

Black masculinity and White-cast Sitcoms

Unraveling stereotypes in *New Girl*

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ABSTRACT

For decades, situational comedies — commonly named “sitcoms” — have been racially segregated on TV between Black-cast sitcoms and White-cast sitcoms. Extensive research has been led about representation of Black and White masculinities in this segregated context. This master thesis studies what happens when White and Black males are equally casted as main characters in contemporary sitcoms by offering a case-study of the 2011 sitcom *New Girl* (2011-2017). How is Black masculinity represented in *New Girl*, and in which ways does it intersect with contemporary societal issues (e.g. racial profiling, Black Lives Matter movement)? This case-study uses tools, methodologies and concepts, drawn from Black and Intersectional feminism as well as Feminist media studies. Based on a 25 episodes sample of the show, it implements Ronald Jackson’s traditional stereotypes classification and “Black masculine identity theory” (Jackson, 2006) to study representations of Black masculinity in *New Girl*, through its two main Black male characters, Winston and Coach. Given that representations of minorities in popular culture reflect and influence our contemporary society, the results offer new insights about how sitcoms, series and pop-culture productions in general can challenge traditional stereotypes and display a more progressive Black masculinity.

Key words: Black feminism, Feminist media studies, Men and masculinities, Representation, *New Girl*, Sitcoms

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INTRODUCTION

“When I was a kid, we used to run from the police, even if we did nothing wrong, it was out of habit”. In episode “Par 5” (S4E20) of *New Girl*, Winston Bishop explains his White roommate and friend Nick Miller how it feels like growing up male and Black in the United States — more precisely in Chicago, Illinois, where they both spent their childhood. While he goes on about the topic, one of their four other roommates enters the living room: it’s Coach, the other Black male main character of the show. “I feel like I should weigh in”, he says. He then stops and adds: “But I’m hungry.” Coach finally leaves the room singing a made-up song about a “race talk snack”.

Winston (played by Lamorne Morris) and Coach (played by Damon Wayans) are the two main Black male characters of *New Girl*, a TV-show created by Elizabeth Meriwether — an unconventional setting for an American sitcom. Indeed, *New Girl* is a White-cast sitcom, that is to say “a classical narrative show that uses regular characters, a routine setting and variations of the same plot over, over and over again” (Feasey, 2008), staging a majority of White main and recurring actors and actresses. Historically, sitcoms have been segregated: on the one hand, White-cast sitcoms only comprising White characters (broadcasted as early as 1950s), and on the other hand, Black-cast sitcoms telling daily live stories of Black characters from 1980s (Zook, 1999). The latter kind often stages a family with representations of Black masculinity associated with fatherhood (Chitiga, 2003). Nowadays, the segregation is not as clear as it was before. Even if family Black-cast sitcoms still exist, such as *Blackish* (2016) or its spin-off *Grownish* (2018), Black characters are nowadays featured in White-cast sitcoms. As a matter of fact, it is not rare to spot one - sometimes more - Black male character in White-cast sitcoms, such as *Brooklyn 99* (Terry Jeffords/Terry Crews and Captain Holt/Andre Braugher), *Scrubs* (Chris Turk/Donald Faison), *Happy Endings* (Brad Williams/Damon Wayans) or more recently, *Friends from College* (Ethan Turner/Keegan-Michael Key). However, the study of Black masculinity representation in sitcoms remains a largely

ignored topic in Feminist media studies and other related-academic fields (Feasey, 2008; Miller, 2011).

Staging in total three non-white characters — the third one being Indian female Cece/Hannah Simone — and specifically two Black male characters, *New Girl* breaks from the traditional sitcom scenario and character depiction. Indeed, this observation could be regarded as a random and specific fact, but sitcoms such as *New Girl* have much more aura than similar shows had before media and the Internet allowed international broadcasting. Sitcoms are now part of a world wide popular culture: TV-shows audiences as well as producers exist and live in a world gender order comprised with multiple spaces where gender representations are negotiated, including “international media” (Connell, 2005). Moreover, gender representations in general, and masculine representations in particular, are often aligned on “Western models of attractiveness” and therefore exclude or marginalize non-hegemonic masculinities, that is to say masculinities which do not conform to an ideal masculinity, from representations in the media (Connell, 2005). In particular, Black masculinity is often portrayed as “exotic” and essentialized to basic stereotypes (Morrell & Swart, 2005). Plus, when “Blacks are introduced in ‘White’ sitcoms, a weird racist ideology rears where race is not simply acknowledged (...) but it is immediately depicted as deficient. In other words, the different is treated ‘differently’” (Means Coleman, 1995). The latter observation is significant: several American studies have shown that Black males are more likely to watch pop-culture programs and build their masculine identity *vis-à-vis* the representations they offer, considering them as “role-models” (Goodwill, 2018). For all these reasons, *New Girl* appears as a relevant show to lead a case-study related to the depiction of Black masculinity in White-cast sitcoms.

I came to this conclusion after reading Ronald Jackson’s *Scripting Black Masculinity* (2006). In his book, Jackson uses a Body politics framework to trace the history of Black masculinity representations in popular culture from slavery to contemporary movies and TV-shows. *New Girl*’s racial aforementioned specificity, with two Black male characters, made it a relevant show to study the representation of Black masculinity in contemporary American White-cast sitcoms. Even though, studying gender representations in mass media is traditionally part of a liberal feminist ideology (van

Zoonen, 1994), as a mixed-race woman who has always been sensitive to the representation of minorities and female characters in TV-series, I lead my study according to an intersectional feminist theoretical framework, mixed with feminist media studies and Black feminism which I will explain in the first part of my thesis. This theoretical background frames my two research questions:

- How is Black masculinity represented in *New Girl*?
- In which ways does the representation of Black masculinity in *New Girl* intersect with contemporary societal issues (e.g. racial profiling, Black Lives Matter movement)?

As a second part and in order to lead my research I implement a content-analysis methodology based on Ronald Jackson's traditional Black masculinity stereotypes classification — "Exotic", "Sexual", "Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent", "Violent" and "Exploitable" — and his own "Black masculine identity theory" (BMIT), which mixes different interconnecting concepts — struggle, achievement, recognition, independence and community — to Winston's and Coach's characters in *New Girl*. I then compare the results to study whether or not, Black masculinity representation is stereotypical in the show, and if it evolves through time, as relative societal issues arise and the shows goes on.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is important that I begin my study by delimiting my theoretical framework. In order to do so, I start by addressing previous research within the fields of Men and Masculinities studies and Feminist Media studies, related to the topics of Black masculinity and gender representation in popular culture, and by explaining why my topic is relevant regarding these precedents (1). I then explain feminist theories and concepts supporting my analysis of Black masculinity in a sitcom such as *New Girl*, at the intersection of Black and intersectional feminism, and Feminist media studies (2).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

According to Raewyn Connell, individuals exist in a world gender order, where representations in interconnected spaces, such as international media, overcome borders and reach a worldwide audience (Connell, 2005). That is why gender representations in the media plays a massive role in the gendered identities construction of individuals and why studying gender stereotypes in the media is important work. Following this insight, masculinity has been theorized in the media (Hanke, 1998) and research about the relations between “male gaze” and “female gaze” has shown differences in the depiction of genders in the media (van Zoonen, 1994). Specifically, the representation of hegemonic masculinity has been analyzed as being problematic for young audiences (Kareithi, 2013), who are more likely to construct their gender identities in relation to what they see in popular media.

That is why research about gender stereotypes in popular culture has been extensive: from the history of gender representations in teen-television (Sandonato, 2014) to the construction of femininity and masculinity through relationships in TV-series such as *Buffy & Angel* (Schill, 2008). The study of sitcoms has mainly regarded the displaying of gender stereotypes in White-cast sitcoms such as *Friends* (Reed, 2013) and studied its

link with societal issues regarding homosexual marriage for instance (Melcher, 2017). TV being the most popular media, masculinity representation has been studied in different TV-shows such as crime and hospital series, sitcoms or soap operas (Feasey, 2008). Sometimes research has been focused on specific representations of masculinity in a specific type of TV-series such as the “mock-macho” in White-cast sitcoms (Hanke, 1998).

The segregation between White-cast and Black-cast sitcoms has nonetheless entailed its own study of Black television and racial and gender stereotypes. In her book *Color By Fox*, Krystal Brent Zook highlights the development of Black-cast sitcoms on the Fox Network. Although capitalist interests led such representation improvements, it entailed a transformation of TV-programs (Zook, 1997). Her analysis can be prolonged to our contemporary era where White-cast sitcoms seem to leave room for starring main Black roles: all seven seasons of *New Girl* were broadcasted on the Fox network, as well as *Brooklyn 99* before being cancelled and taken over by NBC. However, the analysis of Black representation has been restrained to Black TV-programs such as Black-cast sitcoms. For instance, in his book, *African American Viewers and the Black Situation Comedy*, Robin Means Coleman analyzes the representation of Blackness in Black sitcoms and its impact on Black audiences (Means Coleman, 1995).

Beyond this segregated media landscape and specifically Black television, the representation of Blackness and Black masculinity in popular culture remain an under-researched subject: Indeed, Black masculinity is often represented as a “monolith” (Goodwill, 2018), which is problematic since Black adolescents are more likely to spend time in front of the television and construct their identity according to popular representations (Adams-Bass, Howard & Slaughter Kotzin, 2014). Especially, according to Diana Miller (2011), there is a “non-visibility of Black masculinities” in sitcoms from 2000-2005. Regarding Black-cast sitcoms from the 1980s and 1990s such as *The Cosby Show*, Black masculinity has been depicted as turned to fatherhood — either positive, or criminal and unreliable (Chitiga, 2003). The intersections between queer and Black identities have also been studied in Black-cast sitcoms through the scripting of gay Blackness (Alfred, 2015).

Scripting is indeed a very significant tool when it comes to study Black masculinity

in popular media. In his book *Scripting the Black masculine body: Body Identity Discourse and Racial Politics in Popular Media*, Ronald Jackson has identified some recurring stereotypes regarding the Black masculine body in popular culture stemming from slavery and segregation (Jackson, 2006). Thanks to an analysis of several popular culture media, he theorizes a progressive Black masculinity turned to struggle and community and call for a better representation of Black masculine bodies in popular media.

Drawing from Jackson's analysis and the lack of research regarding contemporary pop-culture, I address in this thesis the topic of the representation of Black masculinity in White-cast sitcoms. More specifically, how is it represented in a recent production, such as the 2011 series *New Girl*? In order to conduct my case-study I need tools located at the intersection of Feminist media studies on the one hand, and Black and Intersectional feminism on the other hand.

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Studying representation and stereotypes in the media usually falls within liberal feminist views (van Zoonen, 1994). However to study the representation of Black masculinity in *New Girl*, I want to associate the theoretical implications of Feminist media research with tools and concepts from Black and Intersectional feminist studies.

Feminist media researchers view media as “technologies of gender, accomodifying, modifying, reconstructing and producing, disciplining and contradictory renditions of sexual difference” (van Zoonen, 1994). Media is then seen as not only displaying representations of genders, but also distorting and creating new meanings associated with them. That is why the main task of feminist media research is to “unravel dominant and alternative meanings of gender encoded in media texts ad their articulations with other discourses such as for instance, ethnicity, class an sexuality” (van Zoonen, 1994). That is precisely what I aim for in the present master thesis. The goal of my analysis is to study how the representation of masculinity intersects with the representation of Blackness, therefore “unraveling” the meanings associated with Black masculinity in a popular

sitcom such as *New Girl*. To lead my case-study I will simultaneously implement Black and Intersectional feminist lenses.

As depicted by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), in the racist and patriarchal system regulating our Western societies, Black women experience specific kinds of discrimination and stigmatization located at the crossroads of sexism and racism: that's the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). I argue that this exact same system similarly oppresses Black men by putting them at the intersection between gendered masculinity and racism. Indeed, as an intersectional feminist myself, I see Black masculinity as the intersection of masculinity, that is to say patterns of practices associated with maleness, and Blackness, which can be defined by the social, cultural and economical belonging to the Black community. "Masculinity" is in itself a controversial concept to which many scholars – mainly in the field of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities – prefer the plural term "Masculinities" (Kimmell, Hearn & Connell, 2005). Indeed there are different ways to perform masculinity, as well as different types of masculinities. In this sense, Black masculinity is one type of masculinity and can be performed in many different ways by different individuals. At this point I must detail one thing: even though masculinity can be performed by individuals beyond gendered boundaries, since the two characters I will be studying are identified as men, I will focus on Black masculinity as experienced and performed by Black men. According to intersectional gender studies, "Black men are privileged by gender and oppressed by race" (Mutua, 2006). Following this assumption, I will apprehend intersectionality theory in the following way: I will argue in Athena Mutua's words that "Black men are dominant and unjustly privileged in the private realm of the Black community (...) but that Black men are subordinated publicly" (Mutua, 2006). Men and masculinities studies have shown that Black men's experience of masculinity is different from White men's. Indeed, Black masculinity is part of "marginalized masculinities" (Cheng, 1999). Through my analysis of sampled episodes from *New Girl*, I want to study how Black masculinity is represented, as well as differentiated from White masculinity.

Which leads me to the third and last theoretical branch delimiting my research: Black feminism. As precursors of intersectional feminists, Black feminists argued that Black women's experiences were singular, and independent from White women's. As

presented by Black feminist scholar bell hooks in her book *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (1995), they extended their analysis of the “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” to the oppression of Black males. “In patriarchal culture, all males learn a role that restricts and confines”, writes bell hooks. “When race and class enter the picture, along with patriarchy, then Black males endure the worst impositions of gendered masculine patriarchal identity” (hooks, 1995). It is this very well defined intersection between race, class and masculinity that makes Black masculinity such a complex but interesting topic to study.

ANALYSIS

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

New Girl as a case-study

“The representation of Black masculinity in White-cast sitcoms” is a vast and quite broad topic to tackle in a master thesis. That is why, in a matter of efficiency as well as clearness and relevance, I decided to lead a case-study. By definition a case-study “focuses on one instance of the thing that is to be investigated” (Denscombe, 2006). This method allows the researcher to lead an “in-depth study”, in order to offer a “holistic view” of the given situation that is to be analyzed (Denscombe, 2006). Following these guidelines, it appeared obvious and essential that the “one instance” I was going to study had to be “typical” (Denscombe, 2006). That is why, in order to study the representation of Black masculinity in White-cast sitcoms, I had to choose a *typical* White-cast sitcom show with one — or more — Black male main character-s. Many of them have aired these last few years, like *Scrubs* (2001) or *Happy Endings* (2011) and other still air, such as *Brooklyn 99* (2013). However, I chose to focus on *New Girl* for a number of reasons.

First, the fact that *New Girl*, as a White-cast sitcom, offers two Black recurring male characters makes it a mix between a typical instance — Black male characters exist in a White-cast story line — and an extreme case-study — there are not only one, but two recurring Black male characters (Denscombe, 2006). Thus, *New Girl* is an ideal case-study (Denscombe, 2006). Second, the show aired for seven seasons, from 2011 to 2017. The fact that it is now over allows the case-study to be analyzed with a reasonable time distance from the releasing date of each season. Finally, as a big fan of TV-series, I have watched *New Girl* with dedication from its beginning and I was very familiar with the characters and the story line. This allowed me to be efficient as well as fair in my sampling and my analysis.

Therefore, by analyzing *New Girl* as a case-study, my goal was to be as exhaustive as possible. Indeed, my study mixes a “discovery-led approach” (Denscombe, 2006) regarding stereotypes it conveys of Black masculinity, and a “theory-led approach” (Denscombe, 2006) regarding the “Black masculine identity theory” coined by Ronald Jackson (2006).

Sampling episodes

Each *New Girl* season includes from 22 to 25 episodes -- except the last one which only comprises eight. Each episode lasts between 20 and 30 minutes. In order to lead my case-study, I studied a sample of 25 of these episodes extracted from all seven seasons. This sample has been chosen according to different sampling strategies. I use Martyn Denscombe’s classification explained in his book *The Good research guide for small-scale research projects* (2006) to identify them more clearly.

My sampling frame was provided by the Netflix catalogue. Indeed, the streaming platform’s Swedish version offers all seven seasons of *New Girl* with detailed synopsis for each episodes, making it a relevant, complete, precise and up-to-date sampling frame (Denscombe, 2006). Aware of bias that can be induced by the financial interests of such a company, I sampled episodes, mixing both probability and non-probability sampling strategies (Denscombe, 2006). First, I used purpose-sampling as a non-probability sampling strategy. Indeed, my topic being the representation of Black masculinity in White-cast sitcoms and given my already-existing familiarity with the series, I knew which episodes would be critical for my analysis. I first focused on the characters. That is why I deliberately chose to study the following episodes: “Pilot” (S1E1) in which Coach was introduced for the first time, “Kryptonite” (S2E2) in which Winston was introduced for the first time, and “Coach” (S3E7) in which both Black male characters were cohabiting in a same episode for the first time. These “special instances” (Denscombe, 2006) allowed me to study how both characters from the beginning, and in relation to each other, embodied Black masculinity. Following the same logic, I also chose to study “Cabin” (S2E12) and “Par 5” (S4E20) because they explicitly dealt with race-related issues, allowing me to answer the second part of my research question: “In which ways

does the representation of Black masculinity in *New Girl* intersect with contemporary societal issues (e.g. racial profiling, Black Lives Matter movement)?”

In completion to these five deliberately sampled episodes, I used multistage probability sampling strategies (Denscombe, 2006). First, I figured I would have more chances to lead a relevant study by analyzing episodes where I was 100% sure Black male characters were featured. Thus, I first implemented a cluster sampling strategy. Going through Netflix’s synopsis of *New Girl* episodes, I referenced every episode’s synopsis mentioning either Coach or Winston — or both. This gave me 68 occurrences — including some previously sampled episodes. I added both “Pilot” (S1E1) and “Kryptonite” (S1E2) to the sample — which synopsis did not mention either of the characters — making in total up to 70 episodes. To narrow my selection and make it more convenient for a small-scale study, I then applied a systematic sampling to the sampled episodes list. My aim was to reach an approximate equal dispersion within each season: I referenced episodes every second or third ones. The total sample — 25 episodes — with episodes’ titles and synopsis is available in the first appendix.

For instance, in season 3 (23 episodes), I analyzed:

“Double date” (S3E03) - *cluster/systematic sampling*

“Coach” (S3E07) - *purpose sampling*

“Exes” (S3E15) - *cluster/systematic sampling*

“Mars Landing” (S3E20) - *cluster/systematic sampling*

In total, Coach has been analyzed in seven episodes, and Winston in 22 episodes: the frequency gap is natural since Coach is only fully present in two seasons (seasons 3 and 4) while Winston is present all along the series.

Content analysis and semiotics

Content analysis is a good way to give an overview when it comes to gendered representations in the media (van Zoonen, 1994). Plus, it allows the researcher to “disclose many hidden aspects” and “deeper rooted and possibly unintentional message”

from the analyzed documents (Denscombe, 2006). My goal being to study the representation of Black masculinity in White-cast sitcom, which can be very subtle due to stereotypes and cultural interpretations, I decided to first use this methodology. I based it on Ronald Jackson's traditional Black masculinity stereotypes classification — "Exotic", "Sexual", "Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent", "Violent" and "Exploitable" — and his own "Black masculine identity theory" (BMIT), which mixes different interconnecting concepts — struggle, achievement, recognition, independence and community — to Winston's and Coach's characters (Jackson, 2006). For the first part, I studied Winston's and Coach's lines and roles in each episode and associated them to stereotypes referenced by Jackson (2006). This set of traditional stereotypes comprises five different representations of the Black masculine body in popular media:

- Exotic/strange, "the Black body is presented as spectacle and specimen".
- Sexual, the "stereotype of the sex-crazed Black male".
- Violent, a "stereotypical perception that those with Afrocentric features are aggressive, criminal, and violent".
- Uneducated/Incompetent/Irresponsible, Black poverty is linked to "Black crime, incompetence, and poor education" and "Black males were scripted as being incapable of loving or relating responsibly".
- Exploitable, "racialized bodies are commodities exchanged for social capital".

Thus, while watching each sampled episodes, I referenced every line and situations related to each character — sometimes Winston, sometimes Coach, sometimes both. Once the episode was over, I associated my data and the episode's synopsis with a stereotype depicted by Jackson (2006) — when relevant. Table 1 is an example, regarding Coach's character in "Pilot" (S1E1) where he appears mainly as "Violent". After obtaining similar tables for every sampled episode, I summed up stereotypes occurrences, with the aim of showing a pattern and dominant traits for each character. This allowed me to get clear results based on a content analysis approach.

However, as Martyn Denscombe (2006) underlines, "the more the text relies on subtle and intricate conveyed by the writer, or inferred by the reader, the less valuable

content analysis becomes in revealing the meaning of the text”. That is why I associated this content-analysis methodology with a semiotic approach, studying symbolic representations of *New Girl*'s analyzed scenes and discourses. The aim of this approach is to consider “the various aspects of the content to see what they denote” (Denscombe, 2006). According to Liesbet van Zoonen (1994) semiotics are parts of “interpretative research strategies” used in Feminist media studies. This type of research, often associated with qualitative research, “can be conducted to provide illustrations for quantitative data or to explore and define categories to be used in quantitative research” (van Zoonen, 1994), which is precisely what I am doing in this thesis.

SEASON 1						
Episode 1 - « Pilot »						
Character(s): Coach						
Representation of the Black masculine body / Words/Action	Exotic/Strange	Sexual	Violent	Uneducated/ Incompetent/ Irresponsible	Exploitable	None
Overall pitch: After breaking-up with her two-timing beau, schoolteacher Jess Day moves in with three single males: a bartender, a womanizer, and a personal trainer.						x
« NICK YOU'RE WEAK! »			x			
« MAKE A DECISION! »			x			
« STOP IT »			x			
Break a vase with his basket ball			x			
Flashbak: yelling at a woman he's coaching at the gym			x			
« STOP IT »			x			
Total	0	0	6	0	0	1

Table 1

I implemented similar methods for the second part of my analysis. Then, I studied Coach and Winston's parts in the same episodes according to Jackson's “Black masculine identity theory” (Jackson, 2006). Black masculine identity theory intertwines five concepts: struggle, recognition, independence, achievement and community. They are all interrelated as follow:

1. “Struggle is a human activity that solidifies one's sense of community.

2. Struggle is defined by group experiences (i.e., it is not that struggle is unique to Black males but that racial and gender group experiences of Black males contextualize struggle).
3. Struggle is the centerpiece of the Black masculine identity model because of the complexity of defining and negotiating Black masculine identity.
4. All identity theories in some way call for dialectics. In this case, Black masculine identities are enwrapped in an I–Other dialectic involving politics of recognition.
5. Black masculine persons are usually preoccupied with a sense of self-efficacy, which, when achieved, offers a sense of life satisfaction, autonomy, and stability.
6. Black masculine persons’ motivation to achieve is culturally, historically, and socially founded.
7. Without struggle, recognition, independence, and achievement, commitment to community is virtually impossible.”

Thus, for each episode I studied the story line regarding Coach’s or Winston’s character to match it with all five concepts. If the five of them were complete, then the episodes fulfilled all BMIT’s requirements. Table 2 is an example of my data regarding Coach’s character and BMIT in “Pilot” (S1E01). In this episode, the representation of Black masculinity embodied by Coach fits the framework of BMIT. I eventually use this data to study the evolution of Black masculinity representations in *New Girl*, as well as the intersection of Black masculinity representation with race-related societal topics in the episodes’ scenarios.

To close this methodology part, I want to unravel any ambiguity regarding my position as a researcher. My analysis of traditional stereotypes and Black masculine identity theory have been influenced by my reading of previous research and my personal experience as a Black and white mixed-race women who talked about this issue with different persons identifying as Black males before. Thus before finding any stereotypical representation I associated my data with relatable situations based on what I read, heard, or witnessed. I analyzed primarily the vocabulary used within the series, emotions displayed by characters, and situations leading to a stereotypical interpretation. Finally, as a woman who identifies as an intersectional feminist, I of course do not claim to speak on

the behalf of Black men. Rather, as bell hooks writes, I want to “speak with them” (hooks, 2003).

SEASON 1		
Episode 1 - « Pilot »		
Character(s): Coach		
BLACK MASCULINITY THEORY	Struggle	Coach wants to learn how to speak more gently to women after his boss told him he does not know 'how to talk to' them.
	Recognition	Jess helps him to change his behavior towards women
	Independence	Coach seeks help to improve his behavior towards women
	Achievement	Coach ends up singing for Jess who is sad she has been stood up by her date
	Community	Coach cheers Jess up, along with Schmidt and Nick
	RESULTS	YES

Table 2

BLACK MASCULINITY IN NEW GIRL: ANALYSIS & RESULTS

New Girl: A background analysis

New Girl starts when schoolteacher Jessica Day interviews to move in a Los Angeles loft occupied by three males: bartender Nick Miller, marketing expert Schmidt whose first name stays unrevealed during most of the series, and personal trainer Coach — whose first name is Ernie but that no one uses along the show except his girlfriends. Nick and Schmidt have been best friends since college, and it is not sure how they know Coach. Next episode introduces one other character, Winston Bishop, and sees Coach leaving the show. Winston is a former basketball player who has known Nick since they were kids growing up in Chicago. As a traditional sitcom, the series follow the personal as well as the professional lives of the five characters, plus Cece, Jessica’s best friend who is a model.

If Coach disappears after the very first episode, it is due to the actor's schedule: he was playing in another series at the same time — *Happy Endings* — and decided to focus on this one¹. However, Coach's character comes back in the third season after a break-up (S3E07), before leaving again at the end of season 4 to move to New York with his new girlfriend. He then makes brief appearances in the show, one of them being in the final season (S7E4).

It is worth noticing that the series offers diverse racialized characters: even though Nick, Jessica and Schmidt are white, Winston and Coach are black and Cece, Jessica's best friend, is brown from an Indian background. However, being diverse does not prevent the series from using stereotypical traits in its characters, especially regarding Coach and Winston, the two characters at the heart of the analysis here.

First and foremost, it is important to state both Coach and Winston embody a Black heterosexual able-bodied masculinity. Indeed, all along the series they both collect sexual and romantic female conquests, leaving no doubt over their sexual orientation. Plus, both of them are athletes. Coach is a personal trainer at a gym, before becoming a volleyball coach at Jessica's school. Winston is a former professional basketball player, who performed in a Latvian team. The spectator learns during the series that their common interest for sport led them to meet initially. This character trait linked to sports, is in itself stereotypical when it comes to the representation of the Black masculine body (Jackson, 2006). Edward Mapp refers to it as the "superior athlete" stereotype among its list of nineteen Black masculine stereotypes in American movies (Mapp, 1972). What's more, they met playing basketball, a sport stereotypically associated with Black male athletes (Stone, Perry & Darley, 1997).

This athletic trait is so prevalent regarding Coach's character, that his name — Ernie — is even erased and taken over by his job and his athletic skills. Besides, he is always wearing tracksuits — even in official ceremonies such as Winston's cat one-year death anniversary memorial in "When the Road Goes" (S7E04). Regarding Winston's character, stereotypes are more prevalent regarding his social background. Indeed,

¹ ANGELO Megan (1st November 2013). "A Not-Quite New Guy on 'New Girl'", *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/03/arts/television/damon-wayans-jrs-departure-and-return-to-new-girl.html>

Winston grew up in Chicago, Illinois, an American city famous for its large Black and African-American population. According to the 2010 Census Brief, Chicago had the second largest Black and African American population after New York². Moreover, as the show goes on, the audience learns that Winston's father left his family and him when he was young. Having an unstable family setting is also another stereotype when it comes to Black males representations in popular culture, in Black sitcoms for instance fathers are often represented as criminals or absent parents (Chitiga, 2003). According to popular representations, "any Black children are emotionally neglected and/or abandoned by biological fathers" (hooks, 2003). Winston's family background is therefore in itself stereotypical.

Analyzing traditional Black masculine stereotypes in *New Girl*

After analyzing the 25 sampled episodes, the most dominant stereotypes regarding Winston's and Coach characters are first "Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent", and second "Sexual". However, the third most represented stereotype differs: whereas Coach appears "Violent" and "Exotic" once each, Winston is represented to be "Exotic" four times and never represented to be mainly "Violent". They are never depicted as mainly "Exploitable". All these data are represented in Figures 1 and 2.

It is also worth noticing that one episode doesn't picture Black male characters as "Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent", "Sexual", "Violent", "Exploitable" or "Exotic" — the "Kryptonite" episode where Winston's character is introduced (S1E02). I will now analyze in details both characters according to each stereotype. First Coach (1), then Winston (2) and finally, I will study how their relationship plays a role in the building of these stereotypes through a sub-case-study of "Coach" (S3E07) episode (3).

² RASTOGI Sonya, JOHNSON Tallese D., HOEFFEL Elizabeth M. (September 2011). "The Black Population: 2010", *2010 Census Briefs*, 20p, <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-06.pdf>

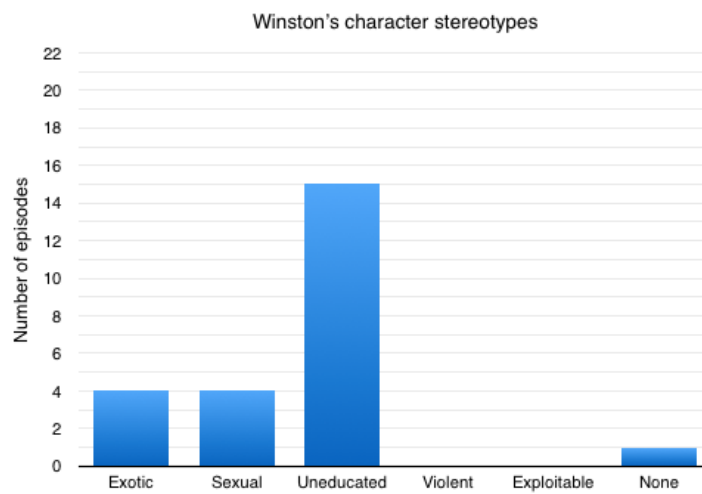


Figure 1

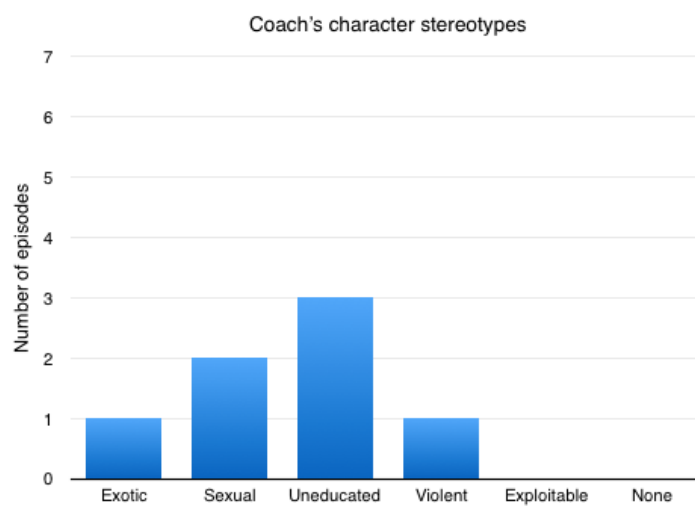


Figure 2

Coach: Introduced as “Violent”, but... “Irresponsible” and “Sexual”

“Out of control” or “rage-aholics”: according to bell hooks, black masculinity is often associated with being aggressive and violent (hooks, 2003). And in *New Girl*, Coach does not escape the rule. As a matter of fact, in the very first episode “Pilot” (S1E01), the only stereotypical character trait associated with his embodiment of Black masculinity is “Violent”. From the beginning he is represented as a personal trainer who is yelling at everyone, from his clients to his own friends — “NICK YOU”RE WEAK”, he yells at Nick when they have to decide if they let Jess move in with them. He later admits to Jess he has a problem when it comes to “talking to women”. Here, Coach’s character appears to be intimidating and his masculinity is associated to violence, facing others’ White characters’ calmness and innocence. This dichotomy is what leads Ronald Jackson to define a stereotype based on Black masculinity as violent, as opposed to masculine whiteness’ non-violence (Jackson, 2006). He writes: “The Black body is consistently scripted as an inherently violent, irresponsible, and angry street urchin, while the White male body is script as a young, innocent, and immature individual”. As mentioned earlier, this is clearly depicted when he yells at his friend Nick, who, as a consequence, decides to bury his head in his hoodie out of fear and avoidance. This only emphasizes the opposition between the Black male character embodied by Coach against the White innocent male, embodied by Nick. This dichotomy is also noticeable during the flashback scene showing Coach yelling at one of his female client, as well as when Coach yells “WHO CARES?” to Jess when she tries to help him canalize what she calls his “rage” — another word showing Coach’s violent masculinity. Here, the picture of a Black male yelling at two White female characters reproduces and accentuates the violent/innocent dichotomy. Worth noticing: this stereotypical violent representation of the Black male body often leads to its depiction as criminal (hooks, 2003), but it is not the case for Coach.

Surprisingly, in the rest of the series, Coach never appears to be mainly “Violent” again. He mainly embodies a Black masculinity turned towards stereotypes like “Irresponsible” or “Sexual”. Indeed, regarding the cluster of stereotypes “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent” designed by Jackson (2006), Coach fits the

description of the second one as an immature adult man. This is mostly noticeable in “When the Road Goes” (S7E4), where most of the lines and situations referring to him or coming from him, represent his Black masculinity to be “Irresponsible”. If the synopsis of the episode is not explicit, it is obvious that the episode revolves around Coach’s immaturity and irresponsibility. As the episode begins, Jess tells that he is going to be late and then, when Coach actually arrives to Ferguson’s (Winston’s cat) memorial, he’s wearing a tracksuit — as usual. Jess even teases him regarding the fact that he did not respect “the dress code” — but he does not seem to care. Then, Coach is presented to be in a fight with Nick, which leads Jess to yell at both of them like they are kids. Here again, Coach is presented to be immature and irresponsible. Eventually, when Coach solves the argument by paying part of the money he owes Nick, he drops a few banknotes on the ground without caring about it. Jess emphasizes his irresponsibility: “You just dropped like 600 dollars”, she says, being ignored. Here, Coach appears to be unreliable because he is late and does not respect the event he is invited to, immature about the way he is handling his fight with Nick and irresponsible when it comes to money. As a matter of fact, the same character trait — “Irresponsible” — could be associated with Nick, who is a White male. However, the fact that Nick is backed and supported by his own girlfriend makes him appear as an innocent man, making Coach the bad irresponsible guy — or at least *the most* irresponsible guy.

This immaturity and irresponsibility are associated with a “Sexual” component of Coach’s embodiment of Black masculinity. This can be easily noticeable in the episode “Exes” (S4E15). Coach’s character first line is explicitly sexual and sets the tone for the whole next 30 minutes. When Jess asks him if he stays friends with his exes, he replies that he does... “for sex”. He then makes a pun: “Cannot spell sex, without the ex”. Meaningfully enough, during this episode Coach’s goal is to have sex with a girl he dates in Schmidt’s apartment. To reach his aim, he lies to her by pretending he is Schmidt, and that he owns the apartment he brought her to. It perfectly fits the stereotype of the “sex-crazed” Black male (Jackson, 2006) who does not hesitate to lie to have sex with his love interest. Usurping Schmidt’s identity makes Coach even more stereotypical. Indeed, it fits bell hooks’ description of “the black male who could not demolish white male power with weaponry” and then use “his dick to ‘bitch slap’ white men and by doing so sexually

subjugating them” (hooks, 2003). In the same episode, Schmidt is also willing to have sex with his date, in his own apartment. He ends up planning a strategy to allow Coach, Winston and himself to have sex at the same time in his apartment. Here, he also can be depicted as “Sexual”. But, as he takes the initiative and rationalizes the sexual act by planning it for his Black friends, he does not appear as primarily “sex-crazed” (Jackson 2006). He mostly appears as a kind of “Master of sex”, intellectually dominating the whole situation.

Regarding Coach’s character, being represented as a stereotypical “Sexual” Black male goes in pair with being depicted as “Exotic”. In “Micro” episode (S4E04), Coach and Schmidt are moved by one of Jess’ dates who happens to have a micro-penis. To mess with them, Winston and Cece make them believe they should become models to celebrate their “normal” good-looking bodies. From the beginning, Coach’s “Exotic” physical appearance is referred to by Schmidt who does not hesitate to mention his “normal to above-normal endowments”. Later, he refers to Coach as a “stunning physical specimen” who must have been “created in a lab full of gay scientists”, which obviously shows a kind of fascination for his Black body. Schmidt also ends up deciding that Coach is “too big for high-fashion” and is more of a “runway” type. Eventually, Schmidt calls Coach “Little miss princess waist”. The rest of the dialogue between Schmidt, Coach and Nick goes as follow:

Coach: “I am a 26, that’s normal!”

Nick: “Yeah, in Asia!”

Mentioning Asia as an even more “Exotic” feature reinforces stereotypes not only to Coach but also towards Asian males: research has indeed shown that Asian males are perceived as “feminized” and “asexual” (Chua & Fujino, 1999). This prejudice regarding another “marginalized masculinity” (Cheng, 1999) associated with words such as “above-normal”, “stunning”, “created”, “too big”, “princess” makes Coach strongly appear as an “Exotic” body who must be immortalized through modeling and photo-shoots. This can be associated with Mapplethorpe’s photographs analyzed by Ronald Jackson in his book, where the Black body is described as a “naked body, “which” appears as an athletic

specimen” (Jackson, 2006).

As a conclusion, Coach fits a stereotypical representation of Black masculinity, mainly based on his immaturity and irresponsibility as well as his obsessive sexuality. A particular attention is also put on his body: his Black masculine body is portrayed as exotic. Always put in opposition to other White male and female characters, this normalizes the idea of a Black masculine body embodying threatening sexual behaviors, and displaying exotic features. This also enhances the idea of Black males being irresponsible, which can have a negative impact on Black male adolescents who are more likely to consume popular culture TV-programs (Adams-Bass, Howard & Slaughter Kotzin, 2014).

Winston: Almost unstereotypical... but “Uneducated/Incompetent” and “Sexual”

After watching “Kryptonite” (S1E02), I almost thought my research wasn’t going to lead anywhere. Indeed, in this episode, Winston does not appear at all stereotypical. It is even the opposite: he is defined as already belonging to the group of friends and his blackness or any related-topic are not mentioned as “Exotic” or “Strange”, he manipulates Schmidt into giving him the biggest room of the loft which appears as the contrary of being “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent”, the “Sexual” part of his life is not mentioned, he does not appear as a “Violent” person — it’s even Schmidt, the White guy, who ends up slapping Jess’ ex-boyfriend — and even though he ends up helping Jess getting her stuff back from her ex’s house, he is never depicted as “Exploited”. In conclusion, based on this very first episode his embodiment of Black masculinity does not seem to be constructed around stereotypical representations that could have a negative impact on audiences.

However, in the rest of the series, Winston appears the most as “Uneducated” and “Incompetent”. That is the case in several episodes: “Parking Spot” (S2E17), “Girl Fight” (S2E10), “Par 5” (S4E20), “Heatwave” (S5E09) and “Helmet” (S5E16). To make the analysis easier, I however chose to focus on the first of these ones, “Parking Spot” (S2E17). In this episode, Winston is struggling to have sex with his girlfriend Daisy

because of their different schedules — he works at night, and she travels a lot with her job. When she invites him over to have sex, he unfortunately forgot to bring a condom and ends up running errands during the whole afternoon to find one. Here, Winston could be praised for his sense of responsibility: he dedicates himself to have safe, protected sex. However, the fact that Winston forgets to bring a condom in the first place makes him rather appear irresponsible. And even more when he enumerates alternatives protection Daisy and him could use: “grocery bag”, “tin foil”, “hand sanitizer” and a “shower cup and a twist tie”. Daisy has to stop him and ask him to get a condom for him to concede. This scene lets the audience wonder: what would have happened if she had not said anything? Daisy appears to be more responsible than Winston and the one talking some sense into him. Moreover, once Winston is at the pharmacy, he realizes that he forgot his phone and his wallet at Daisy’s, right after cutting the huge line that’s formed before the counter. He eventually steals a condom from Jess’ room and ends up lost in Daisy’s neighborhood. This series of events makes a fool of Winston and represents Black males as uneducated, irresponsible and incompetent at the same time. He even ends up by saying himself: “I left my phone, my wallet and my dignity at Daisy’s house”.

The “Parking Spot” episode (S2E17) could also be a good example to show the stereotypical “Sexual” side of Winston’s character: as previously mentioned, in this episode, he appears very dedicated to have sex with his girlfriend, and all the story line regarding his character revolves around this one thing. All along the series, Winston is depicted successively as an insecure boyfriend and an irresponsible lover with sometimes weird kinks. But he finally settles with his White police partner girlfriend Aly in season 5. In the episode “Single and Sufficient” (S6E03), Aly and he have planned to go on a camping trip with Cece and Schmidt who have been married since the end of season 4. At that time, Aly and Winston have not seen each other for three months, because they are living a long-distance relationship. What they can only think about is then, having sex. From the beginning of the episode, Winston explicitly mentions it:

“I am so pumped for this trip, he says. Aly and I figured out how many times we would have to have had sex since we’ve been apart, and it’s a whole bunch. And we gonna play catch up on all of it. All 52 times. I am about to take Aly to Mount

Smushmore.”

What’s more, the episode’s entire scenario built around them is focused on how much they are having sex. Even when they finally admit that they are tired — after having sex 13 times in a row — and they would rather just enjoy the fact that they are “in the same place” at the same time, they end up having sex one last time on a pile of hay. This only perpetuates the stereotype of the Black masculine body as capable of “sexual prowess” (Jackson, 2006). Moreover, in the end, Aly adds: “This time I am a mermaid”, which adds up to the sexual “Exotic/Strange” part of Winston’s character.

Because even though in *New Girl*, Winston’s character is not mainly depicted as “Exotic” or “Strange”, it is definitely a big part of his character — from his best friend being a cat to his passion for pranks. This trait is particularly enhanced and caricatured in the “Cabin” episode (S2E12). This episode is particularly relevant as I am going to show later since it addresses race dynamic issues. In this episode, Schmidt’s attention is drawn to Winston’s blackness when he spots him being friendly to a group of Black people in a bar. Then, he obsesses over the idea that Winston should be “himself” and should enjoy being Black, even if he belongs to a mostly White group of friends. This episode is hard to analyze because it mainly consists in Winston acting as a stereotype of himself to make a fool out of Schmidt. However, I argue that Schmidt’s behavior contributes to make Winston appear as exotic and strange. In this sense, despite the intention of making fun of these amalgams, it participates in reinforcing some stereotypes around Black masculinity. “Do you think we are allowing Winston to be his blackest self?” Schmidt asks to Cece and Nick for instance. He then proudly says: “Let’s let Winston turn on his black switch and let his black-light shine!” as if Winston was completely different from him. To see until what point Schmidt is ready to allow him to be his “Blackest self”, Winston asks him to get some crack — a cheap kind of cocaine which was widespread among Black communities under Ronald Reagan presidency (1981-1989). In the end, Schmidt does not even show any understanding of the issue: as Winston goes out to get frozen yoghurt, he orders a “vanilla chocolate swirl” — a metaphor involving both of their skin-colors. Winston ends up annoyed and leaves the loft, slamming the door. Here, the Black masculine body is also represented as being “Exotic” and “Strange” but in a

less fascinating way than it was the case for Coach. Indeed, when it comes to Winston, it could be associated with “weirdness” instead of “fascination”.

In general, although Winston’s character is built around Jackson’s “Sexual” and “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent” stereotypes just like Coach, his embodiment of Black masculinity is intrinsically different. He of course is represented as a “sex-crazed” male but in more stable relationships than Coach, which makes him also appear as more responsible. However, he is definitely depicted as “Uneducated” and “Incompetent”, as the “Parking Spot” episode (S3E17) shows. Coach and Winston then appear to both fit stereotypical traits in their embodiment of Black masculinity but with small nuances, making them two different stereotypical representations of Black masculine bodies.

Coach is back: When Winston and Coach meet

Now that I have studied each character independently from each other, it is interesting to focus on the representation of their own masculinity through their relationship. In total, four episodes of the sample present Winston and Coach as simultaneously main characters: “Coach” (S3E07), “Mars Landing” (S3E20), “Micro” (S4E04) and “Where the Road Goes” (S7E04). As told earlier, it is not very clear how Winston and Coach know each other; they are just presented as having played basketball together in “Coach” (S3E07). This episode is crucial to analyze the dynamic and the relationship between Coach and Winston, since it is the first one where they are presented together in the series. In this episode, Coach comes back to the loft after breaking-up with his girlfriend Malia, and wants to take Winston, Schmidt and Nick out to a strip-club. Still implementing the set of stereotypes coined by Ronald Jackson (2006), I will now analyze how both of the characters’ masculinities are represented in relation to each other based on this episode. As shown by Figure 3, it is worth noticing that in this episode, Winston and Coach are mainly representing the same stereotype associated with the Black masculine body: “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent”. Both featured in this episode, they actually reinforce their own stereotypical Black masculinity analyzed in the two previous parts: Coach as “Irresponsible”, and Winston as “Uneducated” and “Incompetent”.

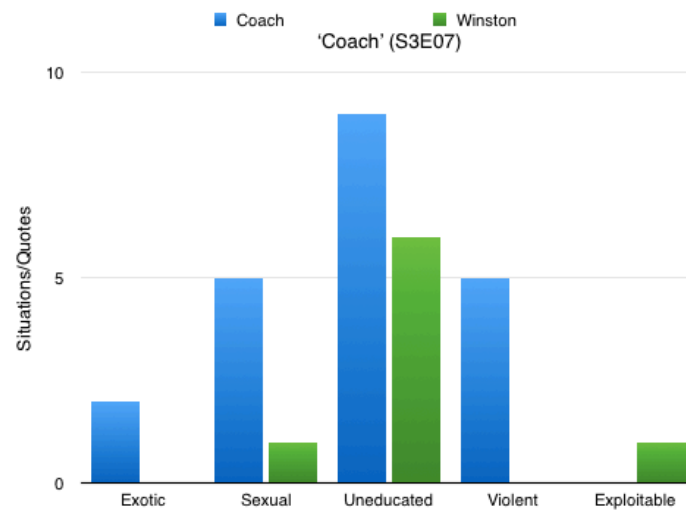


Figure 3

From the beginning, a flashback shows Coach drunk on a stage, and a man yelling, “You are ruining my wedding!” This makes Coach definitely appear as irresponsible. This is only enhanced in the rest of the episode. On board with the strip-club idea at first, Nick and Schmidt (two White men) later regret their decision: one wants to go back to his girlfriend Jess, and the other must wake up early the morning after. They decide to elaborate a plan to leave early. This very scene shows how much Coach is depicted as being an irresponsible and immature man: he does not have a job to show up to, and he does not have a stable relationship. At the end of the episode Nick even tells him directly: “You gotta grow up”. This is an abrupt depiction of Black masculinity as being based on immaturity, and judgment from White male peers. Moreover, the fact that Coach buries his feelings of sadness entailed by his break-up with Malia also shows a lack of emotional maturity. “Taught to believe that a real male is fearless, insensitive, egocentric, and invulnerable (all the traits powerful black men have in movies) a black man blocks out all emotions that interfere with this ‘cool’ pose”, writes bell hooks (2003) in relation to this topic. This makes Coach appear as emotionally unavailable and depicts a Black masculinity based on toxic irresponsible traits.

When it comes to Winston, the character is more depicted to be incompetent and uneducated as in previously analyzed episodes. Indeed, in this episode he withdraws

2,000 dollars at the strip-club, without noticing it is non-refundable “Bunny Money” from the name of the club, “The Velvet Rabbit”. He then spends most of the night trying to get his money back, before giving up and just ordering and buying the most expensive food and goodies from the club to spend the money he got.

Here, as previously mentioned, both of the characters appear like they belong the stereotypes cluster “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent”. However, one difference is striking: while Coach is only made fun of for his irresponsibility by Nick and Schmidt, Winston is made fun of by the entire male group. Indeed, Coach participates explicitly in Winston’s bullying from the beginning by calling him “Shrimp forks” because of his supposedly “small hands” which can’t hold a basketball. At the end of the episode, Winston even asks him not to call him that anymore. Coach agrees and ends up calling him “Bunny money” in reference to the 2,000-dollars withdrawal incident. When Winston withdraws the money, he even tells him “You keep making mistakes Winston”.

It is interesting to notice how Winston and Coach featured in the same episode stick to their stereotypical representation of Black masculinity — “Uneducated” and “Incompetent” for the former and “Irresponsible” for the latter. What’s more interesting is the fact that their respective position in the group makes Winston appear as marginalized, due to Coach participation in his bullying. Instead of supporting each other, both Black male characters compete.

Of course, the very fact that Winston and Coach both spend the night at a strip-club make them undeniably “Sexual”. In *We Real Cool*, bell hooks shows that the representation of Black masculinity as “compulsive-obsessive fucking is represented as a form of power when in actuality it is an indication of extreme powerlessness” (hooks, 2003). In this episode, Coach being the one suggesting the strip-club activity, his lines and appearances in the episode makes him appear way more as “sex-crazed” (Jackson, 2006) than Winston. His “powerlessness” can here be associated with his vulnerability after his break-up: he is not actually powerless; he is behaving like he is in denial of his feelings. Regarding Winston, the only line that makes him “Sexual” is his question to the taxi driver: “Can I ask you something: do you like strippers?” His powerlessness can here be associated with his intoxication: during this scene, he is obviously drunk.

Besides being depicted as “Irresponsible” and “Sexual”, Coach is represented to be

an “Exotic/Strange” and a “Violent” Black male. Indeed, from the beginning he is presented as this “Strange” guy who “disappears” whenever he has a girlfriend — quote from Winston’s character. It makes him appear as a mystery, especially to Jess who did not get to know him that much — remember, he left the loft after the first episode. Another moment when Coach appears “Exotic” is definitely when the audience can see him lifting a stripper like if she was a weigh he was training with. “The contest does not work, it’s only making him stronger”, says Schmidt, half-impressed, half-worried. By displaying Coach’s body as strong and remarkable, this “Exotic” side is also associated to being intimidating, and therefore can be seen as “Violent”. That is why in the same episode, Coach is depicted as “Violent” when he wants to beat his ex-girlfriend’s current boyfriend. He ends up abandoning the idea, thanks to Nick and Schmidt who talk him out of it. Here again, the White male characters appear to be the most responsible ones.

Finally, in the “Coach” episode (S3E07), Winston does not look “Violent” or “Exotic/Strange”. His character is more depicted as being “Exploitable”, a trait that is linked to his “Uneducated” and “Incompetent” side. Indeed, after withdrawing “Bunny Money”, he is buying expensive things in the strip-club, which are enjoyed by his whole group of male friends. The most striking moment when it comes to this, is the closing scene: Winston comes back from the strip-club where he bought food for the whole group — including the girls — that he pays with “Bunny money”. He tries to ask for money... but everyone ignores him:

“I was thinking maybe you guys could chip in a little bit... cause that was expensive, I would take 50 cents on a dollar, I really would, Please?”

Ending the episode like this makes it a culmination in the representation of Winston’s masculinity as being “Exploitable”.

As a conclusion, the “Coach” episode (S3E17) clearly shows two different representations of Black masculinity embodied on the one hand by Winston being “Uneducated”, “Incompetent”, “Sexual” and “Exploitable” and on the other hand, by Coach being “Irresponsible”, “Sexual”, “Exotic/Strange” and “Violent”. The differences between these representations are enhanced by the antagonistic dynamic between both

characters: Coach makes fun of Winston and marginalizes him, instead of supporting him or showing sympathy. This creates an all the more great dichotomy between two fixed representations of Black masculinity, to which audiences can refer themselves.

Implementing Black masculine identity theory in *New Girl*

“Black masculine identity theory” (BMIT) as coined by Ronald Jackson (2006), interlaces five concepts: struggle, recognition, achievement, community and independence. The idea of this second part is to analyze Coach and Winston’s characters according to BMIT. The goal is to check if *New Girl* displays a positive representation of Black masculinity in line with BMIT. In order to do that, I apply the concepts previously mentioned to each sampled episodes. Each of them are defined as follow:

1. Struggle, as “keeping oneself in balance”.
2. Recognition, as “others recognize and identify the authentic I and offer it permission to proceed with a given behavior”.
3. Independence, as “self-authorization, autonomy, and freedom of self-expression”.
4. Achievement, as “accomplishment of personal and collective goals”.
5. Community, as “a global or diasporic ‘family’ and/or locally as in the neighborhood in which one live” that is often “diverse”.

Based on Jackson’s definitions, I associated the concept of community with *New Girl*’s friends group comprising Nick, Schmidt, Cece, Winston and Coach. For each character in sampled episodes, I then asked myself:

1. Does Winston/Coach face a struggle?
2. Is he recognized/acknowledged by other characters?
3. Does he achieve something?
4. Does he behave as an independent person?
5. Is he committed to his community?

The results are seeable in Figure 4: Coach and Winston both fulfill this set of questions in more than 50% of the sampled episodes. It is interesting to notice that BMIT is compatible with the traditional stereotypes studied in the first part of the analysis. First, both characters are introduced in the series as representations of Black masculine identity fitting BMIT (1). However the association of BMIT and racial stereotypes depicted in the first part of the analysis reveals different processes in the meaning/making of Black masculinity, according to each character, Coach (2) and Winston (3).

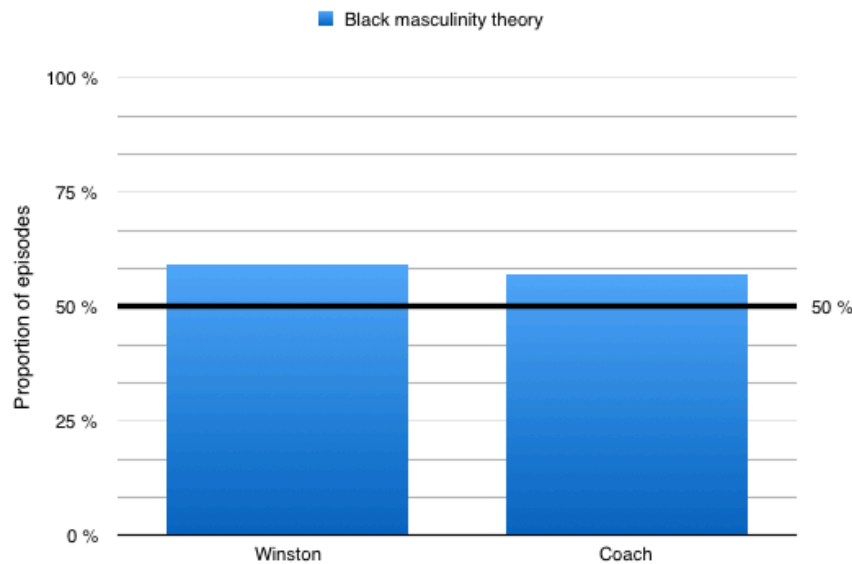


Figure 4

Coach and Winston introduced as positive Black masculine identity characters

As demonstrated in the first part of the analysis, Coach appears as “Violent” in *New Girl*’s very first episode, “Pilot” (S1E1). However, the fact that he asks Jess for help in order to calm his tone while talking to women shows an inner *struggle* he is willing to

address as an *independent* Black male. Moreover, Jess accepting to help him shows how his struggle and his person, instead of being “Othered” (Jackson, 2006), are being *recognized* and acknowledged. *Achievement* is then completed when, instead of yelling at her for crying, Coach ends up singing *Dirty dancing* soundtrack to cheer Jess up after she’s been stood up by her date, along with Schmidt and Nick. As Ronald Jackson states it is both a “collective” and an “individual” achievement (Jackson, 2006). This last scene also shows how much Coach is committed to help members of his *community*, which Jess is part of.

In the following episode, “Kryptonite” (S1E2), Winston — who “replaces” Coach — does not appear at all stereotypical according to the set of character traits coined by Ronald Jackson (2006). What’s more, he fulfills all the BMIT requirements. Indeed, his *struggle* can be identified as willing to get his old room (the biggest one in the loft) back, after coming back from Latvia, which he *achieves* at the end of the episode. In order to get what he wants, he manipulates Schmidt with reverse psychology: Schmidt finally *recognizes* Winston as the “top-dog” who deserves the biggest room. This strategy makes him appear as an *independent* person, capable of working and struggling to get what he wants. Plus, all along the same episode, he is committed to the daily life of the loft and his group of friends (his *community*), until he helps Jess get her belongings back from her ex-boyfriend’s house.

These episodes, which are each introducing each Black male character into the series, both show how Winston and Coach are BMIT-compatible characters. However, while one is clearly embodying a racial stereotype — Coach as “Violent” — but works through it to get improvement, the other is presented as already “perfectly” fitting a positive Black masculinity based on BMIT requirements.

BMIT as a process: revealing Coach’s soft-side

In “Micro” (S4E4), Coach mainly appears as “Exotic”. However, as the episode goes, he handles a *struggle* related to becoming a confident model. Encouraged by Schmidt who *recognizes* his “above-average endowments”, he realizes he actually does

not need modeling to feel confident, which makes him appear *independent*. Instead, he chooses to leave the (fake) modeling job created by Winston and Cece, to Schmidt who, he thinks, needs it more than he does. This shows his sense of *community* and how he *achieves* his goal of being confident. One turning point in *New Girl* is the moment Coach meets May who is going to become his girlfriend. He even ends up moving to New York with her at the end of season 4.

In “Spiderhunt” episode (SE17), Coach *struggles* with writing an e-mail to May to ask her out, while trying to help his *community* with hunting a spider in the loft. Winston and Schmidt both *recognize* he needs their help and don’t hesitate to give him advice regarding what to write. Voicing his concern and acknowledging his feelings for May, Coach is shown as being *independent*. Plus, in spite of a few mistakes, May accepts to go out with him: this *achievement* closes the episode. The fact that he shows his emotional “soft” and vulnerable side makes Coach appear as a “healthy black male” as depicted by bell hooks (2003): “Healthy black males in our society do not fall for the patriarchal hype. They attain emotional well-being by learning to love themselves and others.” As long as the show goes, Coach evolves into a grown Black male who does not hide his feelings anymore out of obedience to patriarchal injunctions.

BMIT as a process: Winston finding his voice

As shown by Figure 5, from season 5, Winston is representing a positive Black masculinity as defined by BMIT. In “Single and Sufficient” (S6E03), Winston is depicted as being “Sexual”, as I showed in the first part of the analysis. During this episode, he also fulfills BMIT requirements. He is *struggling* with catching up with his girlfriend Aly who he has not seen in three months because they are in a long-distance relationship. Yet, he is represented as “Sexual” since all he can think about during the main part of the episode is having sex with Aly. However he ends up opening up to her and telling her he is too tired to have sex anymore, and he is just happy to be “in the same place” as she is. This makes him appear *independent*. Moreover, Aly acknowledges his feelings — which is undoubtedly part of a *recognition* process. They just end up being happy together and catching up in the best way, which can be seen as an achievement. Finally, when it comes

to *community*, in the middle of the episode, both of them decide to stop having sex for a while to help Nick by proofreading his manuscript — they even really like it!

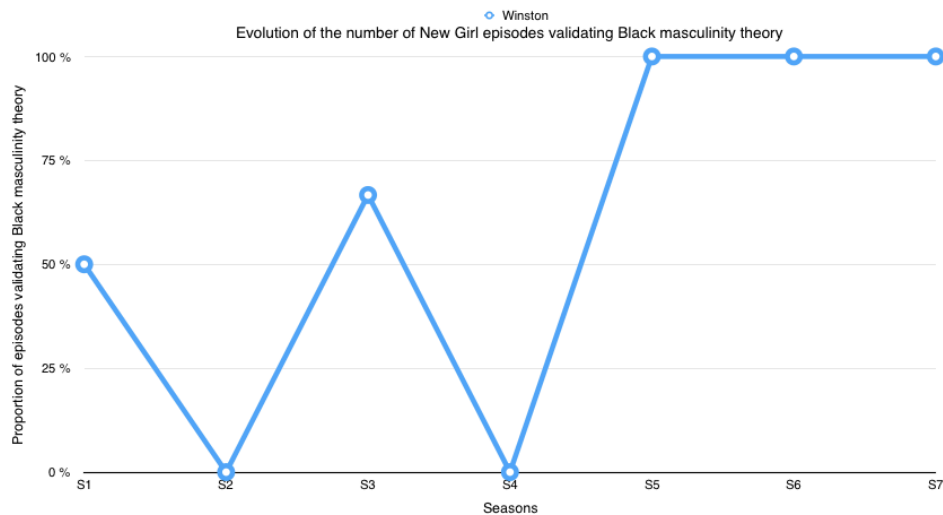


Figure 5

Winston’s character evolution towards a more positive black masculinity is even more obvious in “About Three Years Later” (S7E01). It is a particular episode since it’s the first one of the last season and it takes place three years after the end of the sixth season. In this episode, Aly is (very) pregnant but is in denial of her health and wants to keep living like nothing happened. The whole group of friends is invited to Schmidt and Cece’s daughter’s birthday, and Winston is depicted as being ‘Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent’. At the same time, Winston is *struggling* with choosing the best pregnancy picture he took during a photo shoot with Aly, while trying to convince her to take some rest. In his struggle, Winston gets some help from different people, and Aly ends up telling him to choose whatever picture. Indeed, she trusts him – which is a mark of *recognition*. She also ends up realizing she is pregnant, and how it has changed her body thanks to Winston — *achievement*. Eventually, during the whole episode, despite having some “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent” traits, Winston supports her as an *independent* man. The episode ends with Winston celebrating Cece and Schmidt’s daughter’s birthday in the loft with the whole group reunited, this shows a big sense of commitment to *community*. Winston’s dedication to share the responsibilities during his

wife's pregnancy makes him appear very feminist and supportive, which is, according to bell hooks a first step towards a more progressive Black masculinity: "Black men who stand against sexism, who choose to be feminist in their thinking and action model a healing masculinity for all black men" (hooks, 2003).

This evolution can be explained by the evolution of the character. Indeed, at the beginning of the series, Winston is a single unemployed Black male in his late twenties who does not seem like he has his life together. But as the show develops so does he: by season 5, he has become a successful police officer and gets in a stable relationship with his former partner, Aly, who by season 7 is pregnant. He even appears to be a loving and committed father, far away from stereotypes as depicted by bell hooks (2003) and Miriam Chitiga (2003). However, it should be noted that Winston's evolution is not out of the ordinary: all other characters go through a similar process of maturing and growing up.

"Being Black means whatever I want it to mean": Addressing contemporary racial issues in *New Girl*

In "Five Stars for Beezus" (S6E22), Winston's girlfriend Aly suggests moving to Portland. Winston refuses, because according to him, this city is "hell of white". This is one of the sporadic mentions of race in *New Girl*. However two episodes are very eloquent when it comes to blackness and what being Black and male entails in modern day America: "Cabin" (S2E12) and "Par 5" (S4E20). As explained earlier, that is why I purposely sampled these two. Beyond the fact that they explicitly deal with race-related topics, they embody two ways in which *New Girl* deals with the representation of Black masculinity: using satire (1), as well as tackling more explicit issues such as police brutality (2). The show also mixes both of them through the running reference of the O.J. Simpson trial (3). Through all of these examples, the show intersects Black masculinity and contemporary societal issues.

Satire to denounce racial prejudices

In “Cabin” (S2E12), Winston finds himself caricaturing Black males in order to show Schmidt how much he is prejudiced in his perception of blackness. Everything starts when Schmidt sees Winston chatting in a bar with an all-black group of friends. He then realizes that Winston is the only Black person in their friends group, comprised with Cece, Jess, Nick and themselves. Schmidt ends up worried Winston might not be in an ideal environment to be his “blackest self”. When he goes to Nick and Cece to talk about it, they disregard his concern so Schmidt turns directly to Winston. For instance, he gives him a rastafari-colored hat, which Winston does not appreciate. But instead of calling Schmidt out, Winston decides to embody all stereotypes associated with Black people — for instance he chooses to eat ribs (pork), pretends to do crack, and insists on being raised in a matriarchic family with his “mom and her mom and her mom”, which are all stereotypes attached to Black people (de Garine, 2001; Welch, 2007; hooks 2003). The whole episode revolves around Schmidt buying everything Winston makes him believe until they actually go get some crack and Schmidt realizes he’s been fooled. “Why would you believe I have done crack? Because I am black?” asks Winston. The episode ends with Winston telling Schmidt: “Being black means whatever I want it to mean”. This makes him appear as an independent Black male and draws some distance from the stereotypes he has been embodying from the beginning of the episode. With this ending, Winston’s embodiment of Black masculinity appears as more progressive as depicted in the previous analysis part dealing with “Black masculine identity theory”.

Embodying widespread racial stereotypes in order to demonstrate their ridicule is a common way to express satire. It is a particularly widespread tool in Black comedy shows, such as *Living in Color* (Cooks & Orbe, 1993) or *The Chappelle’s show* (Glebatis Perks, 2012). However, it also participates in normalizing them: showing them on TV makes the audience aware that these stereotypes exist and can still have a negative effect on the public (Glebatis Perks, 2012) — especially if the audience is mainly Black and masculine as it is often the case for pop-culture TV-shows (Adams-Bass, Howard & Slaughter Kotzin, 2014). Indeed, satire and irony requires audiences to decode meanings in a sophisticated way. In the case of Black comedies, these meanings can be “neutral”,

“surface” or “derived”: in the latter case, audiences “need to have both the ability and motivation to satirically decode the text” (Glebatis Perks, 2012). As a consequence, some particular audiences won’t grasp the social commentary carried by scenes such as Winston ordering ribs or asking Schmidt to get crack. In that case, Black masculine audience could be negatively impacted in their identification process to the character (Goodwill, 2018) and other audiences won’t be necessarily questioning their own prejudices.

Yet, “Cabin” is an important episode in *New Girl*: it is the first one to seriously tackle race issues in the show. It aired in January 2013, a year after Trayvon Martin’s death — this 12-year-old boy was killed by a White male whereas he was not a threat to anyone. This tragic event participated in reviving awareness about the danger of being male and Black in contemporary America. In 2012, the FBI counted that 31% of the police killing victims were Black people, when they only represent 13% of the total U.S. population: among them 39% were not attacking when they were killed³. Besides, research has shown that Black men were more likely to be controlled and arrested by the police based on their race and assumptions they were involved in drug-trafficking (Welch, 2007), even more when they were tall (Hester & Gray, 2018). Based on these observations, the very fact that Winston decides to become a police officer in season 4 participates in countering the previously mentioned stereotypes, and can even be interpreted as a statement from the series producers and writers.

Winston, Coach, Black masculinity and the police

“Did you hear the joke about the two black guys and the two white guys walking into a police station? The two white guys came out.” In “Coach” (S3E07), Coach tries to convince Nick, Winston, and Schmidt to beat up his ex-girlfriend’s current boyfriend, who happens to be a police officer. Winston refuses, by telling this “joke”. After “Cabin” (S2E12), this is another episode where a race-related topic such as racial profiling is

³ Lopez German, “There are huge racial disparities in how US police use force”, *Vox.com*, 14th November 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/8/13/17938186/police-shootings-killings-racism-racial-disparities>

addressed in *New Girl*. Even if it is only a line, it presumes for what is happening in the next season.

In “Par 5” (S4E20) which aired in April 2015, Winston — who became earlier a police officer in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) — finds himself in a tricky situation: the Black girl he is dating, named KC, is involved in an anti-police movement organizing protests against racial profiling. The whole situation is used as a pretext to reflect on the relationship between Black people and the police, which, as I wrote earlier is problematic in the U.S. First, even though the movement KC is involved in is not named in the episode, it surely can remind the audience of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement created to protest police brutality directed towards Black people. BLM has been created in 2014 after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, an event which entailed riots during weeks the same year. Later during her first date with Winston, KC mentions the case of a teenager she met who was arrested because he “fit a description”. “He is 14, she says, he does not even fit into his jeans”. This line denouncing racial profiling is research-grounded. In the mind of the public, Black maleness is (wrongly) associated with crime, which leads to racial profiling and police unfairly targeting black male populations (Welch, 2007). This situation is very problematic for Winston: he is represented to be simultaneously a potential victim of police practices, while being part of its system. As a consequence, he is torn between lying and telling the truth to KC about being a police officer.

Winston seeks advice by asking Nick what he thinks about the situation. It turns out Nick is unfamiliar with the ambivalent relationship Black people have with the police. “I had no idea”, he says after Winston tells him how he grew up scared of the police in their Chicago neighborhood, where they both grew up. In this scene, Winston acknowledges his tricky situation and voices concern about growing up Black and male in the U.S. However, it is interesting to note that when Coach, the second Black male character in *New Girl*, enters the room during the discussion, he acts as he is undermining the whole problem, and prefers getting “a race talk snack” instead of engaging with the topic. This scene shows two ways of dealing with race-related subjects as a black male in the U.S, more commonly called “race talk” (Wing Sue, 2013). On the one hand, Winston has no problem talking about it with his White friend, whereas on the other hand Coach is

avoiding this serious conversation by simply stating “You will never understand”.

However, in both cases the issue of racism is acknowledged and encourages Nick to admit he benefits from White privilege.

At the end of the episode, Winston admits to KC he is working as a police officer. She later tells him that she is madder at him for lying than for working for the LAPD, and finally accepts to go out again with him.

Running gags & Black masculine stereotypes: mentions of the O.J. Trial

I have demonstrated how *New Girl* addresses racial topics through satire as well as direct and genuine ways. The show also addresses these topics mixing both of these tools such as introducing a running-gag about the O.J. Simpson trial. As a reminder, *The People vs. O.J. Simpson* case was presented before the court of Los Angeles in 1994: Orenthal Junior Simpson, a famous Black football player, was tried for the murder of his ex-wife Nicole Brown and her friend Ronald Goldman. This case polarized the American people: on the one hand people thinking O.J. Simpson was being framed by the LAPD and on the other hand, people convinced he was guilty. More than that, the trial, which lasted almost a year, unraveled racist systemic practices within the LAPD, entailing a huge national debate around racial profiling and the relationship between the police and the Black community.

The opening of “Christmas Eve Eve” (S6E10) is the most obvious reference to it: the episode begins with the whole group dressed up for Halloween as characters from the series dedicated to the trial, *The People vs O.J. Simpson: an American Crime Story* (2016). In this scene, Winston is dressed as actor Sterling K. Brown playing Christopher Darden, the Black prosecutor who was co-assigned to the case. This choice is eloquent. Indeed, along the trial Christopher Darden was accused to betray the Black community by siding with the prosecution and defending the police. Regarding the whole situation, Winston could have been dressed as O.J. Simpson — maybe was it too evident? — or as Johnnie Cochran, his lawyer attached to defending black males against the LAPD. Instead, he dressed up as the only Black male protagonist accused of being an accomplice

of the “White prosecution”. This could also be interpreted as a reference to his own job, police officer in the LAPD. More references to the O.J. Simpson trial are made throughout the series, including one in “Par 5” (S4E20). In this episode where Winston discusses race and police brutality with Nick, he tells him: “You lost your right to talk to me about race during the O.J. trial”. Follows a flashback about them kids watching TV, and Nick saying he doesn’t understand why people call O.J.’s car — a white bronco — a “white” bronco. Later, in “Single and Sufficient”, Jess refers to the O.J. trial when she mimics “O.J. trying to put on the bloody glove” to prove a point to Schmidt who accuses her of not enjoying being single.

These references are more or less subtle, but they are not coincidental: Los Angeles, where the series takes place is also the city where the whole trial and case took place. O.J. Simpson’s trial has also been a major racial event in America and just as the creation of the Black Live Matters movement or the death of Trayvon Martin previously mentioned, it rose awareness about issues linked with Black masculinity in the U.S. Black feminist scholar bell hooks refers to it numerous times in her book *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*, mainly in the chapter dedicated to violent and aggressive stereotypes attached to Black men. Without clearing him, she questions the media coverage and the LAPD responsibility in Simpson’s domestic abuse behavior. “Mass media never cared or called attention to O.J. Simpson’s violent abuse of black female partners, but when he was accused of murdering a white woman, the documentation was already in place to prove his violence toward her” (hooks, 2003). Here, we find again a representation of Black masculinity as “Violent” but the show seems to counter this stereotype: as we saw earlier, only one episode depicts Black masculinity as mainly “Violent”, the first one.

DISCUSSION

Until the 2000s, the representation of Black masculinity in sitcoms was almost only limited to Black-cast family sitcoms due to television racial segregation (Zook, 1999). Black male characters were then mainly embodying father figures — which did not suit expectations from Black audiences (Chitiga, 2003). However, with the appearance of non-White characters in sitcoms with shows such as *Scrubs* (2001), the representation of Black masculinity has evolved: Black male characters were not only fathers — or brothers and uncles — anymore, but friends, boyfriends, colleagues and more, confronted to mainly other White characters. That is why in this thesis I decided to study the representation of Black masculinity by focusing my analysis on the 2011 sitcom *New Girl*, which features two Black male main characters, none of them being (initially) fathers.

From my results, it is worth noticing that despite this obvious progressive display of racial characters in *New Girl*, Winston and Coach are stereotypical Black male characters when it comes to traditional representations of Black masculinity in popular culture like “Sexual”, “Exotic”, “Uneducated”, “Exploitable” and “Violent” (Jackson, 2006). It is also important to stress that each Black male character embodies a different Black masculinity representation from the other. Winston’s stereotypical Black masculinity representation is more centered on him being “Sexual”, “Exotic” and “Uneducated” when Coach’s revolves around being “Sexual”, “Violent” and “Irresponsible”. Plus, their characters are shown and presented as being antagonistic and regularly opposed, such as in “Coach” (S3E17) where a line is clearly drawn between them when Coach makes fun of Winston and “teams up” with Nick and Schmidt to bully him.

In this sense Coach’s representation of Black masculinity can be interpreted as an embodiment of “ritualistic Black masculinity”, and Winston and he both can be associated with “innovative Black masculinity” (Mutua, 2006). Indeed, taking over Franklin’s classification of progressive Black masculinities, Mutua defines “ritualistic Black masculinity” as recognizing “‘blocked opportunities’ but continuing to ‘play the

game' without believing or really questioning it" (Mutua, 2006). This description fits Coach who, as we found in the last part of the analysis, acknowledges race-related problems but refuses to talk about them — in that sense, he “plays the game”. On the contrary, “innovative Black masculinity” is defined as exaggerating “one aspect of traditional masculinity which can be achieved in order to receive desired responses” (Mutua, 2006). Coach and Winston being primarily represented to be “Sexual” — a traditional aspect of hegemonic masculinity — can thus be associated with this “innovative” type of Black masculinity.

However, as the second part of my analysis shows, they also embody an increasing representation of a more progressive Black masculine identity throughout the show, as their characters evolve and grow. From this point, it is interesting to notice that the five concepts interlaced in Black masculine identity theory (Jackson, 2006) — struggle, achievement, independence, recognition, and community — are compatible with traditional stereotypical Black male characters traits. It even appears like making fun of traditional stereotypes like Black masculinity as “Exotic” or “Sexual” (Jackson, 2006), even though representing and reinforcing certain prejudices (Glebatis Perks, 2012), can be counter-balanced by a narrative emphasizing a progressive Black masculinity respecting Jackson’s Black masculine identity theory criteria (Jackson, 2006). Combining both also allows the show to address serious societal issues linked to Black masculinity, such as racial profiling and institutionalized racism within the police. In that sense, *New Girl* appears like a White-cast sitcom depicting a progressive Black masculinity.

In my analysis I focus primarily on Winston and Coach as main characters of the show. However in the 25 sampled episodes three other Black male characters appear: an alleged drug-dealer in “Cabin” (S2E12), one of Jess’ love interests in “Coach” (S3E17) and an awkward ceremonial host in “Where the Road Goes” (S7E04) who also happens to be one of Winston’s colleagues. It could be interesting to analyze how they, as secondary characters, embody Black masculinity. However, it would certainly be easier to analyze this according to traditional stereotypes. Indeed, implementing the BMIT five-questions test could be tricky since their story lines are obviously shorter than for main characters. Further research could also be done regarding media input and output of the show. I focused on texts and representations, but it would be interesting as part of a feminist

media research to study the encoding of Coach's and Winston's characters — or Black male characters in white-cast sitcoms — through the scripting process for instance, or analyze how audiences react to Black masculinity displays in the show.

All these results and observations show what representation is. Especially, representation is not only a matter of seeing diverse skin-colors on TV and popular-culture in general. It is, above all, what and how race is represented to be -- not only an aesthetic or artistic issue in the case of series, but also an issue linked to political, cultural and social processes which are reflected on TV and popular culture. That is because the influence of popular culture is so important, that minorities deserve representation but not any kind of representation. When it comes to Black males, it is even more important to be careful how they are represented to be, since they are more likely to consume popular culture TV-programs (Adams-Bass, Howard & Slaughter Kotzin, 2014). In that case, seeing Black male characters being represented as “Sexual” or “Violent” is not necessarily good representation. As media platforms reflecting society and participating in the identity building of young people, sitcoms and popular culture in general need a representation of a positive and progressive Black masculinity, breaking from stereotypical traditional patterns of racial and gendered representations.

In that sense, Ronald Jackson's “Black masculine identity theory” revealed itself to be a very useful tool to study Black masculinity representation in popular culture. I suggest the set of five questions I set to lead the second part of my analysis could be used similarly to the Bechdel test — elaborated by American cartoonist Alison Bechdel to assess the feminist qualities (or lack thereof) of movies. Such tests already exist to study racial and diversity representation, such as the “Racial Bechdel Test”, which the first season of *New Girl* passes⁴. However, the “BMIT-test” would only focus on Black male characters and could be used to spot movies or series conveying a progressive representation of Black masculine identity. It would require five steps, according to the five following questions, assuming at least one Black male character is featured in the production:

⁴ racialbechdel, “The Racial Bechdel Test”, <https://racialbechdel.tumblr.com/>

1. Does the Black male character face a struggle?
2. Is he recognized/acknowledged by other characters?
3. Does he achieve something personal or collective?
4. Does he behave as an independent person to achieve “self-efficacy”?
5. Is he committed to his community?

In case all answers are “Yes”, the production could be regarded as conveying a progressive representation of Black masculinity.

In analyzing Black masculinity in White-cast sitcoms, my goal was to focus on an under-researched topic at the crossroads of Men and Masculinities studies and Feminist media studies. Thanks to concepts and tools drawn from Intersectional and Black feminism I have demonstrated and given hints about how popular culture can participate in conveying a more progressive and less stereotypical representation of Black masculinity. Because far from being a “monolith” as they are often represented to be (Goodwill, 2018), “contemporary expressions of black masculinity work symbolically in a number of directions at once; they challenge and disturb racial and class constructions of blackness; they also rewrite and reinscribe the patriarchal and heterosexual basis of masculine privilege (and domination) based on gender and sexuality” (Gray, 1995). Certainly, Black masculinities intrinsically challenge (White) hegemonic representations of masculinity, but they also challenge it by creating their own masculinity meanings and definitions.

CONCLUSION

By leading a case-study focused on *New Girl*'s characters Winston and Coach, I wanted to address the topic of Black masculinity representations in contemporary White-cast sitcoms. In order to achieve this aim, I collected data to answer the two following questions:

- How is black masculinity represented in *New Girl*?
- In which ways does the representation of Black masculinity in *New Girl* intersect with contemporary societal issues (e.g. racial profiling, Black Lives Matter movement)?

My data collection strategies mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies as advocated by Feminist media research (van Zoonen, 1994), and were based on probability and non-probability sampling strategies (Denscombe, 1998).

Following these previous steps, I studied Black masculinity as represented and embodied by both Coach and Winston in 25 sampled episodes, spread out throughout all seven seasons of the show. I first studied traditional stereotypes associated with Black masculinity and then Black masculinity identity theory, based on Ronald Jackson's classification in his book *Scripting Black Masculinity* (2006). I found that both were compatible and that their association with humor and satire allowed the show to address contemporary social issues. Indeed, Winston and Coach are both embodying Black masculine traditional stereotypes — mainly “Sexual” and “Uneducated/Irresponsible/Incompetent” — but are also more likely to display a positive representation of Black masculinity regarding their character's storylines as the show goes on. Their characters are also pretexts to tackle racial issues inspired from real life, such as racial profiling or institutionalized racism within the U.S. police.

This study led following a theoretical framework interlacing Black and intersectional feminism as well as Feminist media studies, allows a better understanding of Black masculinity representation in contemporary popular culture. Focusing on a recent sitcom featuring two Black male characters in a White-dominated cast like *New*

Girl, it is in line with previous research led on Black representation when sitcoms were explicitly segregated between White-cast and Black-cast sitcoms (Zook, 1999). My results also highlight the importance of positive representations in popular culture regarding Black male characters. In this sense, Ronald Jackson's Black masculinity identity theory reveals itself to be a good tool to check positive representations of Black masculinity in popular culture productions.

However, focusing on the two Black male lead roles in *New Girl*, my case-study has a limited scope. Other Black male characters featured in the show could also be analyzed, and above all, it would be interesting to study the creative process leading to the scripting of such characters and the effect it has on viewers. I also suggest implementing similar methods and methodologies to other types of series, such as soap operas, detective or hospital shows, to be able to compare data and convey a more complete panorama of Black masculinity representations in TV-series.

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APPENDIX

List of sampled episodes

2011	Saison 1	Title	Description	Analyzed character-s
	Episode 1	Pilot	After breaking up with her two-timing beau, schoolteacher Jess Day moves in with three single males: a bartender, a womanize and a personal trainer.	Coach
	Episode 2	Kryptonite	Nick and Schmidt help Jess get her things out of her ex's apartment. Later, Jess meets new roomie Winston, who's back from playing basketball abroad.	Winston
	Episode 17	Fancyman, Part.1	Jess reluctantly dates the wealthy father of one of her students. Meanwhile, Schmidt and Winston become ultra competitive while playing bar trivia.	Winston
2012	Saison 2			
	Episode 6	Halloween	Jess gets hired as a zombie in a haunted house. Meanwhile Schmidt and Cece's Halloween costumes match — but Winston's and Shelby's don't.	Winston
	Episode 12	Cabin	Things go awry when Nick and Angie spend a week-end away with Jess and Sam. Meanwhile Winstonn teaches Schmidt about race relations.	Winston
	Episode 17	Parking Spot	Schmidt finds a prime parking spot, which the roommates then fight over, Meanwhile, Winston looks for a condom after getting an invitation from Daisy.	Winston
	Episode 24	Winston's Birthday	Jess's dad visits at a bad time, forcing Nick to spend time alone with him. Meanwhile, Winston hopes someone will throw him a surprise birthday party.	Winston
2013	Saison 3			
	Episode 3	Double date	Schmidt is mistakenly invited to a double date with Jess and Nick, and there's a hitch in Winston's promise to get them a table at a hot new eatery.	Winston

	Episode 7	Coach	Single once again, Coach moves back into the loft, where things have changed. Meanwhile, Jess and Cece meet an intriguing guy on a girl's night out.	Winston & Coach
	Episode 15	Exes	Jessica teaches Nick how to be friends with his ex, and Coach borrows Schmidt's loft for a date that gets cut short... by Schmidt and his own date.	Coach
	Episode 20	Mars Landing	Jess and Nick examine their relationship, Cece drunk-texts Buster, and Schmidt, Winston and Coach try to impress their attractive new neighbours	Winston & Coach
2014	Saison 4			
	Episode 4	Micro	Jess tries to prove she is not shallow by dating a guy with a male endowment issue. Cece and Winston suggest to Coach and Schmidt they could be models.	Winston & Coach
	Episode 10	Girl Fight	An old argument resurfaces between Jess and Cece, and Schmidt's caught in the middle. Winston is suspicious of Nick's date, Tran's granddaughter Kai.	Winston
	Episode 17	Spiderhunt	Schmidt's fear of spiders forces everyone in the loft to hunt down and eight-legged visitor. Coach tries to compose and e-mail asking to May out on a date.	Coach
	Episode 20	Par 5	Jess tries to get new computers for the school by schmoozing with politicians at a charity event. Winston falls for an activist who dislikes police.	Winston & Coach
2015	Saison 5			
	Episode 1	Big Mama P	Jess and Nick plan an elaborate engagement party for Cece and Schmidt, but one part of the plan goes awry. Winston tires of being seen as a hero.	Winston
	Episode 9	Heat wave	Nick's refusal to enjoy the air conditioning in Reagan's room during a heat wave leads to a confession. Winston discovers the uses of his « cop voice ».	Winston
	Episode 16	Helmet	On the eve of meeting sam's parents, Jess has an upsetting erotic dream about someone else. Aly's boyfriend competes with Winston at a cat audition.	Winston
2016	Saison 6			

	Episode 3	Single and Sufficient	When Schmidt, Cece, Winston and Aly invite Jess on their glamping trip, she brings along some single friends, Nick hits a wall with his novel.	Winston
	Episode 10	Christmas Eve Eve	Winston worries that his Secret Santa gift for Cece won't arrive in time, and the gang goes all out to ensure Jess has a memorable Christmas.	Winston
	Episode 15	Glue	Nick's anxiety goes into overdrive when Reagan lands him a book reading. Winston asks Schmidt and Cece for a big favor.	Winston
	Episode 22	Five Stars for Beezus	As Jess prepares to reveal her feelings to Nick, Cece and Schmidt get life-changing news. Meanwhile, Aly helps Winston find an important person.	Winston
2017	Saison 7			
	Episode 1	About Three years later	Jess and Nick return from a European book tour, Schmidt and Cece prepare for a birthday, and Winston and Aly fret over a photo.	Winston
	Episode 4	Where the Road goes	The gang honors a dear and departed friend. Jess gets to the bottom of Nick and Coach's dispute. Schmidt ponders what Cece would do if he died.	Winston & Coach
	Episode 8	Engram Pattersky	When Jess and Nick get an eviction notice, they invite Schmidt, Cece and Winston over for one last jaunt down memory lane.	Winston