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SANTA CRUZ

**HOW AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TYPICALITY AFFECTS IN-GROUP
BELONGING AND STEREOTYPING: A CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

PSYCHOLOGY

By

Antoinette R. Wilson

June 2016

The Dissertation of Antoinette R. Wilson
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Abstract

**How African American Male Typicality Affects In-Group Belonging and
Stereotyping: A Cross-Sectional Analysis**

by

Antoinette R. Wilson

Although ethnic-racial typicality is often considered as either *phenotypic* (e.g., facial features, skin tone) or *behavioral* (e.g., “acting Black” or “acting White”), little research has investigated the interaction of these two dimensions. The present study built on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), phenotypic bias models (Maddox, 2004), and related empirical research to examine how phenotypic and behavioral ethnic-racial typicality relate to in-group belonging and stereotyping among African American adolescents and young adults. Eighty-two participants, 40 African American adolescents ($M_{age} = 15.38, SD = .81$) and 42 college students ($M_{age} = 19.55, SD = 1.35$), watched animated clips of African American male characters varying in *phenotypic* and *behavioral typicality*. Participants rated the character’s stereotypical traits, academic potential, and likelihood of intra-ethnic/racial group belonging. They then completed a survey measuring multiple dimensions of ethnic-racial identity (self-perceived ethnic-racial phenotypicity, felt ethnic-racial behavioral typicality, centrality, private regard, nationalism, humanism, and assimilation) and experiences with intra-ethnic/racial discrimination. Participants rated characters who were typical in behavior as having higher average stereotypical traits, fewer counter-stereotypical traits, and lower academic potential than were

characters with less typical behaviors; these characters were also rated as more likely to belong than those showing less typical behavior, regardless of their phenotype. Participants' endorsement of nationalist ideology was positively related to their attributing positive traits to the target character, whereas endorsement of assimilation was negatively related to such attributions. Finally, participants' felt behavioral typicality and perceived skin tone were positively related to their ethnic-racial centrality. This study advances both theoretical and practical understanding of the role of ethnic-racial typicality in stereotyping and in-group belonging among African American youth.

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How African American Male Typicality Affects In-Group Stereotyping and Belonging: A Cross-Sectional Analysis

Perceptions of Blackness extend beyond simple identification with being an African American to include how authentic one is perceived to be as an African American. Given the broad range of experiences, phenotypic appearances, and cultural ideologies in the African American community, there is no single correct way to behave or appear as African American. However, perceptions of in-group members vary based on the extent to which they are seen as typical in their behavior or appearance. African Americans who do not exhibit behaviors regarded as typical may face accusations of “acting White” from peers and family (Carter, 2006; Murray, Neal-Barnett, Demmings, & Stadulis, 2012; Nasir, 2012). Similarly, prejudice and discrimination based on phenotype (e.g., having a lighter or darker skin tone) can have lifelong implications for job opportunities, mate selection, perceptions of aggressiveness, and academic success (Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns, & Johnson, 2006; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Keith & Herring, 1991; Ogbu, 2004).

The present study examines if and how typical ethnic-racial behavior and phenotypic appearance affects African American adolescents’ and young adults’ perceptions of Black male characters. Intersectionality research suggests that the experiences of African American girls and women can be profoundly different than that of African American boys and men (Cole, 2009; Ghavami & Peplau, 2012). For instance, issues related to skin tone differences may affect African American girls’ and women’s self-esteem and employment opportunities to a greater degree than

African American boys and men (Hill, 2002). In contrast, African American boys and men may be more likely to encounter stereotypes related to African Americans (e.g., athletic, dangerous, and lazy) than girls and women (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Ghavami & Peplau, 2012). Considering in-group perceptions of both African American women and men would reveal important distinctions for in-group stereotyping and belonging. However, to limit the number of conditions for this study, I focused on girls'/women's and boys'/men's perceptions of African American males.

I investigated three overarching questions: (1) How behavior and phenotype influence in-group stereotyping and perceptions of in-group belonging, (2) How one's felt behavioral typicality and phenotypicality relate to individuals' ethnic-racial identity, and (3) How ethnic-racial identity predicts in-group stereotyping. For each question, I examined if and how perceptions of in-group members differ between high school adolescents and emerging adults attending college.

In the following sections, I trace the theoretical and empirical foundations of these questions. To begin, I briefly explain reasons for using the term ethnic-racial identity as a meta-construct. Then, to provide the developmental context of the study, I outline potential differences between adolescents and emerging adults in their experiences of these issues. Next, I examine how behavioral ethnic-racial typicality and phenotypic appearance relate to in-group stereotyping and belonging. Then, I introduce dimensions of ethnic-racial identity and how they may differ between adolescents and young adults. Finally, I consider if and how ethnic-racial identity relates to one's own racial typicality and stereotyping of in-group members. I present

hypotheses after each main section and conclude with a summary of the ten overall hypotheses.

Ethnic-Racial Identity and Ethnic-Racial Group as Meta-Constructs

Ethnicity describes a set of cultural traditions, values, and attitudes that group members share (e.g., Phinney, 1990), whereas *race* is a social construct that unites members of a group according to biological and physical traits (e.g., skin tone; Quintana, 1998). Because this study assessed characteristics related to both ethnicity and race, I used the integrated terms *ethnic-racial identity* and *ethnic-racial group* throughout the paper. This is consistent with scholars who have argued for the use of term *ethnic-racial identity* instead of considering them as separate constructs (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). However, because African Americans are commonly described as being a racial group, many past studies and measures concerning African Americans have used the terms *race* and *racial identity*. Thus, when referring to prior studies that have examined race or racial identity, I used their terminology.

Changing Developmental Contexts

Differences in the experiences of high school and college students may influence judgments of in-group members. First, peer pressures to conform to group norms may differ. During adolescence, social factors such as peer acceptance may play a role in intra-group stereotyping and discrimination (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). Fitting in and feeling typical of one's group is seen as important for group belonging. However, among older youth, uniqueness and individual variation may become more accepted and appreciated by peers (Brewer, 1991). Thus, college-

age young adults may hold less rigid expectations or stereotypes of acceptable group behavior than high school adolescents.

Second, ethnic-racial experiences during the many transitions between high school and college may also lead to changes in evaluations of in-group members. Students' transitions to college can be transformative and eye-opening experiences. For example, Syed and Azmitia (2010) conducted a longitudinal study of college students' narratives of experiences that encouraged their ethnic-racial identity exploration. Between students' sophomore and senior year, the majority of participants reported a defining experience that made their ethnicity salient. These included being in situations that made them aware of ethnic-racial differences or underrepresentation, experiencing prejudice, and feeling stronger connections to their culture.

Finally, differences in ethnic-racial and socioeconomic diversity between high school and college environments can also play a role in shifting ethnic-racial attitudes. As of 2011, 39% of African American students attended schools that were at least 90% ethnic-racial minority and located in economically homogenous neighborhoods (Rothstein, 2014). Thus, as they enter college, many (but not all) African American students may move from being in the ethnic-racial majority of their school to the ethnic-racial minority. Research indicates that intra-group discrimination and accusations of "acting White" are more common in schools where African Americans are in the ethnic-racial majority (Bergin & Cooks, 2002). In settings where African Americans are in the ethnic-racial minority, between-group

contrasts become more salient than within-group differences and within-group cohesion becomes stronger (Harvey, LaBeach, Pridgen, & Gocial, 2005). Furthermore, ethnic/racial-minority status and exposure to diverse ethnic-racial groups may encourage students to explore their own ethnic-racial identity and develop connections to others within their ethnic-racial group (Santos, Ortiz, Morales, & Rosales, 2007; Umaña-Taylor, 2004).

In sum, high school and college settings may affect the ways in which African American youth experience their ethnic-racial identities and feel pressures to conform to ethnic-racial group stereotypes. Judgments of in-group members may be more stringent among high school adolescents than college students. For these reasons, I compared high school and college samples for each of the three overarching questions of the study.

In-Group Stereotyping and Belonging Among African Americans

The first overarching question of this study was to investigate how in-group stereotypes and perceptions of in-group belonging vary based on behavioral typicality and phenotypicality among African American high school adolescents and college students. I drew on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and phenotypic bias models (Maddox, 2004) to investigate how behavioral racial typicality and phenotypic appearance each relate to in-group stereotyping and in-group belonging. Then, I build on this work to argue the importance of investigating the intersection of behavioral and phenotypicality.

Behavioral Ethnic-Racial Typicality

Stereotyping. Perceptions of what it means to be a typical African American are often rooted in stereotypes. Exhibiting normative racial behavior is known as *race-acting* (Burrell, Winston, & Freeman, 2013) and describes differences in individuals' speech styles, cultural preferences, dress, racial composition of peer groups, and dating preferences. For example, in a study of African American adolescents, characteristics associated with being Black included having a negative attitude toward school, listening to hip-hop music, being gangsters, wearing the latest clothing styles, and understanding African American history (Nasir, 2012).

Those who do not adhere to behaviors seen as normative for African Americans may encounter accusations from peers of "acting White" (Carter, 2006; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Behaviors considered "acting White" include using standard American English; listening to classical, heavy metal, or rock music; dressing "preppie;" always doing homework; having White friends; and acting "stuck-up" (Bergin & Cooks, 2002). Many of the behaviors considered to be "acting White" are counter-stereotypical of what it means to be Black. In this way, Blackness is viewed in relation to (and in opposition of) Whiteness. That is, to be Black is to not engage in practices and behaviors associated with being White, and those engaging in these behaviors might be considered atypical of other African Americans.

One stereotyped domain that has drawn significant attention is academic achievement (Carter, 2006; Chavous, Hilken Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, & Zimmerman, 2003; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Oyserman, Brickman,

Bybee, & Celious, 2006). There has been much debate on the extent to which academic achievement is a basis for accusations of “acting White” (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005). An early and influential perspective was Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) hypothesis that some (but not all) students might adopt an *oppositional cultural frame of reference* by avoiding behaviors that promote school success because school achievement might be considered a stereotypical identity domain for White students. Similar patterns were indicated in Oyserman, Brickman, and Rhodes’ (2007) work on African American and Latino adolescents’ perceptions of academic stereotypes. These researchers found that youth who separated themselves from the broader society (i.e., an *in-group* ethnic-racial schema) were more likely to disengage from academics and to view academic engagement as stereotypically White.

Displaying typical behaviors or “acting Black” may have adverse consequences for perceptions of academic success. For example, Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004) investigated African American high school students’ perceptions of the term “acting Black.” Youth reported that academic behaviors associated with “acting Black” included “skipping class, not doing school assignments, and emphasizing non-academic priorities by being street smart instead of school smart” (p. 87). Many behaviors considered “acting Black” might be negatively correlated with those considered necessary for academic achievement. However, scholars have consistently reported variation in African American students’ views towards academic achievement and that many students and parents placed high value on

school success (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Carter, 2006; Cooper, Gonzalez, & Wilson, 2015; Nasir, 2012; Ogbu, 1989). Thus, although academic success may not be stereotyped as an out-group domain, some behaviors that youth associate with in-group typicality may not be conducive to academic success.

In-group belonging. Typicality is also important for perceptions of in-group belonging (Fordham, 1988). Feeling a sense of belonging to one's ethnic-racial group is positively related to self-esteem for adolescents and young adults (Phinney, 1992; Romero & Roberts, 2003; Seaton, Scottham, & Sellers, 2006; Wilson & Leaper, 2015). Scholars have drawn on social identity theory to illuminate how behavioral typicality influences judgments of in-group members. For instance, Marques, Abrams, Paez, and Martinez-Taboada (1998) found that high school students judged in-group members who behaved according to group norms more favorably than those who deviated from these norms. This illustrates what Marques et al. called the *black sheep effect*, in which group members discriminate against in-group members who do not adhere to group norms and favor out-group members whose behavior aligns more closely with group norms. This concept helps address how discrimination based on atypical racial behavior or "acting White" might occur among African American youth.

Studies of typicality have often focused on how perceptions of one's ethnic-racial typicality affect their experiences with peers. For example, in her mixed-methods study, Carter (2006) found that African American and Latino adolescents teased in-group peers (or felt teased by them) for their speech styles, musical tastes,

dress, and other culturally related behaviors. The present study extended this work by investigating how youths' perceptions of Black males' typicality influences youths' stereotyping and perceptions of their likelihood of in-group belonging.

Phenotypic Appearance

Stereotyping. In addition to behavioral typicality, individuals sometimes hold stereotypes and prejudices against others in their group based on salient characteristics that are perceptually discriminable, such as skin tone or ethnic facial features (Averhart & Bigler, 1997; Bigler & Liben, 2007; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Hill, 2002; Maddox, 2004). *Racial phenotypicality bias* is seen when members of a racial group whose features most closely resemble those of typical members are most likely to encounter stereotypes ascribed to that group (Maddox, 2004). Such phenotypic features among African Americans (Afrocentric features) include having dark skin, a broad nose, full lips, and tight, curly hair, among other traits. Conversely, African Americans with lighter skin, more European features, and “good hair” (considered atypical for their racial group) are less likely to face stereotypes associated with African Americans (Walker, 1983). For example, African American men with darker skin who appear more prototypical of what it means to be Black may be stereotypically perceived as stronger, more masculine, and threatening than men with lighter skin (Barsamian-Kahn & Davies, 2011). In addition to supporting proposals based on social identity theory suggesting the importance of behavioral typicality (Marques et al., 1998), these findings indicate that phenotypic features are

salient and important characteristics that individuals attend to when making judgments of others.

In-group belonging. In addition to its role in stereotyping, skin tone also has implications for peer belonging. African Americans with less typical phenotypes may be considered less authentic and discriminated against by in-group peers for their appearance (Khanna, 2010). For example, Oyserman et al. (2006) investigated differences in academic self-concepts among African American adolescent boys with lighter skin compared to African American boys with darker skin. Boys with lighter skin felt less accepted by their African American peers than did those with dark or medium skin tones. Furthermore, having a darker skin tone appeared to be a protective factor for boys; they did not fear being teased by peers for not being a true member of their group if they were academically successful. However, because the lighter-skinned boys feared being accused by their peers of “acting White” on the basis of their phenotype, they might have overcompensated by engaging in stereotypically aggressive or tough behaviors to prove their racial identity, even if this came at the expense of their academic success.

Harvey et al. (2005) also identified variations in in-group belonging related to skin tone differences among African American college students at a predominately Black university and a predominately White university. Those with darker skin tones were more likely to feel accepted by peers than those with lighter skin tones; however, this was found only among students attending the predominately Black university where within-group contrasts were likely more salient than at the

predominately White university. In an analogous manner, African American youth in high school (with proportionally more Black students) and college (with fewer Black students) may differ in the extent to which phenotype relates to perceptions of peer belonging.

Intersection of Behavioral Racial Typicality and Phenotypic Appearance

Most research on in-group stereotyping and belonging has focused on how behavior or phenotypic appearance influences perceptions of in-group members; rarely have the effects of one's behavior and phenotype been considered simultaneously. Additionally, most of the research has been correlational. In the present study, I addressed this gap by investigating how variation in African American behavior and phenotype together influence in-group stereotyping and belonging. I used an experimental design to assess judgments of stereotypicality and in-group belonging of animated male characters who varied in their phenotypic and behavioral typicality. This experimental method allowed various aspects of ethnic-racial typicality to be manipulated systematically.

Further, I investigated how the intersection of contrasting behavioral and phenotypic typicality influences stereotyped perceptions and in-group belonging among African American adolescents and young adults. For example, how might African Americans perceive a peer whose phenotype is typical of African Americans (e.g., Afrocentric facial features), but whose behavior is less typical (e.g., speech style, listens to classical music)? According to developmental intergroup theory (Bigler & Liben, 2007) and phenotypic bias models (Maddox, 2004), attributes that

are most perceptually salient (e.g., phenotypic appearance) may be primarily attended to when developing perceptions and prejudices towards others. Thus, characters who are more typical in their phenotype would be perceived to be most likely to belong and ascribed more stereotypical traits than characters who are less phenotypic. Research based in social identity theory has tended to focus on the salience of behavior (rather than phenotypic appearance) when individuals make judgments of other in-group members (e.g., Marques et al., 1998; Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979). According to this view, characters who were more typical in their behavior would be judged as more likely to belong and ascribed more traits that describe African Americans than characters who were not typical in their behavior, regardless of their phenotypic appearance. In this study, I integrated these two perspectives to explore how the intersection of behavior or phenotypic appearance relates to stereotyping and perceptions of in-group belonging.

I hypothesized that a combination of behavioral typicality and phenotypicity would additively predict perceptions of stereotypicality and in-group belonging. In this study, perceptions of stereotypicality included judgments of a male character's stereotypical and counter-stereotypical traits and academic achievement. I expected the manipulation to work in predictable ways such that an African American character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype would be rated as the most stereotypical and least counter-stereotypical, whereas the character who was not typical in either dimension would be rated the least stereotypical and most counter-stereotypical (Hypothesis 1). Further, I expected these judgments would be stronger

among high school students than college students (Hypothesis 2). As noted earlier, factors such as lower peer pressures to conform, experiencing salient ethnic-racial events, and increased exposure to diversity may be related to college students' lower levels of stereotypical in-group attitudes relative to high school students.

Studies of African American youth suggest that it is not necessarily academic achievement that is the basis for accusations of "acting White," but rather behaviors that might accompany it, such as speech styles or friendship group (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). Furthermore, phenotypicality may play a role in African Americans' perceptions of academic potential (Oyserman et al., 2006). An African American male who is typical in both racial behavior and phenotype may be perceived as more authentically Black (Khanna, 2010; Maddox, 2004) and would be more likely to encounter stereotypes associated with being Black than one who is less typical. Thus, to the extent that less typical ethnic-racial behavior is associated with higher academic achievement, a character who was less typical in both behavior and phenotype would be stereotyped as being a higher academic achiever than one who was more typical in both dimensions (Hypothesis 3). I predicted that this association would be stronger among high school adolescents than college students (Hypothesis 4).

With regard to perceptions of in-group belonging, I expected the manipulation to work in predictable ways, such that participants would rate an African American character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype as more likely to belong in a group of same-race peers than a character who was not typical in either of these

dimensions (Hypothesis 5). In addition, I also expected that the developmental context would moderate the effect for the same reasons noted earlier. I predicted that perceptions of typicality and in-group belonging would be more strongly associated among high school students than college students (Hypothesis 6).

For each of these three sets of hypotheses, I expected that the two male characters who were typical in only one dimension would be rated in between the male character who was typical in both dimensions and the male character who was not typical in either dimension; I did not advance a hypothesis as to whether behavioral typicality or phenotypicality would be more salient in stereotyping or judgments of belonging.

Ethnic-Racial Identity

Given the significant within-group variation among African Americans, it is also pertinent to investigate how individual differences relate to ethnic-racial attitudes and expectations for one's group members. In the current study, I considered variations in individuals' ethnic-racial identities based on a multidimensional model (see Wilson & Leaper, 2015 for a review). As detailed below, I used the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998) as well as complementary work on felt typicality to examine ethnic-racial identity. Although felt typicality is often considered as a dimension within multidimensional identity models (Egan & Perry, 2001; Wilson & Leaper, 2015), in the current study, I argue why felt typicality might be considered a predictor of other ethnic-racial identity dimensions.

Ethnic-Racial Identity Dimensions

I considered three dimensions of Sellers et al.'s (1998) racial identity model: *racial centrality*, *private regard*, and *ideology* (beliefs about acceptable group behavior). I included three facets of ideology: *nationalist*, *assimilationist*, and *humanist*. I first describe each of the dimensions in turn, and then I explain how they relate to each other and to behavioral ethnic-racial typicality. Finally, I consider how racial ideologies might predict judgments of positive and negative stereotyping of in-group members.

Racial centrality refers to the extent to which one views race as a defining aspect of oneself. For example, items measuring racial centrality include “In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image” and “I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.” When race is a central aspect of identity, individuals may behave in ways that highlight their group membership. For instance, in a study of African American college students, those whose racial identity was more central to their self-concept were more likely to emphasize the importance of engaging in African American traditions and cultural behaviors, such as supporting Black businesses and learning about Black history (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). In contrast, individuals whose racial identity was less central were more likely to highlight connections between African Americans and mainstream society. Moreover, adolescents with low ethnic-racial centrality may be more likely to include stereotypes in their ideas of typical in-group behavior (Oyserman et al., 2007).

Racial private regard refers to the emotional significance of being a member of one's racial group. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997) measures one's views and feelings towards being Black. Sample items include "I am happy that I am Black" and "I feel good about Black people." High private regard is related to many positive outcomes including higher well-being (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006), self-esteem (Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998), and academic achievement (Chavous et al., 2003). Private regard may also be related to *stereotype threat*--the fear of confirming a negative stereotype about one's group (Steele, 1997). Individuals holding negative feelings towards their ethnic-racial group may increase their susceptibility to stereotype threat because they might believe these negative stereotypes (Sellers et al., 1998).

Nationalist ideology describes a preference for African American culture and organizations as opposed to mainstream society. Example items include "Black students are better off going to schools that are controlled and organized by Blacks" and "It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music, and literature." This ideology can develop in response to conscious-raising experiences regarding African Americans' marginalization in society. It can also result from developing an appreciation for African American culture and history. Those with a nationalist ideology posit that African Americans have a unique cultural experience that is separate from other groups.

Assimilationist ideology reflects the value of integrating African Americans into mainstream society. Example items from the MIBI include "Blacks should view

themselves as being Americans first and foremost” and “Because America is predominantly White, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.” An assimilationist ideology does not imply disregard of African American identity; rather, it places value on interacting with those in mainstream society. The cultural environment of schools may encourage assimilationist ideologies. Students may believe that the best way to achieve success is integration into the institution; this includes assimilating behaviors, speech styles, and values associated with mainstream culture (Carter, 2006; Fordham, 1988).

Finally, *humanist ideology* describes individuals who adopt a “colorblind” ideology, in which individuals are seen as humans and not in terms of their race, gender, or other characteristics. It is a belief in shared human experience across people of all ethnicities/races. Statements reflecting a humanist ideology include, “Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black” and “Black values should not be inconsistent with human values.” Fordham (1988) asserts that some African Americans adopt a *raceless* ideology in order to achieve upward mobility in school and career and succeed in mainstream society. However, the ramifications of adopting such an ideology include feeling isolated and not belonging among in-group peers. These individuals might be viewed as “sell-outs” or lacking an attachment to their community.

Developmental differences in ethnic-racial identity. Adolescence is a time when many ethnic-racial minority youth begin exploring their identity (Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Seaton et al., 2006). Adolescents who do not yet understand what it

means to be a member of their ethnic-racial group or have not experienced salient racial events may hold racial ideologies that reflect mainstream society (Cross, 1991). Nationalist ideology may develop in response to salient racial events or consciousness-raising experiences (Cross, 1991; Sellers et al., 1998). College students have reported such views after encountering newly diverse settings with peers of ethnic-racial and social class backgrounds different than their own (Syed & Azmitia, 2010; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Furthermore, such heightened awareness and appreciation of ethnicity/race appear related to more positive attitudes towards one's ethnic-racial group (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Thus, in this study, I hypothesized that high school students would score higher than college students in humanism (Hypothesis 7a) and assimilation (Hypothesis 7b) than college students. In contrast, I expected that college students would score higher than high school students on nationalism (Hypothesis 7c), centrality (Hypothesis 7d) and private regard (Hypothesis 7e).

Relationships Among Identity Dimensions

Facets of racial ideology are not mutually exclusive (Sellers et al., 1998). For example, an individual can consider it important to integrate into mainstream society (assimilationist), yet also have appreciation and pride for African American culture and history (nationalist). However, few studies have investigated relations among these dimensions (see Scottham et al., 2008; Wilson & Leaper, 2015). Instead, studies have more typically investigated how dimensions of ethnic-racial identity are related to variables such as self-esteem (Phinney, 1992; Wilson & Leaper, 2015), academic

engagement (Okeke, Howard, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2009), and perceptions of inter-group discrimination (Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

Scottham et al. (2008) conducted one of the few studies examining the interrelations among dimensions of Seller's multidimensional racial identity measure. In their development of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity for adolescents (MIBI-T), private regard and nationalism were both positively correlated with racial centrality. These correlations were also found in Sellers et al.'s (1998) original validation study with college adults. In addition, scores on assimilation were negatively correlated with private regard. There was also an inverse relationship between centrality and humanist ideology. These findings support Sellers et al.'s (1998) assertion that those with higher humanist ideology are less likely to view race as an important aspect of their identity.

Relations Between Felt Typicality and Other Facets of Ethnic-Racial Identity

Although felt typicality is not a dimension of identity in the MMRI (Sellers et al., 1998), it is often included in other multidimensional models of identity. For example, felt typicality is one of the most commonly studied dimensions of gender identity (e.g., Corby, Hodges, & Perry, 2007; Egan & Perry, 2001; Smith & Leaper, 2006). Recently, it has also been examined as a component of ethnic-racial identity (e.g., Wilson & Leaper, 2015). Felt typicality is often associated with important outcomes including self-esteem (Wilson & Leaper, 2015), peer acceptance (Smith & Leaper, 2006), perceived discrimination (Leaper & Brown, 2008), academic self-concept (Oyserman et al., 2006), and stereotype endorsement (Patterson, 2012). In

addition, felt typicality may be important for perceptions of ethnic-racial pride and in-group belonging. For example, Wilson and Leaper's (2015) study with Asian American, European American, and Latino emerging adults, revealed a strong, positive correlation between felt ethnic-racial typicality and in-group ties. Thus, typicality appears to be an important facet of identity with implications for adjustment that can be considered independently of the other identity dimensions. In the present study, I examined felt typicality as a predictor of other dimensions of ethnic-racial identity.

Typicality is defined as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves to be similar to others within their group (Egan & Perry, 2001). It is assessed with items focusing on one's similarity to in-group members in behavior (e.g., "I feel that the things I like to do in my spare time are similar to what other [in-group members'] like to do in their spare time") or their personality (e.g., "I don't feel like my personality is similar to other [in-group members'] personalities"). For clarity, in the present study, I use the term *felt behavioral typicality*.

In addition to felt behavioral typicality, I also examined *felt phenotypicality*. Research has yielded mixed findings concerning the relation between phenotypicality (most often measured by skin tone) and ethnic-racial identity. Some studies have found that those with darker skin tones score higher on Black separatism (Hughes & Hertel, 1990) and ethnic identity commitment (Harvey et al., 2005) than do those with lighter skin tones. However, other studies have found no relation between skin tone and racial identity (Hochschild & Weaver, 2007). These studies did not consider

features besides skin tone that might make one feel typical, such as behavior.

The current study extended previous work by considering how perceptions of one's behavioral typicality and phenotypicality together relate to dimensions of ethnic-racial identity. I hypothesized that those who feel typical in both their behavior and phenotype (skin tone) would feel stronger ties to their group and thus score higher on centrality (Hypothesis 8a), private regard (Hypothesis 8b), and nationalism (Hypothesis 8c) than those scoring lower in typicality for behavior and phenotype. In contrast, those scoring lower in behavioral and phenotypicality were predicted to score higher in assimilation (Hypothesis 8d) and humanism (Hypothesis 8e) than those scoring higher in both behavioral and phenotypicality.

As noted earlier, typicality appears to have greater implications for one's self-concept during adolescence than young adulthood (Brewer, 1991). Therefore, I expected each of the above relationships to be stronger among high school adolescents than college students (Hypotheses 9a to 9e, respectively).

Relationship between Ideology and In-Group Stereotyping

According to self-schema theorists, individuals' social identities influence expectations of behavior for themselves and other group members (Oyserman et al., 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Ethnic-racial identity can likewise be considered one of the social identities that influences behavioral expectations for one's ethnic-racial peers (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Sellers et al., 1998). More specifically, dimensions of racial ideology reflect individuals' ideas of how other

African Americans should behave. Thus, racial ideologies should predict participants' stereotypes of characters that vary in their racial behavior.

I next consider how each ideology dimension relates to positive and negative in-group stereotyping. Although many studies on ethnic-racial stereotyping have focused on academic stereotypes, it is unclear how these beliefs extend to other stereotyped domains or personality traits. In the current study, I investigated how ideologies may be related to judgments of other positive and negative group stereotypes, such as athleticism, aggression, and wealth.

Nationalist ideology. There is mixed evidence regarding the effect of nationalism on in-group stereotyping. Some research suggests that individuals endorsing a nationalistic ideology are more likely to believe that some behaviors or traits are appropriate only for out-group members, while others are more typical for their own group (Sellers et al., 1998). As noted earlier, academic engagement is one domain that some African American students may consider as more appropriate for members of an out-group (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

However, endorsing a nationalist ideology may serve as a protective factor against incorporating negative stereotypes into one's schemas of typical group behavior. Research suggests that those endorsing a nationalist ideology are especially motivated to promote in-group cohesion (Sellers et al., 1998). In turn, individuals who do so may seek to maintain a positive image of their group by endorsing positive group stereotypes (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Based on this research, this study tested the hypothesis that those with higher scores in nationalist ideology would be more likely to attribute positive traits to characters (Hypothesis 10a) and less likely to attribute negative traits (Hypothesis 10b) than those with lower levels of nationalism.

Humanist ideology. One aspect of humanist ideology is a lack of awareness or dismissal of race-ethnicity. Those lacking an ethnic-racial schema (or *aschematic* ethnic-racial schema; Oyserman et al., 2006) may be at increased risk for believing traditional societal stereotypes (both positive and negative) about their group. One reason for this is that such individuals may not have developed a cognitive framework for what it means to be a member of their group. Furthermore, absence of an ethnic-racial schema is related to endorsing a “colorblind” ideology. Paradoxically, individuals who claim to ignore race or ethnicity might hold more stereotypical beliefs about different ethnic-racial groups (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). For example, Neville, Coleman, Faloner, and Holmes (2005) found that African American adults with higher levels of colorblind ideology scored higher in internalization of negative stereotypes of African Americans. In the present study, I tested the prediction that those scoring higher in humanism would be less likely to ascribe positive traits to characters (Hypothesis 10c) and more likely to ascribe negative traits to characters than those scoring lower in humanism (Hypothesis 10d).

Assimilationist ideology. Finally, endorsing an assimilationist ideology is related to lower levels of racial centrality (Sellers et al., 1997). Individuals whose racial identity is not an important aspect of their self-concept may be more vulnerable

to incorporating negative stereotypes into their beliefs (Oyserman et al., 2006). These individuals may be more likely to make stereotypical judgments of other in-group members than those low in assimilation ideology.

I tested the hypothesis that those scoring higher in assimilation would be less likely to ascribe positive traits to characters (Hypothesis 10e) and more likely to ascribe negative traits than those scoring lower in assimilation (Hypothesis 10f). The relation between racial ideology and in-group stereotyping was expected to be similar among high school and college samples; so no hypothesis was tested regarding age group as a moderator.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate three overarching questions concerning how African American adolescents and young adults perceive in-group members who vary in their behavioral and phenotypic typicality.

In-Group Stereotyping and Belonging

With regard to the first overarching question investigating how behavior and phenotype influence in-group stereotyping and belonging, I tested six hypotheses: (1) the African American character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype would be rated as the most stereotypical and least counter-stereotypical, whereas the character who was not typical in either dimension would be rated the least stereotypical and most counter-stereotypical; (2) these judgments would be stronger among high school students than college students; (3) the character who was less typical in both behavior and phenotype would be stereotyped as being a higher

academic achiever than the character who was more typical in both dimensions; (4) this association would be stronger among high school students than college students; (5) participants would rate an African American character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype as more likely to belong in a group of same-race peers than a character who was not typical in either of these dimensions; and (6) perceptions of a character's in-group belonging would be stronger among high school students than college students.

Felt Typicality and Ethnic-Racial Identity

With regard to the second overarching question examining how felt behavioral typicality and phenotypicality relate to adolescents' and young adults' ethnic-racial identity, three sets of hypotheses were tested: High school students would score higher than college students in (7a) humanism and (7b) assimilation, whereas college students would score higher than high school students on (7c) nationalism, (7d) centrality, and (7e) private regard.

In addition, I hypothesized that participants who felt typical in both their behavior and phenotype (skin tone) would score higher on (8a) centrality, (8b) private regard, and (8c) nationalism than those who scored lower in felt typicality for behavior and phenotype. Those scoring lower in felt behavioral and felt phenotypicality were predicted to score higher in (8d) assimilation and (8e) humanism. I expected each of these relationships to be stronger among high school adolescents than college students, respectively (9a to 9e).

Ethnic-Racial Identity and In-Group Stereotyping

Finally, with regard to the third overarching question investigating how ethnic-racial identity predicts in-group stereotyping, I hypothesized that those with higher scores in nationalist ideology would be (10a) more likely to attribute positive traits to characters and (10b) less likely to attribute negative traits than those with lower levels of nationalism. Those scoring higher in humanism were predicted to be (10c) less likely to ascribe positive traits and (10d) more likely to ascribe negative traits to characters than those scoring lower in humanism. Those scoring higher in assimilation would be (10e) less likely to ascribe positive traits and (10f) more likely to ascribe negative traits than those scoring lower in assimilation.

Method

Participants

Forty self-identified Black/African American high school adolescents ($M_{age} = 15.38$, $SD = .81$, 48% girls) and 42 self-identified Black/African American undergraduates ($M_{age} = 19.55$, $SD = 1.35$, 50% women) participated in the study. I used quota sampling to achieve an approximately equal percentage of girls/women and boys/men for each sample. The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

Adolescent participants were recruited from two public high schools with varying ethnic-racial school contexts in Northern and Southern California. The demographics of the Northern California high school included 2% African American student enrollment; the high school in Southern California included 41% African

American student enrollment (California Department of Education, 2015). Thus, 15% of high school participants attended the Northern California school in which they were in the ethnic-racial minority; 85% of high school participants attended the Southern California high school and were in the ethnic-racial majority. Forty percent of students were in ninth grade, 45% were in tenth grade, and 15% were in eleventh grade. Socio-economic diversity was reflected in mothers' highest education level: 63% held a high school diploma, 31% a bachelor's degree, 3% graduate degree, and 3% did not complete high school. Fathers' highest education level ranged from: 78% held a high school diploma, 14% a bachelor's degree, and 3% did not complete high school.

Undergraduate participants were recruited from the African American Resource Center and African/Black student organizations (e.g., the Black Student Alliance) at a public university in Northern California. Recruiting from various organizations on campus elicited a range of diverse African American students. Participants represented an array of college majors: 57% STEM, 31% Social Sciences, and 12% Humanities. The majority (71.4%) reported having attended a high school where they were in the ethnic-racial minority; 28.6% had been in the ethnic-racial majority. Socioeconomic diversity was reflected in mothers' highest education level: 50% held a high school diploma, 22% a graduate degree, 15% a Bachelor's degree, and 12% did not complete high school. Among fathers, 54% held a high school diploma, 26% a graduate degree, 10% Bachelor's degree, and 8% did not

complete high school. The sample included 21% frosh, 31% sophomores, 21% juniors, and 26% seniors.

Experimental Design

Video vignettes. There were four experimental conditions; participants either viewed a male target with a typical phenotype and stereotypically Black interests, a less typical phenotype and stereotypically Black interests, a typical phenotype and “acting White” interests, or a less typical phenotype and “acting White” interests. In each video vignette, a female narrator provided the voiceover to introduce the scenario in each video. After this introduction, a male voice representing the character in the video spoke.

Four animated African American male characters were created with the computer game software *Sims 3* (Refer to Appendix A for screenshots of characters). This method allowed for the creation of characters who were identical in every way except for the phenotypic features of skin tone, nose width, and lip size. Consistent with the racial phenotypicity bias model (Maddox, 2004), each of these characteristics was found to influence perceived ethnic-racial typicality.

To manipulate behavioral interests, each video character narrated a vignette about themselves describing personal interests typically associated with either “acting White” (e.g., “My friends at my old school always made fun of me a lot because I speak “proper”) or with stereotypical Black behaviors or interests (e.g., “I feel very proud to be Black and whenever possible, I buy from local stores run by Black owners”). The behaviors and interests included in each condition were based on

research among African American adolescents and adults describing traits typically associated with accusations of “acting White” or traits associated with African Americans among in-group members (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Carter, 2006; Nasir, 2012). The female voiceover at the beginning of each animated video said:

Today is Michael’s first day at his new school. He’s having a good day so far and likes his classes. It’s lunchtime and for the first time he is a little nervous because he realizes he has to choose a place to sit in the lunchroom. He sees a group of Black students talking and wonders if he should join them. Your job is to decide whether he would fit in with this group. To help you make this decision, here’s some background information about Michael.

In the vignette for the two characters with typical racial behavior, the male voiceover said:

I’m Michael. I grew up in the East Oakland area and I like to stay in that area with Black people that can relate to me. I really like to play football, basketball, and track and my dream is to one day join the NFL. I only listen to hip-hop/RnB music and my favorite artists to listen to are Jay-Z and 2-Chains. I feel very proud to be Black and whenever possible, I buy from local stores run by Black owners. I only date other Black people and prefer to hang out around other Black people because they understand me best. I guess that’s pretty much it.

In the vignette for the two animated characters with less typical racial behavior, the male voiceover said:

I'm Michael. I grew up in the suburbs and recently moved to Oakland. Since I've moved here, people always ask me what I am and I guess I'm African American. But I don't really like referring to myself as that. If I were to describe myself it would be that I am just human. I grew up without many other Black people around, so I don't really have any Black friends. My classmates sometimes call me an 'Oreo,' meaning I'm Black on the outside, but White on the inside. Maybe it's because my favorite things to do are to play lacrosse and golf. I listen to all types of music but mostly prefer rock and classical. Well, anyway.

Measures

Target character's perceived stereotypicality. To measure perceived stereotypicality, participants rated how likely different traits were to describe the target character on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Definitely*). The traits included four stereotypical (athletic, musical, ghetto, aggressive), four counter-stereotypical (nerdy, stuck up, trustworthy, rich), and four neutral (nice, artistic, messy, anxious) characteristics. Both positive and negative stereotypes were included for each. Internal reliability for *positive stereotypes* (i.e., musical, artistic, nice, and rich) was .68; the internal reliability for *negative stereotypes* (i.e., ghetto, stuck-up, aggressive, and messy) was .70. There was a small, negative correlation between ratings of positive and negative stereotypes ($r = -.26$).

These stereotypical and counter-stereotypical stereotypes were based on research investigating common attributes associated with African Americans and

European Americans (Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; Wilder, 2009). Stereotypes that describe European Americans are often considered counter-stereotypical for African Americans (Ghavami & Peplau, 2012). Thus, the four counter-stereotypical traits of African Americans were chosen from stereotypical traits found to characterize European Americans. Internal consistency analyses indicated that the stereotypical and counter-stereotypical traits yielded low Cronbach's alphas ($\alpha = .41$ and $\alpha = .23$ respectively). The stereotypical trait, musical, was dropped from analyses to yield an internal consistency of .65. The counter-stereotypical trait, trustworthy, was similarly dropped from further analyses, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of .54.

Target character's perceived academic success. One item assessed participants' perceptions of the character's academic success ("How likely is Michael to enroll in an AP/Honor's course?"). Participants rated this item on 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Not at all likely* to 4 = *Very Likely*).

Target character's perceived in-group belonging. To measure perceived in-group belonging, after watching the video vignette participants rated one item on a 4-point Likert scale, "How well do you think Michael will fit in with this group of Black kids?" (1 = *Will not fit in at all* to 4 = *Will fit in perfectly*).

Ethnic-racial identity. A modified version of Scottham, Sellers, and Nguyen's (2008) Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-Teen (MIBI-T), comprising 15 items, was used to assess participants' ethnic-racial identity. Subscales included *centrality* (e.g., "I feel close to other Black people," $\alpha = .68$), private regard (e.g., "I am proud to be Black," $\alpha = .72$), and three of the MIBI-T ideology subscales.

These include *nationalism* (e.g., “Black parents should surround their children with Black art and Black books,” $\alpha = .77$), *humanism* (e.g., “Being an individual is more important than identifying yourself as Black,” $\alpha = .74$), and *assimilation* (e.g., “Blacks should act more like Whites to be successful in this society,” $\alpha = .54$). Participants rated each question on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *really disagree* to 5 = *really agree*).

Felt ethnic-racial behavioral typicality. To measure self-perceptions of ethnic-racial behavioral typicality (Wilson & Leaper, 2015), participants rated how much they agreed or disagreed with six statements (e.g., “I feel like I’m just like all the other Black kids at my school”) on a 5-point scale (1 = *really disagree* to 5 = *really agree*). Items had satisfactory internal reliability ($\alpha = .62$).

Self-perceived phenotypicality. Participants answered two items measuring perceptions of their skin tone: “Which of the following best describes your skin tone compared to other Black people?” (1 = *very dark brown* to 5 = *very light brown*) and “Compared to most other Black people my skin color is ___” (1 = *much darker* to 5 = *much lighter*). To measure the centrality of skin tone, participants rated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements (e.g., “As an African American, the shade of my skin tone plays an important role in my everyday life”) ranging from 1 = *really disagree* to 5 = *really agree*.

“Acting white” accusations. A modified version of Murray et al.’s (2012) Adolescent Acting White Experiences Questionnaire (AAWEQ) was used to measure experiences with accusations of “acting White.” Participants rated how true 20

statements related to “acting White” accusations were for their personal experiences (e.g., “The kids around me say I talk proper”) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all true* to 5 = *really true*). Reliability for this scale was satisfactory ($\alpha = .89$).

Parents’ education. Participants reported their mother’s and father’s highest education level using the following scale: 1 = *elementary school*, 2 = *some high school*, 3 = *high school graduate*, 4 = *some college*, 5 = *college degree (bachelor’s)*, 6 = *some graduate school*, 7 = *graduate degree (master’s, doctorate, medical, law)*.

Procedure

For high school participants, the study was conducted in classrooms during regular school hours. Undergraduate participants completed the study during scheduled meeting times for the campus organization from which they were recruited. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. The video vignette and survey were administered individually to each participant on a laptop computer or iPad provided by the researcher and using earphones.

After watching the video, participants completed the survey. They first rated the target character’s likelihood of being accepted into the group, likelihood of enrolling in an Honor’s/Advanced Placement course, and personality traits. The survey also included questions measuring their own ethnic-racial identity (MIBI-T; Scottham et al., 2008), felt ethnic-racial behavioral typicality, experiences with “acting White” accusations, perceptions of skin tone, and demographic information.

After completing the study, participants were debriefed and encouraged to ask questions or offer comments about the work. Many participants elaborated on their

written answers and described ways the survey questions resonated with their experiences. Participants were then given a \$10 gift card for their participation.

Results

Preliminary Tests for Average Group Differences

Gender differences. To test for average gender differences among participants, I conducted independent-groups *t*-tests for each outcome variable (five ethnic-racial identity dimensions, felt ethnic-racial behavioral typicality, phenotypicality, “acting White” accusations, and ratings of target character’s stereotypical traits of in-group belonging). No average gender differences for the overall sample were found for any of these variables (see Table 2), so analyses for gender groups were combined.

High school racial demographics. Racial demographics (i.e., majority Black or minority Black) of participants’ current or past high school and neighborhood were not related to ethnic-racial identity variables. There were also no significant differences in ethnic-racial identity based on high school location for adolescent participants. Thus, results for high school participants from Northern California and Southern California were combined.

Within-age group differences. There were no grade level differences in ethnic-racial identity dimensions within the college sample or the high school sample.

Parents’ educational level. Mother and father’s highest level of education were averaged for each participant to analyze the role of parents’ education. When data for only one parent were available, that parent’s highest education level was

used. Parents' education was not correlated with any of the ethnic-racial identity dimensions or the "acting White" subscale (all $ps > .050$). However, parents' education was negatively correlated with ratings of character's likelihood of enrolling in an Honors class ($r = -.24, p = .043$) and positively correlated with participants' rating of negative stereotypes ($r = .30, p = .010$). Thus, parents' average education level was used as a covariate in analyses of stereotyping.

Bivariate correlations among variables. Bivariate correlations for high school adolescents and college adults are included in Table 3. Among high school students, only two significant correlations were found. There was a positive relationship between private regard and centrality and a negative relationship between experiences with acting White and humanism.

In the college sample, moderate to large correlations were indicated among most of the dimensions. Felt behavioral typicality was positively related to centrality, private regard, and nationalism; it was negatively correlated with humanism. In addition, there was a moderate, negative correlation between assimilation and private regard. There was a positive relationship between centrality and private regard and nationalism. In contrast, centrality was negatively related to humanism.

In-Group Stereotyping

Traits. The first overarching question investigated the effect of ethnic-racial typicality on in-group stereotyping. For this manipulation check, I hypothesized that participants would rate a character who was typical in both phenotype and behavior as more stereotypical than one who was not typical on either dimension (Hypothesis

1). I expected that this pattern would be stronger among high school than college samples (Hypothesis 2).

I analyzed ratings of trait stereotypes and likelihood of enrolling in an Honor's/AP course. I conducted a 4 (video condition) x 2 (age group) multivariate analysis of covariance test (MANCOVA) with participants' average rating the character's stereotypical traits, counter-stereotypical traits, and neutral traits as dependent variables. Parents' average education level as entered as a covariate.

The effect of parents' education level and neutral traits were not significant. There was a main effect of video condition for ratings of stereotypical traits, $F(3, 65) = 33.00, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .60$ and counter-stereotypical traits, $F(3, 65) = 14.20, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .40$. Follow-up tests were conducted to analyze the six pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction to control for Type 1 error. See Table 4 for adjusted means, pairwise comparisons, and effect sizes.

In support of Hypothesis 1, the average rating of stereotypical traits for the character displaying typical racial behaviors and a typical phenotype was significantly higher than any other character. In addition, the average rating of counter-stereotypical traits was higher for the character with less typical racial behaviors and a less typical phenotype than the character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype. There were no significant differences between video conditions for ratings of neutral traits. The effect of parents' education, the main effect for age group, and the Video Condition x Age Group interaction term were not significant for any of the dependent variables. Thus, Hypothesis 2--that high school students would be more

stereotypical in judgments than would college students--was not supported. Refer to Appendix B for age group comparisons within each video condition.

For exploratory purposes, I tested how the intersection of contrasting dimensions of typicality relates to in-group stereotyping and did not advance an *a priori* hypothesis. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the character who was typical in behavior but less typical in phenotype was rated with a significantly higher average for stereotypical traits ($M = 2.37, SD = .34$) than the character who was less typical in behavior but more typical in phenotype ($M = 1.60, SD = .37; p < .001, t(37) = 6.77, \text{Cohen's } d = 2.17$). In contrast, the character who was typical in behavior but less typical in phenotype was rated with a significantly lower average for counter-stereotypes ($M = 1.43, SD = .28$) than the character with less typical racial behavior but more typical phenotype ($M = 2.36, SD = 1.09; p < .001, t(37) = 3.61, \text{Cohen's } d = -1.17$). In sum, the characters who displayed typical racial behaviors were rated with higher average stereotypical traits and fewer counter-stereotypical traits than were characters with less typical behaviors--regardless of phenotype.

Academic engagement. For my third hypothesis, I predicted that the character who was less typical in both behavior and phenotype would be stereotyped as being a higher academic achiever than the character who was more typical in both dimensions (Hypothesis 3). I also expected this association to be stronger among high school students than college students (Hypothesis 4). I conducted a 4 (video condition) x 2 (age group) analysis of covariance test (ANCOVA) with participants' rating of the target character's likelihood of enrolling in an Honor's course as the

dependent variable. Parents' average education as entered as a covariate. The main effect for age group was not significant and there was a trend towards significance for parents' average education, $F(1, 65) = 3.90, p = .053, \eta_p^2 = .06$. In support of my hypotheses, there was a significant main effect for video condition, $F(3, 65) = 7.84, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .27$; the two characters with less typical behaviors were rated as more likely to enroll in an Honor's class than the two with typical racial behaviors. Participants' age group moderated this relation. There was a statistically significant interaction between video condition and age group, $F(3, 65) = 3.08, p = .034, \eta_p^2 = .12$. As shown in Table 5, follow-up analyses revealed that high school students rated the two characters who were less typical in their behavior as more likely to enroll in an Honor's class than the characters who were more typical in their behavior, regardless of phenotype. In contrast, college students rated the character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype as more likely to enroll in an Honor's class ($M = 3.07, SD = .92$) than a character who was typical in behavior and less typical in phenotype ($M = 2.33, SD = .79; p = .011; t(19) = 2.83; \text{Cohen's } d = .86$). There was no significant difference between college students' ratings of the character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype and the character who was less typical in both behavior and phenotype ($M = 2.97, SD = .50, p = .641; t(17) = .48, \text{Cohen's } d = .14$) or less typical in behavior and more typical in phenotype ($M = 3.48, SD = .67; p = .520, t(19) = -.66, \text{Cohen's } d = .51$).

Perceptions of In-Group Belonging

I next tested the relation between characters' ethnic-racial typicality and participants' perception of the target character's in-group belonging. I predicted that participants would rate the character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype as more likely to belong in a group of same-race peers than the character who was not typical in either dimension (Hypothesis 5). In addition, I expected this association would be stronger among high school students than college students (Hypothesis 6).

I conducted a 4 (video condition) x 2 (age group) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with participants' rating of the target character's in-group belonging as the dependent variable. Parents' average education was entered as a covariate. Results indicated a significant main effect for video condition, $F(3, 65) = 18.72, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .46$. In support of Hypothesis 5, the character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype was rated as significantly more likely to fit in with a group of Black students than the character who was not typical in either of these dimensions (see Table 4). Parents' education, the main effect for age group, and the Video Condition x Age Group interaction were not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

I also explored how the intersection of contrasting dimensions of typicality relates to perceptions of in-group belonging. The character with typical behavior and a less typical phenotype was rated as significantly more likely to fit in with a group of Black students ($M = 3.01, SD = .47$) than the character with less typical behavior and a typical phenotype ($M = 1.96, SD = .61; p < .001, t(37) = 6.00, \text{Cohen's } d = 1.93$). In

other words, typical behavior was more important for judgments of in-group belonging than having a typical phenotype.

Relationship Between Racial Behavioral Typicality and Ethnic-Racial Identity

My second set of research questions investigated whether differences in participants' own felt ethnic-racial behavioral typicality and phenotypicality related to their ethnic-racial identity. This included three sets of hypotheses. First, I predicted that college students, relative to high school students, would score lower in humanism and assimilation as well as higher in nationalism, centrality, and private regard (Hypotheses 7a to 7e). Second, I hypothesized that participants who felt typical in both their behavior and phenotype (skin tone) would score higher on centrality, private regard, and nationalism than those who scored lower in typicality for behavior and phenotype (Hypotheses 8a to 8c). I also predicted that those scoring lower in both behavioral and phenotypicality would score higher in assimilation and humanism (Hypotheses 8d to 8e). Finally, I expected the latter set of patterns would be stronger among college than high school samples (Hypotheses 9a to 9e, respectively).

Using a median split, I classified participants as either high or low in typicality. In addition, participants who self-reported that their skin tone was *very dark*, *dark*, or *medium dark* were classified as having a dark skin tone; those who self-reported that their skin tone was *light* or *very light* were classified as having a light skin tone. This resulted in a new variable with four categories: (1) high in typicality and having dark skin tone ($n = 29$); (2) low in typicality and having a dark

skin tone ($n = 17$); (3) high in typicality and having a light skin tone ($n = 15$); and (4) low in typicality and having a light skin tone ($n = 11$).

I conducted a 4 (participant typicality category) x 2 (age group) analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). The dependent variables were the five ethnic-racial identity dimensions, with parents' average education entered as a covariate.

A main effect for age group was found (see Table 6 for means, standard deviations, and effect sizes). In partial support of Hypothesis 7, high school students scored significantly higher on humanism than did college students. Also, as predicted, college students scored higher than high school students on nationalism and racial centrality. In addition, there was a trend towards significance with college students scoring higher on private regard than high school students. There was no significant age group difference for assimilation.

Next, a significant main effect was found for participant typicality category, $F(3, 59) = 4.30, p = .008, \eta_p^2 = .18$ (see Table 7). In partial support of Hypothesis 8, Bonferroni *post hoc* tests revealed that racial centrality was significantly higher in individuals high in felt behavioral typicality and with a darker skin tone than those low in felt behavioral typicality and with a lighter skin tone. However, there were no significant typicality group differences for private regard, nationalism, assimilation, or humanism. Finally, Hypothesis 9 was not supported, as the Participant Typicality Category x Age Group interaction term was not significant for any of the outcome variables. Refer to Appendix C for age group comparisons of the relation between typicality and ethnic-racial identity.

Ethnic-Racial Ideology and In-Group Trait Stereotyping

In addition to examining perceptions of stereotypical and counter-stereotypical traits, I also investigated how ethnic-racial identity predicts ratings of an African American character's positive and negative traits. I hypothesized that participants with higher scores in nationalist ideology would be more likely to attribute positive traits to characters than will those with lower levels of nationalism and less likely to attribute negative traits than those with lower levels of nationalism (Hypotheses 10a and 10b). I also predicted that those scoring higher in humanism would be less likely to ascribe positive traits to characters and more likely to ascribe negative traits to characters than those scoring lower in humanism than those scoring higher in humanism (Hypotheses 10c and 10d). Finally, I hypothesized that those scoring higher in assimilation will be less likely to ascribe positive traits to characters and more likely to ascribe negative traits than those scoring lower in assimilation (Hypothesis 10e and 10f).

I conducted two hierarchical linear regressions to test these hypotheses. In both, parents' average education level was entered as a control variable in the first step. The next step included age group as a dummy variable (0 = high school, 1 = college), and the third step included the three ideology variables (nationalism, humanism and assimilation). The two-way interaction terms for Ideology Dimension x Age Group and Ideology Dimension x Parent Education were entered in the fourth step. The final step included the three-way interaction terms for Ideology Dimension x Age Group x Parent Education. The dependent variable for the first regression was

participants' average rating of positive traits attributed to the character; the dependent variable for the second regression was average rating of negative traits.

For ratings of positive traits, Step 3 was the only step that added significantly to the model. In partial support of Hypothesis 10, higher scores in nationalism ideology were related to higher ratings of positive traits to describe characters, ($b = .22, p = .015$). Also, there was a trend such that higher scores on assimilation predicted lower ratings of positive traits to describe characters ($b = -.23, p = .080$). Humanism ideology and the interaction terms were not significant.

For ratings of negative traits, Step 2 was significant and used as the final model, $F(2, 69) = 3.71, p = .030$, adjusted $R^2 = .071$. In contrast to my hypotheses, the only variable that predicted participants' average rating of negative traits was parent education ($b = .11, p = .025$), which was positively related to higher average ratings of negative traits. None of the ethnic-racial ideology variables or interaction terms was significant.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand how behavioral and phenotypic dimensions of ethnic-racial typicality relate to group belonging and stereotyping among African American adolescents and young adults. I used an experimental paradigm to test how different dimensions of typicality influence in-group attitudes. In addition, I examined how ethnic-racial ideology and participants' felt ethnic-racial typicality related to judgments of in-group members. First, I summarize the findings for each overarching research goal and offer interpretations of their meaning at the

close of each section. I then discuss limitations and future directions for research.

Finally, I conclude with theoretical and practical implications of this work.

In-Group Stereotyping and Perceived In-Group Belonging

Traits. The first goal of this study was to examine how behavioral and phenotypicality influence in-group stereotyping and perceptions of in-group belonging among high school adolescents and college-age young adults. As expected, the Black male character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype was rated as the most stereotypical and least counter-stereotypical character (Hypothesis 1). Participants rated the two characters who were typical in their behavior as more stereotypical and less counter-stereotypical than the characters who were less typical in their behavior--regardless of phenotype. This suggests that behavioral typicality served as a marker of ethnic-racial authenticity--more so than phenotypicality. Judgments of stereotypicality were based on displaying in-group normative behavior, interests, and ideologies. This finding supports the tenets of social identity theory (Turner et al., 1979), which highlights the importance of normative behavior for in-group judgments.

Furthermore, I hypothesized that associations between characters' typicality and judgments of stereotypicality would be stronger among high school students than college students (Hypothesis 2). In contrast to this hypothesis, there were no differences in ratings of characters' stereotypicality between high school and college young adult participants. This finding suggests that the manipulation was appropriate for adolescents and young adults. It could also reflect the persistence of stereotypical

schemas from adolescence through young adulthood (Berndt & Heller, 1986). Investigating how perceptions vary among younger children may reveal developmental differences. For example, Avera and Bigler (1997) found that African American children as young as six years old classify by skin color and attribute more positive traits to light-skinned African Americans and negative traits to dark-skinned African Americans. Perhaps examining attitudes among preschool aged children will illuminate how stereotypes related to behavioral and phenotypicality develop.

Academic achievement. I also investigated how behavioral and phenotypicality influenced perceptions of academic achievement. As hypothesized, a character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype was rated as being a lower academic achiever than a character who was less typical in both dimensions (Hypothesis 3). Overall, the two characters with typical ethnic-racial behaviors were rated as less likely to enroll in an Honor's class than the two characters with less typical ethnic-racial behaviors. This suggests that those who engage in certain behaviors considered typical of African Americans may be perceived as less likely to achieve academically. Scholars have reported that African Americans consider academic achievement to be valuable and necessary (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Carter, 2006). The current findings do not contradict this. Instead, they highlight that youth may be aware of certain ethnic-racial behaviors associated with negative biases about academic potential. Consistent with previous research, participants may have made implicit associations between typical ethnic-racial behaviors or interests expressed by

the characters and their likelihood of academic success (Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). These findings underscore the need to reduce associations between behaviors and ideologies related to “acting White” or “acting Black” and academic achievement.

Further, as expected, perceptions of characters’ academic potential differed between high school and college students (Hypothesis 4). Among high school students, characters who were less typical in behavior were rated as more likely to enroll in an Honor’s class than characters with more typical behavior, regardless of phenotype. However, college students rated the character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype as more likely to enroll in an Honor’s class than the character who was typical in behavior but less typical in phenotype. This difference in judgments of academic achievement might reflect college students’ greater awareness of common ethnic-racial stereotypes in society and school, especially as they relate to colorism and discrimination of African American boys and men (Byrd & Chavous, 2011; James, 2011; Noguera, 2003; Okeke et al., 2009). Keith and Herring (1991) found that African Americans with darker skin tones reported higher levels of discrimination and had lower educational attainment than did those with lighter skin tones. Compared to high school participants, academic stereotypes of African Americans may have been more salient among undergraduate participants, so they may have been particularly cautious about confirming or perpetuating traditional race stereotypes that may be more associated with darker-skinned, typical African American males (Eberhardt et al., 2006; Khanna, 2010; Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2000).

Perceived in-group belonging. In addition to stereotyped perceptions, I also examined judgments of in-group belonging. Consistent with my hypothesis, participants rated an African American male character who was typical in both behavior and phenotype as more likely to belong in a group of same-race peers than a character who was not typical on either dimension (Hypothesis 5). To test the relative contributions of behavior and phenotype for in-group judgments, I considered how individuals perceive in-group members with contrasting levels of behavioral and phenotypic typicality. Participants rated a character who was typical in ethnic-racial behavior and less typical in phenotype as more likely to belong than one less typical in ethnic-racial behavior and more typical in phenotype. This finding suggests that there are expected group norms, interests, and ways of thinking that in-group members should follow in order to be perceived as fitting in with their ethnic-racial group. In this way, one's values and practices may be better reflections of group membership than one's group identification or categorization. This idea also supports cultural views of development, which argue that culture is based in participating in activities and traditional practices associated with one's community (Rogoff, 2003).

In contrast to Hypothesis 6, there were no developmental differences in judgments of in-group belonging. This result is analogous to the finding for in-group stereotyping. Again, beyond confirming that the manipulation was developmentally appropriate for both adolescents and young adults, it could also suggest that schemas of behaviors and qualities for in-group belonging persist from adolescence through emerging adulthood.

Impact of video stimuli. The findings regarding in-group stereotyping and perceptions of belonging could be interpreted as a manipulation check of the video stimuli. It is logical that those who explicitly stated that they engage in typical behaviors of a group would be considered as more in-group syntonic than those who did not. However, the findings regarding perceptions of academic engagement provide evidence for implicit assumptions about behavior and ethnic-racial typicality that extend beyond being a manipulation check. Messages about academic ability or interest were not mentioned in the video narrations, but participants still made associations between the characters' racial behavior and likelihood of enrolling in an Honor's course. This suggests that youth may hold schemas about the type of people who achieve academically. Ethnic-racial behaviors may be tied to schemas of who is likely to be an academic achiever.

Felt Typicality and Ethnic-Racial Identity

The second overarching goal of this study was to examine how felt behavioral typicality and phenotypicality relate to adolescents' and young adults' ethnic-racial identity. I tested three main hypotheses to investigate this question. First, I hypothesized that high school students would score higher than college students in humanism and assimilation (Hypothesis 7a to 7b). In contrast, I expected college students would score higher than high school students on nationalism, centrality, and private regard (Hypotheses 7c to 7e). In partial support of these hypotheses, high school students scored higher in humanism and lower on nationalism and racial centrality than did college students. College participants' involvement in campus

clubs and organizations for Black, African Americans, and African students may be a factor related to age group differences in racial ideology. Ethnicity/race was likely central to college participants' identity as indicated by their voluntarily attending meetings concerned with creating connections and kinship with other African American students. Harper and Quaye (2007) found that ethnic-racial student organization membership was related to stronger ethnic-racial identities and increased affiliation and positive affect towards African Americans. In addition, students interested in affiliating with other ethnic-racial minority students through campus ethnic-racial organizations have reported stronger ethnic-racial identities than those not involved in such activities (Saylor & Aries, 1999).

In contrast to my hypotheses, developmental differences were not found in students' endorsement of assimilation or private regard. There was a floor effect for assimilation, with low scores across age groups, and a ceiling effect for private regard with scores were high across age groups. Assimilation may have been low among undergraduate participants due to their involvement in Black organizations on a campus in which they are in a hyper-minority; this behavior contrasts with an assimilation ideology, which reflects the importance of integrating into mainstream society. For adolescent participants, assimilation may not have been a part of their lived experiences because most were in the ethnic-racial majority of their schools, where assimilation may not have been necessary or a concern. Finally, private regard was high among both adolescents and young adults, which reflects normative growth in exploration of their ethnic-racial identity and their in-group preference and pride.

Thus, adolescents may have already developed in-group preference (Nesdale, 1999; Rowley, Burchinal, Roberts, & Zeisel, 2008).

Next, I found differences in ethnic-racial identity based on participants' combined felt behavioral and phenotypicality. I hypothesized that those who felt typical in both their behavior and phenotype (skin tone), compared to those scoring lower, would score higher on centrality, private regard, and nationalism (Hypotheses 8a to 8c). Conversely, those scoring lower in behavioral and phenotypicality would score higher on assimilation and humanism (Hypotheses 8d to 8e). Only Hypothesis 8a was supported. Individuals high in felt behavioral typicality and with a darker skin tone scored higher in racial centrality than those low in felt behavioral typicality and with a lighter skin tone. Ethnic-racial centrality may be especially relevant to feelings of typicality. Indeed, among college participants, felt behavioral typicality and centrality were the most highly correlated. Those for whom race is central to their self-concept may have a greater desire to match their behaviors with stereotypes of what it means to be Black (Greenwald et al., 2002). However, because this was a correlational finding, it is unclear if felt typicality leads to ethnicity/race being central to one's identity or if behavior changes as a way to show to others that race is important to one's self-concept. Overall, this finding suggests additive contributions of behavioral racial typicality and phenotypicality to individuals' ethnic-racial centrality. Feeling typical on both dimensions is related to having a closer connection to one's racial group. Because research examining how either behavioral typicality or phenotypicality relates to ethnic-racial identity has yielded mixed findings (Maddox,

2004; Marques et al., 1998), it will be important to examine multiple dimensions of ethnic-racial typicality to understand their roles in in-group ethnic-racial attitudes and ideologies.

Finally, I expected developmental differences, such that the associations posited in my eighth set of hypotheses would be stronger among high school adolescents than college students (Hypotheses 9a to 9e). This was not supported. It may be that cognitive developmental differences between adolescents and young adults were too small to detect changes in how typicality relates to ethnic-racial ideology. Investigating these relationships among younger children might reveal important differences in how typicality affects ideas of their ethnic-racial group. Preoperational children are likely to hold rigid thoughts about ethnic-racial groups, and the capacity for flexible thinking emerges with the development of conservation, ethnic-race constancy, and the knowledge that two different schemas can be true at the same time (Aboud, 1988; Doyle, Beaudet, & Aboud, 1988). Thus, children's understanding of how one's behavioral and phenotypicality reflect group membership may differ from that of adolescents and young adults.

Ethnic-Racial Ideology and In-Group Stereotyping

The final goal of this study was to examine how ethnic-racial ideologies predicted participants' judgments of characters. I predicted that those with higher scores in nationalist ideology would be more likely to attribute positive traits to characters and less likely to attribute negative traits than those with lower levels of nationalism (Hypotheses 10a and 10b); those scoring higher in humanism would be

less likely to ascribe positive traits and more likely to ascribe negative traits to characters than those scoring lower in humanism (Hypotheses 10c and 10d); and those scoring higher in assimilation would be less likely to ascribe positive traits to characters and more likely to ascribe negative traits than those scoring lower in assimilation (Hypotheses 10e and 10f). These predictions were partially supported.

As expected, those scoring higher in nationalism rated the character they viewed with more positive traits than did those scoring lower in nationalism. In addition, there was a trend such that those higher in assimilation rated the character they viewed with fewer positive traits than those scoring lower in assimilation. In contrast to Hypothesis 10c, endorsement of humanism was not related to positive stereotyping of characters. These findings suggest that, on average, those with a greater sense of connection to their racial group hold more positive views of in-group members.

These findings are consistent with the concept of *positive social identity*, which suggests that individuals are motivated to maintain a positive view of their group; this motivation, in turn, may be more salient among those with strong connections to their in-group (Haslam et al., 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Indeed, in the present study, nationalism was positively correlated with ethnic-racial private regard. Furthermore, awareness of membership in a social group has been found to make individuals more likely to endorse positive stereotypes of their group (Greenwald et al., 2002; Lee & Ottati, 1995). Nationalist ideology may act as a buffer

against incorporating negative stereotypes about one's group into one's schema or cognitive framework about one's ethnic-racial group.

None of the hypotheses regarding negative traits was supported. However, parental education was related to higher ratings of negative traits. Parents with higher socioeconomic status have been found to be more likely to engage in cultural socialization and preparation for racial bias (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1997). For this reason, children of more highly educated parents may have a greater awareness of stereotypes. Thus, their judgments might reflect this awareness of societal stereotypes and not necessarily their personal views or ethnic-racial ideologies.

Limitations and Future Directions

Comparing Male and Female Targets

One limitation in the methodology of this study was that all of the animated characters were male. The implications of this work may be more valid regarding attitudes towards African American boys and men than towards girls and women. Furthermore, in the current study, phenotype did not influence judgments of group belonging or trait stereotyping of characters. This finding could reflect gender differences in how phenotypicality affects perceptions and stereotypes of African American women and men. Biases concerning phenotypic differences in African American men more commonly concern stereotypes about masculinity or criminality (Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Uzogara, Lee, Abdou, & Jackson, 2014). Thus, it is possible that I did not find that phenotypicality influenced stereotyping of African

American male characters because I did not assess traits directly related to masculinity or criminality. In contrast, among girls and women, evaluations of attractiveness often differ based on one's skin tone (Thompson & Keith, 2001). For example, when evaluating attractiveness, possessing lighter skin tones has been found to affect perceptions more for African American girls than for African American boys (Hill, 2002; Hunter, 1998). Future studies that consider how ethnic-racial typicality influences various in-group perceptions of African American female and male characters may reveal important gender differences that could not be assessed in the current study.

One area that might reveal gender differences is the influence of hairstyles (e.g., natural vs. relaxed). Hairstyles are an especially pertinent aspect of appearance among African American women. In an analogous way that biases related to skin tone and facial features perpetuate European standards of beauty, having long, straight hair has historically been perceived as more attractive (White, 2005). For many African American women, wearing their hair in its natural, curly state is a way to subvert hegemonic ideas of beauty that perpetuate intra-group biases (Patton, 2006). In the participant debriefing, I asked students whether there were any questions I had not asked that they thought would be important. The most common answer I received from girls and women was to ask more questions about hairstyles and the "natural" hair movement. Including differences in hair as an aspect of phenotypicality will be illuminating, especially among African American women.

Expanding Developmental Analyses

In this cross-sectional study, I was unable to examine the process of change in in-group attitudes over time. Future research should utilize longitudinal methods to investigate how in-group attitudes develop and evolve over time. In addition, it would also be pertinent to investigate how younger children understand ethnic-racial typicality. Children may be more likely than adolescents and young adults to identify race by physical markers than behavioral traits (Doyle et al., 1988; Quintana, 1998). Although the current findings suggest behavior is more salient for judgments of in-group members, younger children may attend more to phenotypic appearance in stereotyping and judgments of in-group belonging (Bigler & Liben, 2007).

Testing Ecological Validity

Furthermore, although using animated characters was instrumental for manipulating ethnic-racial typicality, doing so may have constrained the ecological validity of the findings. It is unclear if judgments of animated characters reflected adolescents' and young adults' perceptions of their actual peers. Furthermore, participant responses might reflect views of how likely another group of Black students are to accept one of the characters and not necessarily how likely the participant is to personally (and hypothetically) accept the character into their own friendship group. However, even this is illuminating. These findings still suggest that there is awareness that individuals could hold biases against others in their group for exhibiting counter-stereotypic behaviors. It highlights that these biases and assumptions continue to exist and carry consequences. It will be important to conduct

qualitative work concerning perceptions of ethnic-racial typicality to illuminate if and how the current findings are reflected in students' lived experiences.

Examining Perceptions Among Other Ethnic-Racial Groups

Multi-ethnic/racial individuals. It will be also be important to explore how these issues affect bi-ethnic/racial and multi-ethnic/racial individuals. The numbers of people who report identifying with multiple ethnicities has rapidly increased over the past decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Bi-ethnic/racial and multi-ethnic/racial individuals may have salient characteristics that indicate their membership in an ethnic-racial group, but they may also have features that are not typical of that group or are ambiguous (James & Tucker, 2003; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002). This may spur curiosity or doubts from others about whether one is a true member of that group (Gilbert, 2005). Thus, they may experience intra-group discrimination from multiple groups they belong to for not being true members of either group. This has important implications for their ethnic-racial identities as well as feeling connections to their multiple groups.

Inter-group biases based on ethnic-racial typicality. Although this study focused on intra-group perceptions among African Americans, these are inter-group issues as well. Those outside of the Black community may also hold biases of African Americans based on their behavioral ethnic-racial typicality and phenotypicality (Barsamian-Kahn & Davies, 2011; Carbado & Gulati, 2013). For instance, during the 2008 presidential election, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid predicted that presidential candidate, Barack Obama, was more electable than other African American

candidates might be because he was “light-skinned” and had “no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one” (Zeleny, 2010). He later apologized. This off-hand statement reflects how certain behaviors and appearances of African Americans may be seen as more palatable for some groups. Appearing less typical of one’s ethnic-racial group may have implications for acceptance rather than exclusion among out-group members.

In addition, given the heightened between-group ethnic-racial tensions across the U.S. and the recent rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, it is important to investigate how issues of typicality may make certain African American women and men more at risk for discrimination. It was apparent that some participants in the current study were attuned to and had a keen awareness of how their own appearance affected inter-group biases. For example, after they completed the survey, I asked participants to write about any relevant experiences they had had with issues covered in the study. One male undergraduate described his experience of feeling judged by peers because of his appearance and stature. As he explained:

When most people see my skin color, height, and body shape, they automatically assume that I am violent and intimidating. Most of the people in my dorm room told me that before they knew me, they were intimidated.

For African American boys and men, assumptions about behavior based solely on appearance can have life-threatening effects (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007); thus, understanding the processes underlying inter-group biases based on ethnic-racial typicality is vital.

Interventions to Decrease In-Group Biases

Finally, future research should also seek to understand why stereotypes associated with ethnic-racial typicality exist and explore ways to decrease them. I will discuss two areas for interventions to focus. First, messages conveyed in the media that perpetuate racial stereotypes may be important to consider. As Nasir (2012) notes:

Students' identities are also influenced by the broader societal context that perpetuates racial inequities on multiple levels and constrains identity choices for African American youth. In particular, media portrayals and stereotypes of African American youth may have important implications for the identity choices African American youth perceive for themselves (p. 3).

Because media images often depict African Americans as a homogenous group, African American children and adolescents may come to believe there are limited ways for their same-race peers to behave. Developing media interventions can be challenging, however, because a variety of factors that influence their effectiveness. For instance, many intervention programs present individuals with examples of counter-stereotypic models of racial and ethnic groups to decrease biased attitudes towards these groups (Graves, 1999; Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007). However, this might actually have the opposite effect on biased attitudes, especially among those holding highly stereotyped ethnic-racial biases (Bigler, 1999). For example, Bigler and Liben (1993) found that European American children scoring higher in biased attitudes were more likely to remember stereotyped images of Black and

White cartoons that supported their expectations than were those with fewer biased attitudes. In addition, these children were more likely to reconstruct counter-stereotypical information to fit their stereotyped beliefs.

Thus, in developing media interventions to decrease in-group biases, it may be important to tailor presentations differently based on individual characteristics, including age, previous ethnic-racial biases, and ethnic-racial identity. It is not sufficient to simply increase the quantity of images depicting African Americans in media. The quality of these images should also be improved in order to represent the diversity of African American experiences. Validating differences should become normative to expand ideas of ethnic-racial typicality. Through achieving this, we might positively contribute to how African Americans view and accept differences and variation among members of their racial group.

Second, inter-group contact is commonly used to decrease stereotyping and prejudice between groups (Pettigrew, 1998). However, when addressing intra-group biases, increasing contact with others within one's group who are different may paradoxically be related to higher in-group stereotyping and discrimination. Intra-group discrimination based on behavior and skin tone may be more likely to occur in environments with a higher proportion of African Americans than those where they are in the minority (Bergin & Cooks, 2002). Further, greater contact with in-group members has been associated with increased perceptions of in-group homogeneity and higher stereotyping of typical in-group norms (Oakes, Haslam, Morrison, & Grace, 1995). Interventions that have been effective in decreasing prejudiced group

attitudes include teaching and discussing issues directly related to confronting bias (Lamb, Bigler, Liben, & Green, 2009; Pahlke, Bigler, & Martin, 2014). Successful interventions to decrease intra-ethnic/racial bias should include explicit discussions about intra-group bias related to skin tone and behavior, training with how to identify instances of intra-group discrimination in the media or from peers, and suggestions for how to respond to experiences with or witnessing of intra-group bias.

Implications

Overall, these findings suggest an awareness of behaviors that are considered necessary to belong and those that would be considered “truly” Black. Although behavioral typicality may be more important than phenotype regarding how others perceive in-group members, the combination of felt behavioral typicality and phenotypicality may be important for how individuals perceive themselves. These findings suggest that models of identity should integrate measurements of both felt behavioral typicality and felt phenotypicality to get a richer and more valid understanding of their effects.

These findings do not imply that students would make these assumptions and judgments themselves, but do indicate their knowledge of group expectations and stereotypes. As suggested by studies of stereotype threat (Steele, 1997), even knowing that others might hold biases and stereotypes based on one’s behavior or beliefs may be threatening and a source of anxiety. Stereotype threat often involves fear of confirming stereotypes about one’s group. The current findings suggest that disconfirming stereotypes about one’s group might also be a threat. Students might

feel a threat of confirming they are not truly a member of the Black community if their behaviors or ideologies are not considered to reflect what it means to be authentically Black. Oyserman et al.'s (2006) finding that African American boys changed their academic behavior and felt lower academic self-concept when they believed their peers would question their ethnic-racial authenticity supports this idea.

Finally, educational institutions may play an important role in decreasing stereotypes associated with belonging and academic potential. School cultures and climates can contribute to ethnic-racial minority students' feelings of school belonging and academic success (Byrd & Chavous, 2011; Syed, Azmitia, & Cooper, 2011). Teachers may misinterpret teasing or speech styles among African American students who do not share or understand those cultural practices (Nasir, 2012). In his study of factors affecting African American boys' academic performance, Noguera (2003) posits that, "the structure and culture of school plays a major role in reinforcing and maintaining racial categories and the stereotypes associated with them" (p. 444). This is reflected in the unbalanced and biased disciplinary actions of African American boys and their academic disengagement (Monroe, 2005). Thus, students witnessing these implicit school messages may associate typical ethnic-racial behaviors with decreased academic engagement or potential.

Conclusion

This work contributes to empirical and practical understanding of in-group belonging, academic achievement, and ethnic-racial typicality among African Americans. There are standards and qualifications for acceptable behavior and

interests in order to be considered an authentic in-group member. To mitigate the costs to youth of inflexible standards of acceptable behaviors, interests, ideologies, and phenotypes to be considered authentic in-group members, it is important to promote awareness of in-group variation in these qualities. Such awareness will help reduce in-group stereotyping and modify prescribed schemas of typicality (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1999). If we can understand judgments of in-group belonging and stereotyping, we can begin to affect change by emphasizing diversity among African Americans and dispelling stereotypes surrounding typical or atypical appearance and behavior.

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Table 1
Sample Demographics

	High School Participants	College Participants
	% (<i>n</i>)	% (<i>n</i>)
Mother's Highest Level of Education		
High School	67% (27)	63% (26)
Bachelors Degree	31% (12)	15% (6)
Graduate Degree	3% (1)	22% (9)
Father's Highest Level of Education		
High school	87% (35)	64% (27)
Bachelor's Degree	14% (6)	10% (4)
Graduate Degree	0%	26% (11)
Self-perceived Skin Tone		
Light	41% (17)	32% (13)
Medium-Dark	46% (18)	34% (14)
Dark	13% (5)	34% (14)
Friendship Demographics		
Majority Black	83% (33)	76% (32)
Minority Black	17% (7)	24% (10)
High School Demographics		
Majority Black	70% (28)	29% (12)
Minority Black	30% (12)	71% (30)
Neighborhood Demographics		
Majority Black	60% (24)	43% (18)
Minority Black	40% (16)	57% (24)

Note. *N* = 40 for high school participants. *N* = 42 for college participants.

Table 2
Comparisons of Ethnic-Racial Identity, Typicality, and Acting White By Gender and Age Group

	Women/Girls	Men/Boys	<i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Centrality				
High School	3.93 (.79)	3.25 (.73)	2.73**	.89
College	4.32 (.81)	4.20 (.86)	0.46	.14
Combined	4.13 (.81)	3.76 (.93)	1.91	.42
Regard				
High School	4.60 (.56)	4.37 (.62)	1.23	.39
College	4.72 (.44)	4.71 (.43)	0.03	.02
Combined	4.66 (.50)	4.55 (.55)	0.91	.21
Nationalism				
High School	2.89 (1.17)	2.84 (.84)	0.14	.05
College	4.37 (.64)	4.15 (.78)	0.97	.17
Combined	3.67 (1.18)	3.54 (1.04)	0.49	.12
Humanism				
High School	4.07 (.77)	3.62 (1.04)	1.54	.49
College	2.62 (.89)	3.06 (1.16)	-1.38	-.43
Combined	3.32 (1.11)	3.33 (1.12)	-0.00	.00
Assimilation				
High School	1.20 (.29)	1.73 (.70)	-3.15**	-.99
College	1.39 (.61)	1.37 (.58)	0.10	.03
Combined	1.29 (.48)	1.54 (.66)	-1.97	.43
Typicality				
High School	2.96 (.79)	2.91 (.58)	0.22	.07
College	3.18 (.66)	3.15 (.81)	0.16	.04
Combined	3.07 (.72)	3.03 (.71)	0.24	.06
Acting White				
High School	1.62 (.43)	1.76 (.50)	-0.86	-.30
College	2.48 (.86)	2.22 (.60)	1.11	.35
Combined	2.10 (.82)	2.00 (.60)	0.59	.14

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

Table 3

Correlations Among Identity Dimensions, Typicality, and Acting White Accusations

	Centrality	Regard	Nationalism	Humanism	Assimilation	Typicality	Acting White
Centrality	--	<i>.43**</i>	<i>.39*</i>	<i>-.38*</i>	<i>.01</i>	<i>.62***</i>	<i>-.11</i>
Regard	<i>.42*</i>	--	<i>.13</i>	<i>-.09</i>	<i>-.41**</i>	<i>.47**</i>	<i>-.02</i>
Nationalism	<i>.19</i>	<i>.17</i>	--	<i>-.23</i>	<i>.19</i>	<i>.53***</i>	<i>-.07</i>
Humanism	<i>.11</i>	<i>.02</i>	<i>-.07</i>	--	<i>.28</i>	<i>-.31*</i>	<i>.26</i>
Assimilation	<i>-.04</i>	<i>-.04</i>	<i>.18</i>	<i>.24</i>	--	<i>-.06</i>	<i>.16</i>
Typicality	<i>.27</i>	<i>.10</i>	<i>-.29</i>	<i>.07</i>	<i>-.17</i>	--	<i>-.09</i>
Acting White	<i>-.27</i>	<i>-.20</i>	<i>.10</i>	<i>-.48**</i>	<i>-.19</i>	<i>-.12</i>	--

Note. Correlations among undergraduate participants appear above the diagonal in italics. The correlations among high school adolescents appear below the diagonal.

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

Table 4

Comparisons of Participants' Ratings of Target Character Traits and In-Group Belonging

	Act Typical, Look Typical	Act Typical, Look Atypical	Act Atypical, Look Typical	Act Atypical, Look Atypical	<i>F</i>	η_p^2
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Stereotypical	2.71 (.46) _a	2.37 (.34) _a	1.60 (.37) _b	1.65 (.36) _b	33.00 ^{***}	.60
Counter-stereotypical	1.63 (.47) _a	1.43 (.28) _a	2.36 (1.09) _b	2.20 (.57) _b	14.20 ^{***}	.40
Neutral	2.50 (.50)	2.37 (.44)	2.42 (.47)	2.30 (.46)	0.48	.02
In-group belonging	2.93 (.73) _a	3.01 (.47) _a	1.96 (.61) _b	1.94 (.52) _b	18.75 ^{***}	.45

Note. Adjusted means for overall sample presented controlling for parent education. Means with different subscripts were significantly different.

^{***} $p < .001$.

Table 5

Comparison of Participants' Ratings of Target Character's Academic Engagement by Condition and Age Group

	Act Typical, Look Typical <i>M (SD)</i>	Act Typical, Look Atypical <i>M (SD)</i>	Act Atypical, Look typical <i>M(SD)</i>	Act Atypical, Look atypical <i>M(SD)</i>	<i>F</i>	η_p^2
High School	2.17 (.79) _a	2.73 (.67) _{ac}	3.46 (.61) _b	3.23 (.46) _{bc}	4.58*	.29
College	3.07 (.92) _a	2.33 (.79) _b	3.48 (.67) _a	2.97 (.50) _{ab}	7.09**	.41

Note. Adjusted means presented controlling for parent education. Means with different subscripts were significantly different within each age group.

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

Table 6
*Comparisons of Ethnic-Racial Identity, Typicality, and Acting White By
 Participants' Age Group*

	High School Adolescents	College Young Adults		
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Centrality	3.58 (.82)	4.35 (.83)	3.64 ^{***}	.93
Regard	4.49 (.59)	4.71 (.43)	1.99 [*]	.43
Nationalism	2.86 (1.00)	4.25 (.72)	7.16 ^{***}	1.60
Humanism	3.84 (.94)	2.85 (1.05)	4.45 ^{***}	.99
Assimilation	1.47 (.59)	1.37 (.59)	.71	.17
Typicality	2.93 (.73)	3.16 (.73)	1.48	.32
Acting White	1.70 (.46)	2.34 (.74)	4.51 ^{***}	1.04

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

Table 7





Ethnic-Racial Identity Differences Based on Participants' Behavioral Typicality and Skin Tone

	High Behavioral Typicality/Darker Skin	High Behavioral Typicality/Lighter Skin	Low Behavioral Typicality/Darker Skin	Low Behavioral Typicality/Lighter Skin	<i>F</i>	η_p^2
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Centrality	4.56 (.60) _{ac}	4.22 (.83) _{ac}	3.71 (.89) _{bc}	3.35 (.67) _b	4.30 ^{**}	.18
Regard	4.75 (.33)	4.67 (.82)	4.56 (.51)	4.33 (.61)	2.15	.09
Nationalism	4.10 (1.05)	3.50 (1.53)	3.47 (1.00)	3.45 (1.07)	1.72	.08
Humanism	2.81 (1.08)	3.78 (1.13)	3.60 (1.03)	3.51 (1.16)	.07	.11
Assimilation	1.33 (.47)	1.50 (.69)	1.44 (.59)	1.67 (.79)	.41	.04

Note. Adjusted means presented controlling for parent education. . Means with different subscripts were significantly different.

^{**} $p < .01$.

Appendix A
Screenshots of Animated Characters

		Behavioral Racial Typicality	
		More Typical	Less Typical
Phenotypicality	More Typical		
	Less Typical		

Appendix B
Comparisons of Participants' Ratings of Target Character Traits and In-Group Belonging by Age Group

	Act Typical, Look Typical		Act Typical, Look Atypical		Act Atypical, Look typical		Act Atypical, Look atypical		<i>F</i>	η_p^2
	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		
Stereotypical	2.75 (.49)	2.67 (.45)	2.35 (.17)	2.38 (.47)	1.53 (.41)	1.67 (.41)	1.62 (.36)	1.67 (.37)	33.00***	.60
Counter- stereotypical	1.52 (.44)	1.77 (.50)	1.42 (.28)	1.44 (.36)	2.23 (.33)	2.49 (.74)	2.13 (.47)	2.26 (.68)	14.20***	.40
Neutral	2.03 (.23)	2.54 (.60)	2.17 (.43)	2.55 (.39)	2.52 (.43)	2.34 (.52)	2.36 (.31)	2.22 (.59)	.37	.02
Belonging	2.90 (.88)	3.00 (.54)	3.22 (.44)	2.80 (.42)	2.00 (.71)	1.91 (.54)	2.00 (.50)	1.90 (.57)	18.72***	.46

Note. Adjusted means presented controlling for parent education.

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

Appendix C
Ethnic-Racial Identity Differences Based on Participants' Behavioral Typicality and Skin Tone by Age Group

	High Behavioral Typicality/Darker Skin		High Behavioral Typicality/Lighter Skin		Low Behavioral Typicality/Darker Skin		Low Behavioral Typicality/Lighter Skin		<i>F</i>	η_p^2
	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	High School <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	College <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		
Centrality	3.54 (.59)	4.59 (.58)	3.72 (.85)	4.33 (.52)	3.40 (.87)	4.00 (.77)	3.29 (.98)	3.33 (1.12)	3.26*	.13
Regard	4.54 (.25)	4.79 (.32)	4.28 (1.00)	4.73 (.28)	4.37 (.62)	4.76 (.50)	4.42 (.61)	4.33 (.61)	.97	.04
Nationalism	2.79 (.80)	4.44 (.60)	2.61 (1.04)	4.67 (.47)	2.93 (1.02)	4.00 (.87)	3.21 (1.21)	3.76 (.53)	.18	.01
Humanism	4.13 (.64)	2.59 (.96)	4.29 (.85)	3.33 (1.03)	3.87 (.79)	3.05 (1.30)	3.50 (1.43)	3.14 (.77)	.62	.03
Assimilation	1.38 (.38)	1.32 (.48)	1.89 (.96)	1.73 (1.06)	1.60 (.73)	1.29 (.52)	1.38 (.33)	1.43 (.60)	.22	.07

Note. Adjusted means presented controlling for parent education.

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