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Media and Modern Manhood: Testing Associations Between Media Consumption and Young Men's Acceptance of Traditional Gender Ideologies

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Abstract Content analyses of popular media have consistently documented the narrow and stereotypical ways in which women and men are frequently depicted. Despite growing evidence that these media images impact viewers' attitudes towards women and gender relations, less is known about how specifically media impact men's beliefs about masculinity. Thus, the purpose of our paper was to explore the association between media use and beliefs about manhood among a sample of undergraduate men from a U.S. Midwestern university. In Study 1 ($N = 488$), we examine the relation between young men's media consumption and their beliefs about the male role using the Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale (AMIRS; Chu et al. 2005). As hypothesized, men's media use was associated with more traditional beliefs about the male role, with reality TV and movie viewing emerging as significant predictors. Study 2 ($N = 449$) addresses the contribution of male-oriented media (e.g., sports programming, video games, men's magazines) to men's personal adherence to masculinity ideology as measured by the Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory-46 (Parent and Moradi 2009). Here, sports TV viewing, reality TV viewing, and reading men's magazines were predictive of stronger adherence to masculinity ideology. These findings suggest that media may contribute not only to beliefs about women and gender relations, but also to young men's beliefs about manhood and personal enactment of masculinity.

More than just a source of entertainment, mainstream media are powerful communicators of cultural norms and values that "define the world and legitimize the social order" (Gerbner et al. 1986, p. 18). Included in media are messages and representations about gender norms, often narrow and stereotypical (for a review, see Greenwood and Lippman 2010). Cultivation theory (Gerbner 1998) argues that frequent exposure to consistent media themes or stereotypes leads viewers, over time, to cultivate or adopt beliefs about the real world that coincide with media content. Thus, many have raised questions about the potential impact of these representations on viewers. Indeed, a notable amount of research on media effects has centered on viewers' gender beliefs. Much of this work has been conducted within the United States, and therefore all media-effects studies cited throughout this paper are based on U.S. samples unless otherwise noted. In addition, much of this research has focused on constructions of femininity (Good et al. 2002) and on how exposure to mainstream media affects women and stereotypes about women (Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Cobb and Boettcher 2007; MacKay and Covell 1997; Stermer and Burkley 2012). As a result, little is known about how media exposure shapes men's gender attitudes, especially their beliefs about masculinity.

Using cultivation theory as a guiding framework, the present survey studies sought to explore the relation between media use and attitudes about manhood among U.S. undergraduate men. In Study 1, we examine the association between

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men's mainstream media use and their beliefs about the male role. We build on this work in Study 2 by including further assessments of men's male-oriented media use and by testing their personal adherence to masculine ideology. Although our studies are based within the United States, implications of our work are far reaching. The mass production and increasing availability of media provide individuals across the world access and exposure to similar content. Thus, the relation between media use and men's gender beliefs may follow similar patterns within and outside of the United States based on the media content in question. In addition, studies conducted across various nations have linked endorsement of traditional gender beliefs among boys and men to a variety of problematic outcomes (e.g., Pleck et al. 1993, in the U.S.; Monk and Ricciardelli 2003, in Australia; Kulis et al. 2008, in Mexico). The consistency of these findings across cultures highlights the global importance of investigating the sources of these gendered messages.

Media Representations of Gender

Content analyses have consistently revealed stereotypical portrayals of gender across a number of media formats and genres, including television programs, television commercials, movies, and magazines (for recent reviews, see Collins 2011; Greenwood and Lippman 2010). A common finding across many studies is that women are often under-represented in particular media, and, when present, are more likely than men to be scantily clad, sexualized, and relegated to stereotypical roles such as subordinates, housewives, and helpless victims (Collins 2011). By contrast, analyses indicate that boys and men in the media are more likely to be shown as aggressive, in a work role instead of a family role, as active, and as dominant. These patterns are by no means universal and have been found to vary across media (e.g., TV programs vs. video games), across genres (e.g., TV comedies vs. TV dramas), and across time.

Specific depictions of men and masculinity often fall within the bounds of hegemonic masculinity (Evans and Davies 2000; Vigorito and Cury 1998). *Hegemonic masculinity* is the embodiment of traditional and stereotypical masculine norms and values (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), illustrated by characteristics such as aggression, power and dominance, status seeking, emotional restraint, heterosexuality, and risk taking (Levant et al. 2013; Parent and Moradi 2009). Hegemonic masculinity is a complex and culturally bound concept, and thus, a full review of hegemonic masculinity in modern media is beyond the bounds of our paper. However, we discuss several prominent and recurring media themes in the following.

First, media depictions of men illustrate the importance of status and accomplishment within masculinity by placing male characters in positions of power and leadership while minimizing parenting or spousal roles (Vigorito and Cury 1998). For example, Glascock (2001) found that men on television are significantly more likely than women to be of unknown marital and parental status. Greenwood and Lippman (2010) argue that this pattern illustrates the notion that men are defined by characteristics other than familial relationships (e.g., work). Second, male characters across media formats are often aggressive, dominant, and violent (Coyne et al. 2010; Dill and Thill 2007; Stern 2005). In one analysis of teen-oriented films from the past 30 years, Coyne and colleagues (2010) found that male characters were responsible for 86 % of aggressive acts. Third, male characters are over-represented in depictions of high-risk behaviors (DuRant et al. 1997; Manganello and Chauhan 2011). DuRant and colleagues (1997) recorded instances of risky behaviors in 513 music videos and found that men engaged in smoking in 90 % of videos and alcohol use in 85.5 % of videos, compared with 41 % and 48 % for women, respectively. Similarly, Roberts et al. (1999) found smoking to be more prevalent among men than women in a sample of 200 movies. With regards to driving behavior, Manganello and Chauhan (2011) found that men were significantly more likely than women to be shown engaging in reckless behavior in a sample of 15 television programs popular among adolescents. These representations of men help foster the idea that an important part of being a man includes risk taking, or being a daredevil.

A final example of hegemonic masculinity in media content is the perpetuation of stereotypical male sexual scripts. A content analysis of 12 popular programs among children and adolescents found that the most common types of messages about sexuality were, in fact, those pertaining to the male sexual role (Ward 1995). Men were portrayed as always being ready and willing for sex, being preoccupied with sex, and taking pride in their sexual histories. A later analysis of 25 popular television programs (Kim et al. 2007) found similar patterns. Male characters were depicted as having uncontrollable and natural sexual urges. Men maintained their heterosexual appearance through homophobic attitudes and gender policing of other male characters. Together, these findings indicate multiple ways through which media portrayals have been shown to support and reify hegemonic constructions of masculinity that highlight the importance of power, aggression, risk-taking, promiscuity, and heterosexuality.

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory argues that exposure to media messages over time fosters homogenous attitudes and beliefs about the world among frequent viewers (Gerbner 1998), and it has become one of the most prominent theories in communication research (Morgan and Shanahan 2010). Gerbner (1970, p. 69) argued that "the mass production and rapid distribution of

messages create new symbolic environments that reflect the structure and functions of the institutions that transmit them" and simultaneously "short-circuit other networks of social communication and superimpose their own forms of collective consciousness." Thus, heavy consumers of media are expected to display attitudes and beliefs that closely resemble depictions within media content. Cultivation theory has been used to investigate how media may affect viewers' beliefs about others (e.g., women, racial minorities), as well as beliefs about the self (e.g., body satisfaction; for a review, see Morgan and Shanahan 2010).

Early cultivation research focused on documenting the repetitive and pervasive messages conveyed broadly across television, as well as assessing how closely viewers' attitudes mirrored those depictions. A meta-analysis of this research found that level of television viewing is indeed associated with distorted perceptions of reality among viewers, thereby supporting the cultivation hypothesis (Shanahan and Morgan 1999). In its original format, cultivation theory characterized television as a pervasive and homogenous medium and therefore did not distinguish between genres. However, today's media landscape is far more diversified than that of the 1960s and 70s, with more niche channels and markets available than ever before (Becker and Schönbach 2013).

The continuous evolution of mass media has led many scholars to extend Gerbner's (1970) original theory by examining contributions of specific TV genres to viewers' attitudes, including genres such as talk shows (e.g., Woo and Dominick 2001), situation comedies (e.g., Appel 2008), and children's programs (e.g., Aubrey and Harrison 2004). One TV genre receiving much recent attention is reality programming. Reality television programming has been defined "as a distinct genre made up of entertainment-oriented programs that feature nonprofessional actors playing themselves whose words and behavior are presented as being unscripted" (Hall 2009, p. 431). Data indicate that 11 of the top 20 most-watched U.S. cable TV programs in 2012 by viewers aged 18–49 were reality programs, with *Jersey Shore* and *Teen Mom* leading the list (Rice 2015). This genre holds high potential to influence viewers' gender ideologies because of the suggested reality nature of the programming and because of the strong presence of gendered scripts. For example, in their analysis of 64 h of reality dating programs, Ferris et al. (2007) reported that references that women are sexual objects appeared 5.9 times per hour and references that men are sex-driven appeared 3.6 times per hour. We therefore explore contributions of men's exposure both to overall TV programming and to reality programming.

Additionally, cultivation theory has been successfully applied to other media such as video games (Anderson and Dill 2000; Williams 2006) and music videos (Borzekowski et al. 2000; Ward 2002), indicating that effects are not limited to television. One medium that has been understudied but that

holds potential to shape beliefs about men and masculinity are mainstream movies. Data indicate that emerging adults provide the largest per capita motion picture attendance by age in the United States (Motion Picture Association of America 2014). Moreover, movies offer abundant models of masculinity, given that 73 % of characters with speaking parts are male (Smith and Cook 2008). Analyses suggest that the behaviors depicted often follow expectations of hegemonic masculinity. For example, in youth-oriented films, men are frequently shown ogling women's bodies and losing their senses in the presence of a beautiful woman (Martin and Kazyak 2009; Towbin et al. 2003). In an analysis of teen characters from top-grossing films, women were more likely than men to groom themselves and care for family members, and men were more likely than women to commit violence (Stern 2005). Drawing on these findings, we have chosen to include movie viewing in our analysis, investigating whether exposure is associated with men's views about masculinity.

Media Effects on Gender Attitudes

Is there any evidence that regular exposure to these portrayals shapes young men's own conceptions of masculinity in the ways suggested by cultivation theory (Gerbner 1998)? As noted earlier, most existing studies on media effects on gender beliefs have focused on representations of women and subsequent attitudes towards women (for a review, see Greenwood and Lippman 2010). Although findings from this work typically indicate that frequent media use, among both women and men, is linked to holding more sexist attitudes or holding more stereotypical views towards women, less in known about how media use shape men's conceptions of *masculinity*, specifically.

At this point, findings from a small body of research signal that these media effects might also extend to men's beliefs about masculinity. More specifically, some studies, including surveys conducted within cultivation theory and also some basic experiments, have found media use to influence specific characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as emotional control and aggression (Ben-Zeev et al. 2012; Scharrer 2005). For example, an experiment conducted by Ben-Zeev and colleagues (2012) found that undergraduate men, but not women, who were exposed to male characters displaying emotional withdrawal in the context of a relationship showed less willingness to engage in affective communication in a subsequent task. Another experiment conducted with undergraduate men found that participants exposed to media stimuli containing hypermasculine portrayals (i.e., violence, thrill seeking, trivialization of emotions and relationships) later reported higher rates of hypermasculinity, specifically within dimensions emphasizing danger as thrilling and violence as manly (Scharrer 2005). Finally, survey data link

men's regular consumption of TV, reality TV, or movies to greater support for traditional sexual scripts, including greater support for non-relational sex and for notions that men are sex-driven (Ferris et al. 2007; Seabrook et al. 2016; Ward 2002; Ward et al. 2006, 2011; Zurbriggen and Morgan 2006). Together, this research suggests that media may influence particular beliefs about masculinity in addition to beliefs about women and gender relations.

Study 1

As noted in the literature review we presented previously, prior studies have consistently documented gender stereotypical content across media formats. Furthermore, a wide body of research has extended support for cultivation effects beyond television use. Drawing upon these findings, the current study was designed to test the following: television use (Hypothesis 1a), reality TV (Hypothesis 1b), and movie viewing (Hypothesis 1c) will be associated with more traditional beliefs about the male role. In addition, we will examine the following research question: When considered simultaneously, which media genres will emerge as significant contributors to men's beliefs about the male role?

Hypotheses 1a through 1c will be tested using zero-order correlations. To examine our exploratory research question, we will utilize hierarchical regression analysis. In preparation for this analysis, we will first use zero-order correlations to examine whether beliefs about the male role vary by age and sexual orientation. Because a central component of traditional masculinity is heterosexuality, sexual minority men may be less likely to conform to traditional notions of masculinity. Significant demographic correlates will be entered in Step 1 of our regression equation, followed by television, reality TV, and movie viewing in Step 2.

Method

Participants

Participants were 488 undergraduate men aged 18–26 years-old ($M = 18.95$ $SD = 1.07$). Of this sample, 68 % of participants identified as White, 21.1 % as Asian/Asian American, 3.1 % as Latino/Hispanic, 4.1 % as Middle-Eastern, 3.1 % as Black, and .6 % as multiracial. Participants were generally from well-educated families, with mothers having completed an average of 16.66 years of education ($SD = 2.32$), and fathers having completed an average of 17.52 ($SD = 2.74$) years of education, levels equivalent to a Bachelor's degree. Fully 91 % of participants identified as exclusively heterosexual.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from introductory psychology courses at a large U.S. Midwestern university and were compensated with 1 h of research credit to apply towards their course requirements. Undergraduate men were invited to participate in a study of media use and social relationships and completed the survey during small-group administrations in a research lab. Students were given 1 h to complete the anonymous pen-and-paper survey; the order of measures was randomized across the survey packets.

Media Exposure

Participants were asked to indicate the number of hours spent watching television, in general, and reality television, in particular, during a typical weekday as well as on Saturday and Sunday (0 to 10+). A weekly sum score was created for each medium by multiplying the weekday responses by 5 and then adding this product to the Saturday and Sunday amounts. To assess reality television viewing in more detail, participants were given a list of 34 popular reality television programs (e.g., *Jersey Shore, Real Housewives*) and were asked to report how often they watched each program on a scale from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*all of the time, most or all episodes*). Programs were chosen based on their prominence in social media and on previous pilot data. Responses were then summed to create a composite score representing overall frequency of viewing popular reality programming. Movie exposure was assessed by asking students to report how many movies (0 to 10+) they viewed in a typical month at the theater, on a computer or DVD, and through premium channels. A sum score was then computed across these three items to reflect the total number of movies watched per month.

Attitudes Towards the Male Role

To assess participants' beliefs about the male role, we utilized the Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale (AMIRS; Chu et al. 2005). Because 78 % of our sample was aged 18 or 19, and because participants did not have extensive experience with work or parental roles, we chose this adolescent measure over available adult measures. The AMIRS assesses attitudes and beliefs about the male role within interpersonal relationships, including the importance of toughness, stoicism, and sexual presentation (e.g., "It's important for a guy to act like nothing is wrong, even when something is bothering him"). The AMIRS asks participants to indicate their level of agreement with 12 items along a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Negatively worded items received a reversed score. A mean score was then computed across all items, with higher scores reflective of more traditional attitudes about the male role in relationships ($\alpha = .80$).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics for media and gender belief variables are reported in the top portion of Table 1. Overall, media use within this sample was high. Men reported viewing an average of 12.55 h of television per week and 5.75 movies per month. Less than 1.5 % of participants reported watching 10 or more hours of television per weekday or weekend, which suggests that survey response options did not result in a ceiling effect. Overall, participants did not strongly endorse more traditional attitudes as indicated by a mean score of 2.55 of a possible 6 on the AMIRS. To explore the potential effect of demographic variables, we conducted preliminary correlational analysis among age, sexual orientation (0 = exclusively or predominantly heterosexual, 1 = gay or bisexual), and our outcome variable. Results indicated that sexual orientation was negatively associated with scores on the AMIRS, $r(482) = -.16$, $p < .001$.

Testing the Main Hypotheses and Research Question

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c argued that individual media variables (TV, reality TV, movies, respectively) would each correlate with scores on the AMIRS. These hypotheses were tested by running zero-order correlations that are reported in Table 2. As expected, there were several significant associations between the media exposure variables and men's beliefs. Overall weekly TV viewing was associated with higher scores

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for media use and gender role attitude

Variables	M	SD	Range
Study 1			
TV hours/week	12.55	11.17	0–70 (0–70)
Reality TV hours/week	2.03	4.73	0–37 (0–70)
Movies/month	5.75	3.74	0–24 (0–30)
Viewing of popular reality TV	5.47	6.31	0–44 (0–102)
AMIRS	2.55	.64	1–5 (1–6)
Study 2			
TV hours/week	12.79	10.63	0–62 (0–70)
Sports TV hours/week	9.53	9.73	0–70 (0–70)
Video games hours/week	6.15	8.35	0–62 (0–70)
Movies/month	6.06	4.77	0–30 (0–30)
Men's magazines/year	.18	.45	0–2.80 (0–48)
Viewing popular reality TV	7.89	6.71	0–42 (0–45)
AMIRS	2.54	.66	1–5.08 (1–6)
CMNI	3.48	.48	1.58–4.91 (1–6)

AMIRS Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale; *CMNI* Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory. Actual response ranges are presented followed by possible response ranges in parentheses

on the AMIRS, supporting Hypothesis 1a. Weekly viewing of reality TV was associated with more traditional attitudes about the male role, but viewing of popular reality TV programs was not. Thus, Hypothesis 1b was partially supported. Furthermore, monthly movie viewing was associated with more traditional beliefs, supporting Hypothesis 1c.

To examine our research question concerning the unique contribution of media use genres to men's beliefs, we ran a hierarchical regression analysis (Table 3). Because preliminary correlations indicated a relation between sexual orientation and our outcome variable, sexual orientation was entered in a first block as a covariate. Our four media use variables were then entered in Step 2. Results showed that weekly reality TV viewing and monthly movie viewing were each significant predictors of men's beliefs about the male role. This model explained approximately 5 % of variance in men's scores on the AMIRS. Tolerance and VIF values (Table 3) indicate that multicollinearity was not an issue.

Discussion

Our study sought to examine the relation between regular, everyday media consumption and men's attitudes towards the male role in interpersonal relationships. We found that consumption of TV, reality TV, and movies was each associated with higher scores on the AMIRS. In addition to movies, viewing reality TV emerged as a significant predictor of beliefs about men's roles, which points to the importance of considering reality television as a source of information about manhood. Overall, our results indicate that, similar to results for women, media use predicts men's endorsement of traditional gender beliefs.

Although we assessed a variety of media genres, one limitation of the current study is that we did not include some popular male-oriented media genres. Male-oriented media genres are known to frequently feature content that supports hegemonic masculinity, and they are particularly popular among boys and men. Video games are one such male-oriented media. Data on gender differences in video game playing indicate that boys and men are significantly more likely to play video games than girls and women (Lucas and Sherry 2004; Wright et al. 2001). In one survey of 593 college students, Lucas and Sherry (2004) found that men were more likely to play video games than women, and male gamers played significantly more hours per week than female gamers. Additionally, male players reported greater gratification from playing video games than did female players. In addition, findings indicate that male characters heavily populate the video game world, and female characters, if and when present, are often sexualized or portrayed as victims (Beasley and Collins-Standley 2002; Dietz 1998; Scharrer 2004).

Sports television is yet another prominent male-oriented media genre. Sports programming is particularly rife with themes

Table 2 Correlations among variables of interest, Study 1

	Age	SO	TVhrs	RealTV	Movies	PopTV
Age	–					
Sexual orientation (SO)	.01	–				
TV hours/week (TV hrs)	.03	−.13**	–			
Reality TV hours/week (RealTV)	−.01	−.03	.42***	–		
Movies/month	.03	−.10*	.39***	.17***	–	
Viewing popular reality TV (PopTV)	.06	.10*	.16**	.36***	.06	–
AMIRS	−.00	−.16***	.09*	.14**	.15**	.06

AMIRS Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale; *CMNI* Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory. Sexual orientation was coded as 0 (exclusively or predominantly heterosexual) or 1 (gay or bisexual)

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

of masculinity, and women are vastly underrepresented (Messner et al. 2000). Compared to men's sports, women's sports were allotted only 2.9 % of programming time on *SportsCenter*, a popular sports news and commentary program. Sports commentators often praised stereotypically masculine values such as physical aggression and toughness, and poor performances were attributed to a lack of aggression whose players were described as being "pushed around," responding "passively," or acting "feeble" (Messner et al. 2000, p. 386). Significant airtime and praise were given to replays of dangerous or reckless acts, particularly in extreme sports. With such an emphasis on male sports and stereotypically male values, it is not surprising that data indicate greater sports viewership for boys than girls (Garitaonandia et al. 2001).

A third male-oriented media genre that warrants attention are men's magazines, both for their articles and for their advertising. Men's magazines have been shown to feature a heavy emphasis on traditional male sexual scripts. Findings

Table 3 Regression analysis predicting scores on the AMIRS from media use, Study 1

	AMIRS			
Predictor	ΔR^2	β	Tolerance	VIF
Step 1	.03***			
Gay/Bisexual		−.15**	.97	1.04
Step 2	.03**			
TV hours/week		−.03	.71	1.40
Reality TV hours/week		.12*	.74	1.36
Movies/month		.13**	.85	1.18
Popular reality TV shows		.03	.86	1.16
Total R^2	.06			
Total adjusted R^2	.05			
Final F	5.99***			

AMIRS Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale. Sexual orientation was coded as 0 (exclusively or predominantly heterosexual) or 1 (gay or bisexual)

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p < .001$

indicate that a recreational orientation to sexuality prevails, one that privileges nonrelational sex and sexual gratification and defines "good sex" for men in terms of the quantity and variety of heterosexual partners (Farvid and Braun 2006; Krassas et al. 2003; Stibbe 2004; Taylor 2005). This analysis also extends to magazine advertising. In their analysis of advertising in eight U.S. men's magazines, Vokey et al. (2013) found that 56 % of ads depicted one or more hypermasculine beliefs, and in some magazines, as many as 90 % of ads met this criteria. In addition, men's magazines are known to feature a limited and sexualized portrayal of women, which supports traditional gender stereotypes (Ezzell 2009; Ricciardelli et al. 2010; Stankiewicz and Rosselli 2008). Given these patterns, it is not surprising that studies link frequent exposure to men's magazines to stronger support of masculinity ideology and gendered sexual scripts and to a greater numbers of casual sex partners (Ward et al. 2006, 2011, 2014).

A second limitation of Study 1 is that our dependent variable provides insight into only one aspect of gender: men's beliefs about how other men, in general, are or should be. There is a distinction between measures of generalized beliefs about how men or women exist in the world (such as the AMIRS) and measures of personal adherence to, or enactment of, such beliefs (Smiler and Epstein 2010). The former set of measures describe an individual's awareness or support of cultural norms about gender through the use of descriptive statements (e.g., men *are*) and prescriptive directives (e.g., men *should*). In turn, the latter set of measures assesses personal adherence through agreement with first-person statements. Although Study 1 showed a relation between media consumption and men's beliefs, these findings do not allow us to make conclusions about how media may shape men's own gendered behavior.

Study 2

These arguments suggest that to fully understand the potential impact that media use has on men's gender beliefs, we must

assess exposure to male-oriented media and also include measures that address adherence to masculinity. Study 2 builds on Study 1 by incorporating three male-oriented media formats (sports programming, video games, and men's magazines) and by adding a measure specifically assessing personal adherence to masculinity ideology. For Study 2, we propose two hypotheses and a research question. Paralleling results from Study 1, we predict that frequent exposure to television, reality TV, and movies will each be associated with expressing more traditional beliefs about the male role (Hypothesis 1a) and to masculinity ideology (Hypothesis 1b). In addition, frequent exposure to male-oriented genres (sports programming, video games, and men's magazines) will each be associated with expressing more traditional beliefs about the male role (Hypothesis 2a) and with a stronger adherence to masculinity ideology (Hypothesis 2b). We also ask an exploratory question: When all media variables are considered together, which genres will emerge as significant predictors of beliefs about men's roles and adherence to masculinity?

Hypotheses 1a through 2b will be tested using zero-order correlations. To examine our research question, we will utilize hierarchical regression analyses. In preparation for these analyses, we will first use zero-order correlations to examine whether beliefs about the male role and adherence to masculinity ideology vary by age and sexual orientation. Because a central component of traditional masculinity is heterosexuality, sexual minority men may be less likely to conform to traditional notions of masculinity. Significant demographic correlates will be entered in Step 1 of our regression equation, followed by media variables (TV, sports TV, video games, movies, men's magazines, reality TV) in Step 2.

Method

Participants

Participants in our study were 449 undergraduate men aged 18−25 years-old ($M = 18.96$ $SD = 1.03$). Of this sample, 71.9 % of participants identified as White, 15.5 % as Asian American, 3.6 % as Latino/Hispanic, 3.1 % as Middle-Eastern, 2.5 % as Black, and 3.4 % as multiracial. Participants were generally from well-educated families, with mothers having completed an average of 16.24 years of education ($SD = 2.35$), and fathers having completed an average of 17.21 years of education ($SD = 2.71$), levels equivalent to obtaining a Bachelor's degree. Fully 91 % of participants identified as exclusively heterosexual.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from introductory psychology courses at a large U.S. Midwestern university across two semesters (Winter 2013, Fall 2013) and were compensated with 1 h of research credit to apply toward their course requirements. Undergraduate men were invited to participate in a study of media use and social relationships, which was administered and completed in small groups at a research lab. Students were given 1 h to complete an anonymous pen-and-paper survey, and survey measures were randomized across survey packets.

Media Use

Participants were asked about six media or media genres: television, reality television, movies, sports programming, video games, and men's magazines. Weekly television viewing and monthly movie viewing were assessed in the same manner as Study 1. Reality television viewing was assessed by asking participants to report how often they watched each program from an updated list of 15 popular reality television programs on a scale from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*all of the time, most or all episodes*). Programs were updated based on their prominence in social media and on Study 1's patterns. Responses were then summed to create a composite score representing overall frequency of viewing popular reality programming. In addition, participants were asked to report the number of hours spent playing video games during a typical weekday as well as on Saturday and Sunday (0 to 10+). Weekday responses were then multiplied by 5 and added to Saturday and Sunday responses to create a single-sum weekly score.

Those who participated during the Winter 2013 semester were asked to report the number of hours spent viewing sports programming on a typical weekday and weekend (0 to 10+). A single-sum weekly score was created for these participants by multiplying weekday responses by 5 and adding this product to weekend responses. Men who participated during the Fall 2013 semester were asked to report the number of hours spent viewing sports programming on a typical weekday, Saturday, and Sunday (0 to 10+). For this set of participants, a single-sum weekly score was computed by multiplying weekday responses by 5 and adding the resulting product to Saturday and Sunday responses. To assess magazine use, participants were given a list of four men's magazines (*GQ, Men's Health, Maxim*, and *Playboy*) and asked to indicate the number of issues they read of each one per year (0–12). These particular magazines were found to be the most popular among undergraduate men in previous pilot data. Responses were averaged together in order to create a single mean score reflective of average magazine issues read per year.

Attitudes Toward the Male Role

Parallel with Study 1, attitudes toward the male role were measured with the AMIRS (Chu et al. 2005). Negatively worded items received a reversed score. A composite mean score was then computed across all items, with higher scores

reflective of more traditional attitudes about the male role in relationships ($\alpha = .81$).

Personal Adherence to Masculinity Ideology

To assess personal enactment of masculinity, we utilized the Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory-46 (Parent and Moradi 2009). The CMNI-46 is a measure of personal adherence to 9 dimensions of masculinity, such as emotional control (e.g., "I hate it when people ask me to talk about my feelings"), being a playboy (e.g., "If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners"), and heterosexual self-presentation (e.g., "I would be furious if someone thought I was gay"). Participants indicated their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores were then calculated across all 46 items, with higher scores reflective of stronger adherence to masculinity ideology ($\alpha = .88$).
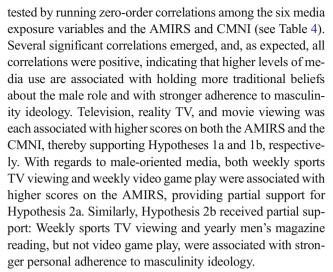
Results

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics for media and gender belief variables are reported in the bottom portion of Table 1. Media use was also high in this sample, with men reporting an average of 12.79 h of television viewing per week and 6.06 movies per month. In regards to male-oriented media, participants showed highest exposure to sports TV, viewing an average of 9.53 h per week. An independent-samples *t*-test showed no significant differences between sports television viewing in the Winter ($M = 9.55$, $SD = 10.27$) and Fall ($M = 9.50$, $SD = 8.97$) semesters, $t(447) = .052$, $p = .353$. Video games were also popular, with participants reporting an average of 6.15 h of play per week. Magazine consumption was low, with a majority of respondents readings less than one issue per year. On average, participants leaned towards disagreement with traditional attitudes as measured by the AMIRS, but clustered between *disagree a little* and *agree a little* for gender attitudes measured by the CMNI. To explore the potential effect of age and sexual orientation (0 = exclusively or predominantly heterosexual, 1 = gay or bisexual) on outcome variables, we conducted preliminary correlational analysis. Results indicated that age was negatively correlated with scores on the AMIRS, $r(449) = -.11$, $p = .019$, and the CMNI, $r(448) = -.13$, $p = .008$. Sexual orientation was negatively associated with scores on the AMIRS, $r(427) = -.22$, $p < .001$, and the CMNI, $r(427) = -.24$, $p < .001$,

Testing the Main Hypotheses and Research Questions

All hypotheses argued that individual media variables would each correlate positively with beliefs about the male role and personal enactment of masculinity. These hypotheses were tested by running zero-order correlations among the six media exposure variables and the AMIRS and CMNI (see Table 4). Several significant correlations emerged, and, as expected, all correlations were positive, indicating that higher levels of media use are associated with holding more traditional beliefs about the male role and with stronger adherence to masculinity ideology. Television, reality TV, and movie viewing was each associated with higher scores on both the AMIRS and the CMNI, thereby supporting Hypotheses 1a and 1b, respectively. With regards to male-oriented media, both weekly sports TV viewing and weekly video game play were associated with higher scores on the AMIRS, providing partial support for Hypothesis 2a. Similarly, Hypothesis 2b received partial support: Weekly sports TV viewing and yearly men's magazine reading, but not video game play, were associated with stronger personal adherence to masculinity ideology.

To explore our research question concerning contributions of the media variables when tested together, we ran a series of hierarchical regressions. As with Study 1, age and sexual orientation were included in Step 1 as demographic controls, followed by media variables in Step 2. Results are reported in Table 5. Our first regression equation concerned media contributions to participants' attitudes towards the male role in relationships. Overall, this model explained approximately 10 % of the total variance in men's scores on the AMIRS. After controlling for demographic variables, sports programming emerged as the only significant predictor of men's attitudes. Our second regression equation focused on media contributions to men's personal adherence to masculinity ideology as measured by the CMNI. This model accounted for 14 % of the total variance. In this equation, consumption of popular reality TV programs, sports programming, and men's magazines emerged as significant predictors of men's scores on the CMNI. Tolerance and VIF values for both equations indicated that multicollinearity was not an issue (see Table 5).

Discussion

Study 2 sought to explore the relation between men's media use and their gender attitudes across a wider variety of media formats, genres, and measures of gender ideology. When each media variable was examined individually in correlational analyses, we found that frequent consumption of TV, movies, sports programming, and reality TV were each associated with participants' beliefs about men and with their personal adherence to masculinity. In contrast, video game play and men's magazine consumption were each associated with only one of the two outcome variables. Although our correlational results were consistent with Study 1, the addition of male-oriented media in Study 2 added additional predictive power when all media variables were tested together in regression analyses. For example, weekly sports viewing emerged as the only predictor of more traditional attitudes about the male role.

Table 4 Correlations among variables of interest, Study 2

Variables	Age	SO	TVhrs	Movies	Sports	Games	Mags	PopTV	AMIRS
Age	–								
Sexual orientation (SO)	−.01	–							
TV hours/week (TV hrs)	.10*	.02	–						
Movies/month	.12*	−.02	.42***	–					
Sports TV hours/week	−.00	−.09	.62***	.31***	–				
Video game hours/week	.12**	.02	.24***	.12*	.12**	–			
Men's magazines/year (Mags)	−.02	−.04	.00	.10*	.01	−.09	–		
Popular reality TV (PopTV)	.05	.01	.18***	.15**	.11*	.01	.12**	–	
AMIRS	−.11*	−.22***	.15**	.11*	.20***	.10*	.07	.09*	–
CMNI	−.13**	−.24***	.16**	.13**	.20***	.05	.14**	.20***	.68***

AMIRS Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale; CMNI Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory. Sexual orientation was coded as 0 (exclusively or predominantly heterosexual) or 1 (gay or bisexual)

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Furthermore, weekly sports viewing and reading men's magazines were each predictive of personal adherence to masculinity ideology. These findings support premises of cultivation theory, which suggest that more frequent viewing leads viewer to endorse ideas and beliefs portrayed on television. Participants not only agreed that men, in general, should behave a certain way but also stated that they personally behaved this way.

Given the centrality of hegemonic masculinity in sports programming (Messner et al. 2000), it is not surprising that viewing sports programs was predictive of personal adherence to masculinity ideology and stronger endorsement of the male role in relationships. The depiction of women and men in sports also align with traditional gender roles by focusing on men's strength and power and placing women in supportive roles. Men are the active doers of sports, and women are passive participants who are either limited to the sidelines or serve as cheerleaders or supporters to the (male) athletes (Messner et al. 2000). This tendency to hold men as central is parallel to traditional gender roles, which expect women to

Table 5 Regression analyses predicting gender attitudes from media use, Study 2

Predictor	AMIRS				CMNI			
	ΔR^2	β	Tolerance	VIF	ΔR^2	β	Tolerance	VIF
Step 1	.06***				.07***			
Age		−.13**	.96	1.04		−.15***	.96	1.04
Gay/Bisexual		−.21***	.98	1.02		−.23***	.98	1.02
Step 2	.05***				.09**			
TV hours/week		.03	.52	1.92		.04	.52	1.92
Sports TV hours/week		.13*	.60	1.68		.12*	.60	1.68
Video game hours/week		.09	.92	1.09		.05	.92	1.09
Movies/month		.04	.80	1.25		.05	.80	1.25
Men's magazines/year		.06	.96	1.04		.11*	.96	1.04
Popular reality TV		.07	.95	1.06		.17***	.95	1.06
Total R^2	.11				.16			
Total adjusted R^2	.10				.14			
Final F	6.62***				9.85***			

AMIRS Adolescent Masculinity in Relationships Scale; CMNI Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory. Sexual orientation was coded as 0 (exclusively or predominantly heterosexual) or 1 (gay or bisexual)

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p < .001$

take subservient roles that require them to support men's careers or make sacrifices for male partners. Thus, it is not surprising that sports programming was predictive of both men's attitudes and personal adherence.

One unexpected outcome was the weak contributions of men's video game use and movie exposure. A possible explanation for these null results is the manner in which we assessed these variables. We asked participants to indicate global video game usage and total movie viewing per month, but we did not provide an opportunity for them to specify the types of video games or movies with which they were engaging. Just as is the case with television, it is likely that the relation between these media formats and gender beliefs would vary between subgenres. For example, playing sports games or violent shooter games might be more strongly associated with holding traditional beliefs about men, but playing strategy games may not. Similarly, action or romantic-themed movies may be more likely than dramas to depict content associated with traditional masculine gender norms. Thus, future studies might want to assess video game usage and movies in a more nuanced manner.

General Discussion

From movie superheroes to TV detectives to magazine cover models, mainstream media offer abundant examples of societal norms and expectations concerning masculinity. Research indicates that these portrayals are highly consistent and commonly endorse a hegemonic masculinity centered on power, financial status, aggression, virility, and the objectification of women. Cultivation theory (Gerbner 1998) argues that frequent exposure to these consistent messages slowly leads viewers to cultivate, or adopt, attitudes that are in line with the messages presented. Although emerging adults consume media at high levels, averaging 12 h a day (Coyne et al. 2013), we know little of how exposure to this content contributes to their beliefs about masculinity. Most analyses have tested media contributions to sexist attitudes or to stereotypes about women and femininity. The studies presented here represent an attempt to address this gap. Drawing on cultivation theory, we tested associations between young men's exposure to multiple media genres and their traditional gender ideologies. Over two studies we found significant contributions of individual media genres, especially of reality programs and sports. When all media variables were tested together, with demographic controls, these two factors continued to make significant contributions. Together these findings provide some of the first and most consistent evidence of media contributions to young men's masculinity ideologies.

Several significant take-home messages emerge from these findings. First, we note the importance of including understudied media genres, such as sports programming and reality TV, into analyses testing effects of media content on gender ideologies. The young men in our second sample reported watching TV for approximately 13 h a week, and watching sports programming for approximately 9.5 h a week, indicating that the viewing of sports programming is a large part of their TV viewing experience. Further study is needed concerning the types of sports involved here (e.g., team sports like football versus individual sports like tennis and auto racing) and the nature of men's sports programming diets (e.g., what percentage is live sports events versus sports news and commentary). The fact that we did not find significant viewing differences between the fall and winter semester in Study 2 suggests that sports consumption may be driven by sports news and commentary programs that air daily, rather than seasonal live sports. Furthermore, given high profile news events linking sports figures to violence and sexual aggression, it would be useful to include measures testing dating violence and sexual aggression into these studies.

A second take-home message is that media exposure contributes not only to beliefs about what men, in general, should do, but also to men's personal enactment of these norms, as measured via the CMNI. In Study 2, we provide one of the first know tests of media correlates of men's personal adherence to masculine norms. The combined CMNI variable was associated with five of the six media variables in the correlational analyses and was predicted by three media variables in the regression analyses. Emerging most prominently here were sports, men's magazines, and popular reality programs.

In documenting and addressing media contributions to men's gender ideologies, we acknowledge that media use is only one of many forces contributing to these belief systems. Indeed, men acquire an understanding of masculinity from the real men around them, including their fathers, male relatives, teachers, male friends, and clergy. However, the findings presented here indicate that this learning may not stop at real models, but rather may also include fictional media models and sports figures. Indeed, media figures may be especially attractive sources because they often feature an idealized masculinity that is surrounded by glamour, sex, and women.

In addition to leading men to adopt more traditional gender ideologies, it is also possible that exposure to these masculinity ideals could lead men to feel worse about themselves for not being able to achieve such narrow ideals. Findings across several studies indicate that exposure to sexually objectifying images of women is linked with young men's feeling more discomfort with their own bodies, as indicated by higher levels of self-objectification and body surveillance, as well as lower body esteem (Dens et al. 2009; Johnson et al. 2007). For example, Aubrey and Taylor (2009) reported that young men exposed to magazine images of sexualized women expressed more body self-consciousness, greater appearance anxiety, and less confidence in their own romantic abilities.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although our findings make unique contributions concerning the impact of mainstream media on men's gender ideologies, we acknowledge several limitations that future studies will want to address. First, as with most cultivation analyses, our findings are correlational so that they do not allow us to draw conclusions about causality. It is likely that media exposure may shape men's beliefs about masculinity, as argued here; it is also likely that men with certain traditional beliefs are drawn to media content that supports them. Although we selected popular media formats here, increasing the likelihood that most men would be exposed to this content, further work is needed to demonstrate causality by employing longitudinal and experimental paradigms. Second, both samples consisted of undergraduate men from well-educated families, likely representing high-income brackets. Therefore, we cannot assume our findings represent the patterns of all young men; further study is needed of non-college students, of men from lower-income brackets, and of men of color, who consume media at higher levels that White youth (Ward et al. 2010). Third, it would be beneficial to capture elements of viewers' cognitions known to shape media effects, such as viewers' motivations and identification with characters (Ward 2002). Finally, the social nature of sports viewing, as well as its strong links to our measures of men's gender beliefs in Study 2, raises questions about the interplay of various socialization forces. Future studies on sports programming would benefit from assessing the social contexts and peer groups in which viewing may occur and how these contexts may serve to reinforce gendered content messages.

Conclusion

Our findings highlight several critical ways through which media use may contribute to young men's gender ideologies and enactments of masculinity. Although we acknowledge that media models are just one of many forces contributing to men's gender socialization, we hope the patterns documented here will encourage further study of the role of this ubiquitous societal force.

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