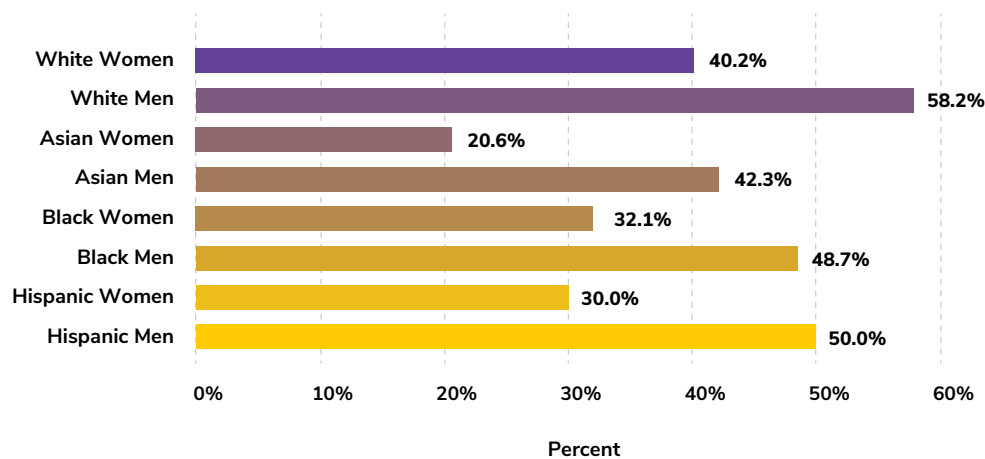
Asian Women

Like Black and Latinx women, Asian women are subject to strong racial stereotypes with a gendered distinction. Common stereotypes about Asian women in the United States include "the submissive and docile Geisha, the hypersexual, seductive, and dangerous Dragon Lady, and the newest addition, the assimilated, studious female nerd" (Seethaler, 2013, para. 1). The "model minority" myth regarding Asian Americans tends to focus on the "positive" associations of Asian Americans as "ambitious, hardworking, intelligent, mathematical, obedient, self-disciplined, serious, and traditional" (Park et al., 2015, para. 5), which reflect perceived competence. Negative stereotypes include "cold, cunning, deceitful, narrow-minded, nerdy, pushy, selfish, shy" (Park et al., 2015, para. 5), which are linked to a perceived lack of warmth. A powerful association is of "foreignness"—manifesting in presumptions such as that Asian Americans speak English as a second language—also often applied to Latinx people (Park et al., 2015). Across numerous realms, Asian Americans are seen through the lens of "other." They are perceived as foreign or are left out of mainstream conversations, such as those about race, which center white, Black, and Latinx experiences. Moreover, while the "model minority" myth and related characteristics are often referred to as stereotypes of Asian Americans, they are, of course, in reference specifically to people of East Asian origin (from nations such as China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) (Taylor et al., 2012).

While stereotypes about (East) Asian Americans are well documented, the academic research focusing on Asian American women is minimal. Most of the research on the stereotyping of Asian Americans has no gender distinctions and also lacks any treatment of variation in stereotypes that exist among different nationalities and ethnicities among Asian American women. This may translate into a male-normative default in the research.

The experience of Asian American women in STEM fields draws attention to the importance of distinguishing the experience of Asian American women from those of Asian American men. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the advancement of Asian female scientists and engineers in STEM careers lags far behind those of men (Wu & Jing, 2011). The chart below (National Science Foundation, 2011), which disaggregates doctoral scientists and engineers by race and gender, mirrors the data from other STEM career paths. The authors argue that this data points to the existence of a "double bind" for Asian women, "facing both a bamboo ceiling because of Asian stereotyping and a glass ceiling because of implicit gender bias." (Wu & Jing 2011, para. 4) Again, this is a manifestation of intersectional invisibility—the clouding of the experience of Asian American women by broader social tropes about the "success" of Asian Americans in the United States.

White Women	**40.2%**
White Men	**58.2%**
Asian Women	**20.6%**
Asian Men	**42.3%**
Black Women	**32.1%**
Black Men	**48.7%**
Hispanic Women	**30.0%**
Hispanic Men	**50.0%**

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

Percent

Source: Naitional Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, Survey of Doctorate Recipients: 2008 Table 9-26
"Employed doctoral Scientists and Engineers in 4-Year Educational Institutions, by Broad Occupation, Sex, Race/Ethnicity, and Tenure Status: 2008"
http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/pdf/tab9-26.pdf Acessed July 16, 2011

Note: Data of Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander is supresed for data confidentiality reasons.

Native Women

Reviewing how Native women are portrayed in the academic literature reveals yet another glaring example of intersectional invisibility. Direct studies of Native women are few and far between. The Reclaiming Truth Initiative has done **important work identifying the role of narratives around Native peoples more generally**. In a recent report, they argue that ostensibly:

> "positive" stereotypes blend many unique tribes into one "Native American" persona that is perceived to be committed to family and culture, spiritual and mystical, resilient through historical challenges, fiercely protective of the land, and patriotic to the United States. Non-Natives often hold positive and negative stereotypes together: Native peoples living in poverty and rich from casinos; resilient and addicted to drugs and alcohol; the noble warrior and savage warrior (Reclaiming Native Truth, 2018, p.5).

With respect to the negative stereotypes specifically associated with Native women, the two most common stereotypes are the "Indian princess," which conveys natural, wholesome virginity and freshness, and her opposite, the "squaw/drudge" (Merskin, 2010). The latter is a historical "failed" princess, "who is lower even than a bad White woman" (Bird, 1999, p. 73). The fact that the stereotypes are derived from the distant past does not rob them of the ability to do harm, precisely because these associations have not been replaced or expanded by current representations. Native women are truly rendered invisible by modern media, and the effect is that "native girls and women live on the periphery of mainstream and, at times, Native society. They are simultaneously marked as racial and sexual other" (Merskin, 2010, p. 359).

The Reclaiming Truth Initiative provides an "ally" narrative guide that they urge as a base for future communications with and about Native peoples. The narrative they suggest is as follows:

> The history of Native Americans is one of great strength and revitalization. It is a story built around values that have shaped Native cultures and U.S. society: respect for family and elders; shared responsibility to care for the land; and an obligation to do right by the next generation. It is a story of resilience through great pain and injustice, from broken treaties and loss of land and language in the past to derogatory sports mascots and biased history taught in schools

today. Across more than 600 sovereign Native nations and in every profession and segment of society, Native Americans carry the cultural knowledge and wisdom that sustains Native nations and helps build a stronger future for all. Let's find our commonalities, celebrate our differences and creatively work together for our shared future and the futures of the next generations. (Reclaiming Native Truth, 2018, p. 14)

Women of Color Perceiving White Women

Research about gender frequently treats "women" as synonymous with "white women," and the participants in psychology studies are often primarily white. As we note above, studies about women of other races and ethnicities are rare but are finally becoming more common. Even more rare are studies that examine stereotypes held by women of color about white women.

In 2013, researchers recruited African American, Asian American, and Latinx participants from a U.S. west coast college campus to make assessments of the differences between the groups' stereotypes about white women (Conley, 2013). Stereotypes held about white women by women of color were not identical to common stereotypes about "women." Rather, the four stereotypes among the top 10 listed by all three ethnic groups were: dumb, snobby, sexually easy, and beautiful. Additional common stereotypes were: blonde, dieting/appearance-focused, racist, shopaholics, untrustworthy/immoral, and career-oriented. Notably, Black and Latinx participants were also likely to list: weak, dependent, and racist.

These are not the most common stereotypes of "women" generally—leading researchers to conclude that for women of color, "white women" belong to an ethnically marked category, largely based upon media images (Conley, 2013).

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall—Beauty and Race

Standards of beauty are also heavily racialized. Studies have found that when asked to rate the attractiveness of images, irrespective of participants' racial identities, participants are more likely to rate white faces as more attractive than Black faces (Lewis, 2011; Wade, Irvine, & Cooper, 2004; Rudman & McLean, 2016). Academics refer to the racialization of beauty standards as "white normative femininity" (Deliovsky, 2008). Within the American cultural context, women across races and ethnicities are judged by men, by other women, and by themselves, against a standard linked to an archetypal vision of white women, which encompasses physical appearance and demeanor (Deliovsky, 2008).

Transgender and/or Non-binary People

Transgender and/or non-binary people have been largely excluded from academic research examining stereotypes and perceptions relevant to their experience.

In a rigorous meta-analysis, Meerwijk and Sevelius (2017) searched PubMed, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature, and Web of Science for national surveys, in addition to conducting an Internet search of "gray" literature (government reports, policy statements, and issue papers) from 2006 through 2016, and found that the number of adults who identify as transgender increased over the past decade, with a current best estimate of 390 transgender people per 100,000 adults (about one in every 250 adults, or almost one million Americans) (Meerwijk, 2017). In 2019, a federal government report (Johns et al., 2019) found that 1.8% of high school students identify as transgender. Advocates note that the number of people who are gender nonconforming has been under-researched but appears to be growing as well (Webb et al., 2017). For transgender men and women who are non-binary, the associations linked to their gender categories may be experienced differently. While research is insufficient regarding the lived experiences of these groups, we include a discussion of broader attitudes toward transgender and/or non-binary people from important emerging literature.

Even as the percentage of people who do not conform to dominant gender norms increases, as the research above indicates, a significant majority of Americans of all ages continue to accept the gender binary for themselves and for society more generally. According to a Pew Study in fall 2018, roughly 42% of Americans say that forms and gender questions for online profiles should include more options than "man" or "woman," but 56% say that forms should not include other gender options (Pew Research Center, 2019). Those who identify as a man or as a woman (transgender or cisgender) are grappling with whether to embrace egalitarian or traditional gender norms (Walter, 2018). Complicating these challenges are the distinction between roles ascribed to the public sphere (political/occupational) in contrast to the private sphere (family/sexuality) (Walter, 2018).

In an article published in 2018, Morgenroth and Ryan decry that, despite the fact that philosopher Judith Butler (1990) called upon society to create "gender trouble" by disrupting the binary view of sex, gender, and sexuality, little theorizing and research within experimental social psychology has drawn directly on Butler's ideas (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). In their paper, Morgenroth and Ryan propose research questions and concrete ways for experimental social psychologists to incorporate notions of "gender performativity and gender trouble" into the ways in which they research gender. For all the ways in which American society has morphed in its understanding, conversation, and representation of life beyond the gender binary, scientific research falls far behind.

While theory and narrative literature addressing the experiences of those outside of the traditional gender binary is growing, the dearth of experimental research on this topic is surprising, given that in today's culture, transgender and non-binary lives are becoming highly visible, and transgender individuals are extremely visible in the public sphere (e.g., Laverne Cox, CeCe McDonald, Janet Mock) (Coefield, 2017). Despite progress in some spheres, political persecution of and reported violence against transgender people and people who do not adhere to dominant gender norms have also increased, especially toward transgender women of color—and Black transgender women in particular—who are targeted and killed because of their perceived gender transgression or sexuality (Gossett, 2016). The research about transgender and/or non-binary lives is nascent, and the need to tell authentic stories to bring their experiences to light cannot wait for social scientists.

Moving Toward Gender Equity—Positive Research and Narratives of Hope

As far as we can determine, Story at Scale is the first national research effort aimed at determining how best to promote gender justice using narrative to reshape culture. The approaches pursued by Story at Scale find support in existing research that shows some success in addressing race discrimination. Extrapolating from existing research that shows some success in addressing race discrimination provides a way forward for praciioners. A combination of five strategies have been found to be most successful in long-term reduction of the effects of discrimination (Devine et al., 2012): stereotype replacement (Monteith, 1993), counter-stereotypic imaging (Blair, Ma, & Lenton, 2001), individuating (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990), perspective taking (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000), and increasing opportunities for contact (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In a replication of the original study by Devine and colleagues in 2012, Forscher and colleagues found that participants who engaged in these practices were more likely to (1) notice bias in the world around them, (2) label any bias (in themselves, others, or society) as wrong, and (3) have interracial interactions with relative strangers (as opposed to friends and family). Most significantly, two years after engaging in the five strategies for a concentrated period of time, intervention participants were more likely to confront bias by writing comments in disagreement with an essay advocating stereotyping (Forscher et al., 2017).

Stories portraying authentic depictions of people in a variety of contexts can create new mental associations regarding how gender can be performed. Stories can also teach us how to individuate—seeking information about people's unique characteristics rather than relying upon presumptive stereotypes. Stories have always been a powerful source for perspective taking. When people are given an opportunity to view themselves through the lens of protagonists who differ from them by gender, race, ethnicity, and other identity characteristics, their capacity to see the world differently increases (Downing & Husband, 2005). Finally, while we recognize that stories are not themselves a replacement for actual peer-to-peer, intergroup contact, research has shown that culture can provide a form of "indirect contact" that can shift attitudes (Murrar & Brauer, 2015).

It is critical, however, that these stories move away from a deficit-based orientation—that is, a focus on the shortcomings of marginalized groups or the tacit assumption that their potential is limited or that the barriers are insurmountable (Yeneabat & Butterfield, 2012; Perception Institute, 2017). This is not to suggest a reductionist approach in which portrayals are always positive or somehow counter-stereotypical. Instead of relying on a particular character or plotline, stories should elicit emotional responses, since research on popular culture suggests emotional stories are the most effective because they increase feelings of connectedness (Olivier et al., 2015).

We acknowledge that the way forward for gender has salient differences from attempts to address stereotypes linked to race and ethnicity. The latter—stereotypes linked to race and ethnicity—are often founded in a *lack* of intergroup contact and a reliance on media representation. However, people of different genders come in contact frequently, so gender stereotypes are more founded in power differences and, as discussed throughout this literature review, the pressures to conform to existing norms.

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Acknowledgements & Key Terms

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About Story at Scale

Story at Scale (**storyatscale.org**) is a year-long collaboration of researchers, data scientists, artists, advocates, and organizers to develop and test a new cultural strategy to advance gender justice. Using big data and a collaborative, creative process, Story at Scale delivers audience research and a narrative foundation to guide artists and campaigners in telling stories that reflect the world we seek: a joy-filled life in a gender-just future. Story at Scale's tools are designed for practical use by those working on issues ranging from reproductive justice to sex- and gender-based violence to LGBTQ+ rights and more.

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About The Culture Change Fund

Housed at the Women's Foundation of California, The Culture Change Fund is a collaborative fund focused on using culture to advance and transform gender justice by changing how the public thinks about wide-ranging issues, including economic security, income inequality, violence against women, sexual assault, maternal health, abortion, contraception, and broader reproductive justice and gender justice issues, among others. Learn more at **womensfoundca.org/culture-change-fund**.

Key Terms

Gender justice is a framework used to bring about the fair and equitable treatment of people of all genders, with the goal of achieving dignity for all. It serves all those directly impacted by gender-based oppression, including transgender and cisgender women, genderqueer and non-binary people, and transgender men. True gender justice is intersectional and incorporates the needs and perspectives of those working towards racial justice, immigrant rights, LGBTQ+ liberation, and disability justice, among other struggles, recognizing that each of these is required in order for people of all genders to experience full dignity, equality, and liberation.

Intersectionality, a term first used in 1989 by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, is a mode of analysis that examines discrimination experienced by people who face multiple lines of identity-based exclusion. Intersectional gender justice examines the overlapping systems of oppression and discrimination that people face, based not just on gender but on race, class, sexual orientation, and a number of other axes. As such, as we work toward gender justice, we do so through the lens of multiple, simultaneous identities— for instance, as a poor, cisgender woman or an Asian, transgender man—not gender identity alone.

Cultural Strategy is a field of practice that centers artists, storytellers, media makers, and cultural influencers as agents of social change. Over the long term, cultural strategy cracks open, reimagines and rewrites fiercely-held narratives, transforming the shared spaces and norms that make up culture. In near-term campaigns, it helps to shape opinions, beliefs, and behaviors that lead to electoral, legislative, and policy wins. (source: Jeff Chang, Liz Manne, Erin Potts, **A Conversation About Cultural Strategy**)

Contact

hello@storyatscale.org

Story
at Scale

hello@storyatscale.org

storyatscale.org